

# THE TIMES



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## Au revoir, Andy

### Murray retires after defeat at Paris Olympics

Sport, pages 62-64



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## Can this dress save Gap?

Anna Murphy, Times2

# Police will join forces to stop summer of riots, vows Starmer

**Fiona Hamilton** Chief Reporter  
**Steven Swinford** Political Editor  
**Aubrey Allegretti, Shayma Bakht**

Sir Keir Starmer has said that he will not allow the far right to co-ordinate a “summer of riots” as police are braced for further disorder at rallies across Britain this weekend.

Events are planned for nine cities and

towns, with posters shared on the encrypted Telegram and other social media channels telling “patriots” to take action, saying “enough is enough”.

Flyers are circulating online for rallies in Manchester, Hull, Liverpool, Nottingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Bristol and Belfast. Some urge people to congregate outside mosques. There has been widespread disorder

after three girls — Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, nine — were fatally stabbed at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class in Southport, Merseyside. Two adults were seriously injured and eight other children suffered stab wounds, five of whom are in a critical condition.

Hundreds of rioters have taken to the streets in London, Hartlepool and

Manchester, fuelled by disinformation about the incident and the suspect on social media. Dozens clashed with the police, throwing beer cans and bottles during a protest in Whitehall. Demonstrators also targeted Sir Winston Churchill’s statue in Parliament Square.

Starmer said “gangs of thugs” were behind the violence as he announced a new “national capability” across police

forces to stop the riots. Speaking at No 10, he said: “It’s not protest. It’s not legitimate. It’s crime, violent disorder, an assault on the rule of law and the execution of justice. So on behalf of the British people who expect their values and their security to be upheld we will put a stop to it. These thugs are mobile. They move from community to community”

Continued on page 9

# Russia in biggest prisoner exchange since Cold War

● US journalist among 16 people returned to the West ● Germany sends murderer back to Moscow

**Tom Parfitt, Hugh Tomlinson**  
**Marc Bennetts**

Evan Gershkovich, the American reporter jailed for spying after a show trial in Moscow, was released in a momentous East-West prisoner swap yesterday.

Moscow gave up Gershkovich, two other US citizens, a Russian-British dissident, several Germans and a slew of Russian political prisoners in the biggest handover since the end of the Cold War.

In exchange the Kremlin received two deep-cover agents, an FSB hitman known as the “bicycle killer” and a series of Russians convicted for hacking, fraud and espionage in the West. A total of 24 people were traded; 16 from Russia and eight in the other direction.

Days of speculation about a swap had culminated yesterday afternoon in blurry footage of people milling by a Russian government plane on the tarmac at Esenboga airport in Ankara. Then came the announcement from The Wall Street Journal: “WSJ Reporter Evan Gershkovich Is Free.”

Emma Tucker, the newspaper’s editor-in-chief, said it was a “joyous day”, and praised Gershkovich’s “strength, composure [and] humour” during a year and four months of captivity.

The WSJ said Gershkovich, 32, and other Americans had left the Russian aircraft in the Turkish capital at roughly 3.20pm (BST). He was then transported to an aircraft lounge on a Turkish bus. FSB video later showed masked men leading Gershkovich and others across the runway.

Being freed alongside the reporter were Vladimir Kara-Murza, 42, a Russian-British opposition politician, Paul Whelan, 54, a former US Marine convicted of spying after being detained in 2018, and Alsu Kurmasheva, 47, a Russian-American journalist sentenced in Moscow last month to six and half years under draconian censorship laws.

Also being let go were prominent



Evan Gershkovich, Alsu Kurmasheva and Paul Whelan in Turkey where they boarded a plane taking them to freedom

dissidents who had been jailed in Russia for standing up to the Kremlin, such as Ilya Yashin, 42, and Alexandra Skochilenko, 33, who was arrested shortly after the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and charged with replacing price

stickers in a supermarket with tiny anti-war messages.

Speaking from the White House, President Biden said: “Some of these women and men have been unjustly held for years. All have endured unim-

aginable suffering and uncertainty. Today, their agony is over.”

Flanked by relatives of the freed American prisoners, the president thanked US allies who “stood up” and

Continued on page 4

# Split decision brings first interest rate cut in 4 years

**Jack Barnett**  
Economics Correspondent

Mortgage holders and prospective homebuyers received much needed relief yesterday as the Bank of England cut interest rates for the first time in more than four years.

The monetary policy committee, which sets the base rate, voted by 5-4 for a reduction of 0.25 percentage points — from a 16-year high of 5.25 per cent to 5 per cent.

Borrowers on tracker mortgages, which are pegged to the base rate, will see an immediate fall in their next payment. Those on a standard variable rate may see a fall in their payments if their lender chooses to pass on the quarter-point saving, although they are not obliged to.

Santander and the Coventry Building Society confirmed that they would reduce their tracker mortgages and standard variable rate mortgages by 0.25 percentage points from the start of next month.

The Bank’s base rate cut was largely priced into fixed-rate deals already, with high street lenders cutting rates earlier in the week. Santander cut its prices by up to 0.2 percentage points on Tuesday, reducing a five-year deal for borrowers.

Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, welcomed the cut but said that “millions of families are still facing higher mortgage rates after [Liz Truss’s] mini-budget”. She added: “That is why this government is taking the difficult decisions now to fix the foundations of our economy after years of low growth.”

The reduction in interest rates represents another milestone in the easing of the UK’s cost of living crisis. Borrowing costs started to increase from a record low of 0.1 per cent in December 2021 to tame inflation and then rose at the fastest pace in a generation, intensifying financial strain for millions of families.

Headline consumer prices index inflation has stabilised at the Bank of

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News

# Today's highlights

- 8am** Damian Collins, former digital, culture, media and sport committee chairman
- 11am** Adam Boulton looks at whether Labour can build an NHS fit for the future
- 1.30pm** Danny Kruger, the Conservative MP and backer of Robert Jenrick
- 5pm** Neil Basu, the former Met Police counterterrorism chief
- 8.10pm** Ed Vaizey chats to the bestselling author Helen Tupper, right



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## The downfall of Huw Edwards

Huw Edwards has pleaded guilty to making indecent images of children. Will he go to prison and could this latest scandal topple the BBC's director-general?

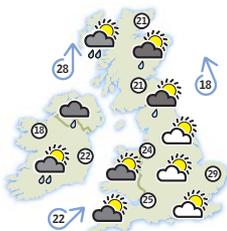
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### THE WEATHER



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# Prisoners with whole-life terms banned from marrying in jail

Geraldine Scott  
Senior Political Correspondent

Prisoners serving whole-life orders will be banned from marrying in prison after a new attempt by the serial killer Levi Bellfield to enter a civil partnership.

Laws come into force today that automatically block the most serious criminals from being able to get married behind bars. It is understood that a recent application from Bellfield for a civil partnership prompted Shabana Mahmood, the justice secretary, to bring forward the plans.

Bellfield, 56, received a whole-life sentence for the murder of Marsha McDonnell, 19, in 2003, Amélie Delagrangé, 22, in 2004, and the attempted murder of Kate Sheedy, 18, also in 2004.

He was a serving prisoner when he was tried for killing Milly Dowler, 13, who was abducted while walking home from school in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, in March 2002. He was found guilty and given another whole-life term in 2011.

Whole-life terms are reserved for some of the most dangerous criminals, who are expected to die in prison. The Ministry of Justice said the measure, which is in the Victims and Prisoners Act but had not been signed into law, would "deny the most heinous criminals from enjoying the important life events they callously took from their victims, while preventing families from the trauma of seeing them getting married or entering civil partnerships".

In 2022 Bellfield became engaged to

a prison pen pal to whom he had written for several years. The Sun reported that Bellfield got down on one knee to propose in front of prison staff at the category A prison HMP Frankland in Co Durham.

At the time his fiancée was described as a "besotted" blonde-haired woman in her forties. It was reported that the pair had been introduced through Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, who was friends with the woman and was on the same wing as Bellfield. The Conservative government launched an urgent review into whether it could stop the marriage and started work on a Victims and Prisoners Bill. However, last year

a proper relationship. It is not clear whether this renewed attempt to marry is with the same woman.

Mahmood said: "Victims should not be tormented by seeing those who commit the most depraved crimes enjoy the moments in life that were stolen from their loved ones. That is why I have acted as soon as possible to stop these marriages and give victims the support they deserve."

Mahmood will still have the right to grant permission for marriages in exceptional circumstances.

More than 60 criminals are serving a whole-life order including the child serial killer Lucy Letby; Wayne Couzens, Sarah Everard's killer; the necrophiliac David Fuller; and the terrorist Ali Harbi Ali, who murdered the MP Sir David Amess.

Other notorious criminals serving whole-life orders include Michael Adebolajo, one of Fusilier Lee Rigby's killers; Mark Bridger, who murdered five-year-old April Jones in Machynlleth, Powys; the neo-Nazi Thomas Mair, who killed the MP Jo Cox, and Khairi Saadallah, who murdered three men in a park in Reading.

Only four women have faced such a punishment: Letby; Myra Hindley, the girlfriend of the Moors murderer Ian Brady, who died in 2002; and the serial killers Rose West and Joanna Dennehy.

Before they died, Brady, Sutcliffe and Dr Harold Shipman — thought to be one of Britain's most prolific serial killers — were also among those handed the punishment.



Levi Bellfield, a multiple murderer, made a renewed attempt to marry while in jail

Bellfield challenged plans to block his marriage and won up to £30,000 of legal aid to oppose the decision. At the time prisoners were able to make a formal application for a marriage or civil partnership that could be refused only by a prison governor on security grounds.

Bellfield's lawyers were believed to have cited the European Convention on Human Rights and the Marriage Act 1983. He won his case. However, it was reported that the couple eventually called off the plans because they both realised they would not be able to have

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### First rate cut since 2020

England's 2 per cent target for the past two months, the lowest level since July 2021, fuelling speculation that the central bank would loosen monetary policy for the first time since March 2020.

Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, who voted for the base rate cut, said: "Inflationary pressures have eased enough that we've been able to cut interest rates." However, in a note of caution he warned households and businesses not to expect a rapid descent in borrowing costs.

"We need to make sure that inflation stays low and be careful not to cut interest rates too quickly or by too much," he said. "Ensuring low and stable inflation is the best thing we can do to support economic growth and the prosperity of the country."

Bailey's reticence was reflected in the views of the four monetary policy committee (MPC) members who voted to keep borrowing costs unchanged. This group, including Huw Pill, the Bank's chief economist, said that "underlying domestic inflationary pressures appeared more entrenched", adding that interest rates in the long term might need to remain restrictive to keep inflation at bay.

There is anxiety among the MPC that price pressures will prove tough to tame after the reduction in energy costs slips out of the inflation calculation. The Bank said that inflation was set to jump to 2.75 per cent in the second half of this year "as declines in energy prices last year fall out of the annual comparison, revealing more clearly the prevailing persistence of domestic inflationary pressures".

Investors now think that the Bank will lower rates by a further 0.5 percentage points this year.

Sterling and markets down, page 29  
Doves got a tough call right, page 31

### Mortgage rates

	Rate, %	Details	LTV, %	Fee, £
<b>Two-year fixed</b>				
Halifax	4.57	Fixed until 30/11/26	60%	£999
Halifax	4.71	Fixed until 30/11/26	75%	£999
First Direct	4.71	Fixed for 2 years	90%	£490
<b>Five-year fixed</b>				
Halifax	4.25	Fixed until 30/11/29	60%	£999
Barclays	4.40	Fixed until 30/09/29	75%	£999
Nationwide	4.78	Fixed for 5 years	90%	£999
<b>Base rate trackers</b>				
Barclays	5.15	BoE+0.15% for 2 years	60%	£999
HSBC	5.29	BoE+0.29% for 2 years	75%	£999
HSBC	5.89	BoE+0.89% for 2 years	90%	£999

## Battle of the birds over rates

### Analysis

A recurring criticism of the Bank of England is that it suffers from group think, leading it to act too slowly (Jack Barnett writes).

The decision yesterday to lower rates to 5 per cent was reached by the thinnest of margins, with a 5-4 vote split among the bank's monetary policy committee. That voting pattern should put group think accusations to bed.

A clear split has emerged among the

nine members on the rate-setting committee. The first camp, the doves — parlance for people who are more comfortable with lower rates — think the external shocks of the past few years have washed through the system and will not lead to high inflation embedding in the economy.

This group has five members — Andrew Bailey, Sarah Bredden, Clare Lombardelli, Dave Ramsden and Swati Dhingra.

The second, the hawks, are agitated by data that suggests these shocks have left their mark on households and businesses, triggering a behavioural shift within the economy that could lead to structurally higher

inflation. In this environment, rates must remain restrictive for some time. In this camp are Huw Pill, Jonathan Haskel, Catherine Mann and Megan Greene.

This division suggests that future interest rate votes will be tight. Any upside surprises on inflation, wages or growth could tip one or two members of the dovish camp into the hawkish camp.

A series of severe shocks — the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit, the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine — in quick succession has made economic predictions a fool's game.

The path to further interest rate cuts will be settled by who wins the battle of ideas in the committee.

# Gloves are off in boxing gender row

Female Olympian quits bout with rival who failed testosterone test, report **David Brown** and **Matt Lawton**

The Olympic Games organisers have been criticised for allowing an Algerian boxer who failed a gender test last year to batter her female opponent into submission in 46 seconds yesterday.

Imane Khelif, 25, was declared the winner after the Italian fighter Angela Carini, also 25, withdrew after a few punches, saying it was to “save my life”.

A human rights group said the rules on gender eligibility for the women’s boxing tournament at Paris had created a “dangerous and absurd spectacle”. The International Olympic Committee’s [IOC] profile of Khelif records that she was disqualified hours before her gold medal match at last year’s world championships “after her elevated levels of testosterone failed to meet the eligibility criteria”.

Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, said: “Athletes who have male genetic characteristics should not be admitted to women’s competitions. And not because you want to discriminate, but to protect the right of female athletes to be able to compete on equal terms. It was not an even contest.”

She posted a photo of herself consoling Carini, a police officer. “I know that one day you will get what you deserve through strength and sweat. In a competition that is finally equal,” Meloni wrote.

Carini fell to her knees and sobbed after the 66kg bout was abandoned then shrugged off Khelif’s attempts to shake her hand. She had a nose injury and blood on her trunks. “I am heartbroken because I am a fighter,” Carini said. “I have always stepped into the ring with honour ... And this time I couldn’t do it because I couldn’t fight any more. In that moment, I had to safeguard my life. I train with my brother. I’ve always fought against men, but I felt too much pain today. It hurt so much. I am heartbroken. I have never felt a punch like this.



Imane Khelif of Algeria, in red, left Angela Carini of Italy, who trains with her brother and has always fought against male opponents, sobbing in the ring. The Italian threw in the towel, saying that she had never before felt a punch like it

After the second blow, I felt extreme pain... I didn’t lose, I just surrendered with maturity.”

Khelif said: “I hope to achieve a second victory to secure a medal, and then think about the gold medal. I tell the Algerian people that I am working to provide the best I can in order to make them happy.”

JK Rowling, the author and campaigner, addressed a message to Kirsty Burrows, head of the International Olympic Committee’s safer sport unit: “A young female boxer has just had everything she’s worked and trained for snatched away because you allowed a male to get in the ring with her. You’re a disgrace,

your ‘safeguarding’ is a joke and #Paris24 will be for ever tarnished by the brutal injustice done to Carini.”

Khelif was one of two boxers cleared to compete in Paris despite having been disqualified from last year’s World Championships, which is run by the International Boxing Association. The other is Lin Yu Ting, 28, of Taiwan.

Umar Kremlev, president of the association, said DNA tests showed the boxers had “XY chromosomes and were thus excluded”. It issued a statement on Wednesday in which it claimed that neither boxer had a “testosterone examination” last year but they were “subject to a separate and recognised test” for their disqualification. Khelif

dropped an appeal. The Algerian Olympic Committee claimed the disqualification was a conspiracy to stop them winning gold, citing “medical reasons” for high testosterone levels.

The International Olympic Committee no longer recognises the IBA because of its links with Russia, so is running the boxing in Paris itself. It operates different eligibility criteria for women. A spokesman said Khelif and Lin were “women according to their passports”.

Some experts suggest the two have “differences of sexual development”, a group of rare conditions that can lead to increased testosterone and muscle mass as well as a skeletal advantage. **Olympic reports, pages 57-64**



## UK’s best start for 112 years (as US meddles with medals)

**David Brown** Paris

British athletes are celebrating their best start to the Olympics in 112 years after winning a silver and two bronze medals on the rowing lake yesterday.

The nation has enjoyed the most successful first six days since the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, when there was a different format.

While the record books are awaiting official confirmation, Team GB had amassed six golds, seven silvers and seven bronzes by late afternoon.

The total is two more than in Tokyo, 2021, at the same stage. The start of the athletics competition today could bring a significant increase in the medals tally.

UK Sport, the government agency, said before the start of the Games that

a record haul of up to 70 medals was “within our grasp”. Team GB has finished the last three Games in the top four of the medals table.

By early evening yesterday, Britain was sixth in the official table, one place behind the United States, which also had six golds but more of the lesser medals. Both nations were behind China with 11 golds, while France, Japan and Australia have eight.

Tables assessed in the US, however, show its team out front. America ranks countries in order of the total number of medals of any colour. So the US was top with 31 and France second with 27, followed by China with 22 and Britain with 20.

Analysts say the US should take top spot by the end of the Games but Britain is chasing more medals today.

## Mothers glide into the record books

**David Brown**

Mathilda Hodgkins Byrne and Helen Glover credited the influence of their children as they became the first British mothers to win rowing medals at an Olympics.

The pair, whose families were cheering from the stands at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium, are part of a record number of mothers in Team GB. Hodgkins Byrne made her Olympic debut in Tokyo in 2021 as part of the women’s quadruple sculls, but did not secure a podium place.

After winning a bronze medal in the double sculls yesterday she rushed to see her two-year-old son, Freddie.

“He was like, ‘Mummy’, and then tried to steal my medal,” said Hodgkins Byrne, 29, from Hereford. “He can understand everyone around clapping, so he’s clapping as well. But, he has no idea Mummy’s just won a bronze medal, which he’ll be told about in years to come. And he’ll be told he was part of the journey.”

For the first time at an Olympics the athletes’ village has a crèche. There are at least ten mothers in the 327-strong Team GB squad. A breastfeeding room



Mathilda Hodgkins Byrne and Becky Wilde won bronze in the double sculls

and play area have been added to the team’s performance lodge and a WhatsApp group has been created for the “supermums”.

Hodgkins Byrne said she was “quite slow” in returning to rowing after giving birth and did not get back in a boat for eight months.

Last year she told MPs on the Commons women’s and equalities committee that despite her efforts she felt “pushed to the side” and “alienated” after having a baby and trying to return

to elite rowing. However, she received “amazing support” to regain her place in the double sculls.

Hodgkins Byrne said: “For rowing and sport, having a child shouldn’t be the end of your career. I think all of us decided to prove that.”

Glover, 38, was already one of the most successful female Olympic rowers having won golds at the London and Rio Games. She retired to have a family and has a son, Logan, five, and twins, Kit and Bo, four, with her husband, Steve Backshall, 51, the naturalist, explorer and television presenter.

Glover came out of retirement to compete in Tokyo and finished fourth.

After winning silver in the women’s four yesterday, she said: “Right now I just want to spend time with my family and kind of just enjoy being Mum.”

Glover suggested she may retire despite the hopes of her crewmates Esme Booth, 25, from Stratford-upon-Avon, Rebecca Shorten, 30, from Belfast, and Sam Redgrave, 29, from Gateshead, that she would continue. “Half the team think I’ll carry on. I don’t plan to carry on,” she said. “I guess it has been ‘focus on crossing the finishing line and then we will see.’”

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	United States	6	13	12	31
2	France	8	10	8	26
3	China	11	7	3	21
4	Great Britain	6	7	7	20

## News Prisoner exchange

# Mother's return gives daughter

Continued from page 1

made "bold and brave decisions" to bring the prisoners home.

Biden also paid tribute to the families who "never gave up hope." "I can't imagine their joy right now," he said.

The president led the families and assembled reporters in singing Happy Birthday for Kurmasheva's daughter, Miriam, who turned 13 yesterday.

Gershkovich, Whelan and Kurmasheva were due to land late last night at Andrews air force base in Maryland where they were to be greeted in person by Biden and Kamala Harris.

Four Germans held in Russia and one in Belarus, Moscow's ally, were set free as part of the deal. The Kremlin's main target was Vadim Krasikov, an FSB hitman described by President Putin as a "patriot". Krasikov was convicted of assassinating a Chechen rebel in Berlin in 2019.

Biden praised Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, for the "tough call" of agreeing to release Krasikov, who shot his victim from a bicycle in Tiergarten park but was spotted by a passer-by. Scholz is said to have told Biden: "For you, I will do this."

Russia also received two men convicted of cybercrimes in the US, an alleged FSB officer who shipped US military hardware to Russian contacts, and four spies caught in Poland, Norway and Slovenia.

The WSJ reported that about an hour before Biden notified the world he was dropping out of the presidential race on July 21, he had called the prime minister of Slovenia, whose country was to contribute two convicted Russian agents to the swap, to secure the pardon necessary for the deal to proceed.

William Burns, the director of the CIA, travelled to Turkey last week to meet his counterpart there and finalise the plan.

Gershkovich was arrested in March last year in Yekaterinburg, a city in Russia's Urals. The Kremlin said he had been caught "red handed" trying to obtain defence secrets for the CIA from a weapons plant, but provided no evidence to back up its claim.

He was sentenced to 16 years in a penal colony after a three-day trial last month that Washington described as a sham. Gershkovich and the WSJ denied the allegations. He was the first western journalist to be accused of spying by Moscow since 1986.

The Biden administration has said that Moscow deliberately seizes westerners to use as "bargaining chips" in prisoner exchanges.

Robert Thomson, the CEO of News Corp, said in response to the exchange: "Journalists are potentially exposed to risk each and every day, and so we must continue to champion their profoundly important work and the role of a free press and free speech. We must also continue to highlight the plight of those individuals who remain unjustly imprisoned in Russia and elsewhere."

The Wall Street Journal, like The Times, is part of the News Corp media group.

Like all of the prisoners released by Russia, Gershkovich was required to write an appeal for a presidential pardon before he was allowed to get on a plane. The form included a large space for additional comments that is usually left blank. Gershkovich, never one to miss an opportunity for a scoop, had other ideas, though, according to The Wall Street Journal.

After his release, he wrote, would Putin be willing to sit down for an interview? It is unclear whether the request was forwarded to the Kremlin.

Biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War, leading article, page 25

## How the delicate deal was finally done

**T**he Cold War-style prisoner exchange that brought freedom for Evan Gershkovich, The Wall Street Journal reporter, and others locked up by President Putin's regime, followed months of tense negotiations involving officials from Russia, the United States, Germany and Belarus (Marc Bennetts writes).

At times, it seemed the complex talks would collapse, especially after the death in February of Alexei Navalny, the imprisoned Russian opposition leader whose release is believed to have been initially sought by US and German officials as part of any deal with Moscow.

The Kremlin's main prize in the dramatic swap that unfolded on an airport runway in Ankara on Thursday was Vadim Krasikov, a colonel with Russia's FSB security service.

Krasikov had been serving a life sentence in Germany for the assassination of Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, a former Chechen rebel commander who had been accused of terrorism by Russia. Khangoshvili, who denied the allegations, was shot dead by Krasikov in a park in Berlin in 2019.

A German court ruled that Krasikov had been ordered to kill Khangoshvili by the Russian government. Under Russian law, the president has the authority to order the assassination of anyone that Moscow deems to be a terrorist, even abroad. Putin once vowed that Russia would "waste"

terrorists wherever it finds them. Moscow, however, denied that Russia was involved in the shooting in Berlin and insisted that Krasikov was in fact an ordinary Russian tourist named Vadim Sokolov whose arrest was politically motivated. Yet behind the scenes, Russian officials were doing everything they could to bring the FSB hitman home.

Although other Russian agents were released, Ivan Pavlov, a prominent Russian human rights lawyer, said Krasikov was Moscow's priority. "Everyone listens to what Putin says. If Putin named someone [for an exchange], then there will be some kind of circus around this. Everything that is being done, is being done for the sake of Krasikov," he said on Monday, as rumours swirled about the swap.

Krasikov also appears to have been confident that Putin would come to his rescue, reportedly once telling a US prison guard that Russia would not leave him "to rot".



In 2021, shortly before Krasikov was sentenced, Putin instructed his security officials to try to arrange a prisoner swap to free him, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported, citing a former European official with connections to senior figures in Russia.

In 2022, according to CNN, Russia tried unsuccessfully to have Krasikov included in a deal that saw Brittney Griner, a US basketball star who had been sentenced to nine years in Russia on drugs charges, exchanged for Viktor Bout, a convicted international arms dealer with suspected links to GRU, the Kremlin's military intelligence service.

Talk of a potential swap involving Gershkovich began almost as soon as he was arrested on espionage charges by Russia in March 2023. Washington has accused Moscow of seizing innocent Americans to use as "bargaining chips" to secure the

release of Russians in prisons in the West.

In late 2023, Rupert Murdoch, chairman emeritus of News Corp, which owns The Wall Street Journal and The Times, reached out to Roman Abramovich for help in freeing Gershkovich. Abramovich, the Russian businessman and former owner of Chelsea Football Club, is believed to have assisted to mediate the deal in an independent capacity. Although details of his involvement are not known, sources suggest he was approached by several parties to help advise on how to structure a possible agreement.

A spokesperson for Abramovich said: "Mr Abramovich was not involved in this exchange and any speculations regarding his involvement are false."

In February, during an interview in Moscow with Tucker Carlson, the former Fox News presenter, Putin suggested that Moscow would be prepared to exchange Gershkovich

for a "patriot" who was serving time in an unnamed western country.

"This person, due to patriotic sentiments, eliminated a bandit," Putin said. "Whether he did that of his own volition or not, that is a different question."

No one was in any doubt that the Russian leader was referring to Krasikov. As a former KGB officer and FSB chief, Putin is well-aware that securing the release of Kremlin agents convicted in the West is essential to maintaining the loyalty of his regime's security services.

Yet while the White House was keen to do a deal to free American hostages, President Biden still needed to convince Germany to go along. Would Berlin agree to release a convicted Kremlin hitman who had served less than three years of a life sentence in exchange for US citizens?

Around the same time as Putin made his comments, Biden and Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, are believed to have

# the greatest birthday gift of all

US GOVERNMENT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; NATALIJA KOLESNIKOVA/GETTY IMAGES; GAVRIIL GRIGOROV/ALAMY



The Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, left, with the former US Marine Paul Whelan, second right, and the US-Russian journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, right, after the prisoner swap. Gershkovich, who had been serving a 16-year sentence for espionage, was wearing the

same shirt he had worn in court, below left, as he was taken to the plane by FSB agents in Ankara, above. Going the other way was Vadim Krasikov, a Russian hitman who was serving life in a German prison. President Putin embraced those who disembarked from a jet after the exchange



discussed a possible exchange deal for Krasikov that would involve Gershkovich and Navalny, as well as Paul Whelan, a former US marine who was serving 16 years in Russia on disputed spying charges.

Navalny was a popular figure in Germany, and Scholz, who had met the Russian dissident in 2020 when he was recovering in Berlin from a nerve agent attack, is said to have told an aide afterwards that he was a "man of immense courage".

His inclusion in any deal would have likely reduced the political fallout from a decision to release Krasikov. Although the Kremlin received news of the talks between Biden and Scholz through an intermediary, no formal offer was ever made, according to the Journal.

But Putin could not bear the thought of seeing Navalny walk free from prison, his allies said. Maria Pevchikh, the head of Navalny's FBK anti-corruption organisation, said that discussions to swap

Navalny and two unnamed US citizens for Krasikov were finalised on February 15.

Navalny was found dead the next morning at the Polar Wolf prison in the Arctic, where he was serving 30 years on politically motivated charges. Pevchikh said that Putin had ordered Navalny to be murdered to prevent his inclusion in any deal with the West.

"It's the behaviour of a mad mafioso," she said.

Putin said later that he had agreed to exchange Navalny on the condition that he never returned to Russia, but that the opposition leader had died of natural causes before the swap could take place. "Such is life," Putin said. Western officials denied that a deal had been agreed, but said discussions were under way.

With Navalny out of the picture, Germany appears to have cooled on the idea of releasing Krasikov for Gershkovich and Whelan. "This is a kind of amnesty and sends the

political signal that Russia can commit further murders on our territory," Ulrich Lechte, whose Free Democratic Party is part of Scholz's government, told the BBC in March.

Last month, Gershkovich was sentenced to 16 years in prison by a Russian court. His trial, which was described by Washington as a sham, was rushed through in just three court sittings, an indication that Moscow was keen to secure a deal. Moscow was keen to finalise a deal before the US presidential elections in November.

But if Putin wanted to secure Krasikov's release, he would clearly need a German prisoner or two to offer up in exchange. Luckily for the Kremlin, Alexander Lukashenko, the Belarusian dictator, was ready to oblige.

In June, a court in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, a Russian ally, sentenced Rico Krieger, a German national, to death on terrorism charges. A month later, a fearful Krieger was paraded on Belarusian television, pleading with Scholz and the German government to save his life "before it's too late".

If the move was designed to tug German heartstrings, it worked. "It is unbearable how the Belarusian regime paraded a German national on television," Annalena Baerbock, the German foreign minister, said.

Although Belarus claims that Krieger was arrested in Minsk in October, nothing had been made public about his case until last month, after sentencing. Lukashenko announced this week that Krieger had been pardoned, and his death sentence commuted to life in prison.

Belpol, an organisation of exiled former Belarusian police officers, said that it suspected that Krieger had been set up by the Lukashenko regime. "We think a trap was set for him," Uladzimir Zhyhar, its spokesman, told Der Spiegel.

Krieger was not the only German national that Putin was able to use as a pawn in his bid to win Krasikov's freedom. Last year, Kevin Lick, a 19-year-old dual German-Russian citizen, was arrested by the FSB and accused of spying on a military base that could be seen from his bedroom window in Maykop, a town in Russia's north Caucasus region. Lick's "spying equipment", the FSB said, consisted of binoculars, a camera and a telescope. Just 17 when he was arrested, he was reportedly beaten in custody before being sentenced to four years in prison on treason charges. Both Krieger and Lick were freed yesterday.

Some politicians remained sceptical about the wisdom of the deal even as it became clear that it was under way. "Vadim Krasikov is a murderer and is exactly where he belongs: in prison. Germany should not give up on its judicial principles in order to exchange prisoners," said Jurgen Hardt, an MP for the opposition Christian Democratic Union party.

Such discussions are now likely to be put off for another day, however. Gershkovich and over a dozen prisoners of Putin's brutal regime are free, at last. "Some of these women and men have been unjustly held for years. All have endured unimaginable suffering and uncertainty. Today, their agony is over," Biden said.

## Who has been released?

### Returning to the West

#### Released by Russia

**Lilia Chanysheva**  
Chanysheva, 42, right, an associate of the late opposition figure Alexei Navalny, was jailed on extremist charges for more than nine years in 2023.

#### Vladimir Kara-Murza

The 42-year-old Russian-British activist, a Pulitzer prize-winning Washington Post columnist, was sentenced to 25 years in prison in 2023 after criticising the invasion of Ukraine.

**Oleg Orlov** Orlov, 71, right, is a veteran activist charged in 2022 for "discrediting the Russian army" during the war in Ukraine. He was sentenced to two years and six months in prison in February.

**Ilya Yashin** Yashin, 41, led the People's Freedom Party from 2012-16 and is a long-time ally of Navalny. In 2022 he was sentenced to eight years in prison after statements about war crimes allegedly committed in Ukraine.

**Alsu Kurmasheva** The Russian-American journalist, 47, for the US-funded Radio Liberty reportedly flew into Russia in 2023 to care for her elderly mother. She was accused of spying and sentenced to five years in prison.

**Kevin Lik** The 19-year-old German citizen, right, was jailed for four years in 2023 for treason, accused of spying on a military base.

**Paul Whelan** The Canadian-born former US Marine, 54, with British and Irish citizenship was a security director for BorgWarner, a car parts maker. He has been in jail since 2018 and faced another decade there for spying.

**Evan Gershkovich** The reporter for The Wall Street Journal, 32, was arrested in 2023 and

accused of espionage. After more than a year in detention, he was sentenced to 16 years in prison last month.

**Dieter Voronin** Voronin, 45, a political scientist, is a citizen of Russia and Germany. He was accused of selling defence secrets to foreign intelligence agencies and sentenced to 13 years in a penal colony.

**Patrick Schoebel** The German, 38, was arrested for possessing cannabis gummies and accused of smuggling drugs.

**Herman Moyzhes** This year the dual Russian-German citizen, 39, was accused of treason and charged with helping Russian citizens with obtaining EU residency permits.

**Vadim Ostanin** The head of a group overseen by Navalny's team. Ostanin, 46, was jailed for nine years for participating in an "extremist community".

**Andrey Pivovarov** The Russian opposition activist was sentenced to four years in prison for leading a banned pro-democracy group.

**Kseniya Fadeyeva** Another associate of Navalny, Fadeyeva, 32, was jailed for nine years in 2023.

**Sasha Skochilenko** The 33-year-old artist and activist was sentenced to seven years in a penal colony in 2023 for replacing supermarket pricing labels with anti-war messages.

#### Released by Belarus

**Rico Krieger** German-born Krieger, 30, is believed to be the first western citizen ever to be sentenced to death in Belarus, before being pardoned by President Lukashenko on Tuesday. The former Red Cross paramedic had been accused of placing explosives on Belarusian train tracks, under the orders of Ukraine.

### Returning to the East

**Released by Germany**  
**Vadim Krasikov** In 2019, Krasikov, 58, murdered an exiled Chechen commander in Berlin. He is now serving a life sentence in Germany. He was previously a colonel in the FSB.

#### Released by the US

**Roman Seleznev** Seleznev, 40, was indicted in the US in 2011 for causing more than £100 million in damages to businesses after hacking into servers and stealing credit card information. He ran the vast operation from his homes in Indonesia and Russia and was arrested in 2014 while on a holiday in the Maldives. He was sentenced to 27 years in prison.

**Vladislav Klyushin** The businessman with ties to the Kremlin was jailed for nine years in 2023 over a £78 million insider-trading scheme that helped hackers view yet-to-be-published earnings reports for companies.

**Vadim Konoshchenok** Konoshchenok, 48, was accused of violating US sanctions by trying to smuggle ammunition to Russia.

#### Released by Slovenia

**Artem and Anna Dultsev** The Russian couple were jailed for 19 months each this week after admitting spy charges. They reportedly used Slovenia as their base to travel to other Nato and EU member states, relaying orders from Moscow and taking cash to other sleeper agents.

#### Released by Norway

**Mikhail Mikushin** In 2022, he was charged with gathering illegal intelligence after posing as a Brazilian academic. He denied he was a Russian spy, before admitting in court to being a colonel in the GRU, the military intelligence service. Mikushin, 45, was facing up to three years in jail.

#### Released by Poland

**Pavel Rubtsov**, The Spanish-Russian citizen, 39, was jailed after Poland's secret service claimed he used his role as a journalist to spy for Russia.



Saddle sisters Amateur lady riders competed in the Magnolia Cup, a charity race run at the Goodwood festival in West Sussex yesterday. Lizzie Jelfs won on Ancient Times. It was her first race Racing, page 55

# GPs vote 98.3% in favour of first industrial action since the 1960s

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

Patients will be “hit hard” by GPs’ industrial action, health leaders have said, despite the doctors’ union insisting that they “won’t be harmed” by the work-to-rule style measures.

General practice members of the British Medical Association (BMA) voted overwhelmingly for collective industrial action with 98.3 per cent in favour, out of about 8,500 who voted.

The action began yesterday. It has been called in protest over the funding for general practice surgeries, which increased by 1.9 per cent in the GPs’ contract for 2024-25. It has been claimed this increase is not enough to cover basic costs. The BMA described the intended impact of the industrial action as a “slow burn” rather than a “big bang”. It could go on indefinitely as the proposed measures do not leave GPs in breach of their contracts.

Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, chair of the BMA’s GP committee for England, said: “It’s likely that impact may not be felt for some time. We hope this will give the new government time to consider our proposed solutions, including fixing our contract once and for all.” She said the action was an “act of desperation” from family doctors.

The action will involve GPs at surgeries in England choosing from a range of ten measures, such as capping the number of patients seen each day at 25. According to recent research they see an average of 37 patients each day.

Other actions may include refusing to share patient data unless it is in the best interests of the patient, and referring patients directly to specialist care rather than following longer processes.

The doctors’ union said on Monday that policymakers and administrators were the target of the strikes. Bramall-

## Beating heart of NHS is in need of urgent care

Dr Rob Barnett  
Comment

Since I became a GP in 1987, the profession has completely changed. I see this, my colleagues see it — and our patients are patently aware of it. They rightly wonder why they can’t see a GP? Why the family doctor who used to care for their entire family no longer exists?

It is because for decades, general practice has been neglected.

Where I am in Liverpool, I’m seeing more and more patients with mental health issues coming to us — whether it’s stress, anxiety, low

mood, or depression. It is extremely disheartening to see so many people who need our help being affected by the failures within our system.

We want to provide high-quality, necessary care to as many patients as possible — but we are seeing a perfect storm of those seeking help in general practice as a first port of call, those who are affected by long waiting times for hospital appointments, and those whose conditions are deteriorating during those long waits. This is happening because in the last five years alone, we’ve lost £660 million in GP funding. While being asked to see more than 6 million additional patients, as doctors leave the profession in droves.

GPs are growing less willing to stay put in such dire conditions. I know a number of experienced colleagues who reached their breaking point and took their talent to other countries like Canada and New Zealand. In addition there are many GPs who are now completing their training and want to work as

GPs in England, but cannot, as there are no jobs available. Why have successive governments allowed the NHS to fall into such chaos that we are actively pushing doctors away? By letting the root of the issue rot, the situation only grows worse.

If things carry on as they are, the beating heart of the NHS will fail. We desperately want to avoid this. But to do so, we need to see change happening from the top down. Government needs to work with GPs from across the country and listen to what is needed so we can provide care for our patients.

That’s why we need urgent intervention from the new government. We need a contract that keeps GPs in the NHS, funds our surgeries properly, and allows us to do our jobs the way we know best. Only by making real, long-lasting change will we be able to protect our patients and protect the NHS. *Rob Barnett is a GP and spokesman for Rebuild General Practice, a campaign group which represents staff across the UK*

Stainer said that patients “won’t come to harm” from the action.

However, the King’s Fund, a health think tank, has warned that the collective action by GPs “will hit patients hard”. Alex Baylis, its co-director of policy, said: “The impact will reverberate right across the whole health and care system... even a small reduction in the availability of GP appointments will see thousands of patients turn to other services such as Ill, pharmacies and A&E departments, many of which will struggle to meet that extra demand.”

NHS England has urged patients to still seek care as normal and to attend

appointments as usual. Practices will still be open at the normal times.

The BMA has said that general practice receives only 6 per cent of guaranteed funding from the NHS’s entire budget and that to protect primary care, this should increase by 1 per cent each year until it reaches 15 per cent.

Wes Streeting, the health secretary, has said he wants to build a “new relationship” with GPs in a letter to them posted on Twitter/X. He described general practice as sitting at the “heart” of the NHS, but said it “has been neglected for too long”. He wrote: “I am determined to act immediately in the inter-

ests of patients to address an immediate challenge you have raised.

Salaried GPs were awarded a 6 per cent pay rise on Monday, which is a separate funding pot from the 1.9 per cent increase set out in the GPs’ contract. Surgeries function a bit like small businesses and the funding covers much of their day-to-day running costs.

Victoria Atkins, the shadow health secretary, said: “Instead of caving in to union demands, the government must resolve this dispute or it is patients and the public who will pay the price.” *GPs are wrong to implement industrial action, leading article, page 25*

## Q&A

**What is the proposed action?**  
GP surgeries can choose from ten measures as part of the collective industrial action. These include capping the number of patients doctors see each day at 25 — the average is 37 — and refusing to share data unless it is in a patient’s best interests. Surgeries are still required to open between 8am and 6.30pm on weekdays.

**How will the action affect me?**  
If you already have an appointment you should still attend unless told otherwise.

The impact on patients will vary in each area and be dependent on which actions a surgery takes. Some patients may be referred directly to a hospital or some might find fewer appointments are available. The 111 and 999 services will still be operating.

**When will industrial action start?**  
It began yesterday and could last for months.

**When was the last industrial action by GPs?**  
In 1964, when they collectively handed in undated resignations to the Wilson government. This led to reform including the family doctor charter of 1965.

Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer of the BMA’s GPs’ committee, said she hoped to talk to the government about a family doctor charter for next year.

She added: “In a free at the point of use service, you have got to have a really effective, emboldened, resourced gatekeeper. And your gatekeeper is the GP. The GP model is why the NHS has lasted as long as it has done and when you try and break the GP model, you break the gatekeeper, and when you break the gatekeeper, you break the NHS.”

# Fashionista faces jail for £1.3m fraud

She borrowed cash from a boutique owner then forged evidence in a bid to win their court battle, **Laurence Sleator** writes

An international fashionista is facing jail after forging documents in an attempt to avoid repaying £1.3 million she borrowed from a friend to get through a costly divorce.

Ekaterina Barrett, 67, was accused by Bridget Hutchcroft, who runs a boutique fashion agency in Knightsbridge, of “fraudulent misrepresentation” by posing as a millionaire to swindle her out of her life savings.

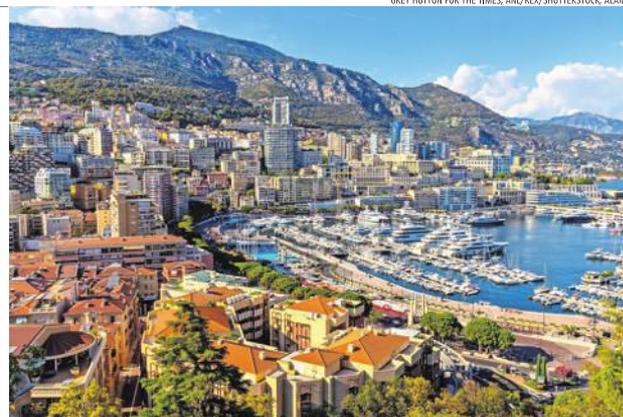
In 2022, Hutchcroft, 63, whose celebrity clients have included Princess Diana and Catherine Zeta-Jones, secured a judgment ordering her former friend to repay the money. This was determined by the judge to now total £1.66 million, including interest. Barrett, who is based in Monaco, failed to pay lawyers for Hutchcroft and her company sought to return to court to establish her wealth.

Barrett claimed she was not a rich woman and her lifestyle was “funded entirely by her family”. However, in May, ahead of the hearing, Barrett sent an email which said she understood the case “had already settled” for an agreed sum of £800,000. In the email she attached an agreement purportedly signed by Hutchcroft.

In a two-day hearing at the High Court this week, James McWilliams, acting for Hutchcroft, said the document was an “obvious forgery”, adding it was “fanciful” his client would settle for £800,000 when a judge had already ordered Barrett to pay more.

He urged the judge to find Barrett in contempt of court for producing a fake document and giving “false evidence” in relation to her links to a property in Monaco.

A lawyer for Barrett said Hutchcroft had tried to “instigate” a meeting with his client at a Harvey Nichols beauty salon to “settle the proceedings”. Photos of the two women in the salon were also shown. Mrs Justice Heather Williams found in favour of Hutchcroft. “[She] said she was ... having her eyebrows done when she was accused by Barrett and that there was no discussion about a settlement,” said the judge.



Ekaterina Barrett borrowed £1.3 million from Bridget Hutchcroft, right, who took a shine to Barrett's greyhounds and sold her designer items in her boutique. Barrett, who is based in Monaco, claimed that Hutchcroft had agreed to receive just £800,000 back — but has now been ordered to repay the full sum with interest



“There’s no separate evidence to say that they are discussing a settlement.”

The judge found Barrett in contempt of court for sending the email containing the fake settlement agreement and for lying over her stake in the property in Monaco.

“I am sure that the settlement agree-

ment including the signature was a forgery,” she said. “I have no doubt at all that she acted as alleged and ... am satisfied that she acted dishonestly in telling the court that the claim [was] settled.”

In an earlier interview, Hutchcroft likened Barrett to Anna Sorokin, the notorious conwoman who inspired the

Netflix drama *Inventing Anna* after posing as a super-rich German heiress to siphon cash from wealthy New Yorkers.

The two women met when Barrett, a fashion designer, began visiting Hutchcroft's shop near Harrods seven years ago while she was living in a £4.2 million

Mayfair flat and driving around the city in a Bentley. They became close after Hutchcroft bought some of her “high-end” designer items to sell in her shop, and took a shine to her two greyhounds.

The case was adjourned to await sentencing of Barrett later this month. She could be jailed for up to two years.

## Nephew stole £600k from aunt, 93

A man who stole more than £600,000 from his elderly aunt has been sent to prison.

David Eggleton, 71, of Calne, Wiltshire, moved large sums from the bank account of Lilian Eggleton, 93, to pay off his mortgage, go on holidays, invest in Bitcoin and cover work on his garden.

Swindon crown court was told that Eggleton committed the fraud from 2018 to 2020. It was only discovered when Mrs Eggleton's care home fees went unpaid after debits bounced.

Eggleton claimed that the money had been given to him as a gift, producing a forged agreement with his aunt. He was convicted of fraud and perverting the course of justice.

Recorder Marcus Pilgerstorfer KC, told him that his aunt gave him lasting power of attorney in 2017 when she moved into a care home.

A direct debit for £4,500 a month was set up from her bank to Kenbrook care home in Wembley, northwest London, which is run by Methodist Homes. The

judge said: “Your aunt told the court in a video interview recorded before her death that she thought she could trust you.”

The payment first bounced in August 2018. Payment issues continued until 2020 when the aunt gave permission for her bank account to be examined.

The judge said this revealed that her nephew had been transferring “large sums” into his own bank account.

Eggleton was told in June 2020 that his aunt did not want him to have any further involvement with her financial affairs but he continued to withdraw cash from her account for months.

Wiltshire Police launched an investigation in September that year. The judge told Eggleton: “The total sum taken is quite eye watering.”

Between August 2017 and November 2020, he spent vast sums on cars, garden work, holidays with his former wife and a Bitcoin mining device.

He admitted spending the money “in an irrational way” and the court heard

that in January 2021, he wrote an email to the care home asking that it be read to his aunt. He promised to repay her while asking her to withdraw her complaint to police, writing “As a Christian, I would never do anything detrimental to her or others for personal gain.”

The care home did not read the email to his aunt but passed it to detectives. Lilian Eggleton died a month later. In a video played to the court she expressed sadness at her nephew's behaviour.

Delia Russell, a family member, said in a victim statement that her great aunt died “distressed” at her nephew's treatment of her.

Felicia Davy, for the defence, said Eggleton had no previous convictions and had worked hard as an engineer. “This is a tragedy for him,” she added.

Eggleton was jailed for five years and six months for fraud and eight months for perverting the course of justice. The terms are to run concurrently. A hearing to recover the stolen money is to be held on January 15 next year.

## After the storms, we're set for more summer sun

Kieran Gair, Charlotte Ait

Thunderstorms offered a brief reprieve yesterday from humid and muggy conditions but temperatures are poised to reach 29C in parts of Britain today.

The Met Office said the storms were expected to feature “frequent lightning, torrential downpours and large hail”. Yellow warnings covering the majority of England and Wales were in place until midnight. Scattered showers and thunderstorms were forecast across parts of central, southern and eastern England and south Wales.

The Environment Agency issued ten flood alerts, with most in the Midlands, including on the River Erewash, River Trent and their tributaries.

The turbulent weather is likely to continue today, the Met Office said, with cloud and rain moving towards the north west, where temperatures will

drop, with heavy showers in the east. Simon Partridge, of the Met Office, said: “The problem is that the winds are very light as well, so where you see those heavy thundery showers, there's not really much wind to blow them through. Where those thunderstorms occur, that local area will probably get pretty much all of the rain that that thunder cloud is holding — so there could be very locally heavy downpours which bring along the risk of localised flooding and surface water problems for transport networks.”

After highs of 27C to 29C forecast for central, southern and northwest England today, temperatures are expected to cool over the weekend dropping to the early to mid-20s.

The hottest day of the year so far was recorded on Tuesday at Kew Gardens and Heathrow reaching 32C.

**Five-day forecast, page 51**

## News Southport attack

# Revealed: the far-right network

Dominic Kennedy

The riots sweeping Britain were ignited by freelance extremists using social media to stir up anger. The organisers are part of an underground movement built up since lockdown whose targets include migrant hotels, drag queen story hours and 15-minute cities designed to reduce the use of cars.

The choice of a mosque as the focus for the Southport riot was made after demonstrators from Liverpool were unable to find asylum seekers' accommodation, their preferred target.

A prominent member of Patriotic Alternative, a group that Michael Gove accused in the Commons in March of promoting neo-Nazi ideology, was among those spotted in Southport. The organisation, which has long feared proscription, is now likely to come under further scrutiny.

Blame for the riots lies with what experts call the "network" or "post-organisational" far-right. Unlike movements such as the National Front, British National Party and English Defence League (EDL), these are individuals who respond provocatively on social media to events in the news. Their messages, which may stop short of breaking speech laws, appeal to disgruntled followers who take the law in-



to their own hands. Tommy Robinson, the former leader of the EDL whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, is a key figure.

During the Southport riots on Tuesday he posted images of a demonstrator throwing a missile at a police van. "The British are angry, betrayed by their government, our children's safety has been taken from us," Robinson told his 804,000 followers. "The media lie to us & people are sick to f\*\*\*ing death of 2 tier policing. Basically if you riot they listen to you, that's the message [they] sent out."

The build-up to the riot began with an online poster advertising a "Keep Our Kids Safe" rally in Southport for 8pm on Wednesday, which it billed as: "Peaceful protest. Everybody welcome. Let's stand up for our children." The event was publicised by Joe Marsh, also known as Joe Butler, an organiser for Patriotic Alternative, who used a more provocative image on his Telegram account, showing a bloody handprint and inviting followers to a "protest demo" titled "Enough is Enough".

A chatroom called "fedsportaliverpool", which brings together people who like to keep abreast of the police's movements, discussed how to proceed. "What's the point in going to Liverpool town boys come on it happened in Southport there's gotta be a hotel or something where they're all staying," one member said. They agreed to meet at the town hall, "find out later where they're all staying then go there".

Rikki Doolan, a hardline pastor who has debated with Laura Towler, the

## Behind the story

**T**here is no known motive and, until yesterday, there was no name. In that news vacuum, rioting spread in the belief that the authorities were withholding the truth behind the Southport stabbings (Tom Witherow writes).

Within hours of the tragedy on Monday, Merseyside police had said it was not terror-related, but rumours had spread online that the attacker was a Muslim who arrived in the UK on a small boat. A statement from police saying the suspect was born in Cardiff, widely reported in the mainstream media, did not quash the lies. So why are the police not trusted by right-wing protesters?

Firstly, far-right leaders whip up their followers with claims that the UK has "two-tier" policing, in which the white working-class is treated worse than those of immigrant stock.

They point to officers who were happy to "take the knee" at Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 but now robustly hold the line at immigration rallies.

Similarly, hard-right commentators have claimed that police allowed rioters in Leeds to create havoc three weeks ago, while the riots this week were controlled with dogs and shields. In fact, police had to retreat in Leeds after losing control.

They also claim it is unfair that demonstrations by the Asian community in protest at police violence last month resulted in meetings with the mayor, MPs and police chiefs, while their protests against asylum-seeker hotels are met with officers in riot gear. The point, however, ignores the context. Those protests last month were sparked after a police officer had been filmed kicking a man in the head at Manchester airport.

Nick Buckley, a former Reform candidate, said this week: "This is called anti-English two-tier policing. Remember BLM, Free Palestine, Leeds riot, Rochdale police station protest? The police do not treat other people like this — only white English people."

Many conspiracy theories have a kernel of truth. The failure of councils and police to join the dots between a series of Asian grooming gangs in northern towns in the 1990s and 2000s, for fear of inflaming tensions, is still corrosive to trust in working-class areas and continues to be exploited by the far right.

Among the most influential are Tommy Robinson and Andrew Tate. Both detest the police — not least as they have often been investigated. Their language can be amplified by the mainstream. Nigel Farage was labelled "Tommy Robinson in a suit" for saying: "I wonder whether the truth is being held from us."

The final reason for distrust has been what the judge at Liverpool crown court called a "vacuum" that allowed "others to spread misinformation". Reporting restrictions are designed to ensure a fair criminal process. Into that silence social media injected rumour and mass sharing of incendiary claims.

deputy leader of Patriotic Alternative, on the arcane subject of "civic nationalism" (which accepts non-whites as British) versus "ethnic nationalism" (old-school racialism), went to Southport. He was berated by other demonstrators as an "anti-white scumbag" for his position in the debate with Towler.

David Miles, known as Jack the Nipper, travelled from the West Midlands. The Patriotic Alternative activist wore a T-shirt with the slogan "Free Sam Melia", a reference to Towler's husband, who is in jail for inciting racial hatred.

Matthew Hankinson, who was jailed for membership of the proscribed organisation National Action, was posting on Twitter/X from Southport, describing it as a "peaceful protest at the anger of the murder of White Children by a foreign import".

The slogan "Enough is Enough" was also adopted for the London protests, which descended into a riot on Wednesday. Robinson's right-hand man, Danny Tommo, whose real name is Daniel Thomas, posted a speech saying: "Meet tomorrow outside Downing Street to show our anger at the government to make them aware that we hold them accountable." Robinson retweeted it.

Allan Jones of Red Flare, a research group that monitors the far right, said: "Stephen Yaxley-Lennon's lieutenant Daniel Thomas issued an incendiary video which called for supporters to 'get prepared' and 'be ready' as 'it has to go off in different cities'. What we have now is a series of overlapping networks where messages like Thomas's can spread virally. The protest in London, which saw 100 arrests, was called by Daniel Thomas."

The hard-right grapevine has been fuming since the stabbing of a soldier near the Brompton barracks in Kent. Extremists were angered that the case failed to rally the country in the same way as the killing of Fusilier Lee Rigby in Woolwich, southeast London in 2013.

In Manchester on Wednesday, protesters responded to online calls to demonstrate against a Holiday Inn in Newton Heath "housing illegal immigrants at the taxpayer's expense".

In Hartlepool, anti-mosque protesters threw bottles at the police and assaulted a passing Asian man. A boy aged 11 has been arrested on suspicion of arson after a police vehicle was set alight. The town is a stronghold for Nigel Farage's Reform UK, which came second there in the general election. Farage issued a video this week insinuating that the police were hiding the truth about the Southport and Kent attacks.

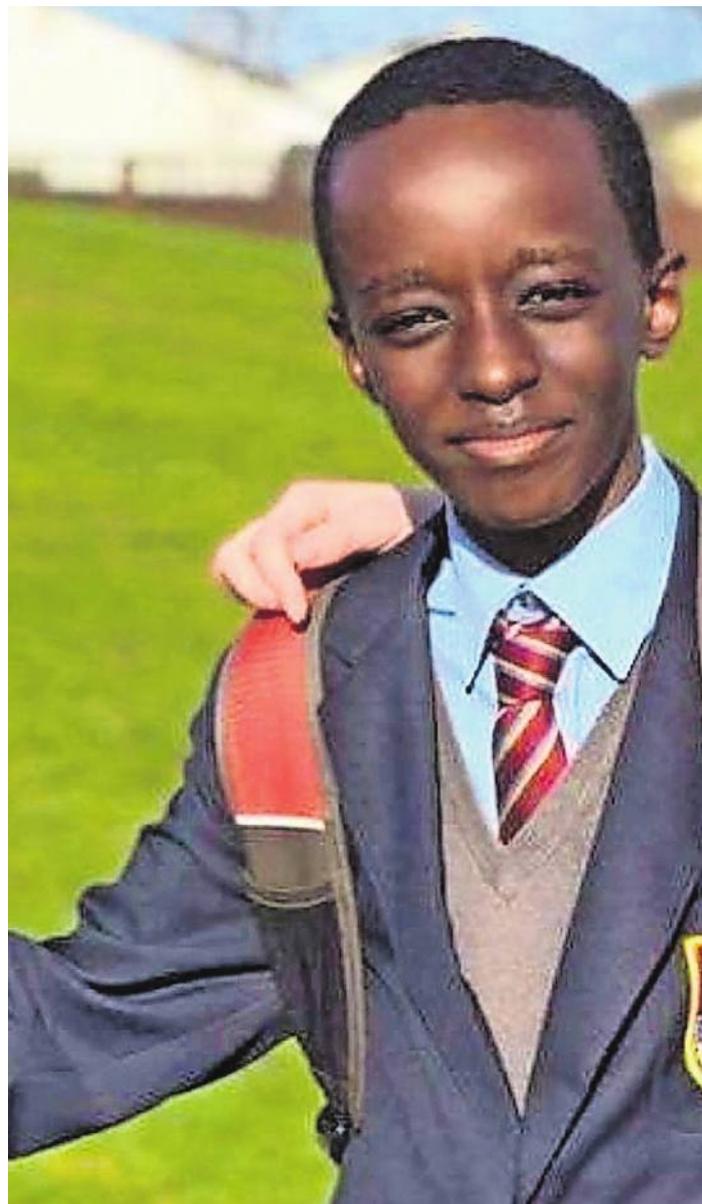
A 200-strong hotel protest in Aldershot descended into racial intimidation and objects were thrown at the police.

The EDL has not been involved in protests this week. The organisation has not been active since 2018.

Mark Collett, the Hitler admirer who leads Patriotic Alternative, said in a livestream with Marsh on Wednesday evening as news of the Downing Street clashes came in: "White British people are waking up. They are beginning to gather together. It does seem finally the British lion is slowly starting to wake up. Maybe the roar has even begun."

Key hard-right leaders have so far stayed away. They will be aware of Sir Keir Starmer's response as director of public prosecutions to the 2011 urban riots, when 3,000 people were brought to round-the-clock courts in five days and the toughest available sentences were imposed.

Robinson and Collett apparently stayed safely behind their keyboards. The unrest is not blowing Labour off course, Patrick Maguire, page 21



## Power of the algorithm harnessed to bad ends

Josh Simons  
Comment

**T**he violence erupting in the wake of the Southport stabbings shows how both the hard right and foreign powers are able to exploit social media platforms to stoke division.

This is how it works: a real person posts something that is untrue — that the perpetrator of a horrific attack was an asylum seeker, for instance. This post is then shared, liked and commented on by hundreds of other profiles. Some of these may belong to real people, but many are fake, set up by those with a vested interest in spreading lies: foreign powers, hard-right thugs, or a frightening mix of

the two. These fake profiles have one goal — to harness the algorithms powering social media websites to push false content to hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people. Before long, those algorithms set off a cycle that sees misinformation go "viral", viewed by tens of thousands of people looking for an explanation for the grief and anger they feel.

The violence of recent days is a reminder that this spread of lies and hatred goes further than social media. The protests since are a severe example of something that is now happening across the UK.

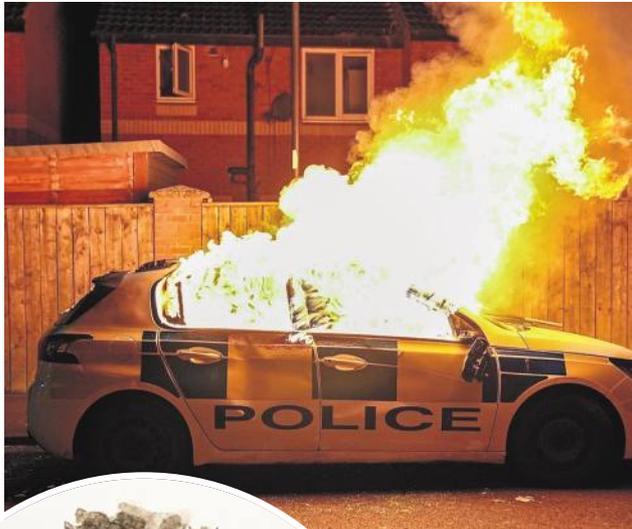
In my own constituency of Makerfield, the false claim that a local church was being turned into a mosque was deliberately spread on social media, resulting in parts of the church being set on fire in the middle of the night in the run-up to

# of freelance jobs behind riots

BENJAMIN CREMEL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; TERRY BLACKBURN/BACKGRID; UNIPKS; HELEN TIPPER/SWNS



The Southport suspect was named as Axel Rudakubana, 17, as a child, left, and in court, bottom, after the judge lifted restrictions to stop misinformation; an “Enough is Enough” protest in Whitehall, London; and, below, riots in Hartlepool



the general election. These new techniques, used by both the hard right and foreign powers, are so dangerous because they are organic. Rather than setting up websites to peddle false narratives, bad actors rely on social media algorithms amplifying their fake profiles, spreading their disinformation across platforms from Telegram and Twitter/X to hyper-local Facebook community pages and WhatsApp chats.

It is a hard problem to address — and the UK has very few tools to deal with it.

Any solution centred on the individual will fail. Algorithms work at the social level, shaping the behaviour of hundreds and thousands of people and millions of pieces of content.

Any solution that is reactive will also not work. Algorithms function at speed, so to combat misinformation we must be proactive and fast. And any solution that requires high burdens of harm-based proof will not

work. Algorithms elide binaries, so we must be more explicit about the positive characteristics of a healthy public sphere that we wish to protect.

We need to look at legislation. The Online Safety Act lacks provisions to proactively detect and combat misinformation and it remains an open question whether Ofcom has

the capacity to address problems like this. The National Security Act sets too high a bar for intervention in situations that are fast-moving and where attribution is difficult.

But crucially, we also need to build public institutions equipped to address this. We could establish a functioning disinformation unit that can detect in real time artificial spikes where misinformation is spreading rapidly online, alerting the relevant authorities before online hate becomes physical violence.

A vibrant, respectful public sphere depends on strong public institutions. That is as true online as it always has been offline. What is happening in these cases is the corruption of our public sphere by actors seeking to weaken democracy and the rule of law.

We must get this right. Nothing less than the fabric of our society is at stake.

Josh Simons is the Labour MP for *Makerfield*

## Anger finds new home on Telegram

Mark Sellman  
Technology Correspondent

Days on from the riots in Southport, sparks that lit the fuse are still lying around on social media.

Incorrect posts on Twitter/X giving a false name for the suspect, claiming that he was Muslim, on an MI6 watch list and known to Liverpool mental health services, are still available. However, the disinformation has morphed both in tone and platform. X was initially the driving force of the lies, circulating fake news from the Russian-linked Channel 3 Now site.

Among those amplifying the claims was Bernie Spofforth, a woman from Chester, who rose to prominence during the anti-lockdown movement and doubles as a swimwear designer.

As X has belatedly started to remove some posts, the Telegram app, which prides itself on a lack of content moderation, is fuelling the anger.

According to Joe Ondrak, policy lead at Logically, a company that combats disinformation, “multiple new narratives are springing up” on Telegram. One is that the name and photo of the suspect, Axel Rudakubana, are a “distraction” to disguise the fact that he is actually Muslim. “The narrative has been embedded among some elements of the UK far-right,” Ondrak added. The false name and link to Channel 3 Now are still being repeated on some US websites and forums.

Sir Keir Starmer has issued words of warning for the social media companies, but also said they had a balancing act to ensure free speech.

In reality, Britain does not yet have the tools to combat online misinformation. That was demonstrated last year when deepfake audio circulated of Starmer and the London mayor Sadiq Khan, but the Met Police said they could not take any action.

Ofcom is drawing up rules for the platforms under the Online Safety Act, due to come in force next year.

However, it makes no specific

mention of misinformation in its text. In Europe, action is already being taken. The European Commission has charged Elon Musk’s X platform with breaching its disinformation rules under the Digital Services Act.

Core to their case is that X’s verified accounts, featuring a blue tick, deceive users as they are paid-for and not checked in line with industry practice.

Musk did not heed warnings from experts when he changed the feature and it has led to a flood of neo-Nazis and hate-mongers arriving with blue ticks, sending advertisers fleeing.

“Back in the day, blue checks used to mean trustworthy sources of information. Now with X, our preliminary view is that they deceive users and infringe the DSA,” said Thierry Breton, the European commissioner for internal market. X now faces a fine of 6 per cent of its annual turnover.

The Online Safety Act will force the largest platforms to combat misinformation if their terms and conditions require it, and also to remove illegal content. The act also creates a false communications offence that is designed to tackle hoax bomb threats and fake health cures.

Disinformation from a foreign state will also have to be combatted. Despite these measures there is a large area of “legal” mis- and disinformation left untouched, a result of a political free speech row under the Tories that led to parts of the act being removed.

Josh Simons, the Labour MP for *Makerfield*, said: “We need empowered institutions that can quickly analyse and understand the spread of lies and threats of violence online and alert the authorities well before online hate becomes physical violence.”

“I will work with my colleagues in parliament and in the government to understand what happened to the [disbanded Cabinet Office] Counter disinformation unit and examine what sort of legal frameworks and institutions might be needed to avoid this kind of problem in the future.”

## Police unite against threat

Continued from page 1

community. We must have a policing response that can do the same: shared intelligence, wider deployment of facial recognition technology. And preventative action — criminal behaviour orders — to restrict their movements.”

Police would ensure any further disorder was “met with the most robust response in the coming days and weeks”, he added. “We will take all necessary action to keep our streets safe.”

He also threatened to take action against social media companies, which he said were allowing violent disorder to be “whipped up” on their watch.

The Southport attack suspect was named in court as Axel Rudakubana, 17. Appearing at Liverpool and Knowsley youth court, he was charged with three murders, ten attempted murders and possessing a kitchen knife with curved blade. He later appeared at Liverpool crown court where Judge Andrew Mearns KC lifted reporting restrictions that had prevented the naming of him. Defendants normally have anonymity until they turn 18. The judge said: “Con-

tinuing to prevent the full reporting has the disadvantage of allowing others to spread misinformation, in a vacuum.”

Extra police officers will be deployed on trains and at transport hubs to disrupt troublemakers. An online intelligence hub is monitoring far-right channels and police will use facial recognition to identify violent activists.

One such channel, for Leeds, says: “Everyone set up a protest in there [sic] city for this Saturday 3rd August. All patriots do this for your town and city against terrorism. What we have seen lately is an attack on British people, lets get out in numbers.”

The Belfast group calls on “all well-intentioned Christians, parents, and law-abiding citizens of our country”. It says it will peacefully protest but urges those attending to march on a local Islamic centre, adding: “Bring your Christian flags and banners.”

A group called Southport Wake Up on Telegram released map routes outside mosques in Liverpool. It calls for a “mass deportation” of people as well as “death to traitors”.

## News

# Bereaved tell others of Scout risks

Katie Gibbons

Parents whose children died on Scouts trips will feature in training videos for leaders and volunteers to help prevent future deaths.

Sharon Collins's son Scott Fanning, 11, died after a fall in Ashworth Valley, Rochdale in 1998, while with an untrained helper. His inquest concluded that the incident could have been prevented. Similar warnings were made in February at the delayed inquest into the death of Ben Leonard, 16, of Stockport, who fell 200ft in 2018 on a Scout trip to Llandudno.

Since 1995 more than 17 such deaths have been reported, of which seven were children who died after alleged failures to tell them of risks.

Collins and other bereaved mothers have met Matt Hyde, chief executive of the Scouts Association, and Carl Hankinson, the UK chief volunteer, to discuss poor training and the need for external regulation. They discussed producing videos in which the parents tell what happened to their children.



Purple craze Cotswold Lavender farm, in Snowhills, has 500,000 plants. Jake, three, a Weimaraner, was keen to enjoy the lot

TAL CHOHAH/MEDIADROM IMAGES

## Quintagram® No 2010

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

- 1 Aristocratic title (4)  
\_ \_ \_ \_
- 2 Labour prime minister (6)  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- 3 Support for unsteady toddlers (6)  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- 4 Celebrated reindeer (7)  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- 5 Third US president (9)  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

A	A	D	E	E	E	E	F
F	H	I	J	K	L	L	L
L	N	N	O	O	O	P	R
R	R	R	S	S	U	W	W

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15  
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

## M25 protesters jailed

Five Just Stop Oil activists have been jailed over an attempt to cause mass disruption by climbing gantries on the M25 in November 2022. The five, aged 24 to 77, had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to causing a public nuisance and were given terms of between one year eight months and two years at Basildon crown court. **Heathrow arrests, page 14**

## £9m family scammers

A former bank manager and a company boss ran a "callous" investment scam through which their own family and friends lost £9 million. Andrew Bird, 60, and Christopher Walton, 67, both from Derbyshire, carried out the fraud from 2010 to 2016 and were convicted in May. At Nottingham crown court, Bird was jailed for eight years and Walton for five.

## I was brash, says Ross

Jonathan Ross has admitted being "far too brash" on the BBC about films. Ross, 63, took over *The Film Programme* from Barry Norman in 1999 but said that he used to get "quite angry" when something wasn't good. He told the *Walking The Dog* podcast that his wife, Jane Goldman, had helped him to become more accepting of other people's views.

## Oldest slug discovered

A half-a-billion-year-old fossil of a slug has shed light on the origins of animals such as oysters and octopuses. *Shishania aculeata*, found in China, reveals that the earliest molluscs were flat, shell-less slugs protected by spiky cones. The discovery, by a team from Oxford University and Yunnan University in China, is published in the journal *Science*.

# Parents blind to signs of suicide, cautions Harry

Katie Gibbons

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have urged parents to be "first responders" in an interview about online safety and cyberabuse.

The full interview will appear on CBS in the United States on Sunday morning. In a preview clip posted yesterday Harry and Meghan speak about the need for parents to protect their children from online abuse.

They say they are determined to

want to do as parents is protect them. And so as we can see what's happening in the online space, we know that there's a lot of work to be done and we're just happy to be able to be a part of change for good."

The Sussexes have been vocal about the impact of the online abuse to which they have been subjected. In March Meghan called on female tech executives to do more after giving details of the "spewing hate" she experienced while pregnant.

Their Archewell Foundation has donated to the Responsible Technology Youth Power Fund, to pay for 26 online safety projects. The initiative aims to find ways to make the internet less toxic for young people.

A clip of the interview was posted on social media yesterday with the caption: "The Duke and Duchess of Sussex talk with Jane Pauley this Sunday about a new program supporting parents of children affected by online harm."

The couple are to tour Colombia this year at the invitation of Francia Marquez, the vice-president. It is understood that the trip will showcase the heritage of Colombia and focus on ways to create safer spaces online.

Marquez said: "As the vice-president of Colombia and minister of equality and equity, I am pleased to announce that Prince Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have kindly accepted my invitation to visit our beautiful country."

"The Archewell Foundation ... is renowned for its global leadership in fostering a safer online environment. The forthcoming conference will unveil a comprehensive framework for creating safer physical and digital spaces, tackling issues such as cyberbullying, online exploitation and the mental health impacts of these threats."



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex tell of their work against online bullying

keep Prince Archie, five, and Princess Lilibet, three, safe from any bullying.

Harry said a "terrifying" number of parents did not know "the signs of possible suicide".

Jane Pauley, the host of CBS News *Sunday Morning*, said: "You hope that when your children ask for help, someone is there to give it."

The duke replied: "If you know to help. At this point we've got to the stage where almost every parent needs to be a first responder. And even the best first responders in the world wouldn't be able to tell the signs of possible suicide. That is the terrifying piece of this."

The duchess said: "Our kids are young ... they're amazing but all you

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# Hugs 'too painful' for ME patient

Maeve Boothby O'Neill was 'desperate to live' and angry about medics' scepticism of her illness, **Fiona Hamilton** writes

A young woman with myalgic encephalomyelitis wanted a hug "more than anything" as she approached death, but the pain was too much, an inquest was told yesterday.

Maeve Boothby O'Neill, 27, urged her father to "relive the good times" in a final birthday card and told her mother she knew her death was inevitable, choosing to die at home "in the care of those she loved".

The poorly understood illness, also known as chronic fatigue syndrome, had left her bedbound and malnourished. Boothby O'Neill's mother, Sarah Boothby, read from her statement: "If she had to die from starvation with ME, she wanted it to be in the familiarity of home and in the care of those she loved."

"She wanted, more than anything she said, a loving hug. By then it was too late ... hypersensitivity made all touch excruciatingly painful."

Her father, Sean O'Neill, said she showed great courage in the face of her death even though she was "desperate to live and was full of dreams and hopes". He added: "I feel her loss every hour of every day."

Boothby O'Neill died at home on October 3, 2021, after she became unable to eat or drink. She had been admitted to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital three times that year but refused a fourth admission after being told there were no treatment options. The inquest at Exeter coroner's court is examining whether different clinical decisions might have saved her.

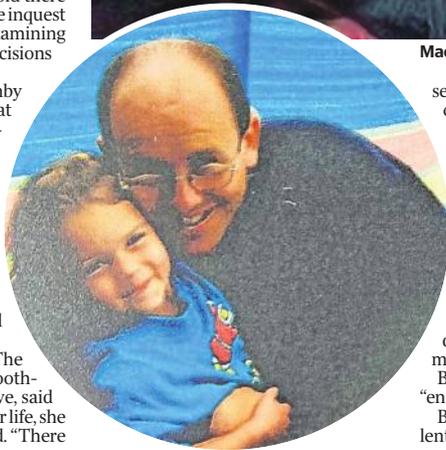
In her final days Boothby O'Neill was said to be angry that doctors had treated her sceptically for so long.

She had suffered from ME since her early teens. O'Neill said she faced delayed diagnosis, ignorance, apathy and stigma from much of the medical profession. In the early years she asked her mother: "Do you think I'm making it up?" Boothby told her: "I know you're not."

O'Neill, a senior writer at The Times who separated from Boothby when their daughter was five, said that even towards the end of her life, she did not get the help she needed. "There



Maeve Boothby O'Neill's father Sean O'Neill, a senior writer for The Times, said he feels her loss "every hour of every day"



seemed to be an obstacle to palliative care," he added. "Somebody seemed to think the illness was fabricated, not real."

O'Neill was too emotional to read his two statements. Deborah Archer, the coroner, did so instead.

O'Neill had believed his daughter, the eldest of his three children, would get better. "I had daydreams about walking along the beach with her," he wrote. "The daydreams are now replaced with memories."

Bit by bit, the disease took away her "energy ... and independence".

Boothby O'Neill, who gained excellent academic results despite her condi-

tion, became knowledgeable about ME but could not cure herself. With a few exceptions, medicine was "unwilling and unable to help her".

O'Neill added that her death "cannot be viewed in isolation from the prevailing view within the medical profession that ME is not a physical illness but a psychological condition. This orthodoxy led to Maeve being stigmatised in the way that so many ME patients are."

"The view is taken that they are malingerers or feigning illness or somehow parents are responsible," he added. "It is a view held by many powerful individuals in the NHS."

The inquest has been told that a series of doctors who reviewed Boothby O'Neill had not been trained to deal

with ME. Her GP, who desperately sought solutions, said doctors "stated they do not believe ME is a medical problem".

Boothby, who gave up her career to care for her only child, said her death was preventable. "Maeve did not want to die," she added. "Death from ME is extremely rare. Malnutrition in severe ME is common."

After her final admission to hospital Boothby O'Neill was "highly distressed" that she had not been given the treatment she needed.

A lawyer for the hospital said it disagreed with criticism that it failed Boothby O'Neill and there were missed opportunities.

The inquest continues.

## Phone fraud platform is shut down

**Charlotte Alt**

An online platform used by fraudsters to steal tens of millions of pounds from victims worldwide has been shut down.

Russian Coms, which was set up in 2021, is believed to have defrauded at least 170,000 people in Britain. The platform enabled criminals to hide their identity by appearing to call from finance firms, telecommunications companies and law enforcement agencies in order to gain victims' trust before stealing their money and personal details.

A typical scam involved offenders "spoofing" the number of a bank and telling victims their account had been subject to fraudulent activity. They persuaded victims to transfer their money to another account under the guise of protecting their savings.

Between 2021 and 2024, Russian Coms fraudsters made more than 1.3 million calls to 500,000 different UK phone numbers. Victims who reported the scam to Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and cyber crime, lost an average of £9,400.

Adrian Searle, director of the National Economic Crime Centre, part of the National Crime Agency (NCA), said: "Criminals are increasingly using technology to carry out fraud and other crimes on an industrial scale, causing very real harm to victims in the UK and across the world."

"Whilst this use of technology, which can be called 'crime as a service', promises anonymity, unbeknown to the criminal users the services also store the users' data, so we can identify who they are and how they operate."

In March the NCA arrested two men,

aged 26 and 28, in Newham, east London, on suspicion of being the platform's developers and administrators. The following month, another 28-year-old man from Newham, alleged to have been close affiliate and handset courier, was arrested. Another alleged user was arrested this week in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.

Lord Hanson of Flint, Home Office minister responsible for fraud, said: "Fraud is a crime that can devastate lives and anyone can be affected. That's why this action from the NCA is so significant, shutting down an illegal platform used by hundreds of criminals and disrupting the flow of funds that their networks rely on to operate."

Fraud accounts for at least 40 per cent of all crime in England and Wales. More than 80 per cent of it is believed to be technology-enabled.

## Swan upping finds tally of birds on Thames hit by flu

The annual census of the King's swans on the Thames has found a 45 per cent decrease over the past two years, with the lowest numbers since 2016.

The census, known as "swan upping", found only 86 young swans during a five-day search of the river between London and Oxfordshire.

The swan counting is an annual summer event. Under the stewardship of David Barber, the King's Swan Marker, teams of rowers go up the river.

The occasion, which dates back to the Middle Ages, started as a method of counting the valuable birds. Barber blamed the fall in their numbers this year on avian flu as well as catapults and airgun shootings.

"I can't say that it was a good year," he

added. "Unfortunately the numbers were lower than last year."

The event now has a conservation purpose. Each bird is counted, measured and weighed before being released back on the water.

Hopes had been high that the swan population would recover after being badly hit by avian flu.

Barber said, however, that some nests had been washed away in winter by the storms and high flood waters. Pollution was also an issue — some swans were found covered in engine oil.

"The poor swan has rather a lot to contend with these days," he added.

Barber is working to help the swans by involving schools and spreading the message about protecting wildlife.

News Huw Edwards

# BBC boss: I knew of worst allegations against Edwards

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Tim Davie, the BBC director-general, has admitted he was aware that Huw Edwards had been arrested for possessing the most serious category of sexual images but did not sack the star news presenter.

Speaking publicly for the first time since Edwards pleaded guilty to viewing indecent images of children on Wednesday, Davie said the Metropolitan Police had informed the corporation about the severe nature of his offences in November.

However, the BBC chose to continue paying Edwards, who had been suspended since July last year, about £200,000 until his resignation in April.

"We knew it was serious — but we knew no specifics apart from the category of the potential offences," Davie said.

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 photos are described as involving "non-penetrative sexual activity", while category C are images of "erotic posing".

At Westminster magistrates' court on Wednesday Edwards, 62, admitted to viewing 377 sexual photographs,



Tim Davie said the BBC decided to keep Huw Edwards's arrest a secret

including 41 indecent images of children, two as young as seven.

Insiders have indicated that the BBC believed that the images were more likely to relate to older individuals after tabloid allegations last July that Edwards had paid a 20-year-old £35,000 and received explicit images from them over a three-year period.

Davie said the BBC was "very shocked" about the nature of the charges when it was informed about them by the Met on Monday. "No one knew

about the specifics of what we heard over the last few days, which have been deeply disturbing," he said. "The primary thoughts here are always for victims of these terrible situations."

He said the BBC had thought "long and hard" about whether to disclose Edwards's arrest in November but ultimately decided to follow the Met's request and keep it secret.

"It wasn't a knee-jerk decision and it was difficult," he said. "The police came to us and said, 'We need to do our work. In total confidence, we have arrested [Edwards] — please keep this confidential. And at that point, the principle is clear in my mind.'"

He said the BBC was mindful of its "very significant" duty of care responsibilities. Edwards had a serious mental health episode and spent time in hospital after his suspension. "I think it was right for us to say we'd let the police do their business and then, when charges happen, we will act," Davie said.

The Met said it told the BBC in "strict confidence" about the arrest of Edwards in November. The force added that the BBC's governance department was informed about the arrest on November 8.

"Common law police disclosure is the established legal mechanism through which the police can inform an individ-

ual's employer when they are arrested or alleged to have committed an offence. It is often used where the individual holds a position of trust/responsibility with the public," it added.

Davie also addressed the controversial decision to continue paying Edwards his full salary of up to £479,000 over the five months between his arrest and resignation. The BBC has previously indicated that its hands were tied as no charges had been brought, but Davie revealed that the BBC is exploring the potential for it to recoup Edwards's salary over the period.

Sir Keir Starmer said he was "shocked and appalled," by the case.

Before the interview, Davie spoke to Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, in an attempt to reassure her that the BBC had acted properly.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport said: "The secretary of state has spoken to the BBC to raise concerns on a number of points regarding the handling of their own investigations into Huw Edwards, what safeguards and processes had been followed in this case, and additionally, what further action may be taken."

**BBC whistleblowers live in fear, Thunderer, page 22**  
Corporation must be transparent about what it knew, leading article, page 25



Huw Edwards leaves court after

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GISTRATES COURT



pleading guilty to possessing images of children being sexually abused. It later emerged that the images were sent by Alex Williams, 25, a convicted paedophile



DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

# Graduate abuser hid conviction from family

Mario Ledwith, David Woode  
Alex Farber

The man who shared indecent images of children with Huw Edwards is a recent university graduate living in Cardiff whose close family were unaware of his sex abuse conviction.

The former BBC broadcaster viewed 377 sexual photographs, including 41 indecent images of children, that were sent to him by Alex Williams.

The images featured in a one-to-one WhatsApp conversation between the pair that was only discovered when police in Wales seized and downloaded the contents of a phone belonging to Williams. The investigation subsequently led detectives to the former *News at Ten* presenter, who was arrested last November.

Edwards was charged on June 26 with three offences of making indecent images of children but the charges did not emerge until this week.

The broadcaster, who led the nation through momentous events including the funeral of Queen Elizabeth, pleaded guilty to three child abuse offences on Wednesday. Westminster magistrates' court was told that Edwards received seven category A images, which are deemed the worst, alongside 12 category B photos, and 22 category C pictures. They were sent between December 2020 and August 2021. Five of the category A images featured children aged between 13 and 15 while at least two moving images depicted a child believed to be "between seven and nine", the court was told.

Police have confirmed that Edwards's offending only came to light during an investigation by South Wales police that began last year.

Williams was convicted of seven counts of distributing and possessing indecent images, including one charge of possessing prohibited images of children. In March he received a 12-month sentence, suspended for two years. Three weeks later Edwards resigned from the BBC, bringing down the curtain on a 40-year career with the broadcaster.

Williams's crimes were largely undocumented at the time, with media not thought to have been present at his court hearings. Neighbours of Williams's family expressed shock at his involvement in the Edwards affair and his mother and stepfather said they had no knowledge of his prosecution.

Williams is understood to have graduated from a university in Cardiff in recent years and still lives in the city, where he holds a management position. His grandmother claimed to have no knowledge that he was involved in the Edwards affair. "He's a lovely boy, he picked me up to go to Asda last week," she said. "He's a quiet boy, he works in Cardiff, I'm not sure what he does. This is a shock to me now."

Addressing his appearance in court on abuse imagery offences, she said: "I didn't know, none of us did." She said her grandson had never been married and did not have a partner.

Social media accounts show Williams socialising with relatives at a wedding and climbing Pen y Fan in the Brecons with his mother and brother.

Edwards's crimes are unrelated to last summer's allegations in *The Sun* that he had paid a young person £35,000 and received explicit images that led to his suspension and admission to hospital after suffering a mental health episode.

# He invited me to hotel room, says young TV producer

Alex Farber

The BBC is facing new calls to disclose the outcome of its "fact-finding mission" into the behaviour of Huw Edwards after further disclosures.

A young television producer has claimed that the former lead presenter on *News at Ten* extended an invitation to his hotel room on the night of Prince Philip's funeral.

The producer said Edwards, who pleaded guilty to possessing indecent images of children on Wednesday, adopted a "pushy" tone as he made the offer in April, 2021.

Edwards, 62, shared a picture of his suite along with the proposal: "If you're around tomorrow night, let me know. There's plenty of room here." After his suggestion was rebuffed he sent a message to say: "You missed a good night."

At the time, the country was under social-distancing regulations during the pandemic. The claims were first reported by *The Sun* and corroborated by BBC News.

Lucy Manning, the BBC special correspondent, said last night that the claimant was "in tears" and felt "let down" by the corporation. Manning added: "I have to say, I don't think it's a great look that the BBC are not dealing with what went on in this newsroom that we all work in."

A former BBC employee told the *Times* that Edwards was known to have shared "suggestive" messages. The insider said: "It was certainly more than emoji love hearts and kisses."

Another employee claimed Edwards would send similar invitations to others in the newsroom. They said: "You wonder how many people he's done the same thing to."

The allegations have revived criticism of the BBC's failure to disclose its internal report into Edwards. The in-

## Media figures who rushed to judgment

**Andrew Marr, July 2023:** "We're all human. We all have our frailties. We both know that Huw Edwards has a very very nice and much-admired wife Vicky Flind and I think five children so there is a lot of family involved in this as well on his side."

**Owen Jones, July 2023:** "The Sun is a disgusting rag and they have to pay for what they've done to Huw Edwards. They tried to destroy someone's life with false claims of illegality involving a minor. We know now there was no criminality, and The Sun have driven a vulnerable man into medical care."

**Jon Sopel, July 2023:** "I don't know what went on at The Sun."

But it just seemed to me that they had a slightly half-cooked story that they decided to go with. They went with the parents of a young man who was in turmoil and from a fractured family relationship. And they didn't even carry the denial from this kid, from this young man. It was nonsense ... I think the BBC is a complicated beast and it would be lovely to think of it as a

streamlined organisation where one bit knows what the other is doing. But the BBC is a series of completely uncoordinated limbs."

**Emily Maitlis, July 2023:** "There is something a bit distasteful. If you know this stuff about a colleague, why isn't your first duty to then go to HR or a senior manager ... or to say I think this is going on ... rather than to turn it into a news story?"

**David Yelland (public relations executive and former editor of The Sun), April 2024:** "Huw Edwards for all the work, all the service, all the years. These grim days will pass."



## News

# Just Stop Oil arrests at Heathrow

Ben Clatworthy  
Transport Correspondent

A group of Just Stop Oil protesters have been arrested at Heathrow after attempting to block passengers from entering the security-clearance area.

The protesters entered Terminal 5 at 8.50am yesterday, holding signs that read "Oil Kills", but were unable to halt or delay any operations at the airport.

Seven activists were arrested at the terminal and JSO said ten others were arrested on public transport.

A Heathrow spokesman said: "A protest incident in Terminal 5 was swiftly resolved and all involved were immediately removed from the airport. Unlawful and irresponsible protest activity is not the way forward and will not be tolerated."

Di Bligh, 77, and Ruth Cook, 72, both from Somerset, were among those arrested yesterday. On Tuesday Phoebe Plummer, 22, and Jane Touil, 58, were arrested at the terminal after spraying orange paint on departure boards and windows.



Just Stop Oil tried to bar departing passengers at Terminal 5, Heathrow, yesterday but failed to halt or delay any flights. Seventeen of the protesters were arrested

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# Stephen Lawrence's body will be brought back to UK

Laurence Sleator

The body of Stephen Lawrence, the teenager murdered in a racist attack in 1993, is to be brought back to the UK from Jamaica, his family have said.

Lawrence, who lived in southeast London, was 18 when he was murdered by a gang of white men as he waited for a bus.

He was buried in a remote location in Jamaica alongside his great-grandmother because his mother feared that his grave would be desecrated if he remained in the UK.

Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon, who was made a Labour peer in 2013, said that images of her son's exhumed grave had appeared on social media, causing the family distress.

In a statement issued through her lawyer, she said: "My family and I have been made aware of the recent images of my son's grave that have been circulated on social media. Following Stephen's passing, we made the decision to have him laid to rest in Jamaica, as we felt he would not be at peace in this country."

"After 31 years, we have decided as a family that we would like to bring Stephen home to be closer to us. The

images that are circulating were taken after the funeral home exhumed Stephen's body.

"However, we would like to express our distress at the funeral home's lack of regard for our feelings and privacy, as evidenced by the decision to leave Stephen's grave open to the public, rather than closed off. We are disheartened by the individual who chose to take images and post them on social media without considera-



Stephen Lawrence was buried in Jamaica, where his father was born

tion for the potential impact on our family.

"We had hoped to have carried out this sensitive task privately, but due to unforeseen circumstances, this was not possible. We apologise for any distress caused by those who saw the images and kindly request that, out of respect for us and our privacy, these are removed from all media platforms," she added.

Neville Lawrence, Stephen's father,

moved to Jamaica after his son's death. He said this was "driven by the pain of loss and by feeling unable to freely walk the streets of the city where my son was slaughtered".

He told The Guardian: "I wanted to be near where Stephen is buried, and hoped that a return to the country of my birth would afford me some solace."

The murder of Lawrence, who was born in southeast London, raised many questions over the levels of racism in the UK and how the police dealt with cases involving black people.

His murder and the subsequent flawed police investigation prompted the Macpherson report, which found that incompetence, institutional racism and alleged corruption within the Metropolitan Police had contributed to failings.

Lawrence was killed by a gang but just two of the five official suspects were found guilty of murder and sent to prison in 2012 after new evidence emerged.

The Metropolitan Police said that it had closed "active" investigations of the case but Baroness Lawrence said she would continue to seek justice for her son.

# Creme Egg thief jailed for eight months

A thief with a sweet tooth has been jailed for eight months after he stole goods that included almost 800 Cadbury Creme Eggs.

Layton Richards, 29, took more than £3,400 worth of goods from 19 stores across Hampshire, Dorset and West Sussex. He was charged with 24 shoplifting offences between January and April this year, including 798 of the 75p sweets. Richards, from Portsmouth, appeared at the city's magistrates' court.

Chief Inspector Marcus Cator,

Hampshire and Isle of Wight constabulary's retail crime lead, said: "This sentence is just one result of an ongoing and dedicated focus on targeting our most prolific offenders as effectively as possible."

"We have been working in strong partnership with retailers regarding offenders who repeatedly target stores and victims with their persistent, and often intimidating, criminality."

Cator added: "We want to continue sending the message to repeat

offenders that their behaviour, and the impact it has on its victims, is not acceptable, while also receiving any support they require to help steer them away from shoplifting."

Gareth Lewis, Southern Co-op loss prevention and security manager, said: "The only way for the business community to tackle the evidenced increase in retail crime and the issues that drive the individuals offending, is to work together and to provide the police (and other agencies) with the information and evidence required."

# From Wall Street to war on mansions

An activist is ensuring life's not a beach for property developers on Long Island, writes Harriet Alexander

A former Wall Street executive is waging a one-woman war against what she views as the plague of mega-mansions spoiling the shores of the Hamptons.

Jaine Mehring, 63, has emerged as a formidable thorn in the side of developers, builders and brokers in East Hampton, one of the most expensive areas of New York's Long Island, where the average cost of a four-bedroom house is \$1.7 million.

"They are not fans, historically, of me," Mehring says of the developers. "It's not unusual to see builders or real estate people funnel their discomfort on to me. I'm a little bit their target."

Mehring's campaign runs mainly on Instagram, where she posts about her fight against millionaire developers, builders and estate agents — to cheers from her followers. It is small-scale but she has made big enemies.

She argues that buying small homes, bulldozing them and replacing them with multimillion-dollar houses several times the size is not sustainable for the environment or fair to the locals enduring ever-rising prices.

She does not object to renovations, or moderate expansion in keeping with the local style and respecting the surrounding greenery. Mehring feels strongly, however, that developers should not be permitted to raze structures and build gargantuan glass-and-steel mega-mansions, sprawling to the limits of the existing boundary and putting pressure on the environment.

The latest developer she has angered is also one of Long Island's most prominent. Joe Farrell is a Hamptons property tycoon famed for his flamboyant homes and a \$3 billion portfolio. In 2021 he sold his own 17,000 sq ft home in Bridgehampton, nicknamed the Sandcastle, which was once rented by Beyoncé and Jay-Z, for \$31 million.

A year ago he put another home in Bridgehampton on the market for \$125 million. It is now available to rent for \$3.5 million a month. Since 2019 Farrell has been trying to get approval to demolish a small beach cottage in the Amagansett dunes and build a 3,240 sq



Jaine Mehring angered Long Island developers by opposing large mansions that can command rents of \$3.5 million a month



ft residence. Mehring has been trying to stop him, arguing that an \$8.8 million floating rectangle mega-mansion is out of keeping with the area.

His lawyers cited her by name in their letters to the planning board, declaring that she "appears to be trying her hand at advocacy in her opposition to multiple projects throughout Ama-

gansett". Farrell declined to comment when approached by The Times.

Mehring said she had fielded countless calls, texts and emails from property figures unhappy with her crusade.

If her campaign began on social media, it is turning into a political calling.

In January Mehring was appointed to the East Hampton zoning board of ap-

peals, a five-person panel that decides on planning applications.

Mehring is a former Wall St banker who runs a consultancy from her home in Amagansett, which she bought 25 years ago.

Fifty-two per cent of East Hampton's homes are built on plots of less than half an acre, meaning that building large

properties on all of them has a significant impact on the area, she says.

The town appears to be taking note. In May, a working committee proposed reducing the maximum size of houses allowed from 20,000 sq ft to 10,000 sq ft. At present, East Hampton uses a formula to calculate maximum allowable gross floor area based on lot size: 10 per cent of the lot area plus 1,600 sq ft, with a 20,000 sq ft maximum. A 20,000 sq ft home can only be built on a large plot of 4.2 acres, of which there are very few, so the argument is somewhat redundant.

She denies being a "nimby" and praises the "yimby" movement, which encourages small-scale homes.

For now, her mission is an uphill battle. But Mehring believes the tide is slowly turning. "Interestingly, now the conversation has gotten more public, builders and developers are coming forward to engage," she said. "There are some of them who quietly whisper, 'I've seen it, Jaine, and it's too much!'"

## Fire chiefs bullying whistleblowers

Charlotte Alt

Fire services are bullying whistleblowers who raise concerns in an effort to cover up "abhorrent" abuse of staff, the watchdog has found.

A report by the HMP Inspectorate of Police and Fire services found victims are failing to disclose instances of bullying, sexism and racism for fear of reprisals from managers.

More than a third of the nearly 4,500 firefighters surveyed by the inspectorate said they had suffered bullying, abuse of power and racist, sexist and homophobic language while more than 40 per cent said they had witnessed such instances in the past year.

Roy Wilsher, HM Inspector of fire and rescue services, said: "We found some deeply troubling pockets of abhorrent behaviour, such as bullying,

harassment and discrimination. This was most often found on watches. This is unacceptable and must be challenged. We also found too many staff lack trust and confidence in the misconduct process, making them fearful about reporting issues."

The report found that victims felt discouraged from reporting misconduct because they believed the system to be biased. One former firefighter told the inspectors that staff were "persecuted, vilified, because they have ... blown the whistle on individuals". Another said: "Some people are just taking the abuse, the harassment, because they don't want to put a target on their back."

The inspectors said in the report: "They told us investigations were sometimes conducted by someone close to the person alleged to have perpetrated the misconduct, such as

their line manager. They considered such cases to be cover-ups. Women most often expressed a fear of reporting. For example, one firefighter told us she did speak to her line manager about something and it wasn't dealt with. The manager breached her confidentiality and she felt humiliated by her peers. She was adamant she would never raise a concern again."

Some respondents said that they had been overlooked for promotion because they reported misconduct. The report was commissioned by the government after an investigation last year uncovered bullying, harassment and discrimination in each fire and rescue service in England. While the inspectorate said there had been an improvement, it also found "compelling evidence" of a "widespread fear" among firefighters to report the behaviour.

## Met officer was 'sexually predatory towards woman'

David Woode Crime Correspondent

A Metropolitan police officer engaged in a "pattern of sexually predatory behaviour" when he slept with a suicidal woman and gave his phone number to a second woman days later, a misconduct hearing was told.

Phil Hunter, 60, slept with the woman, referred to as X, after carrying out a welfare check at her home on August 14, 2017. The pair had regular sex and he also sent her a sexually explicit image.

Eight days later Hunter gave a different woman his mobile phone number, called her a "lovely lady" and asked her out for coffee, the hearing was told. Hunter resigned before his first Met

misconduct hearing in 2020 but would have been dismissed and placed on the barred list if he was still a serving officer, the tribunal said.

Hunter is now accused of engaging in inappropriate communications with the second woman, Y. He denies the claim and did not attend his latest hearing at Blackfriars, central London.

Thom Dyke, representing the Met, said: "The reason I mention the incident with X is we say it shows a pattern of predatory sexual behaviour towards vulnerable members of the public."

A statement from Y said that Hunter's behaviour had been inappropriate, controlling and coercive towards her.

The three-person panel, is expected to return a judgment today.

# Judge labours to decide if mother gave birth to twins

Kieran Gair

A High Court judge said she felt she had “stumbled into an alternative reality” after a former couple asked her to make a ruling on whether two children exist.

The purported father, known as AA for legal reasons, brought proceedings in his efforts to have contact with two children whose alleged mother, known as ZZ, claimed were never born.

Across hearings in London between November 2023 and May 2024, he claimed that he was the father of twin sons who were living with their mother or her family, but that she had hidden the birth from GPs and other doctors. He alleged that over two years she told him that she was pregnant, had seen a midwife, the weight of the babies and that they looked like him.

However, the woman told the court that she was never pregnant and her former partner had doctored evidence of pregnancy as “revenge” for her reporting one of his family members to the police. She also claimed that AA had been controlling and coercive towards her. She said that she had lied about being pregnant and having a subsequent termination to “extricate herself” from the relationship.

In a ruling yesterday, Mrs Justice Arbuthnot called the case “perplexing” and “unusual”, stating she had a “sense of having stumbled into an alternative reality” during proceedings. She ruled that there was “strong evidence” the woman was previously pregnant and that she “wanted to cover [it] up”, deeming there to be “some evidence that at least one child was born”. However, the judge said there was “insufficient evidence” to say the woman gave birth to twins, and that she “cannot say” where the child is currently.

“This is an unusual case because either [AA] or [ZZ] had lied about the pregnancy and the birth of these children for more than three years,” the judge said. “The lies one of them had told had been complicated, persistent

and very well planned and executed. AA claimed that his former partner gave birth to twins in February 2021 and later provided him with “new proof that the children existed”, but the judge said that some of the evidence in the case “points towards the twins’ existence and some the other way”.

While a witness told the court they saw the woman while she was pregnant and saw a child with her in a car, the General Registrar Office, which registers births in England and Wales, found no births registered under either of the pair’s family names.

The man claimed that as well as comments made in recorded conversations, his former partner had shown him ultrasounds scans, pictures and other documents related to the children.

Although the woman accepted making the comments, the judge said it was her case “that these were not truthful comments but ones orchestrated and controlled” by her ex-partner, and that “doctored” documents were “not authentic”. In a 74-page judgment, the judge ruled that some of the evidence for AA’s claims was “probably forged”, including WhatsApp messages he allegedly received about the children.

The judge accepted that AA “had been abusive” to ZZ, but added that while she “was under her ex-partner’s control”, this “did not necessarily indicate that the twins did not exist”.

The court also heard from ZZ’s GP, who had no record of pregnancy, but there was also evidence that suggested that a woman had contacted a private hospital, and had inquired about “terminations, pregnancy and childbirth”.

While the hospital said no twins were born there in February 2021, the judge found that ZZ later contacted the hospital asking for none of her medical records to be stored or shared with the NHS. This, the judge ruled, was part of efforts by the woman to “cover up a pregnancy”, although it remained “unclear” where the child was born due to the circumstances of the case.



What a bloomin' stink An *Amorphophallus titanum* – or “corpse flower” – at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. It emits a stench of rotting flesh to attract insects

# Airports in Europe to bring back 100ml limit

Ben Clatworthy

The era of tiny toiletries is set to continue for a “significant time” as the European Union said it would reimpose the 100ml rule from September.

Officials said that airports with the next-generation CT scanners would go back to old restrictions on liquids after the European Commission received “information indicating that the equipment does not meet the standard for which it has been approved”.

The new CT scanners were designed to allow passengers to take more liquid through security because they generate detailed 3D images of what is inside bags. Older x-ray machines produce a 2D image of luggage.

The scanners had been installed at dozens of European airports including Amsterdam, Berlin, Geneva, Helsinki and Stockholm.

ACI Europe, the trade body, said that reimposing the 100ml rules risked causing operational issues.

Olivier Jankovec, its director-general, said: “Those airports which have been early adopters of this new technology are being heavily penalised.”

“The decision to now impose significant restrictions to their use questions the trust and confidence the industry can place in the certification system.”

The move follows the Department for Transport’s announcement in June that it was reinforcing the existing rules at UK airports which had upgraded to the new scanners, including Luton, Bristol, London City, Teesside, Aberdeen, Leeds-Bradford, Newcastle and Southend.

A DfT spokesman said: “This temporary move is to enable further improvements to be made to the new checkpoint systems and will only affect a small number of passengers.”

The move, which came into force just hours after the announcement, was not in response to a specific threat.

The issue relates to the scanners not being able to detect the volume of liquid in a bag. Under the new rules, passengers travelling through UK airports were going to be allowed to take up to two litres of liquids.

The restrictions were introduced as a temporary measure after the foiled transatlantic aircraft plot in 2006. Terrorists had planned to down seven flights departing from Heathrow using explosives disguised as soft drinks. It would have been al-Qaeda’s largest terrorist attack in the West since 9/11.

# Older cars means more breakdowns

Ben Clatworthy  
Transport Correspondent

The increasing age of cars on Britain’s roads has been blamed for a surge in the number of breakdowns.

New figures from National Highways, which manages motorways and busy A-roads in England, show that breakdowns increased from about 229,600 in 2019 to 274,600 last year.

The government-owned company’s figures also showed the level of breakdowns between June and August last year was 9 per cent higher than the average for the entire year.

Analysis of government data by Green Flag, the breakdown service, found that the average age of cars on Britain’s roads had risen by 42 per cent

over the past 20 years, from 6.6 years in 2003 to 9.4 years in 2023. It urged motorists to maintain their vehicles properly to reduce the chance of becoming stranded on the side of the road.

Katie Lomas, the managing director of Green Flag, said: “Generally cars are lasting longer, which is a good thing. However, cars tend to have more breakdowns as they age and this is reflected in our own call-out rates and the rising number of breakdowns recorded by National Highways. With breakdowns on the rise, drivers should keep up regular maintenance to help reduce risk of issues, however old their vehicle.”

Car maintenance tasks that can be done at home include checking oil, coolant and tyre treads and pressures.

Last week Mike Hawes, the chief

executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers, said people “simply aren’t buying as many new cars as they used to”. He added: “There are several reasons: one, the [anti-car] changes in policies, especially in cities, and another being that we have changed the way we work. If you are working two days a week at home and a dual-income family, you might not need two cars any more. The third is undoubtedly that vehicles are more expensive, and interest rates are high which hits the cost of purchase and the cost of ownership.”

Green Flag’s call-out statistics show older cars are more likely to suffer a breakdown than newer models. One in five cars that are nine years old will malfunction in a year compared with one in seven that are six years old.

# Rapist leader of Maoist cult died in prison cell

A Maoist cult leader who committed a string of sex assaults and kept his daughter captive at home for three decades was found dead in bed in his prison cell, an inquest was told.

Aravindan Balakrishnan, 81, called himself Comrade Bala and brainwashed his cult into thinking he had godlike powers and could read minds. He was jailed for 23 years in 2016 after a trial at Southwark crown court.

Devon coroner’s court, in Exeter, was told that Balakrishnan was found dead by a fellow inmate at HMP Dartmoor on April 8, 2022.

Dr Russell Delaney, a pathologist, found that Balakrishnan had died from

a lower respiratory tract infection, with secondary causes of vascular dementia, diabetes and heart disease.

Phillip Spinney, the senior coroner, recorded a verdict of natural causes.

Balakrishnan, previously of Enfield, north London, had been convicted of several charges of rape, indecent assault, actual bodily harm, cruelty to a child under 16 and false imprisonment.

He idolised communist tyrants such as Chairman Mao and Joseph Stalin and ran a cult-like “workers’ institute”. To keep devotees in check he invented an invisible war machine called Jackie, which he said could kill or trigger earthquakes if anyone rebelled.

# Rector who blamed Israel for 'genocide' removed from duties

Sian Bradley, Marc Horne

St Andrews University has removed its rector from her official duties after she refused to accept a ruling that comments she made about Israel "inflamed tensions" and "could encourage anti-semitic behaviour by others".

Stella Maris, a Nigerian-born political activist, was elected by students to serve as rector and reflect their interests at the university court for a three-year term last October. She became embroiled in controversy almost immediately after she accused

Israel of "genocide" in an email to the student body. Maris said a vigil had been held after "weeks of genocidal attacks by the Israeli government against Gaza".

"She said Palestinians had suffered 'apartheid, siege, illegal occupation and collective punishment'".

Maris rejected accusations that the message was antisemitic and said her use of the terms genocide and apartheid were "supported by numerous human rights organisations".

However, the university court confirmed yesterday that she was to be

discharged from her role as president of court and as a charity trustee, claiming that "she had made some St Andrews students 'fear for their safety', and by her actions and activities breached her responsibilities and legal obligations as a court member and charity trustee".

The court added that Maris "will retain the title and office of rector of the university until her term expires in October 2026, but will no longer sit on court, the university's supreme governing body".

The university claimed that Maris had also published posts on social

media that an independent investigation found were "discourteous and disrespectful" in the way in which they dismissed fears raised by students.

An investigation chaired by the independent judge Lady Ross, then Morag Ross KC, concluded that Maris had been entitled to free speech but had exercised "poor judgment".

It also concluded that her "subsequent actions on social media fell below the standards required of a court member, inflamed tensions in the St Andrews community, and represented a breach of her responsibilities to act

with courtesy and respect". Ray Perman, the chairman of the university court, said: "I wish to offer an apology to all students, staff, and others, who were upset or feared for their safety as a consequence of the rector's handling of this matter."

Professor Dame Sally Mapstone, the university's principal, insisted freedom of speech would be maintained on campus. "We can disagree passionately on the most difficult issues, but it should always be with courtesy and respect for those whose views may differ from our own," she said.



**Balancing act** Gravity & Other Myths, an Australian circus company, mounted an impromptu show on the Assembly Hall steps before the first performance of their new show, *Ten Thousand Hours*, a tribute to the dedication that is required to become a world-class acrobat. It opens at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe today

## BBC ordered to investigate claims of antisemitism

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

A group of more than 200 people including Luciana Berger, the former Labour MP, and Anita Land, the sister of the Ofcom chair Lord Grade of Yar-mouth, have demanded that the BBC open an urgent investigation into allegations of antisemitism.

In a letter to the BBC board sent last month, the predominantly Jewish signatories from the film and TV industry said they were in "anguish and disbelief" that the corporation had not dealt with complaints about biased coverage and social media breaches during the Israel-Hamas war.

The group included Danny Cohen, a former BBC1 controller, and Leo Pearlman, co-founder of James Cordis's Fulwell 73 production company, as well as 112 people who signed anonymously because many work for the BBC.

"We can vouch with certainty that there is a loss of faith in the BBC within our community and a widespread opinion that, when it comes to racism and discrimination at the BBC, Jews don't count," they said. "We are certain that were similar incidents to occur at the expense of any other minority, the BBC would show zero tolerance."

They called for a formal investigation by the board into "systemic problems of antisemitism and bias".

The letter claimed that there have been multiple breaches of the BBC's social media guidelines, citing posts from Gary Lineker, the *Match of the Day* presenter, Asif Munaf, a contestant on *The Apprentice*, and several BBC Arabic staff.

A response to a previous complaint to Tim Davie, the BBC director-general, and Charlotte Moore, the chief content officer, complaining about the decision to allow Qasim Sheikh, the cricket pundit, to continue commenting after he shared an image of Rishi Sunak with an Adolf Hitler-style moustache, was criticised as "unsatisfactory".

The complainants said: "BBC management seems to think it is better placed than Jews ... to identify and define what does and doesn't constitute anti-Jewish racism. And it is repeatedly failing to take any meaningful action."

In February Davie wrote to staff about the growth of antisemitism. However, the group was angered by the response sent by Samir Shah, the BBC chairman, a week ago, in which he shared "great concern" but defended the way in which the corporation had handled any editorial errors.

A BBC spokesman said: "As an organisation, we stand united against any form of abuse, prejudice or intolerance."

## Strictly judge: Chaperones are a good idea — I was hit with a cane

Katie Gibbons

Craig Revel Horwood, the *Strictly Come Dancing* judge, has revealed that his former ballet teacher used to "whack" him with a cane as he expressed support for the provision of chaperones for young dancers.

The programme is in the midst of a scandal after former celebrity contestants made allegations of mistreatment. The controversy has led to the professional dancers Giovanni Pernice and Graziano Di Prima leaving the show.

Pernice denies the "threatening and abusive behaviour" of which he is accused. Di Prima has expressed deep regret for kicking his celebrity partner Zara McDermott during a rehearsal.

Revel Horwood, who has been a fixture on the *Strictly* judging panel since it started in 2004, said that professional dance training could be harsh and

shared his own experience as a young hopeful. "I had a Russian ballet teacher who used to have a cane and she would whack us with it. Just so you're not pulling up from the thigh — doing a *déboulés* for instance to engage your hamstrings," he said. "Obviously, that sort of teaching wouldn't be permissible today. Things have changed significantly over the past 40 years since I trained."

The former choreographer said he was "completely gobsmacked" by the allegations made by former *Strictly* contestants. "Of course I found out with the press because the judges are all kept separate from the contestants," he told the



Craig Revel Horwood said dance training could be harsh

BBC's *Breakfast*. He said that the judges did not spend time in rehearsal spaces.

Asked about the potential impact of the complaints on the future of the programme, Revel Horwood said he supported the introduction of new welfare measures.

"Training everyone is different, what they learn they carry on into the training room," he said. "I think it's beneficial to have mediators present in rehearsal rooms. In theatre, especially with children and younger performers, chaperones are always present. It's prudent to

have a third eye on the entire situation."

The BBC has announced enhanced measures to safeguard *Strictly Come Dancing* contestants in response to the allegations. Last month, the broadcaster said: "Going forward, we will have a production team member present during training room rehearsals at all times; increase existing support with the addition of two new roles on the show dedicated to welfare support — a celebrity welfare producer and a professional dancer welfare producer — and deliver further training for the production team and crew."

Revel Horwood is the only original judge to remain on the panel since the programme started. Before joining *Strictly* he choreographed West End productions, including the acclaimed *Spend, Spend, Spend*, for which he received a Laurence Olivier award nomination for best choreography.



**Hats entertainment** A revival of *A Chorus Line*, the 1975 Broadway show about dance auditions that won nine Tony awards and the Pulitzer prize for drama, opened last night at Sadler's Wells in north London

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# Criminologist guilty of Le Creuset shoplifting

Kieran Gair

A former criminology lecturer who stole Le Creuset cookware and raided a Marks & Spencer steak aisle while armed with a de-tagging device has been found guilty of theft.

Pauline Al Said, 34, formerly a senior lecturer at Bath Spa University, attempted to steal more than £1,000 worth of Le Creuset cookware, "high-value" steaks, wine and boutique gin from a Sussex garden centre and a branch of M&S during shoplifting sprees in December 2021 and September 2022, Salisbury crown court was told.

Al Said, who represented herself during the trial, was found guilty of two charges of theft this week. Her husband, Mark Wheatcroft, also known as Mohammed Al Said, was found guilty of one charge of theft and one of assault.

Laura Duff, for the prose-

cution, told the court that Al Said made her first shoplifting attempt at the Old Barn nursery in Horsham, West Sussex, on December 14, 2021. She told jurors the store had hired John Dunkling as an undercover security guard and he had noticed the defendant's trolley already had carrier bags in it that were not attributed to the nursery.

Dunkling looked at the store's CCTV and saw Al Said walking toward the shop's exit with the two bags without paying, the court heard.

Al Said was stopped on her way out by another member of staff. The first bag held £400 worth of spirits including Mermaid gin and spiced rum. The security guard found more bottles of alcohol, Le Creuset cookware and a Le

Creuset condiment set in the second bag. The two bags contained £581.48 worth of goods.

When the security officer asked the couple to come back into the store, Wheatcroft became aggressive, threatened to punch him and "made contact" with the officer's back, the court heard. The goods were seized and a further search of Al Said's bags uncovered a security tag remover, which she had used to snip off and discard tags around the store.

The criminologist's crime spree continued the following September when she was caught by an undercover security detective at a Marks & Spencer store on Winchester High Street loading "packets of meat" into a trolley. The court heard that when Al Said realised she had been detected, she left the store from the side exit. Outside, she tried to run away. She was found to have about 33 steaks, six bottles of red wine and three bottles of white wine. In total, she attempted to steal £570.42 worth of goods.

The couple had denied the charges. They will be sentenced at a later date.



Pauline Al Said was a senior lecturer at Bath Spa University

# Morrisons warms to hotter freezers

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

British households and food retailers store frozen fish fingers and peas in freezers set at minus 18C, a temperature standard set in the 1930s.

That could soon change, however, as Morrisons prepares to become the first UK grocer to turn up the dial on its freezers after research found that moving to a higher setpoint would not affect food safety or quality.

The supermarket chain said it planned to raise freezer temperatures to minus 15C in ten of its stores, in an effort to reduce its costs, energy consumption and associated emissions.

Ruth McDonald, Morrisons'

corporate services director, said: "We now have vastly better freezers and modern technology and monitoring that gives us a precise picture of frozen food temperatures throughout the supply chain."

The move comes after calls from food and logistics businesses for a rise to the standard temperature metric, which was introduced to prevent bacterial growth and food-borne illnesses, but set at a time when fewer studies and technology were available.

The UK's Cold Chain Federation, the Global Cold Chain Alliance, DP World and MSC want food to be stored and transported at minus 15C to save energy as the sec-

tor transitions to a net-zero model.

The calls came as a study from the Paris-based International Institute of Refrigeration, the University of Birmingham and London South Bank University found that the move could cut costs by up to 12 per cent, could reduce annual emissions equivalent to those produced by 3.8 million cars, and create energy savings equivalent to about 8.6 per cent of the UK's annual consumption.

A separate study by Nomad Foods, the frozen foods company, also found that the change could reduce energy consumption by more than 10 per cent without any noticeable impact on product safety, texture or taste.

# TMS

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## Mandy jostles for position

Peter Mandelson is yet to declare his candidacy for chancellor of Oxford but, in *The Spectator* this week, he is on an election footing. He notes that there hasn't yet been a Labour chancellor at the dreaming spires and hints it is time someone smashed that stained-glass ceiling. He also speaks of his Oxford days, where his studies were delayed by his gap year and the bilharzia he contracted "when chased into Lake Victoria by a truculent elephant who thought I was invading her bathing space". Not the first student to be kept from the library after an encounter with the opposite sex. At least Mandelson, above, knows the elephant never forgot him.

Baroness Jenkin of Kennington, a campaigner for women's rights, raised eyebrows this week by tabling a question to ask the government if "they consider bondage, domination, sadism and masochism to be a protected characteristic within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010". Sounds more like one for the whips.

### A JOB FOR MR PERFECT

There is yet another election race



this summer as the battle for select committee chairs is on, and we have some aptly named candidates. Barry Gardiner wants the environmental audit committee while one is alarmed by the phrase "Slaughter for justice" (Andy Slaughter, that is). Sadly, as they cannot go to Labour MPs, we shall have neither (Paul Waugh for defence nor (Dawn) Butler for home affairs.

### RAPIER-LIKE RESPONSE

A diplomatic incident has broken out over the Olympic fencing where Hong Kong's Cheung Ka Long beat Italy's Filippo Macchi after three reviews on the deciding point. Macchi accepted defeat, but Italian officials declared the refereeing "unacceptable" and the president of the Italian Olympic Committee cast doubt on the partiality of the judges from Taiwan and Korea. Hongkongers have provided a targeted response: their Pizza Hut

branches are offering free pineapple on every pizza.

The makers of moving, historic montages must decide if they will continue to use the footage of the disgraced newsreader Huw Edwards announcing the death of the Queen, but there are alternatives. In fact, Edwards did not break the news as, in typical fashion, *Sky News* got there a few seconds earlier. While that news was risk-free, *Sky* does have a reputation for breaking stories first at whatever cost. Among rivals, it earned them the mock tagline of "Sky News: never wrong for long".

### COMIC'S IDEA OF DEAD FUNNY

A comic finds humour in darkness, and thus David Baddiel maintains that there is "nothing funnier than people who die in a ridiculous way". He knows of what he speaks, telling Sam Leith's *The Book Club* podcast that his father's death descended into farce. After two hours a doctor arrived but, as he attended to the deceased, he accidentally started the vibrate function on the late Mr Baddiel's mattress. After much pushing of buttons, they couldn't work out how to stop it. Baddiel says the comedy peaked when the doctor said: "I don't think I can pronounce him dead while he's moving."

JACK BLACKBURN

## Porridge with pastries at HMP afternoon tea

### Peter Chappell

Inmates at a prison that has locked up Mick Jagger and the Kray twins are to welcome members of the public for afternoon tea.

Diners will be offered sandwiches, scones and pastries made by inmates on a patisserie course in the surroundings of the former governor's house at HMP Brixton.

Prisoners with between 3 and 24 months of their sentence left can volunteer for the programme, which is intended to simulate a professional working environment.

The Clink Restaurant is encircled by six jail wings housing up to 798 prisoners and is in the middle of the main courtyard, which dates back to 1819. The restaurant has become a success with the public, and was visited by Queen Camilla in 2016. Inmates have gone on to work for high street chains including Wahaca and Carluccio's.

Officials will, however, hope that measures to improve security at the venue will be a success after visitors were found to be smuggling mobile phones and drugs into the jail via the venture in 2017. This time phones are banned and guests will eat with plastic knives and forks.

The new afternoon tea at The Clink is priced at £37.50 per person and is now available to book.

The Clink Bakery, also in the prison, has created a menu featuring cakes and

baked treats all made freshly at HMP Brixton. Prosciutto, pesto and rocket sandwiches will be served alongside sweet treats including mango and passionfruit macarons and fruit scones with rhubarb jam. The patisserie items have been designed to incorporate what the students are learning in their NVQ Level 2 in patisserie and confectionery qualifications.

"Visitors to The Clink can be assured that they are taking part in something unique, while helping someone rebuild their life at the same time", a spokesman for The Clink Charity said.

In 1967 Mick Jagger spent one night in HMP Brixton after a drug raid at the home of his Rolling Stones bandmate Keith Richards led to his conviction for drug possession. He was released pending an appeal and his three-month sentence was subsequently overturned after *The Times* criticised the punishment in a leading article as unjust.



The inmates are studying patisserie

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## News

**Queen of gems**  
The largest Scottish pearl to have been found in recent history is going on sale in Edinburgh. The 43.6-grain (2.825 gram) Abernethy Pearl, discovered nearly 60 years ago in the River Tay in Perth, is expected to fetch up to £60,000 in the Cairncross Collection auction on August 21 at Lyon & Turnbull in Edinburgh



LYON &amp; TURNBULL/STEWART ATTWOOD/PA

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# Head with MS in landmark equality win against Ofsted

Georgia Lambert

A head teacher with multiple sclerosis has won a landmark disability discrimination case against Ofsted after it denied her request to delay an inspection due to a relapse in her condition.

Kelly Vaughan, head of Pool Hayes Primary School in Willenhall in the West Midlands, accused the watchdog of failing to arrange “reasonable adjustments” to accommodate her disability.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a lifelong condition that can affect the brain and spinal cord, causing a wide range of symptoms, including vision disturbance, pain, and problems with balance and concentration.

In the lead-up to the inspection, Vaughan experienced laryngitis, which triggered a relapse of her MS symptoms, affecting her co-ordination and cognitive abilities. A deferral was requested but Ofsted declined, claiming it had done so in line with its policy.

Vaughan told *The Guardian* that she had hoped to have been treated fairly. She said: “My last year was an extremely challenging one and no other education professional should go through the same thing. We hope to be treated fairly by those who come to inspect us and unfortunately this hasn't always been the case.”

Vaughan, who was supported by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), explained that the laryngitis, combined with her MS, hindered her ability to think clearly and multi-task. She found it challenging to provide information to inspectors promptly.

Vaughan filed a discrimination claim with the Central London county court, accusing Ofsted of violating the Equality Act 2010 by failing to make reasonable adjustments for her disability, as well as harassment and discrimination.

She was awarded damages in the case, which was settled out of court, and hopes that her experience helps other disabled professionals. She said: “I hope the changes won in my case help to ensure Ofsted deliver positive change

in their wider culture as well as for other education professionals living with disabilities.”

Ofsted has since apologised for the distress caused and has committed itself to implementing mandatory training on equality, diversity and inclusion for inspectors and staff. It will also collaborate with disability charities to help it change throughout the organisation.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT, said the case demonstrated how far the watchdog had to go to fix its culture. “Ofsted's refusal to listen and its determination to try to defend the actions of its inspectors for so long raises serious concerns and shows that despite the recent change in leadership the organisation has a very long way to go if it is to rebuild trust with the profession,” he said.

The National Education Union has said that the watchdog “causes more harm than good”, citing the case of Ruth Perry, a head teacher who took her own life while waiting for an inspection report in January last year.

It said: “For more than 30 years, Ofsted's toxic regime has been driving school leaders and teachers out of the profession and fuelling a mental health crisis among school staff. The health and wellbeing of members must be prioritised and protected — before, during and after an inspection.”

Labour's plans include ending single-word Ofsted judgments and bringing in report cards with annual checks on safeguarding and attendance.

Ofsted said: “We are sorry for the distress Ms Vaughan describes. A number of reasonable adjustments were made during the inspection, including encouraging Ms Vaughan to be assisted during meetings, providing regular breaks and adjusting how we conducted the inspection. But we recognise the impact on Ms Vaughan. We have strengthened our guidance and training to make sure that inspectors can better support leaders with disabilities on inspection and consider any reasonable adjustments needed.”

## Dental costs drive Britons to head abroad for care

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

One in 20 British adults have travelled abroad for dental care in the past year.

Dental tourists cited the cost of dentistry in the UK as the main reason, according to a report by the General Dental Council (GDC).

Patients also said they had been unable to join dental practices at home, or could not find an appointment locally. Younger patients were more likely to have travelled for care, with 18 per cent claiming to have gone overseas. Thirty destinations were cited in the research, including France and India.

Stefan Czerniawski, executive director of strategy at the GDC, said: “The findings highlight ... the need to make progress in addressing these systemic issues to improve access to timely appointments and the affordability of care. It is particularly concerning that the research shows clear evidence of patients' concerns that the recovery of dental services after the pandemic has not only stalled but may have gone into

reverse. That has worrying implications for the oral health of the public.”

One respondent told the GDC that he had built dental care into holidays to Greece, after being unable to register with an NHS dentist near his East Midlands home. The man, in his fifties and originally from Greece, said: “The cost here in the UK is double or triple compared to Greece.”

The survey of 2,000 adults found that 20 per cent had been unable to get an appointment in the past year. Of those who had not been to the dentist in the past year — about a third of those surveyed — 31 per cent had said that it was because of the cost.

Eddie Crouch, chairman of the British Dental Association, said: “Cost of living and access crises have converged, leaving millions with no options.”

The Department of Health said: “We will rebuild NHS dentistry, starting with an extra 700,000 emergency appointments. We will also reform the dental contract to encourage more dentists to offer NHS services.”

Pro-nimby system is costing  
Britain a fortune

Emma Duncan

Page 22



# Comment

## Starmer must keep his Tory switchers happy

Right-wing voters want the prime minister to be tough on crime but the police will not get more powers or money

Patrick  
Maguire



@PATRICKKMAGUIRE

Sir Keir Starmer was heckled when he went to pay his respects in Southport on Tuesday morning. As one of its native sons I can tell you it wasn't representative of the predominant mood in the town — one of sorrow, resilience and gratitude. Not least because there is a fair amount of goodwill for the prime minister in my quiet little corner of Merseyside.

Gentle and a little leafier than much of northern England, until last month Southport had never been a Labour seat. Its long list of Tory MPs includes Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India and foreign secretary, and Ian Percival, the minister who demanded the return of the death penalty well into the 1980s.

But this time Labour won Southport with a majority of nearly 6,000. Examine the results and you see other seats like it going red for the first time in many decades, or indeed ever. The suburbs no longer belong to the Conservatives but are now the bedrock of one of the biggest parliamentary majorities in history. Why? And how, with the streets of Starmer's England already looking ugly and the Treasury effectively pleading bankruptcy, do they keep it that way?

Those were the questions the cabinet chewed over on Monday. Ministers were presented with the data that defines their mandate and party strategists introduced them to

the people who put them in government. They heard that Starmer's Britons are Leave voters in marginal seats, more often than not young families whose middle incomes are spent on mortgages. In 2019 this sort of person tended to vote Tory. In 2024 they didn't, so Starmer won.

Nationally, one in nine Tory voters switched to Labour, and in marginal seats that number rose to one in four. It might have been higher still had it not been for a late drop in the polls, which Starmer's inner circle put down to Tory switchers backing Reform over Labour, a late surge for the Greens and millions of tactical votes for the Liberal Democrats.

That was the long and short of the analysis presented to cabinet but of course it told only part of the story. Ministers were also told that the best predictor of whether a 2019 Tory was willing to vote Labour was whether they said Starmer had changed the Labour Party and shared their

It's striking how closely they have stuck to the pre-election script

values, not least patriotism and prudence. They trusted that the Labour leader would not tank the economy or jeopardise national security, and now want him to focus on the NHS and improving living standards. Lightly mocking the Corbynite mantra those in the room were taunted with for years, Pat McFadden said to colleagues: "As someone once said, we need to respect the mandate."

And that mandate has been narrowly drawn, quite deliberately. What's striking is just how disciplined this government has been in sticking to the script it recited during the

general election campaign. They treat it like a contract. As Angela Rayner told cabinet: "We need to prove our fiscal responsibility, and need to show delivery". Yvette Cooper noted the need for that delivery to include reduced numbers of small boats, and quickly, while Steve Reed, the environment secretary, said ministers needed to become "agents of change".

Pull all of that off and the prize might be an even bigger mandate or, to borrow a phrase Shabana Mahmood used, a bridge built across a broad centre ground. The data presented in Downing Street shows 45 per cent of voters are pleased with the change in government and think it "serious, energetic, honest and collaborative". That, of course, is a bigger number than 33.7 per cent — the meagre but efficient share of the vote Starmer won last month.

Who knows what Labour's electoral coalition will look like in 2029? Well, if they let those Tory switchers down, it won't be as big as the one it has now. But to No 10 this is less about the size of their majority than the health of democracy. Quoting a recent headline in the Financial Times, Ed Miliband suggested at cabinet that Starmer could be centrism's last hope.

He's probably right, given the likely alternatives, and you get a sense of the stakes from disorder on the streets of London, Hartlepool, Southend and Southport — Southport, of all places — and what the prime minister said in response yesterday. "We will not permit in any circumstances a breakdown in law and order on our streets ... It's not protest, it's not legitimate — it's crime." Rachel Reeves spoke of a very different subject as she laid bare the parlous state of the Treasury accounts in the Commons on



The violence in Southport did not represent the feelings of residents

Tuesday but really she was getting at the same thing when she inverted an old line from John Maynard Keynes: "If we cannot afford it, we cannot do it".

Hard lines on law and order and fiscal restraint — this is the stuff of Starmerism in practice. He and his cabinet ministers would not be saying this if his strategists were not confident that voters wanted to hear it. What was particularly striking about Starmer's press conference on Thursday was his comparison of the far-right agitators who took trains and buses to start a riot in a town that never asked for one to football hooligans. He also promised that the law would deal with them similarly, with restrictions on their freedom of movement, better intelligence sharing between forces and the use of facial recognition technology.

When he was asked whether this all proved that the police should have greater powers to put down riots, or, indeed, more officers, the prime minister said no and then declined to commit additional cash. In that couple of minutes you got the absolute quintessence of Starmer: the suburbanite's disgust at petty criminality, the lawyer's restraint and the politician's distaste for the impossible promises his predecessors

Labour's aim is to build a bridge over a broad centre ground

have tended to make at moments like this. His preferred solution was a technical tweak, a fix for inadequate process.

As his cabinet were told, Labour's new voters are suspicious of that kind of thing too: point the finger, announce something, look busy until people stop paying attention. For most Britons, that's just politics. And if anything reignites their inherent scepticism about the Labour Party, one No 10 insider warns, it will be "sounding like we are promising pie in the sky".

That goes for crime as much as it does economic growth. That, in five years' time, will be the ultimate test in towns like Southport, which craves action on both. Labour knows what its new voters want. So far the unrest is not blowing them off course.

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T AUDIO

## Comment

# Pro-nimby system is costing Britain a fortune

Labour will not get the country building unless it can restrain liberal use of the judicial review

Emma  
Duncan



Caxton Gibbet, a hillock between Cambridge and St Neots, was named for its “cage gibbet”, in which offenders were locked and left to die of thirst. These days the traveller’s experience on the road beside the landmark is more tiresome than gruesome. It’s where the A428 narrows to one lane, leaving commuters fuming.

A dual carriageway between Caxton Gibbet and the Black Cat roundabout ten miles west would, according to National Highways, save regular drivers an hour and a half a week and free up an economic bottleneck in one of the fastest-growing bits of the country. In 2021 the cost was estimated at £507 million. Ground was about to be broken in 2022 when a group called Transport Action Network applied for judicial review of the project. It failed twice but the process delayed construction by ten months.

Time is money, especially in the infrastructure business. When the construction teams have been hired and the bulldozers are waiting to break ground, a long delay is expensive. It’s one of the reasons why the cost of the road has now increased to £1 billion.

Judicial review is an important part of Britain’s unwritten constitution. The process by which citizens can get legal redress if the government is

breaking the law protects them against overweening politicians. It’s particularly important in Britain, where there are fewer checks on the executive than in most civilised countries: as Lord Hailsham, a Conservative lord chancellor, famously put it in 1976, Britain is an “elective dictatorship”. It’s particularly important now, for the growth in regulation since Hailsham’s comment has extended the reach of the state into people’s lives.

But there has to be a balance. Even those who, like me, place a lot of weight on civil liberties and cheered on the judges when they pronounced Boris Johnson’s prorogation of parliament over Brexit to be illegal

## Construction costs in Britain are now the highest in the world

must recognise that the checks on government should not prevent it from getting on with the business for which it is elected. That’s happening in the area of planning, where the excessive scope for individuals to take the government to court is holding the economy back.

One reason why judicial review has become a problem is the proliferation of environmental regulations. The more rules there are, the more scope there is for the government to break them. A second is the Aarhus Convention, an international agreement to which Britain has signed up, which seeks to ensure that everybody should be able to use the law to protect the environment. To

that end, the convention caps the costs that can be awarded against a plaintiff seeking judicial review on environmental grounds at £5,000 for an individual and £10,000 for a group — easily raised through crowdfunding. As Sam Dumitriu of Britain

Remade, a campaign group promoting economic growth, points out, because the common law affords so much scope for citizens to challenge the government, the cost cap has turned out to be a particular problem in this country. It means that, even if you’ve got little hope of success, a challenge is worth a go because the risk is minimal and it will probably hold up a project you don’t like.

Here’s why delays can be so lengthy. A claimant first applies on paper to a High Court judge. If that’s refused, they can then demand an oral hearing in the High Court. If they fail at that stage they can go to the Court of Appeal, and if they fail there they can go to the Supreme Court. So Andrew Boswell, a retired computer scientist and former Green Party councillor, took his case against proposed improvements to the A47 in Norfolk by National Highways all the way up to the Supreme Court. He failed at every stage, delaying the project by more than a year and a half and, according to National Highways, costing the taxpayer tens of millions of pounds.

Fear of judicial review inflates the length and cost of planning applications. Developers pack them with pre-emptive studies covering everything they think activists might object to. That’s how you end up with a 350,000-page application for the Lower Thames Crossing. So

construction costs in Britain are the highest in the world, those high costs are one of the reasons for the country’s unusually low level of investment and low investment is one of the reasons why growth has been slow.

This was a big enough problem for the last government that Rishi Sunak commissioned Lord Banner, a KC, to look into how to shorten legal delays to big infrastructure projects. Banner has yet to report. But it’s going to be a bigger problem still for the new government. Labour has big ambitions for accelerating construction in general and clean-energy infrastructure in particular. If every last pylon carrying wind energy to the grid is judicially reviewed, we are not going to decarbonise our electricity supply by 2030. Which, given that it’s environmentalists taking the government to court, is somewhat ironic.

Changing this won’t be easy. We could withdraw from the Aarhus Convention, but it wouldn’t be a good look for Labour. We could raise the cap while staying in the convention, but we’d get slapped on the wrist. All those levels of appeal are embedded in the judicial system. But big infrastructure projects are so important to our future that there’s a good argument for making them a special case. Ultimately, what we do about this is a political choice.

Like everything else in life, this is about balance. We need both checks on executive power and the freedom to get stuff built. The system has tipped too far towards the former, so we need to put a finger on the scale and tip it back again.



## BBC staff are afraid to blow whistle on ‘talent’ like Edwards Jayne Wood

People are saying the BBC has a problem with paedophiles. I can, of course, see why but the issue is broader and more insidious than that.

I’m a producer at BBC News and I used to work with Huw Edwards. I write this neither in defence of his character nor to attack it. The problem I speak of is simultaneously complex and very simple. People are afraid to speak up. Complaints are regularly not acted upon or are actively suppressed. This is only exacerbated when they involve high-profile talent or senior executives.

To understand the culture that allows this, it is necessary to understand just how hard it is to get to work here in the first place. For many of us, these are dream jobs. Comparatively, we are poorly paid and yet, for every job, thousands apply. We are expendable.

When the allegations against Edwards broke last summer, Emily Maitlis branded the reporting “distasteful” and questioned why people hadn’t gone straight to HR. Only someone without one iota of job insecurity could hold such an opinion, I remember thinking. If Maitlis whistleblow, it would hit home. Her career was beyond threat, beyond harm. The same luxury is not afforded to most of us.

Discovering there were multiple complaints against Edwards, Russell Brand and *Strictly* professionals is no surprise. And these are the ones that made it as far as being reported to HR. We are always encouraged to raise things informally for resolution first within our departments. That’s easier to keep quiet.

I’ve raised one serious complaint during my time at BBC News. It wasn’t about Edwards but concerned bullying by two female colleagues. After much encouragement I began the arduous HR process. Many weeks later I was told that the pair would be asked to “reflect upon their behaviour”. Is that the best a massive HR department soaking up millions of pounds of licence fee money can do? As for the real impact, I was no longer offered work on that programme.

I know from friends on *Newsnight* that multiple bullying complaints have been made there recently yet nothing has been done. Valid concerns are dismissed as people’s dissatisfaction with the new format. Every single colleague and friend at the BBC has a similar story. Sometimes the pushback is more subtle — you are told you are occupying everyone’s time and discouraged from taking issues further. Is it then surprising that scandals seem to explode after so much is suppressed?

Sadly, I fear more misconduct and abuse will emerge from the shadows long before any meaningful progress is made.

Jayne Wood’s name has been changed

## Tom Peck Notebook

### One day you will all be gripped by my holidays

This week is meant to be the same as every last week in July until I’m 80, but it’s not. I’m meant to be where

I always am, in the family timeshare at the bottom of Windermere. I’m meant to be in Fell Foot Park, buying my daughter several ice creams a day by way of compensation for the water not being safe to swim in any more.

I’m not there because, as you may know, there was a general election and parliament has been extended, mainly so Rachel Reeves could announce a budget for the middle of the October half-term.

The main thing I do in the family timeshare is think about my still unwritten play and/or screenplay: *Timeshare*. Forty years ago, my wife’s parents co-invested, with their parents, in a week every July in a lovely cottage that backs on to the River Leven, for the next 80 years. When my wife was a little girl, she

went there every year with her parents and grandparents. Now her children — and mine — do too. The cottage stays the same, the week stays the same, the generations turn into one another. When it does become an A-level set text, the York Notes might wish to question whether the title, *Timeshare*, might really be *Time’s Hare*? That this tortoise-like life is racing past while you barely notice.

I don’t make much progress, mainly because beyond the conceit, I can’t quite work out what I want to actually happen. Beyond some protracted negotiations over the changing access rights of timeshare guests to a nearby leisure club swimming pool, there is not much drama. That said, I was at a wedding recently at which the groom also used to go every year, as a young boy, to a timeshare in Ballater, Aberdeenshire. The bride was the little girl from the timeshare next door, so that’s maybe a start.

### Damp squib

Writing an extremely occasional Notebook for The Times does not automatically qualify a man for entry in *Who’s Who*. And that’s just as well, as I

would have little choice but to declare in the hobbies and interests section of mine “enthusiastic dahlia grower” and promptly die of embarrassment.

Most people wisely leave gardening for retirement. Mainly because of the pandemic, I’ve gone three decades too early, so I worry about what will be left.

These are exciting weeks for dahlia enthusiasts, but tense too. British winter weather has become not merely unpredictable but violent. Last year I risked leaving my dahlia tubers in the ground, not knowing that the winter would be the wettest in recorded history. For an overwintered dahlia, essentially a potato left underground and highly susceptible to rot, that is not good news. Most have returned, but it is only in late July that they reach full bloom and I discover how well my little friends have coped.

*Wittmans Superba* has not survived at all. *Polverton Kristobel* appears a shadow of her former self. *Winholme Diane* hangs by a thread and she’s usually first to appear. *Golden Scepter* is resplendent but I’ve kind of gone off

him anyway. *Café Au Lait* shows much promise. Don’t worry, I’ll keep you all posted.

### Flipping heck

I am a man of many faults but none are so pronounced as my capacity for losing things. This summer, it is a fault that will quite literally haunt me. In last year’s September heatwave, I got hold of one of those giant 10,000-litre inflatable swimming pools at a scandalously knockdown price. Last weekend, I felt its time had finally come again.

It takes all day to fill, at least 11 hours. I whiled away most of this time in a fruitless search for my flip-flops. I realised in the night what had happened. In the morning my worst fears were confirmed. There, appearing through the light blue lining underneath, two perfect outlines — flip and flop. They’re stuck there now, pinned under several tonnes of water. To empty the pool and retrieve them would cost more than the flip-flops. There they shall remain, quite possibly until September. I am hopeful the daily torment of their sight might teach me a valuable lesson; hopeful, but not optimistic.

Tom Peck is The Times’s parliamentary sketchwriter

Martin Samuel is away





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# Harris needs to show her sums on economy

The vice-president will have to back either West Coast money or Main Street's workers in a key election battleground



@JUSTINONWEB

The coming of Kamala Harris has turned the foot soldiers of the Democratic Party overnight from a dazed post-presidential-debate rabble, wandering in the woods and waiting to be picked off in November, into a giddy phalanx of happy warriors, flowers in their teeth, weapons gleaming and ready.

A candidate under 60, who walks down the steps of planes without causing onlookers to hold their breath. It feels like a miracle. And the polls suggest that the bleeding of the Democrats has been staunch.

But to win, what now? It is, once again, the economy, stupid. But not only inflation, which has done Biden so much political harm. No, this November the fight is about the future, in particular over trade and anti-trust policies the details of which are too complex for most Americans to bother with but the impact of which is profound and electorally determinative.

American elections, famously, are won through a handful of states that

can change hands. It is possible that Harris expands the number of states — and, crucially, the kinds of states — potentially in play. But at the moment the most obvious path to victory lies through only three must-win races: Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

In those areas — often described as rust-belt but better thought of as would-be domestic manufacturing powerhouses — what matters more than ever is the future of American work. Trump and his running-mate are unashamed populists, promising protectionist tariffs and state investment. Harris is going to have to match the economic populism of their message.

It could bring to the fore an

## An extraordinary and vicious fight in the engine room of politics

extraordinary and vicious battle that has been going on in the engine room of American political economics. Unseen by most Americans there is a battle for the economic soul of the nation being fought around the diminutive and youthful figure of Lina Khan, perhaps the most important American that few outside Washington have ever heard of.

She has been described as a

“wonky cult hero” — The Washington Post called her “the legal wunderkind of a new progressive movement determined to break the economic and political power of Big Business and Big Tech”.

Khan is the 35-year-old head of the Federal Trade Commission. Her job, as she sees it, is to destroy monopolistic practices that are doing damage to American society, backing the little guy, the small face-to-face community versus the faceless and faux techno communities that enrich a few West Coast folk but damage everything else, including, via hate-seeking algorithms, the very soul of the nation.

Her work is of pivotal importance because, unusually, it has been praised across the political aisle. JD Vance, Trump's running-mate, has called Khan “one of the few people in the Biden administration that I think is doing a pretty good job”.

Now the tech bros are fighting back. And Harris is going to have to decide whose side she is on. The billionaire founder of LinkedIn, Reid Hoffman, donated \$10 million to the Biden-Harris campaign and there is plenty more where that came from. But Hoffman has a price and he's not shy about stating it: fire Khan who is, in his view, “waging war on American business”.

Here's the thing: “American business” might look different if you

live in the Bay Area and have a zillion dollars in the bank. You are cool with identity stuff — fights for trans rights and racial rights are fine by you. Particularly if they are conducted online. Mass immigration is no worry either if the folks who come in tend your garden or, higher up the education scale, invent new products. But class rights, union rights? Not so fast.

Will Harris choose Main Street or Menlo Park? Which matters more:

## Trump does not govern as he campaigns and his backers know that

Hoffman's money or Main Street's back?

It is worth adding a complication. Both Trump and Vance are also backed by West Coast money and West Coast plutocrats with ideas about free trade and movement of people that clash with their stated aims for the rustier parts of the nation. The money backers, in their cases though, are willing to be quieter while the election is won: they know from previous experience that Trump does not necessarily govern as he campaigns.

Indeed, his campaign messages on tech matters have also evolved: on bitcoin he has morphed from

intensely sceptical (on behalf of investors who stand to be bilked) to hugely positive on behalf of libertarian tech folk who see cryptocurrency as a form of freedom. Harris is going to have to work out her attitude as well in the coming days: Biden has been mildly keen on regulation; will she stick with that or go where the big money is?

Democrats complain that it is unfair that Harris is going to be asked serious questions while Trump is given — as they see it — a free pass to chop and change, but that is the reality of campaigning against him. And it is no exaggeration to say, because it has an impact in the swing states, that Harris's positions on trade and the tech world more generally could determine the outcome in November.

That is the prize. The reward if Harris has the political ability and, some would say the courage, to shape the message is huge: American capitalism retooled for a new generation. Main Street pacified and enough of its votes won to silence Vance and befuddle Trump. This is not a meme: this is lunch-bucket reality. Heartland votes and, yes, victory.

Justin Webb presents the Americast podcast on BBC Sounds

Gerard Baker is away

## Letters to the Editor



Letters to the Editor should be sent to  
letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to  
1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF



### Housing targets and the 'grey belt'

Sir, The new proposed method for calculating housing targets is every bit as simplistic and misleading as the old one ("Ministers may force homes onto green belt", Jul 31). Requiring that every local authority should set mandatory annual housebuilding targets at 0.8 per cent of the existing stock may facilitate national goals for 1.5 million new homes but it takes no account of differences between places as to their growth potential or environmental constraints etc, which require a more nuanced approach. Through the application of an affordability add-on, it also perpetuates the myth that high house prices necessarily indicate an imbalance between supply and demand. Houses are as much capital assets, purchased in anticipation of financial gain, as they are places to live, which creates an extra demand; encouraging more housebuilding does not seem an appropriate means of addressing that problem. At the most fundamental level, the new approach pays no regard to the overriding backdrop of falling birth rates, with our population sustained only by high levels of net migration.

**Robert Davies**  
Chair, Bath district, Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England

Sir, Has Angela Rayner not been reading the business pages of The Times? Her policy to make homes more affordable by mass building does not stand up to scrutiny. According to David Wighton ("Is more housebuilding really the answer for lower property prices?", May 23), a commonly used yardstick suggests that increasing the housing stock by 1 per cent leads to a 2 per cent fall in prices. Not much use to those at the bottom of the ladder. Labour needs to build council houses in urban areas, not "grey belt" executive housing estates.

**John Conlon**  
Felixstowe, Suffolk

Sir, The government's housing ambitions are correct in principle but will be shoddy in practice. The government has largely removed the words quality and beauty from the National Planning Policy Framework, which will result in a return to the poor-quality building we witnessed under John Prescott. We will have small homes, crowded together, not the decent homes that people need to live their lives in comfort and contribute to Britain's prosperity.

### Corrections and clarifications

**Andy Boddington**  
Ludlow, Shropshire

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## VAT on education and the politics of envy

Sir, The imposition of VAT on private school fees is nothing short of ill-judged class warfare. Not the kind that this Labour government thinks it is but one on aspirational, hardworking parents who are seeking the best life for their children. Is Rachel Reeves so naive to think that exceptionally high earners will be bothered by the rise? It is those parents who are just making enough to scrape together school fees who will face the greatest burden.

We will not be able to send our children to state schools from January as the deadline for withdrawal from their existing school has now passed, and in Merton, where we live, there are no places available at a suitable state school anyway. This leaves us two options: move house or pretend to be Catholic to try to attain a place at the local school, which in any case is oversubscribed. If we move my two children will have to spend the next 12 months trying to make a whole new set of friends and build relationships again. We will be forced to up sticks, sell our home and start over again for the sake of the children. What a vile policy this is, from a government that is so anti-middle class that I am left wondering how it had enough

ambition to even get into government.  
**Chris Cameron-Hann**  
London SW20

Sir, Clearly it is not practical for the new government to backtrack on its commitment to charge VAT on private school fees. But there is scope for wriggle room, not only on the timing but also the amount. A compromise could be to impose a lower rate than the standard 20 per cent — after all, the VAT on heating is at 5 per cent. The same rate for private school fees would reduce the damage to the sector that the standard rate of VAT would cause while still bringing in additional revenue.

**Henry Scrope**  
Shipton by Beningbrough, N Yorks

Sir, Rachel Reeves says she is more interested in the 93 per cent of children in state schools than the 7 per cent who are not. As chancellor should she not be responsible for maintaining an interest in all children? The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the UK is a signatory, states in Article 2 that the convention applies to every child without discrimination of any kind against the child, parent or legal

guardian. I would hope that the chancellor would not wish for an apparent contravention of the UNCRC by punishing children and their parents or guardians for a choice they are allowed to make.  
**Martin Denny**  
Ascot, Berks

Sir, All this fuss about the tax on school fees feels so out of touch with the economic and social realities we face. If only those people who are so vocal about protecting their own child's right to an elite education could instead apply their energies to improving schools for the vast majority of children, we might all benefit.

**Kate Johnson**  
London W3

Sir, I wonder if Rachel Reeves's determination to impose VAT on school fees is fuelled by her experience of being disparaged by the friend of a chess opponent who was also a public schoolboy (Magazine, Jun 22). Perhaps she had not encountered "sledging" before. Independent schools are famed for encouraging resilience in the face of opposition and loss.  
**Anthea McMyn**  
Christchurch, Dorset

### BMA's stance on puberty blockers

Sir, The British Medical Association has a variety of roles including acting as a trade union for doctors and producing a weekly medical journal that publishes rigorously evaluated research. One may take a view about the recent strikes, which have pitted the welfare of junior doctors against the smooth running of the NHS. Today, to my astonishment I read that the BMA has voted to oppose the findings of the Cass report and to try to reintroduce the prescribing of hormone blockers to children (news, Aug 1). The Cass report finally brought scientific rigour to the highly politicised and toxic debate on this matter. For the BMA to dismiss science in favour of wokery is an absolute disgrace. I have resigned my membership after 42 years and expect that many others will do the same.

**Dawn Black**  
Consultant psychiatrist, London NW11

### EXTRA TRAINS FOR HOLIDAY RAIL TRAFFIC

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 2, 1924

The term "record" is much abused in relation to holiday traffic, but this year it really seems as if it will be justified by the rush to the seaside and moors on the eve of the August Bank Holiday. Railway officials at the big termini were early yesterday handling traffic far above the ordinary, and from this they deduce that before tomorrow night they will have exceeded previous holiday figures. The rush to Scotland is most pronounced, and both at King's Cross and Euston there was not one more sleeping car to be found from anywhere. The LNER at King's

Cass review on puberty blockers. The BMA's leaders are a self-serving bunch of political activists who happen to be doctors. In reality, the BMA is just another trade union and should stick to its core role of trying to improve our working conditions.

The BMA says that it intends to carry out an evaluation of the Cass review but it is not a scientific body like the National Institute for Health and Care Research or the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. We should ignore anything that the BMA has to say about this matter and I would urge all members who believe in evidence-based medicine to cancel their membership, especially if they want to protect children from these quacks.  
**Professor Jonathan Beard**  
Consultant vascular surgeon, Sheffield

### Tough ministry

Sir, Concerning your report "Kemi Badenoch: I'm a victim of hit job over bullying claims", Jul 31), the rules of the civil service used to be that we worked with the ministers the electorate had given us. If they were

difficult, we argued with them. If they were impossible, we appealed to the prime minister. The inertia of the civil service is such that Margaret Thatcher could never have got through her reforms without "bullying" them. The best ministers are the most demanding ones.  
**Lord Renwick of Clifton**  
Former British ambassador to the US

### Berry bandits

Sir, Your report on the gratuitous eating of strawberries at a pick-your-own farm in the Vale of Glamorgan ("Berry craze 'is theft'", Aug 1) reminds me of the time that I saw a similar thing occur at a pick-your-own farm near us. Two ladies were having a good snack so I asked my friend in an unnecessarily loud voice if he had noticed the pedestrian weighbridge as we entered the property. I said that they weigh you when you come in, weigh you again when you leave, and then charge you if there has been a significant change in your weight. The two women looked at each other and stopped immediately.  
**David Shepherd**  
Woodstock, Oxon

Cross had every sleeping berth in commission, and the LMS at Euston had booked 350 berths, the full capacity available. The 730 train for the Highlands ran in six portions, and the previous night it had also been necessary to send six trains. Altogether 30 additional expresses were run from Euston yesterday, and every one was well loaded. Duplicate services were needed to North Wales, and there was a heavy demand for trains to the Lake District. Today the heavy excursion traffic swings over to St Pancras, and nearer home the train service to Southend from Fenchurch Street has for weeks past been 20 per cent above normal loads, despite the attractions of Wembley, where the LMS are arranging to provide trains for 125,000 to 150,000 people on Monday, apart from an attractive day programme of excursions to the countryside of Herts and Bucks. Today 12 excursion trains are due in at King's Cross from the provinces,

and yesterday the Flying Scotsman in the morning left London in triplicate, while trains to the Yorkshire coast had to be duplicated. A special party for Newcastle last night occupied three complete trains, and these were run after all the ordinary traffic had been dispatched. At Paddington nearly all the long-distance expresses were run in two parts, and during the past week the registration of seats has mounted into thousands of bookings. The West Country is the great attraction, but the charms of the Welsh coast yearly draw increasing numbers. There have been similar scenes at termini serving the South coast resorts, now in the height of their season, and the welcome change in the weather has produced a general spirit of optimism.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

### Splashing the cash

Sir, James Kirkup is right. The Keynesian tool kit requires supporting demand as much as long-term investment ("Reeves must tempt savers to splash the cash", Aug 1). Hence the chancellor's decision to cut the winter fuel allowance is small-minded, and stems from the government's failure to understand its own economic policy. If we help those who are just about managing they will buy cauliflowers, shoes and stair carpets or be able to afford the car or washing machine that Kirkup mentions without using up non-existent savings.

**Nik Wood**  
London E9

Sir There is no way I am going to "splash the Covid cash". I shall be saving it for the inevitable tax rises.  
**Celia Ansdell**  
London W22

Sir, Alice Thomson (comment, Jul 31; letters, Aug 1) is quite right: the affluent elderly don't need handouts, which is why we and many like us give them away immediately to charities such as the Salvation Army, which is perfectly equipped to engage directly with those who most certainly do — people the Treasury does not (and will never) reach.  
**Peter Wall**  
Hale Barns, Cheshire

### Of mice and men

Sir, Further to James Marriott's article "Men need to see that novels aren't for losers" (Aug 1), men have always read novels. They have simply tended to read different ones from women and in fewer quantities, a trend observed as early as the 18th century. The trouble now is not so much the result of that spurious trope, the "crisis of masculinity", as that no one in English (except perhaps Edward St Aubyn and Alan Hollinghurst) writes novels that men want to read. Perhaps if more men went into publishing, that would change.  
**Sir John Jenkins**  
Matfield, Kent

### Swirling sensation

Sir, Regarding the disappearance of house martins (Nature notes, Jul 31), here in north Cornwall we have six house martin nests on our new-build house: three brought from a shop and three beautifully constructed by bill. Each nest has resulted in two broods, and we have fluttering and chattering around us all day long. It is wonderful.  
**Clare Beard**  
Trebetherick, Cornwall

Sir, My husband and I were astounded to see literally hundreds of house martins arrive above us on one very hot evening this week. They appeared from nowhere and were swirling and diving for about 20 minutes. I wondered if they had been attracted by insects being swept into the air by the harvesting of nearby fields.  
**Judith Gee**  
Himbleton, Worcs

### Munch time

Sir, Sarah McKenna (letter, Aug 1) advises Hilary Rose to indulge her love of crisps "only with wine". Crisps are delicious simply eaten on their own. I enjoy them and other "naughty but nice treats" under the golden rule: "Everything in moderation — including moderation."  
**Bonnie White**  
Wells, Somerset

## Daily Universal Register

UK: The Edinburgh International Festival and Edinburgh Festival Fringe begin; the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is held; Brighton and Hove Pride festival begins.

## Nature notes



There's nothing dull about ditchwater. In fact, it's one of our most valuable habitats. About half a million kilometres of ditches cut their way through Britain and, though many are badly blighted by chemical run-off from nearby fields, some are valuable ecosystems. The water in ditches can harbour otters, water voles and even fish. Many mammals and bird species use the brambly cover that grows around these man-made excavations. Countless aquatic plants manage to survive in the deep-cut channels, as do newts and other amphibians. Dragonflies and hoverflies breed in these trenches too. But perhaps the top beneficiary of the humble ditch is the great silver water beetle. This is our largest water beetle and can only be found in ditches. JONATHAN TULLOCH

## Birthdays today



**Sir Anthony Seldon**, pictured, political biographer, *Johnson at 10: The Inside Story* (2023), vice-chancellor, University of Buckingham (2015-20), 71; **Donna Air**, television

presenter and actress, *The Mummy Returns* (2001), 45; **Isabel Allende**, novelist, *The House of Spirits* (1982), *City of the Beasts* (2002), *Violeta* (2022), 82; **Sir Michael Bibby**, chairman, Bibby Line Group (financial services, marine and infrastructure), 61; **Lord (Simon) Murray of Blidworth**, minister for migration and borders (2022-23), 50; **Matthew Crummack**, chief executive, Domestic & General (appliance warranties), 54; **Major General Gerry Ewart-Brookes**, deputy chief of staff (plans), Joint Support and Enabling Command (Nato), 54; **Andy Fairweather Low**, guitarist and songwriter, Amen Corner, (*If Paradise is Half As Nice* (1969)), 76; **Julia Foster**, actress, *Alfie* (1966), *Half a Sixpence* (1967), 81; **John Gale**, theatre producer, *No Sex, Please — We're British* (1971), 95; **Sammy McIlroy**, footballer, Manchester United (1971-82) and Northern Ireland (1972-87), and manager, Northern Ireland (2000-03), 70; **Sir Paul Marshall**, chairman and chief investment officer, Marshall Wace (hedge fund group), investor in UnHerd and GB News (media), 65; **Zara Mohammed**, secretary-general, Muslim Council of Britain, 33; **Butch Patrick**, actor, child werewolf Eddie in *The Munsters* (1964-66), 71; **Rose Tremain**, writer, *Sacred Country* (1992), *Absolutely & Forever* (2023), chancellor, University of East Anglia (2013-16), 81; **JD Vance**, American politician, Republican Party nominee for vice-president in the 2024 US presidential election, 40; **Dr Jean Wilson**, president, Church Monuments Society (2013-18, now vice-president), 79.

## On this day

In 1492 Jews who had not converted to Christianity were expelled by ship from Spain by edict of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. They were the last Jews legally allowed in the country at the time.

## The last word

"Everybody in the world is thinking: I wish there was just one other person I could really talk to, who could really understand me, who'd be kind to me." Doris Lessing, British novelist and Nobel laureate, *The Golden Notebook* (1962)



## Question Time

Huw Edwards's downfall raises serious concerns about the BBC's internal processes. The national broadcaster must now be transparent as to what it knew and when

The downfall of Huw Edwards has been dismal to behold. Over the two decades that he anchored the News at Ten, his sober, authoritative style appeared to embody the sense of trust the BBC seeks to convey. This week, just fourteen months after presiding over coverage of the King's coronation, Edwards pleaded guilty to three counts of possessing indecent images of children. The offences he has admitted to make for grim reading: seven of the pornographic images found in his possession were classified as Category A, the most serious kind, and some involved children who could have been as young as seven. When he is sentenced on September 16 he could be jailed.

However tempting it may be simply to draw a line under such sordid revelations, BBC executives first have some serious questions to answer. Yesterday, Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, called Tim Davie, the BBC's director-general, to give him an opportunity to account for the apparently opaque and dilatory way the corporation seems to have handled the crisis.

First among the questions the BBC must answer is whether it acted decisively enough once it had learned of Edwards's wrongdoing. The timeline of events over the last year indicates that it may not have. It is now clear the BBC knew in November

last year that Edwards had been arrested in connection with serious offences involving child abuse imagery. Instead of sacking him, the corporation kept him on until April this year, when Edwards finally resigned, citing medical advice from his doctors. Though it wasn't apparent at the time, his eventual decision to quit came just weeks after Alex Williams, the convicted paedophile who shared abuse images over Whatsapp with him, was handed a 12-month suspended sentence.

It is open to doubt whether the date of his departure should have been a decision that fell to Edwards to make. Like any employer, the BBC had to discharge a duty of care towards him and see that due process was observed where guilt had not yet been established. But, in an ultimately puzzling attempt at clarification, the broadcaster this week insisted it would have sacked Edwards had he been actually charged with criminal offences while in its employment: not an approach obviously consistent with a continued presumption of innocence. Where such confusion reigns, sunlight is the best disinfectant: the BBC must be more open about its approach, what it knew, and when.

In the five-month interlude Edwards stayed on the BBC payroll after his arrest, he remained the

highest-paid news anchor at the corporation despite his continued absence from the screen. There is a strong ethical case to be made that the £200,000 of public money he earned during that period should not have been paid to him; if it cannot be clawed back, he should do the right thing and return it voluntarily.

In her 2016 review into the culture that presided at the BBC during Jimmy Savile's time there, Dame Janet Smith found a permissive attitude towards high-profile "talent" had allowed serious criminality to go unchecked. Instead of internalising this lesson, the broadcaster seems to be repeating old mistakes. An investigation into colleagues' complaints about Edwards's behaviour seems to have been swept under the carpet after his resignation in April, leaving victims feeling their concerns have simply been ignored.

When The Sun first sounded the alarm about Edwards, the first impulse of a string of foolish media grandees was to attempt to discredit the reporting. Though a set of different criminal allegations have led to Edwards's undoing, the spirit of that paper's original story has been vindicated. The BBC must now direct a similarly questioning and critical eye towards its own practices.

## Gershkovich Freed

US reporter is part of the biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War

The first reaction of everyone must be joy that the long ordeal of Evan Gershkovich has come to an end. The Wall Street Journal reporter, arrested in Russia in 2023 on trumped-up espionage charges and sentenced two weeks ago to 16 years in a high-security penal colony, was yesterday released as part of the biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War.

The second reaction must be utter contempt for a thuggish government that so cynically kidnaps western journalists and other convenient hostages to trade them for killers, arms dealers and spies imprisoned in the West for carrying out the Kremlin's dirty work abroad. And the third reaction must be surprise that, at a time of almost unprecedented tension with Russia, the Biden administration has been able to strike a hard bargain that has also freed a number of brave Russians who have campaigned against abuses and repression and paid for it with long prison sentences.

It was clear from the start that Mr Gershkovich was kidnapped in Russia to use as political leverage. No evidence was produced of his alleged spying. No testimony was made public at his closed

"trial". No attempt was made to conceal the real purpose of his imprisonment in a notoriously harsh jail outside Moscow and the mockery of his regular court appearances, shaven-headed and yet resilient. President Putin even spoke openly with a US journalist in February about a possible swap, clearly referring to Vadim Krasikov, a former FSB security service assassin convicted of killing an exiled Chechen commander in Berlin in 2019 and serving a life sentence in Germany.

Along with Mr Gershkovich, Russia also released Paul Whelan, a former US marine with British and Irish citizenship, who has been in prison since 2018 and faced another decade there for alleged espionage. Altogether some 24 prisoners are being exchanged, held in Russia, Belarus, the US, Germany, Poland, Slovenia and Norway. This squalid deal can only be justified in the West by the end to the ordeals of those sentenced in Russia to draconian terms. This also, hearteningly, includes a number of Russian dissidents — courageous men and women who supported the late Alexei Navalny, the opposition leader who died this year in a Siberian prison camp, as well as those who

have protested over the war in Ukraine. They include Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian-British political activist and critic of Mr Putin who led opposition efforts to ensure sanctions were imposed on Russians violating human rights.

A key role in the exchanges has been played by Turkey, where a Russian government plane landed with the prisoners. This underlines President Erdogan's determination to make himself an invaluable interlocutor who might yet play a role in negotiating peace in Ukraine. It also, unfortunately, shows how eager Russia is to lure Turkey away from its Nato allegiance and how Ankara is cosying up to its northern neighbour and profiting from not imposing sanctions.

The deal is a supreme example of realpolitik — not always very pretty — by both the Russian and US intelligence services. Despite Ukraine, tentative contacts remain. But the deal also increases Russia's isolation. No western journalist or business leader is now likely to travel to Russia and risk kidnap. The credibility of any justice in Russia is also further compromised. Are all trials there now to be seen only as Kremlin attempts at leverage?

## Bad Medicine

GPs are wrong to implement industrial action over funding for surgeries

The British Medical Association is encouraging general practitioners to choose from a ten-item menu of measures designed to protest against the new GP services contract. The list includes a cap on the number of patients seen daily, reducing appointments by one third, plus several IT-related boycotts which, if enacted, will slow down the exchange of information within the NHS. One union leader says the aim is to "bring the NHS to a standstill very quickly."

Many people with post-pandemic experience of their local practice might be forgiven for wondering how this work-to-rule can make their GP any

more inaccessible than they are already. Yet patients will suffer, as they have throughout the junior doctors' strikes, which caused the postponement of around 1.5 million appointments and operations. The action is deeply irresponsible. If GPs see their funding (if not their salaries and pensions, which are generous) as inadequate, their representatives have a new government with which to negotiate. They should be talking, not shutting up shop or switching off software.

Several prominent BMA figures, however, give every impression of being more interested in waging a permanent dispute than reaching a settle-

ment. A number of militant left-wingers, veterans of the Corbynite takeover of the Labour Party, have gained powerful roles in the doctors' union. They are the reason that the BMA, scandalously, is opposing the Cass review and wants to lift the ban on puberty blockers for children. Moderate doctors must see the harm these activists are inflicting on their standing and, much more importantly, on their patients. It is a misconception that newly qualified doctors must take the Hippocratic oath, including its famous provision "first, do no harm." Young clinicians are under no obligation to make such a public declaration. They ought to be.

# World

## Iran's axis reels as key Hamas

### Lebanon

Oliver Marsden, Edmund Bower Beirut  
Samer Al-Atrush  
Middle East Correspondent

Israel claimed yesterday to have confirmed the killing of Mohammed Deif, the military commander of Hamas, ramping up its military's insistence that it is winning the war on its Iran-backed militia adversaries in Gaza and elsewhere.

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) said an intelligence assessment made clear Deif, below, had been killed in an airstrike conducted on a displacement camp in al-Mawasi, near Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, on July 13.

The strike was highly controversial because of the high number of civilian deaths, with 90 people said to have been killed in all, and it left the fate of Deif, its main target, unclear at the time. Hamas has neither confirmed his death, nor provided proof of life.

Deif, 58, was responsible for building the al-Qasem brigades, Hamas's military arm, into a formidable fighting force, and was regarded as the main planner both of the group's suicide attacks in the past and of the October 7 massacre.

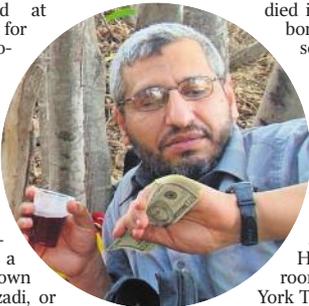
The IDF statement coincided with the funeral in Tehran of Ismail Haniyeh, the Qatar-based Hamas leader, who was killed on Wednesday in an explosion at a compound in the north of the city, where he had just attended the inauguration of Iran's new president, Masoud Pezeshkian. Israel has not claimed the attack but not disputed Iran's claim it was responsible.

The night before, Israel had also struck a block in south Beirut, killing Fuad Shukur, the military head of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia militant group, which like Hamas is financially backed by Iran.

Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, met military leaders and issued a statement welcoming the killings of Shukur and Deif which also served as a warning to Iran and the militias over the likely scale of their expected retaliation.

"After we eliminated [the] Hezbollah chief-of-staff on Tuesday, today came the final verification on the elimination of Hamas chief-of-staff Mohammed Deif," he said. "His elimination underscores a simple principle which we have set: whoever harms us, we will harm them."

In Tehran, hundreds of mourners gathered at Tehran University for Haniyeh's funeral procession. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, led the funeral prayers. State television showed Haniyeh's coffin and that of his bodyguard, who Iran said died alongside him, placed on a lorry and paraded down a street towards Azadi, or Freedom, Square. Huge crowds were shown throwing flowers as the procession moved through the capital. After the funeral, Haniyeh's remains were due to be transferred to Doha, Qatar, where he had been based along with Hamas's political leadership.



His assassination represented a deep embarrassment for Iran, which leads the so-called Axis of Resistance that includes Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis in Yemen and other anti-western and anti-Israel militias.

Iran said Haniyeh, 61, had been killed in an airstrike, but he may have died in an explosion of a bomb planted in the secure residence where he was staying in northern Tehran according to a different account. Middle East intelligence officials said the bomb was placed weeks in advance and detonated when Haniyeh was in the room at night, The New York Times reported.

If that account is confirmed, it would be even more embarrassing to Iran, which has sought to snuff out a network of Israeli intelligence covert agents who have conducted numerous assassinations in recent years, mostly targeting nuclear scientists.

### Analysis

The leadership transition in Hamas after the killing of Ismail Haniyeh is likely to be smooth. What his death means for the group as a whole, for Gaza and for a future Palestinian state — a remote possibility at present — is less clear (Richard Spencer writes). Hamas is an Islamist group born out of the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Like the Brotherhood, it is a disciplined organisation with a politburo and fixed processes, albeit secretive, for replacing its top figures.

When Haniyeh took over from Khaled Meshaal at its head in 2017, the change

happened without explanation but also without any sign of opposition. Meshaal remained active in the politburo and has re-emerged since the October 7 attacks as a combative spokesman.

Most analysts in the Middle East expect Meshaal to be reappointed to the top job, at least on an interim basis. He has the diplomatic experience to be Hamas's main interlocutor with Qatar, Egypt and Turkey — the countries that mediate between the group and Israel and the United States — although Haniyeh had a reputation for being more moderate and flexible.

Hamas may be more

seriously affected by the loss of Mohammed Deif, its military chief, if Israel's new assessment that it succeeded in killing him in an airstrike on July 13 is correct.

Ultimately political decisions, including on deals such as those put forward by Haniyeh, are made collectively. Few individuals, though, were so successful in forging military strength as Deif, who built a group purposed for terrorist attacks on Israeli targets into an army able to use a range of tactics.

The al-Qasem brigades asserted Hamas rule over Gaza, launched missiles at Israel, continued to conduct attacks inside Israel on its citizens — not least on

October 7 — but also established a degree of deterrence that has bedevilled the Israeli invasion of the Strip.

Israeli tanks and jets can operate across the territory but Hamas fighters can still emerge from tunnels to carry out lightning attacks. More than 300 Israeli soldiers have lost their lives since the start of the ground invasion.

Hamas has suffered huge losses in return, certainly several thousand men, but it is still strong enough to act as a spoiler under Yahya Sinwar, its overall commander in Gaza, should Israel and the western allies seek to impose a government of their own choosing.

Vatican judge accused of favouring the mafia  
Page 28



# commanders killed



Iranians burn the Israeli flag during the funeral ceremony of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard who were killed in Tehran on Wednesday. Their coffins were carried through the streets, right. In Lebanon, below, Hezbollah fighters pay respects at the coffin of Fuad Shukur, their commander who was killed in an Israeli strike in Beirut on Tuesday



MAJID SAEDI/GETTY IMAGES; VAHID SALEMI/AP; WAEL HAMZEH/EPA



Khamenei has threatened a harsh response to the killing of Haniyeh. He held a meeting of his national security council, also attended by militia leaders including from Hezbollah, on Wednesday, to discuss what form retaliation should take.

There were more threats at Shukur's funeral in Beirut. Thousands of mourners gathered in Dahiyeh, the Hezbollah stronghold where Shukur was hit, to listen to a televised speech by Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader. He was interrupted by chants of "death to America" and "death to Israel".

Nasrallah said the cross-border attacks on Israel, which it has been conducting since the war in Gaza broke out in October, would resume. "From tomorrow morning we will return as we were and continue the support work," he said, referring to Hezbollah's campaign to pressure Israel into ending its ten-month long war in Gaza.

Those attacks have focused mostly on border towns and military positions in northern Israel, forcing tens of thousands of Israelis to flee. Israel has conducted strikes in southern Lebanon, also emptying out towns there.

Shukur's assassination, after a week-

end rocket attack which Israel and the US blamed on Hezbollah that killed 12 children playing football in the Golan Heights, has changed the calculations of limited mutual exchanges, however. Nasrallah said more was to come. "The enemy and whoever is behind him must wait for our response, which is certain, God willing," he said. "We will respond, that is certain. And they must wait. We are waiting to conduct a real retaliation, and not a symbolic retaliation, and for real opportunities."

Following his speech, mourners, some in Hezbollah uniforms, carried Shukur's coffin in a procession amid a sea of the militia's yellow banners.

The role of Hezbollah, a state-within-a-state in Lebanon, is highly controversial, with several political factions demanding it lay down its weapons and stop risking a repeat of previous Israeli interventions that have killed thousands and destroyed the country's infrastructure. However, its support base is also strong. Standing on the side of the road as the procession passed Nisrene Srour, 45, said: "Of course Hezbollah is ready for war. Hundred per cent I'm sure. We believe in them."

Shukur was a founding member of the

group, who was also wanted by the US for his role in the 1983 Marines barracks bombing in Beirut that killed more than 200 soldiers. His death was the single biggest blow to Hezbollah since 2008, when Israel assassinated a previous military commander, Imad Mughniyeh, in Damascus. Shukur had a \$5 million US bounty on his head.

Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, appealed to all the parties to avoid an escalation that could plunge the region into war, after the US and Britain warned their citizens to leave Lebanon immediately.

Before last Saturday's strike on the Golan Heights, the US had been hoping that Israel and Gaza were moving towards a ceasefire and exchange of prisoners. In the absence of Haniyeh, Hamas's chief negotiator as well as political leader, that now looks remote.

Much depends on the scale of the retaliation eventually mounted by Iran and its allies. So far, they have carefully calibrated their actions outside Gaza to avoid a wider war, which might be punitive for Israel but would certainly be so for Lebanon and Iran.

Additional reporting Richard Spencer  
Obituary, page 47

# White House race boils down to a battle of the sexes

## United States

Hugh Tomlinson Washington

The 2024 American election will be decided by a battle of the sexes, as polling for The Times shows a gender gap growing between voters since Kamala Harris stepped into the race against Donald Trump.

Harris is set to be confirmed as the Democratic presidential nominee next week after President Biden's decision to quit the race, so the contest for the White House is between a man and a woman for only the second time.

Harris leads by 11 points among women — by 51 per cent to 40 — in the YouGov poll of 1,170 registered voters taken on July 22-23. But Trump holds an even more dominant 18-point lead among men — by 54 per cent to 36 — producing a net gender gap of 29 points.

Underscoring how swiftly male and female voters have shifted in a matter of days, a YouGov poll taken just before Biden's announcement that he was stepping aside showed a gender gap of 12 points. Biden led by four points among women, while Trump had an eight-point lead among men.

Carl Bialik, US politics editor at YouGov, said: "The gender gap has widened since Harris became the likely nominee — both because she is doing better than Biden was among women, and because she is doing worse among men."

The divide mirrors that between Trump and Hillary Clinton at the 2016 election, the only other presidential race to pitch a man against a woman.

A survey by the Pew Research Center revealed a gap of 26 points, with Trump winning male voters by 15 points and Clinton winning women by 11. With two men back on the ballot as Biden beat Trump in 2020, it narrowed to seven points, the Pew survey found.

Asked about Biden's decision to step aside after his calamitous debate performance against Trump a month ago, one female voter said she had felt "shock, and then immense gratitude that we have an honourable man in charge who made the choice to put country first".

"Then excited because now I feel we have a chance to eradicate the orange clown from the political sphere for good," she said.

Underlining the nagging doubts among many voters, however, one woman told the survey that she was "terrified that the country won't elect a female president no matter who she is and Trump will be elected".

The poll showed a marked drop since the 2016 election in the proportion of voters who feel that the US is ready to elect a woman to the highest office. In the Times/YouGov poll, 54 per cent of voters said the US was ready to elect a woman as president, down from 63 per cent in a YouGov survey in 2015.

"It's striking that the number is going down," said Bialik. "Men and women say the country is ready at about the same rate, which suggests they have similar views about sexism and tolerance for women leaders among the country's voters. You might hope for nine years of progress, instead you see a significant drop."

Only 37 per cent of men have a favourable view of Harris, compared with 57 who view her unfavourably. Trump's polling was the same among women, with 37 per cent viewing the former president favourably and 57 per cent holding an unfavourable view.

Harris is expected to pick a white man as her running-mate as she seeks to broaden her appeal to male voters. Harris needs to show her sums on economy, Justin Webb, page 23

# Picnickers warned as wolf attacks triple in a year

## Netherlands

Bruno Waterfield

A series of "disturbing" wolf attacks has prompted officials in the Netherlands to warn hikers and picnickers to steer clear of forests around Utrecht.

Officials are seeking a shooting permit to allow gamekeepers to scare off the predators with paintballs or even kill them. In the latest incident, a toddler was knocked over by a large animal, thought to be a wolf, that leapt on her while she was out with her father and grandmother in a forest near the village of Austerlitz.

"Luckily she suffered only a few scratches," said Wilbert Nijlant, manager of Den Treek nature reserve, where other attacks have taken place.

Figures released last week showed that wolf attacks on sheep and other animals had more than tripled year on year, with 267 incidents in the first three

months of this year compared with 77 in the same period last year.

Utrecht province has urgently advised people not to go to local forests and nature reserves, especially with small children. "Assuming it was a wolf, experts say behaviour has been shown that is atypical and disturbing," a statement read.

A fortnight ago a girl was bitten by a wolf at the Den Treek park, two weeks after a dog had been killed there by a predator. "The province seriously considers that this is the same wolf that was previously involved in incidents with another girl and a dog and has therefore decided to prepare a shooting permit," the statement continued.

The Dutch fauna protection foundation said a shooting permit was "completely unthinkable" and has threatened legal action to stop any wolf hunt under European Union "protected status" rules for the animal.

## World

## Copper wire theft kills million birds

## Japan

Gavin Blair Tokyo

As many as one million chickens were killed in Japan when an apparent theft of copper wires shut down air-conditioning equipment at a poultry farm.

About 170 metres of wire connecting the farm building to an onsite power transformer were taken in the early hours of Tuesday morning in Shibukawa, 90 minutes northwest of Tokyo.

Farm workers rushed to the scene after a power cut was detected at about lam. They arrived to find that copper wire worth 5 million yen (£26,000) had been taken, the air conditioning was down and about one million birds were dead, according to police.

The theft is the latest in a series that has hit Japan, many targeting solar farms, as copper prices hit record highs.

There were about 5,300 cases of copper transmission cable theft last year in the Kanto region around Tokyo, up 350 per cent on 2022, according to a survey by the Yomiuri Shimbun. Theft remains relatively rare in Japan and security measures are often lax compared with other countries.

Buoyed by predicted growth in demand for copper for renewable energy, electric vehicles and data centres, prices have been soaring. Three-month futures for copper hit a record high of \$11,104.5 per tonne on the London Metal Exchange in May. The recent weakness of the yen has made the metal even more valuable in Japan.

One solar farm in Ibaraki prefecture said that it had been raided six times in six months. Some farms are now using cheaper aluminium wire and have improved security. Stolen metal is sold as scrap to dealers and police are urging them to carry out more stringent checks on the origins of materials they buy.



Facing the past A marble head from the Roman period depicting Zeus, the Greek god, which was recently unearthed during excavations at Aphrodisias, an ancient Greek city and Unesco world heritage site in modern-day Aydin province, Turkey

## Venice turns down tourist megaphones

## Italy

Philip Willan

Venice has deployed a new weapon against overtourism, banning groups of more than 25 people and forbidding the use of megaphones by their guides.

The rules, which came into force yesterday, apply to the city centre and the islands of Murano, Burano and Torcello. Fines range from €25 to €500 for those who fail to comply. Children under two are not counted and there is an exemption for educational trips.

Loudhailers will be replaced with radio-operated audio guides to preserve calm for residents and visitors.

Simone Venturini, the city's head of tourism, said: "We want tourists to experience an authentic Venice without compromising the daily life of the city's residents."

He said many other European cities were watching the city's crowd-control measures. The first fines were levied yesterday. Venturini said the rules would be rigorously enforced by police in uniform and in plain clothes — and would discourage unauthorised guides.

Enzo Mangini, a tour guide who works with foreign visitors, said the rules made sense, but that it remained to be seen how they would be applied. He said: "The consequences will fall once again on organised tourism."

While it was wise to break up large groups, which sometimes numbered up to 50 and caused chaos, Mangini said, tour operators would need to hire extra staff to handle the smaller groups.

In April, Venice became the first city in the world to impose a €5 access charge to discourage visits at busy times. The project ran for 29 days, raising €2.4 million from some 485,000 visitors. The charge is expected to be renewed and could be increased to €10.

# Vatican judge accused of favouring the mafia

## Vatican

Philip Willan Rome

The president of the Vatican's highest court has been placed under investigation for allegedly favouring the mafia when he worked as a prosecutor in Palermo in the early 1990s.

Giuseppe Pignatone, who was renowned for taking on the mafia in court, is accused of helping to suppress an investigation into ties between Cosa Nostra, a mafia group from Sicily, and businesses from northern Italy.

The case is particularly sensitive as these mafia-business links have been cited as one of the possible motives for the assassination of Paolo Borsellino, a fellow anti-mafia prosecutor. Borsellino was killed by a car bomb on July 19, 1992, as he was investigating the murder two months earlier of his friend and colleague Giovanni Falcone.

Pignatone, 75, the prosecutor under investigation, has presided over a corruption trial of senior Vatican officials including Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who was convicted last year of malfeasance in connection with a London property deal. During his long career as a prosecutor he acquired a reputation as a formidable enemy of organised crime.

Called to answer questions by pros-

ecutors in Caltanissetta, he invoked his right to silence but denied the charges against him. "I undertake to contribute, within the limits of my possibilities, to the investigative efforts of the prosecutor's office," Pignatone said after his meeting with Salvatore De Luca, who worked under him as a junior prosecutor when he was in Palermo.

Pignatone is accused of failing to fol-



Giuseppe Pignatone had a reputation as a formidable enemy of organised crime

low up evidence of corrupt ties between Raul Gardini, the chief executive of the Ferruzzi chemicals group, and mafia bosses in Sicily. Gardini died in an apparent suicide while under investigation in 1993.

Also accused are a former colleague from the Palermo prosecutor's office, Giocchino Natoli, and an officer from the finance police, Stefano Screpanti.

The men allegedly mounted "an apparent investigation" of the mafia's business ties in the north and con-

cealed the significance of intercepted telephone calls.

The Corriere della Sera said the prosecution thesis appeared to be at odds with Pignatone's professional history, "with a life spent [in the fight] against organised crime" as a prosecutor in Sicily, Calabria and Rome.

Borsellino is reported to have been suspicious of some of his colleagues in the Palermo prosecutor's office and some of the evidence for the new investigation was uncovered by Fabio Trizzino, a lawyer for the Borsellino family who is married to the late prosecutor's daughter, Lucia.

A police report suggests that information from investigators frequently leaked, with the Sicilian business world in a state of alarm in 1991 "because of rumours arriving from corrupt elements in the institutions about an imminent carabinieri operation that had identified connections between the business world and Cosa Nostra".

Maurizio Gasparri, a Forza Italia senator, said he was disconcerted that Pignatone had invoked his right to silence. "He and his colleagues from the time must tell us what happened to the mafia-public tenders dossier," Gasparri said. "[It is a] dossier that was the cause of ... the killing of Borsellino."

## Priest 'confessed' to cooking crystal meth in his rectory

## Austria

David Crossland

A Roman Catholic priest has been arrested on suspicion of cooking the drug crystal meth in his rectory.

Acting on a tip-off from a church member, the police found ingredients for the highly addictive drug and laboratory equipment during a search in Waldviertel, a region west of Vienna. "The accused is suspected of using it to produce methamphetamine and then sell it," Stefan Loidl, a police spokesman, told the public broadcaster ORF.

A second suspect, a 30-year-old Iraqi man from Vienna with no links to the church, was also arrested.

Loidl added: "Investigators believe the two suspects had already started producing the methamphetamine in order to sell it afterwards."

The priest made a confession during questioning, he added.

The two suspects are believed to have still been at an experimental stage of the process and had not produced any drugs when the premises were raided. The spokesman said they were not believed to have intended to take the drugs themselves.

The diocese of St Pölten said the 38-year-old priest, who is Polish and has been named only as Radoslaw P, had been removed from his duties with immediate effect. "He is forbidden from

any further pastoral activities," it added.

The diocese said the priest had been employed in the parish since 2021 after moving to Austria from the archdiocese of Warsaw. "The diocese of St Pölten is working closely with the investigating authorities in order to fully investigate the offence," it added.

The Warsaw archdiocese said it was preparing "the necessary legal and canonical measures" in response to the case. The Catholic church in Austria has a shortage of priests and many parishes are run by foreign clerics, of which Poles make up the largest group.

The case comes after the arrest in Spain last February of a priest and another man suspected of selling Viagra and powerful aphrodisiacs.

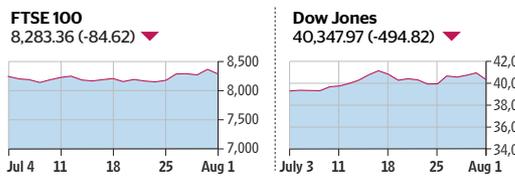
Officers from the Guardia Civil arrested Father Alfonso Masa and a man who claimed to be his partner after finding the stimulants in his parish house in Don Benito, a town of 37,000 inhabitants in the Extremadura region in the southwest of the country.

The priest was well known in the municipality and popular with his congregation "for his different way of exercising the priesthood", police sources said.

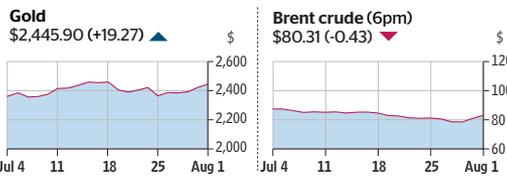
In Italy in 2021 a priest was arrested on suspicion of stealing thousands of euros in church funds and donations to buy drugs for gay sex parties that he hosted.

# Business

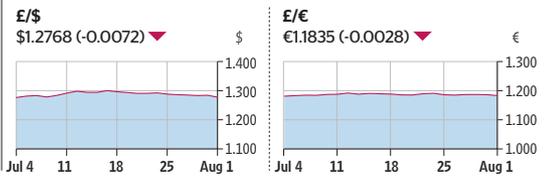
## WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)



## COMMODITIES



## CURRENCIES



## Sterling and markets down as rate cut falls flat with investors

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The pound and the FTSE 100 fell sharply after the Bank of England lowered interest rates for the first time in more than four years.

At one point sterling was down 0.77 per cent against the dollar, at \$1.275, its lowest point in just under a month. The pound also lost ground against the euro, easing by 0.37 per cent to €1.182.

The decline partially reversed the

pound's strong rally so far this year, driven recently by greater political stability after Labour's general election victory and by signs of stronger economic growth than had been anticipated. Sterling has been one of the fastest-rising developed economy currencies in 2024.

Downward pressure on the pound was fuelled by the Bank of England's monetary policy committee voting 5-4 in favour of reducing the UK base rate

by 0.25 percentage points to 5 per cent from 5.25 per cent.

Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank, hinted that interest rates are unlikely to fall rapidly over the coming months. However, analysts doubted that assumption, intensifying the sterling sell-off.

James Smith, a developed markets economist at ING, the Dutch bank, predicted that wages growth and services inflation would ease more quickly

than the MPC expects, "making the committee more comfortable with proceeding with at least one more cut this year. We suspect that [cut] will most likely come in November and we think that will most likely be followed by another in December."

The FTSE 100 closed down 1 per cent, or 84.62 points, at 8,283.36, pushed lower by investors ditching shares in Britain's largest listed banks. Shares in HSBC, NatWest, Lloyds and Barclays

all dropped by more than 3.5 per cent. The FTSE 250 index, more responsive to changes in domestic conditions, also fared poorly, falling by 0.7 per cent, or 141.48 points, to 21,459.23.

UK government bonds rallied. The yield on the two-year gilt dropped by nearly ten basis points to 3.715 per cent, while the rate paid on the ten-year government bond fell by nearly eight basis points to 3.892 per cent.

Full report, page 32

## Apple beats Wall Street forecasts

\$86bn revenue in quarter despite iPhone slide

Louisa Clarence-Smith  
US Business Editor

Apple beat sales expectations on Wall Street in the last quarter as rising demand for its iPads and Macbooks offset a decline in iPhone sales.

The world's most valuable public company, with a stock market valuation of more than \$3 trillion, reported total revenue of \$85.8 billion for the three months to the end of June, ahead of forecasts of \$84.4 billion. The revenue represented a 4.9 per cent increase on the previous year.

Sales generated by the iPhone, which

● Amazon disappointed investors last night with a forecast for current-quarter revenue largely below estimates, signalling tepid demand for its cloud computing services as companies keep a lid on costs against an uncertain economic backdrop. The online retailer expects revenue of \$154 billion to \$158.5 billion for the third quarter, compared with analysts' average estimate of \$158.24 billion. The shares were down \$6.65, or 3.9 per cent, at \$180.51 after the results.

typically amount to about half the company's business, fell by 0.9 per cent to \$39.3 billion under pressure from weak consumer sentiment and competition in China. Indeed, revenue from Greater China dropped by 6.5 per cent to \$14.7 billion during the quarter.

Shares in Apple were up by 0.5 per

cent, at \$1.23, at \$219.59 in out of hours trading in New York last night. The stock has climbed by 17 per cent since the start of the year as investors bet on a huge iPhone upgrade cycle when Apple releases its artificial intelligence-powered iPhones in the autumn.

At Apple's developer conference in June, Tim Cook, the company's chief executive, unveiled plans for AI-powered iPhones intended to enhance users' experience, including by integrating ChatGPT into its devices.

Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, has predicted an iPhone sales boom as "pent-up demand around an AI-driven supercycle", beginning with the iPhone 16 this autumn "as 270 million iPhone users have not upgraded their iPhone in over four years, based on our estimates".

Jacob Bourne, at Emarketer, said: "Apple has married its AI efforts to other key parts of its core business. In future quarters, the effectiveness of these AI investments will be primarily evaluated through device sales and potential growth in subscription revenue."

"While discounted iPhone prices likely helped to bolster sales this quarter, the company's future success depends on two factors: keeping AI development costs low and ensuring that new AI-driven features compel price-sensitive consumers to upgrade their devices."

Apple makes hardware including phones, tablets, computers, smartwatches and headphones. It also sells software, including its music and television streaming platforms.



Alex Beard, formerly of Glencore, is the highest-profile commodities trader in the UK to be charged with alleged corruption

## Bribery charge for Glencore oil boss

Emma Powell

The former head of oil at Glencore is among five former executives at the company to be charged by the Serious Fraud Office with conspiring to make corrupt payments to benefit its west African oil operations.

Alex Beard, 56, is the highest-profile commodities trader in the UK to be charged with alleged corruption. Beard worked at BP before he joined Glencore, the miner and commodities trader, in 1995. He became the head of its oil division in February 2007.

Andrew Gibson, Paul Hopkirk, Ramon Labiaga and Martin Wakefield were also charged in relation to Glencore's operations in Nigeria, Cameroon and Ivory Coast.

The alleged offences relate to oil contracts awarded between 2007 and

2014, during which time the Swiss trading group joined the FTSE 100 after launching one of the largest initial public offerings on the London stock market in 2011. Gibson and Wakefield also have been charged in relation to the alleged falsification of invoices to Glencore's London office, marked as service fees to a Nigerian oil consultancy, from 2007 to 2011.

The defendants are due to appear at a hearing scheduled at Westminster magistrates' court on September 10.

The fraud office opened an investigation into alleged corruption in connection with Glencore's London-based west Africa trading desk in 2019.

Glencore is based in Switzerland and is one of the world's largest traders of natural resources. Last year it made adjusted profits of \$17.1 billion.

A spokesman for Glencore said the

company had noted the charges brought against five former employees by the SFO, that it had co-operated with the investigation and had reached a settlement in its own investigation by the fraud office in 2022.

"This conduct has no place in Glencore and we are committed to acting ethically and responsibly across all aspects of our business and have taken significant action towards building a best-in-class ethics and compliance programme," it said.

In 2022, Glencore pleaded guilty to bribery charges in Britain, the United States and Brazil and paid just over \$1 billion to settle the cases.

Nick Ephgrave, director of the Serious Fraud Office, said: "This action is an important step towards exposing overseas corruption and holding those who are responsible to account."

## Business

## Need to know

**1** The Bank of England cut interest rates for the first time in more than four years, providing a measure of relief to homeowners and families. The nine-strong monetary policy committee voted 5-4 to cut the base rate by 0.25 percentage points from a 16-year high of 5.25 per cent. **Pages 1, 29, 32**

**2** The one-time head of oil at Glencore is among five former executives to be charged by the Serious Fraud Office with conspiring to make corrupt payments to benefit its west African oil operations. Alex Beard is the highest-profile commodities trader in the UK to be charged with alleged corruption. **Page 29**

**3** Dividend payments are to be reinstated by Rolls-Royce for the first time since the pandemic after its performance in the first half of this year proved better than expected. The news, bolstered by an upgrade in full-year forecasts, drove a jump in the share price to value the aircraft engineer at about £42 billion.

**4** The economy is poised to grow this year much more quickly than previously thought but the rate of expansion over the long term is significantly below the 2.5 per cent target set by the new Labour government, according to forecasts from the Bank of England. **Page 32**

**5** Fierce competition on fares and the grounding of aircraft over engine problems have forced Wizz Air to cut its annual profit forecast. Although passenger numbers were up and total revenue rose 2 per cent, the gloomy outlook wiped more than a fifth off its share price. **Page 33**

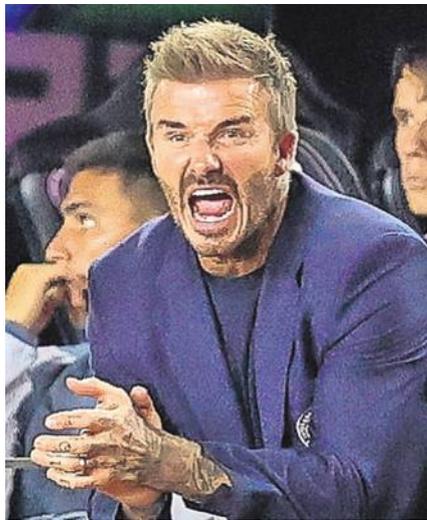
**6** London Stock Exchange Group said that it was investigating the lessons of the global IT failure last month as it reported "strong progress" in its alliance with Microsoft. Its half-year results lifted shares in the financial data and trading group to new record highs. **Page 34**

**7** Profit margins at Schroders narrowed as clients rotate into investments where the fees are smaller. Figures published by the FTSE 100 company, one of Britain's biggest asset management groups, drove its share price down by nearly 10 per cent. **Page 35**

**8** Sir Paul Marshall, the hedge fund boss who owns a stake in GB News, is in advanced talks to acquire The Spectator as part of the auction for the assets of Telegraph Media Group. His bid is believed to value the magazine at £90 million to £100 million. **Page 35**

**9** Shell has joined BP, its London-listed rival, in reporting forecast-beating profits. Adjusted profits for Europe's biggest oil and gas company rose by 24 per cent to \$6.3 billion during the second quarter, up from \$5.1 billion and ahead of consensus City predictions of \$6 billion. **Page 36**

**10** The chief executive of Smith & Nephew plans to retain the medical equipment maker's problematic orthopaedics unit. Deepak Nath forecast a recovery. **Page 37**



## Beckham-backed esports group in battle for survival

**T**he gaming group backed by David Beckham is in trouble less than four years after listing in London (Tom Howard writes).

Guild Esports, which fields teams in video games competitions including *Fortnite* and *Tekken*, has warned shareholders it needs

to raise extra funds and cut costs because it has just £25,000 left in its bank account.

Guild shares more than halved yesterday to less than 1/4p, giving it a value of just £1.2 million. The shares have lost 98 per cent of their value since the company made its stock market debut in October 2020.



Back then, Guild's float was billed as a test of the City's appetite for esports, a booming industry where professional gamers compete against one another for

big prize money.

The shares were launched at 8p as part of the initial public offering, which valued the company at around £40 million. But Guild has struggled to

convince the City, having racked up losses of £26.6 million over the past three and a half years, while generating only £14 million of revenue over that period.

Bosses have been reviewing the "strategic direction of the company" and published their initial findings on Thursday. Guild has bills of close to £1.4 million that

# Rolls reinstates dividend for first time since Covid

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Dividend payments are to be reinstated by Rolls-Royce for the first time since the pandemic after its performance in the first half of this year proved better than expected.

The news, bolstered further by an upgrade in full-year forecasts, drove an immediate jump in the aircraft engineer's share price that lifted its stock market valuation to about £42 billion.

Rolls, which came within days of going bust during the pandemic before a £7 billion emergency recapitalisation, said it would distribute 30 per cent of its after-tax profits for 2024. Analysts expect a payout of about 5.5p a share for the year. The company said that its shareholders then could expect annual payouts of between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of after-tax profits before exceptional items, in line with its global competitors.

It also increased its annual forecasts, suggesting that it would produce an underlying operating profit and cash inflows of at least £2.1 billion this year, significantly ahead of a previous suggestion of at least £1.7 billion.

For the first six months of 2024, revenue at Rolls, the exclusive engine partner on Airbus's widebody aircraft and a supplier to Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, were up by 17 per cent at £8.18 billion. Its operating profit soared by 70 per cent to £1.14 billion, while the

## Behind the story

**T**here is a lot of talk about sustainable aviation fuel powering the jet engines of the future (Robert Lea writes). It's not obvious what Tufan Erginbilic runs on, but judging by Rolls-Royce's latest figures it is something nearer rocket fuel. But is it sustainable?

The intensity of the drive for success at Manchester United could be measured in the decibels of the Alex Ferguson's "hairdryer". The equivalent at Rolls might be the Tufan Turbofan: the amount of thrust executives have felt in either being turfed out of head office or in being told how far they might have to go to get their act together.

The immediate impact means that in year one of a four-year plan, Rolls-Royce is already at 75 per cent of the profit target set by the 64-year-old Anglo-Turkish

underlying after-tax profit figure was £737 million, up from £404 million last time.

Tufan Erginbilic, the former BP executive who described the company as a "burning platform" shortly after becoming its chief executive 19 months ago, said: "Our transformation of Rolls-

turnaround artist. That might suggest the targets set were a little conservative; that a simple rebasing of the business after the pandemic might have seen Rolls's engines firing up in any case.

Erginbilic argues that the rate of recovery and the trajectory to his target of £2.8 billion of annual operating profits will not be linear. That might suggest the present scorching performance could be as eye-catching as it gets — that getting up to acceptable profit margins has been the straightforward job and that staying there and eking out incremental improvements year on year is the greater challenge.

And with the firm trading at 30-plus times this year's earnings, the share price rise might stall as investors who have enjoyed the ride over the last year take stock.

Royce into a high-performing, competitive, resilient and growing business is proceeding with pace and intensity."

Rolls, which also powers ships and submarines and makes power generation systems, said its performance would have been £200 million better but for a continuing "challenging

supply chain environment" in civil aerospace, comprising the lingering effects of the dislocations and capacity reductions that hobbled the industry during the pandemic.

Erginbilic, 64, said two of its key suppliers had gone bust. A further 15 were said to have been in trouble and needed Rolls' personnel to help them. The company is thinking of giving more work to the 26 suppliers that had recovered best.

The strong performance means that Rolls is already at 75 per cent of the £2.8 billion annual profit targets set by Erginbilic for 2027 and at 65 per cent of the £3.1 billion of annual cash inflows that he is aiming for in the same period.

Asked if his reforms at the company had targeted easier, low-hanging-fruit in changing the way the business operated, Erginbilic said: "If it was easy, someone else would have done it. It hasn't been easy. I would not place negotiating giant contracts with giant customers in the easy bucket."

Analysts at Jefferies said that even though expectations had risen before the results, Rolls had over-delivered in terms of both profit and cashflow. Civil aerospace had stood out, they said, noting that flying hours had risen above pre-pandemic levels and that the group had delivered 120 large engines, up from 115 a year earlier.

Shares in Rolls Royce closed up by 31/2p, or 7 per cent, at 481p last night.



need paying before the end of September.

The company hopes to receive around £1.5 million in income over the next couple of months, although even if all of that comes in

GuilD esports fields teams at gaming events; David Beckham is believed to have lost 80 per cent of his investment



its finances will still be precarious.

"The company is exploring options to meet its short-term liabilities as they fall due, including securing additional funding, negotiating improved payment terms with creditors and further cost reduction initiatives," it said.

"The board is also reviewing the strategic direction of the firm."

Beckham was an early investor in GuilD and was allowed to buy shares at a discounted price before the float. He remains one of the largest shareholders, with a stake of just over 3 per cent.

The former football star is nursing chunky losses on that investment, having paid about £250,000 for shares now worth less than £50,000.

However, Beckham has made millions from an agreement that requires him to post about GuilD on social media and make appearances at company events.

In return, Beckham, 49, was guaranteed to earn at least £15.25 million over five years. He collected about half of that before a renegotiation of the deal.

## BAE Systems rises in uncertain world

Robert Lea

Increased defence spending amid wars in eastern Europe and the Middle East has prompted BAE Systems to upgrade its annual profit forecast.

However, Britain's biggest arms company has conceded that it remains unclear about the Labour government's intentions for Tempest, the multi-billion-pound fighter project on which a significant part of BAE's future and the UK's defence aerospace supply chain depend.

With Charles Woodburn, 53, BAE's chief executive, noting an "increased threat environment" worldwide, for the first six months of the year BAE reported a 13 per cent increase in revenue to £13.4 billion and a corresponding 13 per cent rise in operating profit to £1.39 billion.

Its order book has grown by 6 per cent to £74 billion. This increase has

been driven by orders from Australia for Hunter-class warships based on the Type 26 under construction in Glasgow; demand from eastern Europe for fighting vehicles from Haggblunds, its Swedish business; and for missiles from MBDA, the company in which BAE has a 37.5 per cent stake. In addition, there is the contribution from Ball Corporation, the American space company, which was acquired in a \$5.5 billion deal completed earlier this year.

BAE has lifted its sales and operating profit forecasts for the full year to between 12 per cent and 14 per cent higher than last year, from a previous prediction of 10 per cent to 12 per cent for sales and 11 per cent to 13 per cent for profits. At the top end of those suggestions, that would mean BAE reporting operating profits for 2024 topping £3 billion for the first time on record revenues of £28.8 billion.

Shares in the company, which in-

creased its interim dividend by 8 per cent to 12.4p, closed down by 12p, or 0.9 per cent, at £12.85. The stock has had a stellar run dating back almost to the day that Russia invaded Ukraine. In the 28 months between the Russian attack in early 2022 and this summer, BAE's shares more than doubled to a peak of £14, valuing the company at £42 billion, although they have fallen back in recent weeks.

Of the apparent equivocation by the new government over the future of Tempest, Woodburn said it was only to be expected after the announcement of the latest strategic defence review.

Tempest, also known as GCAP, or the Global Combat Air Programme, is a collaboration primarily between Britain, Japan and Italy to develop next-generation fighter jets that could be manned or unmanned and would command in-theatre swarms of fighting drones.

## Bank doves got a tough call right

BUSINESS COMMENTARY Alistair Osborne



A 5-4 humdinger. Finally, the feathers are flying at the Bank of England: a set-to between the hawks and doves, settled fittingly enough by the aviary gov'nor, Andrew Bailey.

The upshot? The first interest rate cut since the pandemic, with rates down a quarter-point to 5 per cent and confirmation that a cycle of 14 successive rises since December 2021 is now in reverse. Plus a boon for the growth agenda of Sir Keir Starmer's new government, even if it also underlined the idiocy of Rishi Sunak calling an early election.

The cut proved as close a call as forecast, too, with a welcome bout of pre-election purdah making the decision trickier than usual to guess. And there was plenty of ammo both for and against. Still, on balance, it looks just about the right decision.

True, it didn't initially seem like that from the summary to the monetary policy committee's decision. There, the nine ratesetters relayed that, in contrast with recent years, for the past two months they'd actually been doing their job, presiding over inflation at the 2 per cent target. Even so, it'll soon be going back up to 2.75 per cent, due to last year's drop in energy prices falling out of the comparisons.

Then there was stuff that could easily have justified holding rates. Yes, private sector wage growth may have eased in the three months to May but it's still running at 5.6 per cent. June's services inflation came in at 5.7 per cent. And first-half GDP was also "stronger" than the Bank expected only in May, forcing it to raise its estimates for this year from 0.5 per cent to 1.25 per cent: not a typical occurrence when rates are too high, even if that probably says more about its lousy forecasting.

Who knows, too, what effect Rachel Reeves's public sector wage awards — 5.5 per cent for teachers and some NHS staff and 22 per cent for junior doctors — could yet have. And some of the quintet who voted for a cut — Bailey, Sarah Breeden, Swati Dhingra, Sir Dave Ramsden and new member Clare Lombardelli — admitted their decision was "finely balanced".

Historical precedent isn't great, either. In August 2005 there was a similar 5-4 vote to cut rates by a quarter-point to 4.5 per cent, only this time with the then governor Mervyn King getting outvoted. He was swiftly proved right. Within a year, rates were on the rise again after the housing market took off — and all en route to the debt bubble that caused 2008's financial crisis.

Still, the Bank's move looks sounder this time. First, because it was what Capital Economics' Ruth Gregory called a "hawkish cut" — Bailey went out of his way to make it clear the MPC would be "careful not to cut interest rates too quickly or by too much". Second, because it looks a timing issue, anyway: most market participants expected a cut at this meeting or in September.

Third, because the "market-implied" path of interest rates saw inflation heading for an undershoot: 1.7 per cent in two years' time and 1.5 per cent in three. And, fourth, because the bigger risk to the economy was

the Bank keeping rates too high for too long. Given timing lags, the full effect of the 14 rate rises are yet to be felt: a third of mortgage-holders still face the shock of refinancing loans at post-2021 rates. And, even at 5 per cent, real rates will be twice inflation. That should be enough to keep a lid on price hikes. The Bank looks to have got a tough call right.

## Rolls gains fans

Nice line from the Rolls-Royce wags: "I was already a fan. Now I'm a turbofan." Tufan Erginbilgic, the engine-maker's boss, has done it again: delivered another set of forecast-beating results, lifting the shares 7 per cent to 481p.

And to think it was as recently as October 2020 that Rolls wheeled out a £2 billion, ten-for-three rescue rights issue at 32p, complete with £3 billion of fresh debt finance. Or that it was only the start of last year when Erginbilgic took charge, with the shares at 93¼p, and claimed he'd alighted on a "burning platform".

Whatever he's done with his "relentless focus on commercial optimisation and cost efficiencies", as he put it at the half-year figures, it's done the trick. True, he's had the post-Covid tailwind of a return to flying. "Engine flying hours" finally returned last half to 101 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Yet that only partly explains how he's again lifting underlying operating profit and free cashflow guidance — now shooting for at least £2.1 billion from both this year, up from £1.7 billion — and returning Rolls to the dividend list.

He's instilled fresh commercial acumen across the group, while renegotiating £1.6 billion of loss-making airline contracts. The next goal? Extending the flying time of the engines and minimising their time out of the skies for workshop repairs. He also bluntly told a Rolls power systems wing built on sales rather than profits that "a hundred times nothing is still nothing". Its response? Last half's 56 per cent rise in profits to £189 million. Erginbilgic may get a bigger fan club yet.

## Deal won't fly

Not many deals are such non-flyers they get called off twice. So credit to British Airways-owner IAG for finding one. In 2019 its ex-boss Willie Walsh agreed to buy Air Europa, flying to South America and the Caribbean, for €1 billion. But then along came Covid, prompting his successor Luis Gallego to call it off, paying owner Globalia a €40 million break fee.

By February 2023 he was having another go, only at half the price. This time he's been done over by EU regulators, unhappy at IAG's dominance at Madrid, where Air Europa would have joined its other Spanish carriers, Iberia and Vueling, despite his offer to transfer 52 per cent of its services to rival airlines. The result? The deal's off again, with another €50 million break-fee. So €90 million for not buying Air Europa. Not the happiest landing.

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## British Airways owner rewards investors

Robert Miller

The owner of British Airways will pay a dividend to its shareholders for the first time since the start of the pandemic after enjoying a strong first half of 2024 and amid a bullish outlook for the rest of the year.

Alongside its results, International Consolidated Airlines Group — which as well as Aer Lingus also owns Iberia and Vueling of Spain — announced that it would pay a €50 million termination fee after ending its proposed takeover of Air Europa, another Spanish airline. Responding to fears that a

takeover would reduce competition, it had offered concessions to the European Commission in June. European regulators had been poised to block the deal after IAG declined to offer additional remedies to address their concerns.

"It doesn't make sense for our shareholders and that's the reason we are abandoning the operation," Luis Gallego, 55, chief executive of the group, said.

Analysts said the group's decision was unsurprising, but argued that it prompted questions about where it may turn next on the acquisition trail.

Tap, of Portugal, is seen as a potential target.

IAG said it would pay a dividend of three cents a share after its operating profit for the first six months of the year rose to €1.3 billion, from €1.26 billion in the same period a year ago. Revenue was €14.7 billion, compared with €13.6 billion previously.

"We see continuing strong demand for travel in the attractive core markets in which we operate: North Atlantic, Latin America and intra-Europe," Gallego said. Shares in IAG closed down 5¼p, or 3.5 per cent, at 160p, before the results were published.

## Business

# Economy falls short of Labour's target

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The economy is poised to grow this year much more quickly than previously thought but the rate of expansion over the long term is significantly below the target set by the new Labour government, according to forecasts from the Bank of England.

The central bank said Britain's gross domestic product would expand by 1.25 per cent in 2024, a sharp upgrade from its previous projection of 0.5 per cent in May. Then growth will ease to 1 per cent in 2025 before rising to 1.25 per cent in 2026, both of which were unchanged from its May forecast.

Before the upgrade, the Bank had been among the most pessimistic forecasters, with the International Monetary Fund and the Office for Budget Responsibility expecting growth to be much quicker this year. The Bank is now broadly in line with the consensus.

Despite the bump to its growth forecast this year, the Bank's medium-term projection averages a shade over 1 per cent — well below Sir Keir Starmer's target of 2.5 per cent. The prime minister aims to make Britain the fastest-growing economy in the G7.

The government has crystallised reviving economic growth as its central mission, launching several policy measures in the King's Speech, including reform of the planning system and strengthening workers' rights, intended to make this possible.

Data since the Bank's previous policy meeting in June had underscored that demand among households and businesses was much stronger than anticipated. The Office for National Statistics recently upwardly revised its estimates for first-quarter GDP growth to 0.7 per cent, the quickest in the G7.

"Housing investment is expected to grow moderately over the forecast period, stronger than expected in the May report," the Bank said, adding that capital spending among businesses also was set to drive overall GDP growth.

The effect of external supply shocks on the economy, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, had waned, the Bank said, and had been the main factor dragging down inflation to 2 per cent for the past two months. "The impact from past external shocks has abated and there has been some progress in moderating risks of persistence in inflation," it said.

Prices growth is expected to rise to 2.75 per cent by the end of the year before falling back owing to the "continued restrictive stance of monetary policy and the emergence of a margin of slack in the economy". However, inflation is expected to be well below

## Close-run thing

How the MPC voted Aug 1, 2024

### 0.25ppts cut



Andrew Bailey Clare Lombardelli Sir Dave Ramsden



Swati Dhingra Sarah Breen

### Hold



Huw Pill Megan Greene Jonathan Haskel



Catherine Mann

## Cut proved a tightly contested decision

Jack Barnett

The vote by the Bank of England's monetary policy committee to reduce interest rates was its tightest in almost a year.

The nine members voted 5-4 to cut the base rate by 0.25 percentage points to 5 per cent from 5.25 per cent. The last time that a committee ballot was that close was in September 2023, when it elected to leave the base rate unchanged.

Clare Lombardelli, who participated in her first MPC having replaced Ben Broadbent, a former

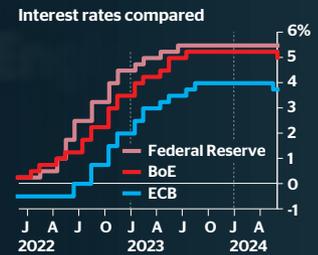
deputy governor, voted for a rate cut, alongside Andrew Bailey, the governor, Sarah Breen, Sir Dave Ramsden and Swati Dhingra. Dhingra and Ramsden both voted for a rate reduction at its meetings in May and June.

The tightly contested decision offered the strongest signal yet that a division has emerged within the committee between those who believe that there is less risk of inflationary pressures flaring up in future and those who are worried by embedded domestic prices growth.

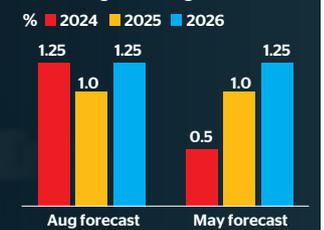
The four members who voted to

keep the base rate unchanged for the eighth meeting in a row at 5.25 per cent — including Huw Pill, the Bank's chief economist — reasoned that "underlying domestic inflationary pressures appeared more entrenched".

Services inflation — a gauge of domestic price dynamics — has been singled out persistently by the MPC as one of the key variables in determining whether to lower interest rates. It has exceeded the committee's forecasts for several months and remained unchanged at 5.7 per cent in June.



### Bank of England GDP growth forecast



### Bank of England CPI inflation forecast



Sources: Bank of England, Federal Reserve, ECB

the Bank's 2 per cent target in two years' time, which Tomasz Wieladek, chief European economist at T Rowe Price, said "implies that the Bank would have to cut rates by more than current market pricing". Traders think the Bank will cut rates twice more this year.

The slow unwinding of so-called second-round effect, typically exemplified by high wages growth, poses a risk to price pressure embedding in the economy over the long run. This dynamic was a key factor that led four members of the MPC to vote to keep interest rates unchanged at 5.25 per cent. The Bank cut rates by 0.25 percentage points.

Underpinning its stronger growth assumption is a fast recovery in household living standards. Real post-tax labour income is set to expand by 3.5 per cent this year and by 1.5 per cent in 2025, fuelling household spending.

## Ultra-low rates won't return, says Bailey

Jack Barnett

Andrew Bailey believes that Britain and other developed economies are not re-entering a world of ultra-low interest rates after the Bank of England lowered its borrowing costs for the first time in more than four years.

The governor of the Bank said that "it's unlikely that we are going back to the world that we were in between 2009, post-financial crisis, and the point at which we started raising rates".

He also suggested that the long-run level of interest rates in the UK was "lower than we are at the moment" but was higher than the period of ultra-stimulative policy that characterised the global economy after the financial crisis in 2008.

Structurally tighter monetary policy would push up mortgage costs for homeowners and potentially would

price first-time buyers out of the property market by making loans unaffordable. However, they would deliver greater returns on savings accounts.

His comments came after the central bank said that its nine-strong monetary policy committee had voted 5-4 in favour of cutting the UK base rate by 0.25 percentage points to 5 per cent.

For more than a decade, central banks around the world slashed interest rates to offset governments cutting spending, sluggish demand after the 2008 banking crashes and a marked slowdown in productivity growth. However, a series of supply shocks — chiefly Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 — propelled inflation to levels not reached in four decades.

The Bank of England raised its base rate from 0.1 per cent in December 2021 to a 16-year high of 5.25 per cent in August 2023. The US Federal Reserve

has increased its main rate to a 23-year high of 5.3 per cent, while the European Central Bank lifted its deposit rate to a record high of 4 per cent before cutting borrowing costs by 0.25 percentage points in June.

Experts at the Bank said that economic activity had exceeded their expectations in recent quarters, signalling that the structural real interest rate required to keep inflation stable and growth intact may have risen.

In its latest Monetary Policy Report, the Bank said: "There is some evidence that the impact of increases in bank rate on UK GDP has peaked a little earlier and at a smaller level than in the estimates underpinning the committee's August central projection. It is also possible that the equilibrium real interest rate has risen somewhat, such that the stance of monetary policy is less restrictive than assumed."

## Bond sales 'modest' gilt yield impact

Jack Barnett

The impact on the UK government bond market of the Bank of England selling bonds bought under its quantitative easing scheme has been minimal, according to the central bank.

Analysts have suggested that the Bank has contributed to pushing up the interest rate paid on gilts by selling assets into a market already saturated with a high supply of government debt.

However, analysis by Bank staff concluded that these bond disposals, termed quantitative tightening, had had a "modest" impact on gilt yields, accounting for "only about ten to

20 basis points of the total rise in the term premium". The central bank added that "there was no clear relationship between expectations for bank rate and the path of QT".

The Bank is set to announce a decision on the pace of its bond-selling programme at its next meeting on September 19. Under the existing strategy, it plans to sell £100 billion of bonds per year. It is expected to trim these bond disposals next month.

Quantitative easing was launched in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis in an attempt to push down UK interest rates and to inject demand into the economy by giving banks an incentive to lend to customers. QE was stepped up after the 2016 Brexit vote and during the Covid pandemic, with the Bank's bond-holding reaching a peak of nearly £900 billion.

Economists have raised concerns about the impact of the bond sales on the UK public finances. The Treasury covers any losses that the Bank incurs when selling bonds.

# Harry Wallop

From Stansted to Starbucks, always work out exactly what you're paying for

“Is Stansted an airport or a car park? Last month, Manchester Airports Group, which owns Stansted as well as the Manchester and East Midlands airports, published its annual report. Astonishingly, it makes more money from its car parks and shops than from aircraft landing and taking off. Car parking generated £371 million in revenue, retail £301 million and aviation £418 million. It made £7 per passenger from landing and take-off fees, but £10.80 per passenger from commercial revenue.

The Sunday Times has worked out that Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Stansted are on track to make more money from parking than NCP, Britain's biggest car park operator with 600 locations. Perhaps that's not surprising when Stansted charges £7 for a 15-minute “kiss and fly” drop-off.

Anyone battling through the hell that is Stansted this summer will know that it is, in effect, a shopping mall with wings. However, once you pass through security, a virus (probably pumped out by perfume sellers in World Duty Free) seems to infect passengers, whereby money loses all value. Paying £5.90 for a coffee or £120 for some really poor-quality headphones is absolutely fine, because, hey, we're already on holiday. Want to tuck into a £740 pint of Lefie Blonde from the Stansted Wetherspoons at 9am? Why not?

A few years ago, I went undercover for a Channel 4 *Dispatches* report at Heathrow to dig into the tricks that airports use to boost retail revenue. We discovered that the “passenger ambassadors”, seemingly there to help to guide people to the right gate, were paid bonuses linked with persuading passengers “to shop if they had not planned to, or encouraging them to spend more”, the job description says.

Airports and motorway services operate on the basis that you are a captive customer and that they can get away with fleecing you, but this principle has been adopted by more and more businesses, which have worked out that they can increase their profits by limiting charges for their main product, making it appear reasonable value but then whacking up subsidiary income.

Ryanair, famously, will sell you a ticket to Alicante for less than it



charges for a pack of Pringles and a can of Heineken. Back in the 1990s, Harley-Davidson was making more money from licensing its logo to leather jacket manufacturers than it was from selling motorbikes. And are football clubs sporting organisations or glorified global advertising hoardings? According to Uefa's European Club Finance report, Manchester City made €84 million last year from gate receipts, but €401 million from commercial revenue. To be clear: this isn't money from television broadcasting rights, this is from shirt sales, sponsorship, stadium naming rights and the like.

Then again, football clubs came up with the ruse of charging £80 for their replica shirts and £110 for their “authentic” replica shirts, which is exactly the same flimsy bit of polyester but is “as worn by the players”. A disgraceful scam.

Vizio, the American electronics manufacturer, makes less money from gadgets than it makes from its streaming service, which requires you to agree to give up a certain amount of privacy. Cory Doctorow, the blogger, called Vizio “a surveillance company that incidentally manufactures TVs”.

Possibly the most fascinating example of a company not being quite what it seems is Starbucks. Obviously, it's a chain of coffee shops. Less obviously, it's a bank. This aspect was explored in an episode of *Acquired*, a business podcast beloved by Silicon Valley types. New episodes appear only once a month, are inordinately long but are often brilliantly researched. The Starbucks episode interviewed Howard Schultz, now the chief critic of the company that he founded but no longer runs. At any one time, Starbucks has



## Wizz Air's profits run into engine trouble

Jessica Sharkey

Fierce competition on fares and the grounding of aircraft over engine issues have forced Wizz Air to lower its annual profit forecast.

Operating profit at the London-listed airline tumbled by 44 per cent to €44.6 million in the three months to the end of June compared with a year earlier, even though passenger numbers were up at 15.3 million and total revenue rose 2 per cent to €1.26 billion. The gloomy outlook wiped more than a fifth off its share price.

The budget airline, which flies an all-Airbus fleet, has had problems with its RTX Pratt and Whitney engines, with an average of 46 aircraft grounded for inspection over the quarter. It expects the groundings to continue for the next 18 months and is in talks with suppliers over compensation. Wizz also warned that up to 35 of 317 new aircraft on order with Airbus would be delayed after the manufacturer pushed back its production goals amid supply chain snarl-ups across the industry.

The pressures caused Wizz Air to lower its annual net income forecast to between €350 million and €450 million, from a previously suggested range of €500 million to €600 million.

“Despite the competitive landscape and supply chain challenges, our strategic focus on delivering the lowest fares, improving our route network and maintaining high operational efficiency has yielded results,” Jozsef Varadi, 58, Wizz Air's co-founder and chief executive, said.

Wizz Air, which is based in Budapest, was founded 30 years ago and now operates almost 800 routes between 200 airports in 53 countries in Europe and the Middle East. It is widely seen as the Ryanair of eastern Europe, although plans to expand further east with new bases in Saudi Arabia and India were blocked by governments in Riyadh and Delhi last week.

European airlines faced a difficult first half of the year amid “normalising” customer demand after an initial post-pandemic boom in “revenge travel” and increased costs. Ryanair and Air France-KLM also have reported challenging quarters.

Shares in Wizz closed down 433p, or 22.6 per cent, at £14.80.

Wizz is valued on the London stock market at £2.3 billion, about half of the figure before the pandemic. It is about a third the size of Ryanair but is growing more rapidly.

about \$1.8 billion loaded on to customers' gift cards or its app and over the course of the year \$14 billion is loaded on to cards. If Starbucks was a bank and you treated the gift cards as deposits, it would be in the top 10 per cent by deposits of banks in the United States, *Acquired* claimed. Even better, all this money is, in effect, loaned by customers interest-free. That is an incredible amount of guaranteed, low-cost capital for Starbucks to use to open new shops.

The sum is so huge because during Covid Starbucks encouraged its customers to start using its app to order their coffees. You could load money on to the app, with the minimum amount being \$10. It also meant that Starbucks was no longer having to pay Visa or Mastercard a small cut of every transaction.

There should have been no downsides but there were lots — mostly that customers would order their drink while they were around the corner, expecting it to be ready by the time they got to the store. The shops became crowded with queues, while the baristas became stressed having to deal with electronic orders rather than talking to customers.

On the podcast, Schultz said: “We're not a beverage company serving coffee. We are a coffee company serving people. We cannot continue to allow the mobile app to be a runaway train that is going to consistently dilute the integrity of the experience of Starbucks.”

The company's management became seduced by the free cashflow, the customer data and the guaranteed revenue of people loading money on to the app, and forgot what had made Starbucks successful in the first place. At its most recent quarterly results, revenue declined.

There's nothing wrong with making money from unexpected corners of the business but airport passengers, coffee shop frequenters and football fans are not fools. Companies that fail to differentiate between charging a legitimate premium and seeing their customers purely as cash cows will end up being resented and slowly falling into irrelevance.

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on Twitter @hwallop

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## Business

# London Stock Exchange Group hails progress with Microsoft

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

London Stock Exchange Group said that it was investigating whether lessons could be learnt from the global computer outage last month as it reported “strong progress” in its alliance with Microsoft.

As it unveiled half-year results that in

turn lifted shares in the financial data and trading group to new record highs, David Schwimmer, its chief executive, said of the IT failure last month, which brought large parts of the global economy that use Microsoft’s cloud servers to a standstill, had hit its regulatory news service and had created “a couple of other issues across

the broader LSEG estate. We’re focused on our operational resilience. We are looking into whether there are any changes that need to be made and any lessons to be learnt.”

LSE Group, which also suffered an outage in February, has entered into a close partnership with Microsoft through which many of its clients will

gain access to its services. The stock exchanges business has pledged to spend at least £2.3 billion on Microsoft services over ten years, while the American technology powerhouse has bought a 4 per cent stake in the British business and has a nominee on its board.

Schwimmer said the alliance was going well, adding that Meeting Prep, the first jointly developed product, was “entering external pilots” and was “due for general availability by the end of 2024”. He denied that this represented a delay from his position in February, when he said that Meeting Prep would be “in customers’ hands in the first half of this year”.

“There are no delays in any of our Microsoft product timelines,” he said. The partnership was now “approaching commercialisation”.

Meeting Prep is an artificial intelligence-driven app designed to give investment bankers an instant synopsis of their corporate clients’ finances in seconds. Open Directory, another Microsoft-developed app, would be widely available by the year end, LSE Group said.

The owner of the 223-year-old London Stock Exchange beat forecasts by reporting a 5.4 per cent increase in total revenues to more than £4.2 billion in the six months to the end of June. There was also a 9 per cent increase in operating profit to £1.56 billion, while Schwimmer re-iterated that future profit growth would be in line with its medium-term forecasts.

Schwimmer, 55, an American, suggested that the prospects for more company flotations in London had improved. “I feel pretty good about the pipeline and the direction of travel,” he said, pointing to various capital market reforms that he said would help to

improve the attraction of London as a jurisdiction. The recent changes to related-party transaction rules, which mean that outside shareholders no longer get a vote on deals where the directors have an interest, would help, too, he argued.

He emphatically denied suggestions by some leading shareholders that they had lost important protections. “To be clear, there is no lowering of standards on the London Stock Exchange,” he insisted.

The stock exchange accounts for less than 5 per cent of LSE Group’s profits now as the business makes far more money from areas such as supplying data and analytics to stock market users, from FTSE Russell, its indices business, and from post-trade services to investors.

Improvements to Workspace, its main platform for traders and analysts, was helping it to poach clients from rival suppliers, Schwimmer appeared to suggest, referring to “several competitor displacements”.

The capital markets division produced the fastest revenue growth, at 15.9 per cent, followed by FTSE Russell, at 9.7 per cent. Post-trade services, at 1 per cent, was the laggard, but that followed a standout 2023.

Analysts at Barclays said the figures were “healthy”, that there was scope for further revenue growth and that the valuation was not stretched.

The interim dividend was lifted by 15 per cent to 41p. Shares in LSE Group closed up last night by 382p, or 4 per cent, at £98.52, valuing the company at about £50 billion.

The shares previously had peaked at £98 in early 2021 — just before the group warned that integrating Refinitiv, its \$27 billion acquisition, was going to cost more than planned.

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## Vanquis scraps dividend as accounting problems linger

Ben Martin Banking Editor

Accounting problems at Vanquis Banking Group have forced the lender to axe its dividend and to find a further £15 million of cost savings.

The company formerly known as Provident Financial rattled its shareholders last month when it revealed £40 million of writedowns after a review of its balance sheet, knocking its capital position. This put its dividend in doubt, and with its first-half results it revealed yesterday that it had decided against making an interim distribution to investors, having paid out 5p a share a year earlier.

Pre-tax losses at Vanquis widened to £46.5 million from £21.9 million a year ago, with its figures for 2023 restated to reflect the recent review. The lender said it would find a further £15 million of cuts by the end of next year. These are on top of the £60 million of cost reductions that Vanquis is already pushing through that have resulted in about 350 job losses.

It is the latest in a series of setbacks at Vanquis, which was once Britain’s biggest doorstep lender and a member of the FTSE 100 with a stock market valuation of more than £5 billion. Its shares have fallen sharply, knocked by a botched overhaul of the group in 2017

and then a surge in complaints at its sub-prime doorstep lending business in 2021, which led to the eventual closure of the division.

It now focuses on less risky near-prime and mid-cost lending through its Vanquis credit card and Moneybarn vehicle financing units. Ian McLaughlin, 57, became its chief executive last year, but his tenure has been marred by

## £46.5m

Pre-tax losses  
Source: Vanquis Banking Group

a surge in “spurious” complaints about its credit cards, the handling of which has pushed up Vanquis’s costs, and the one-off hit from the recent balance sheet review, which he has described as “disappointing”.

Vanquis did not say whether the additional £15 million of savings through “further business streamlining” would involve job cuts.

Gary Greenwood, an analyst at Shore Capital, which is house broker to Vanquis, said that the lender’s balance-sheet issues were “now in the rear view mirror”. Shares in the group rose by 1½p, or 2.4 per cent, to close at 56p.



**Chin up** Pets At Home maintained its forecast of an annual pre-tax profit of £144 million despite lower than expected first-quarter sales, offset by customers trading down to own-label brands. Its shares fell 5¼p, or 1.9 per cent, to 301p

## Melrose hit by woes in supply chain

Tom Saunders

Problems with its supply chain have forced the owner of GKN Aerospace to cut its 2025 revenue outlook.

However, Melrose Industries reported £1.74 billion in sales for the first half of the year, slightly above expectations of £1.73 billion and up by 12 per cent year-on-year.

The FTSE 100 engineer's half-year results are the first since the departure of Simon Peckham, who co-founded the company in 2003. Peckham transformed the turnaround business into a £7 billion aerospace powerhouse.

"Melrose is now an aerospace pure-play business," Peter Dilnot, its chief executive, said. "We're going to build a world-class aerospace technology business from a great foundation."

Supply challenges in the sector forced Melrose to reduce its 2025 sales guidance to £3.8 billion from £4 billion, but the same troubles have boosted the company's maintenance and repair business, as components must stay in use longer. Melrose kept its profit target of £700 million unchanged.

Its shares closed at 515p, down sharply by 73¼p, or 12.5 per cent.

## Hedge fund boss Marshall in talks to buy The Spectator

James Hurley

Sir Paul Marshall, the hedge fund boss who owns a stake in GB News, is in advanced negotiations to acquire The Spectator as part of the auction for the assets of Telegraph Media Group.

Marshall's Old Queen Street Ventures vehicle, the holding company for assets including Unherd, a news and opinion website, is leading the race to acquire the title.

The auction was launched by RedBird IMI, the Abu Dhabi state-backed vehicle that struck a deal this year to take control of the Daily and Sunday Telegraph titles, as well as The Spectator.

RedBird IMI's plans were blocked, however, by government intervention amid a backlash over the prospect of a foreign state owning prominent national newspapers.

Marshall's bid for The Spectator was first reported by Sky News, which said he could acquire the magazine as soon as this month if the deal were to go through. It is understood that the bid values the magazine in the region of £90 million to £100 million.

The Spectator was first published in 1828, making it the world's oldest surviving weekly magazine.

The Conservative-leaning title

covers politics, culture and current affairs. As a smaller and simpler business than the Telegraph, a deal for the magazine may go through more quickly than a sale of the newspapers.

Marshall also has bid for the Telegraph titles and is thought to remain in the running.

Others still in the process include Lord Saatchi, the former advertising man, who is working with his friend, the former Economist director Lady Forester de Rothschild; Nadhim Zahawi, the former Tory chancellor, who is reported to be looking for financial backers for a potential bid; and David Montgomery, the boss of National World, the London-listed newspaper publisher.

Some bidders are interested in securing the Telegraph titles as well as The Spectator.

CVC, the private equity group, and DMGT, the Daily Mail publisher, recently pulled out.

Advisers from Raine Group, the American investment bank that worked on the sales of Chelsea and Manchester United football clubs, and the London-based Robey Warshaw, a boutique investment bank, are handling the sale.

Old Queen Street Ventures and RedBird IMI declined to comment.

# Schroders' clients opt for cheaper products

Patrick Hosking

Profit margins at Schroders have narrowed as clients rotate into investments where the fees are smaller.

Claims by Peter Harrison, the departing chief executive, that his strategy was being vindicated also appeared to fall on deaf ears as the latest figures published by the FTSE 100 company, one of Britain's biggest asset management groups, drove its share price down by nearly 10 per cent.

Operating profits for the six months to the end of June slipped to £315 million from £341.4 million last time. The company pulled in a net £3.9 billion of new business, pushing its assets under management to a record £773.7 billion.

However, stock market traders were more focused on its margins, which came under pressure because of a change in the product mix. "The composition of net new business was weighted to lower-margin products, with significant outflows from regional equities being partially offset by inflows into fixed-income strategies," Schroders said.

In the core public markets category of asset management, the net interest margin narrowed for retail funds sold to private investors and for those in institutional mandates. Last year, Schroders suggested the City should expect an improvement in institutional margins, which "with hindsight" may have been a mistake, Harrison said.

Even in the higher-margin private markets space, Schroders' income came under pressure because of a reduction in fees earned on property deals.

Harrison, 58, who previously had announced plans to leave in 2025, said his push deeper into private markets, wealth management and the Solutions division for institutional clients had been validated by the latest results.

"Today's results are further validation that our long-term strategic pivot

is helping us to navigate the structural changes our industry is facing," he said. Active fund managers have been under pressure for years as clients switch their money to cheaper index-tracking funds.

Analysts at Jefferies, the broker, said the operating profit was 5 per cent below consensus forecasts in spite of inflows and cost-control efforts proving better than expected.

Founded in 1804, Schroders is Britain's second biggest asset manager after Legal & General, managing mandates for traditional pension schemes as well as funds for retail investors. It also owns a Cazenove-branded wealth management division. This week it launched Future Growth Capital, a joint venture with Phoenix to channel £10 billion to £20 billion of pension savings into illiquid private assets.

The public markets business, which invests in listed shares and bonds and was once the mainstay of the group, suffered net outflows of £2.7 billion in the six months, with £6.1 billion pulled out of equities, partly offset by £3.9 billion put into bonds.

While fund manager fees on shares typically are about 0.5 per cent of the assets managed, the fees on bonds are significantly lower at about 0.3 per cent.

The rotation from shares to bonds had started to reverse recently, Harrison said, as investors were prepared to take more risks. However, global political uncertainty remained, especially the question of America's presidential election in November and possible fresh concern about the US debt ceiling. "We're just a little bit nervous of calling it [a new rally in stocks] too early," Harrison said.

Schroders Capital, the private markets division, pulled in £2.3 billion of net new business while Cazenove attracted a net £3 billion. Schroders held its interim dividend at 6.5p.

The shares fell by 38¼p, or 9.7 per cent, to close at 354¼p last night.

## Barclays in a £750m share buyback as profits impress

Ben Martin

The boss of Barclays said his turnaround of the bank was on track after it beat forecasts for its first-half profits, increased its revenue predictions and announced £1.2 billion of capital returns to shareholders.

A strong performance from its investment banking division and lower loan impairments meant that Barclays generated pre-tax profits of £4.2 billion in the six months to the end of June, down 8 per cent on a year earlier but surpassing the £3.8 billion that had been suggested by City analysts.

CS Venkatakrisnan, the bank's chief executive, who is known as Venkat, said the results showed the lender was "making good progress" on the revamp he set out in February, when he pledged to return at least £10 billion to investors by 2026 and to increase annual revenue to £30 billion.

In a "first instalment" of those capital returns, Barclays said it would hand back £1.2 billion via a share buyback of up to £750 million and a 2.9p-a-share interim dividend. It also increased its forecast for net interest income this year, excluding its investment bank and head office, to about £11 billion from its previous guidance of £10.7 billion.

Banks enjoyed a profits boom from

higher interest rates last year, but this is now being offset by fierce competition in the mortgage market and by depositors moving their cash to accounts that pay higher rates of interest.

Profits, therefore, are falling, although lenders have received a boost recently because the Bank of England, which finally has cut borrowing costs, has taken longer to lower rates than had been expected. These higher-for-longer borrowing costs helped to drive the upgrade to Barclays's revenue prediction. A strong second quarter at its investment bank, where income rose by 10 per cent, bolstered by the performance of its equities traders, also helped.

It is a fillip for Venkat, 58, who is overhauling the bank after years of lacklustre returns. The FTSE 100 company has operations spanning Britain's high streets, credit cards in the United States and investment banking.

Venkat's three-year overhaul strategy includes £1 billion of cost-cutting in 2024 and a big bet on the UK, where Barclays will increase its exposure by adding an extra £30 billion of risk-weighted assets. As part of this it is buying Tesco's retail banking operations for about £600 million.

Barclays' shares, which are up about 50 per cent this year, closed down 11p, or 4.7 per cent, at 223p.

## Business

# Shell beats forecasts with profits up 24% in quarter

Emma Powell

Shell has joined BP, its London-listed rival, in reporting forecast-beating profits.

Adjusted profits for Europe's biggest oil and gas company rose by 24 per cent to \$6.3 billion during the second quarter, up from \$5.1 billion and ahead of

consensus City predictions of \$6 billion.

Shareholders have been rewarded with an extension to its multibillion-dollar share buyback programme. Shell with pay out a further \$3.5 billion in share buybacks before the end of September, marking the eleventh consecutive quarter it has announced buybacks

in the range of \$3 billion to \$4 billion. They come on top of a second-quarter dividend of 34.4 cents per share, compared with 33.1 cents a year previously.

Wael Sawan, Shell's chief executive, signalled that the pace of share buybacks could be maintained. "My conviction is that the compounded effect of cost reduction, capital discipline, oper-

ational performance enhancement, all of that will allow us to have more flexibility, more cash with which we can then choose what goes in distributions or otherwise," he said.

Profits for the integrated gas business, which includes its secretive gas trading unit, were 7 per cent higher at \$2.7 billion, compared with \$2.5 billion a year earlier. The result, ahead of analysts' forecasts, was boosted by a higher volume of liquefied natural gas sales.

The volatility in gas prices that sparked the energy crisis in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine had eased back to pre-2022 levels, Sawan said, and he expected less pronounced swings in seasonal prices before the winter period "partly because of the fact that we actually have sufficient storage, because the price levels are lower, because [there have] been warmer winters".

Adjusted profit for the oil and gas production division also beat expectations at \$2.3 billion, up from \$1.7 billion.

Halting work on the construction of one of Europe's largest biofuel plants meant that Shell took a hit of almost \$800 million to earnings, while the chemicals business suffered a \$708 million impairment mainly relating to the sale of its Singapore refineries.

The pause in work on the facility at Rotterdam was the latest clean energy project to be scaled back under Sawan, who took over as chief executive at the start of last year. Since then, Shell has exited investments in renewable power and battery storage. Refining margins across the petrochemicals industry have been hit since the start of this year, which also weighed on earnings for the chemicals and products business.

The shares have risen by 21 per cent over the past 12 months but Shell is still valued at a discount to US rivals, which has led to questions over whether Sawan will switch its listing from London to New York in an effort to close the valuation gap. Shares in Shell closed down 15p, or 0.5 per cent, at £28.25.

Costs of about \$1.7 billion had been taken out of the business by the end of June, compared with 2022, although Sawan said "there is a lot more to do" to unlock more value from the company.



**Next comes up roses as it beats forecasts**

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## Bud Light still hung over following influencer row

Emma Taggart

The world's largest brewer has reported a dip in sales in the United States amid the continuing fallout from a consumer boycott of Bud Light.

Anheuser-Busch InBev reported a 0.6 per cent fall in sales in the United States in the second quarter of the year.

American consumers began boycotting Bud Light in April 2023 because of a promotional campaign featuring Dylan Mulvaney, a transgender social media influencer. The boycott has resulted in Bud Light losing its place as the best-selling beer in the United States. It now sells less than both Modelo Especial and Michelob Ultra, according to an analysis of NielsenIQ data by Bump Williams, an industry consultancy.

The Budweiser brewer unveiled a 0.8 per cent decline in its volumes in the second quarter of 2024 as weak demand put pressure on the wider drinks

industry. This week rival Heineken reported a disappointing increase in its volumes during the first half of the year and wrote down the value of its China business by £750 million.

AB InBev experienced particularly tough trading in Argentina as high levels of inflation weighed on consumers' spending, suffering a 20 per cent decline in volumes in the country. It also reported a 15.2 per cent decline in revenues in China as adverse weather and a slowdown in demand dented sales.

However, the effects of cost-cutting meant that its overall adjusted profits during the second quarter rose by 10.2 per cent to \$5.3 billion.

The brewer said it expected its full-year adjusted profits to continue to grow in line with its medium-term outlook of 4 per cent to 8 per cent.

Andrea Pistacchi at Bank of America said "We are increasingly confident ABI will have a strong year."



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/REX/PA

first half of the year, despite damp summer weather and a cost of living crisis. Total group sales at Next rose by 8 per cent in the six months to August 1, driven by a 4.4 per cent increase in its full-price sales.

It said this was thanks, in part, to its acquisition of fashion brand FatFace and to an increase in its shareholding in Reiss, the premium fashion label, to 51 per cent.

Next had predicted that its sales in the second quarter would be down by 0.3 per cent compared with the same period last year, when a hot summer was “exceptionally favourable for clothing retailers”. However, its full-price sales in Britain rose by 4 per cent, while its overseas online sales increased by a “much better than expected” 21.9 per cent.

Next joins White Stuff, the fashion retailer, in bucking a more generally downbeat high street trend as people continue to watch their spending. Fashion has been one of the sectors most affected.

Next maintained that its full-price sales in the second half would be 2.5 per cent ahead of last year. “This might seem cautious when compared with the performance in the first half, which was up 4.4 per cent,” it said. “However, when compared with two years ago, growth in the first half and the forecast for the second half are almost identical.”

Clive Black, of Shore Capital, the broker, said Next’s profit upgrade was a “very pleasant surprise to us and a marvellous achievement. No doubt second-half expectations are also cautiously set, which means there could be further nudges up to profits down the line: £1 billion of pre-tax profit is touching distance away.”

**F**orecast-beating sales figures have prompted Nest to announce the latest in a series of upgrades to its profit expectations (Isabella Fish writes).

The FTSE 100 clothing and homewares chain, seen as a bellwether for the wider high street, lifted its annual forecast by £20 million to

£980 million, up 6.7 per cent on last year.

That, in turn, fuelled a rise in its share price, which closed at £98.30 — up 75p, or 8.3 per cent. The shares have soared by more than 65 per cent over the past five years.

It is the eighth time in a row that Next has increased its profit outlook. Moreover, Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise,

Mylene Klass attends this year’s Chelsea Flower Show wearing items from her collaboration with Next

56, its chief executive, has started to make a habit of underpromising and overdelivering.

Next, which trades from about 500 shops in the UK, adjusted its targets after its sales beat expectations during the

# Boss of Smith & Nephew resists break-up calls

Alex Ralph

The chief executive of Smith & Nephew plans to retain the medical equipment maker’s problematic orthopaedics unit, with Deepak Nath forecasting a recovery this year.

Presenting encouraging half-year results after it emerged last month that Cevian Capital, an activist investor, had a 5 per cent stake, the FTSE 100 company reiterated its full-year and medium-term forecasts and said that, within orthopaedics, it expected a stronger performance in its struggling American hip and knee implants business.

The update pushed shares in Smith & Nephew up 76p, or 6.8 per cent, to £11.99, their highest level in a year — although they remain down by more than a third over the past five years.

Smith & Nephew is one of the world’s biggest and oldest medical technology companies, employing about 18,500 people and operating in more than 100 countries. The 168-year-old business, which has struggled in recent years with inconsistent trading and a quick turnover of chief executives, has been seeking to improve its orthopaedics unit, its biggest, in line with its other divisions covering sports medicine and ear, nose and throat, as well as wound management.

Its performance, and the structure of the joint replacements-to-wound treatments group, has come under renewed scrutiny since Cevian confirmed a stake in July. The investor said Smith & Nephew “owns a fundamentally attractive businesses in structurally growing markets”, and that it had “high expectations” for the company to improve its operating performance.

Cevian, which manages about

€14 billion of assets, is understood to believe that Smith & Nephew can improve without a break-up, but there has been speculation over the group’s optimum structure. Analysts at RBC Capital Markets said last month that selling the orthopaedics business could unlock \$7 billion of value, while “executing on its improvement plans” could add \$5 billion, but they said that “recent momentum in orthopaedics would likely dissuade a divestment”.

Speaking publicly for the first time since Cevian’s stake was disclosed, Nath, 52, said there were “clearly benefits to having these businesses being together” and that once “we address the remaining challenges in orthopaedics, I believe we’ll have a group that will be firing on all cylinders. We strongly believe in the value, the synergies that we see across these businesses. And right now what we’re focused on doing is have all of our businesses operating to their full potential.”

Nath has been focused on a “12-point plan”, including cutting overdue orders, launching new products and making productivity improvements to generate more than \$200 million of annual savings by 2025. Smith & Nephew said that the total savings target had increased to between \$325 million and \$375 million through to 2027.

Group second-quarter revenue rose by 5.6 per cent on an underlying basis to \$1.44 billion and its trading profit margin expanded to 16.7 per cent from 15.3 per cent a year earlier over the first half, near the top of its forecast range.

It also hailed a “significant improvement in trading cashflow conversion” and reiterated its full-year prediction of underlying revenue growth of 5 per cent to 6 per cent and a trading profit margin of at least 18 per cent.

# Harland & Wolff bailout raises fears over warships

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

The future of Harland & Wolff is hanging in the balance after the historic Belfast shipyard was handed a \$25 million emergency bailout.

The group, best known for building the Titanic, also announced it would scrap plans for a long-awaited restart of ferry services between Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, without a single sailing.

Harland & Wolff said it was winding down non-core businesses to focus on its four main shipyards in Belfast, Apple-dore in Devon, and Methil and Arnish in Scotland, after raising the financial lifeline from Riverstone, the Wall Street “credit investor”.

The company said: “It is regrettable that we have taken the tough decision to terminate the fast ferry, but we need to focus our energies and resources in continuing to grow the core business across our four delivery centres.”

The American asset manager has been keeping Harland & Wolff afloat with \$100 million of loans at 14 per cent

interest. Rothschilds, the merchant bank, has been called in to advise on “strategic options”. Last month the incoming government declined to support a taxpayer bailout of Harland & Wolff. The shipbuilder, which was bought out of administration five years ago, had its shares suspended on Aim, the junior market, last month.

The financial crisis facing Harland & Wolff raises the prospect that its £1.6 billion Ministry of Defence commission to build three military vessels could default to a Spanish shipyard, making them the first warships in the history of the Royal Navy to be built overseas.

Malcolm Groat, 63, the chairman, said: “We are grateful to our lenders in continuing their funding commitment to support Harland & Wolff Group’s stabilisation and long-term strategy objectives.”

The company also said that John Wood, 50, its chief executive, had left with immediate effect.

Hopes have been dashed for a ferry linking Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

# Growth at Haleon boosts profit forecast

Alex Ralph

The consumer goods group behind Sensodyne toothpaste and Centrum multivitamins has raised its full-year profit growth forecast alongside healthy first-half results, helping to lift its shares to their highest level since the business was spun off two years ago.

Haleon, which was separated from GSK, the FTSE 100 pharmaceuticals group, in July 2022, announced organic revenue growth of 4.1 per cent in the second quarter, comprising 3.4 per cent from pricing and 0.7 per cent from higher volumes, which returned to growth after a decline in the first quarter. Adjusted operating profit at the company, whose brands also include Panadol and Voltaren, was up 11 per cent at £1.29 billion over the first half of the year.

On a reported basis, profit growth was weaker because of restructuring costs, including the closure of its oral healthcare manufacturing site in Maidenhead, west of London, and the

relocation of production to Slovakia, with the loss of up to 435 jobs.

Since it was spun off in the biggest London listing in a decade, Haleon has been focused on cutting debt and refining its portfolio, offloading “non-core” brands such as Chapstick, the lip

## 4.1%

Second-quarter revenue growth  
Source: Haleon

balm brand, Lamisil, an antifungal treatment, and most recently its nicotine replacement therapy business outside the United States for £500 million to Dr Reddy’s Laboratories, an Indian generic drugs group.

Haleon said its leverage had fallen to 2.9 times net debt to adjusted profit, leaving it on course to hit its medium-term target of 2.5 times. It declared an interim dividend of 2p per share.

It also launched the remaining

£185 million of a £500 million share buyback programme and said it expected a “high single-digit” increase in full-year operating profit growth from its previous guidance.

Brian McNamara, 58, Haleon’s chief executive, said he expected sales volumes to continue to rise in the second half of the year.

Of Haleon’s first two years as a standalone public company, he said: “I feel good about the performance, the market share growth. But you can never be complacent.”

Analysts at Bernstein, the broker, said: “There is no whiff of ‘consumer weakness’ or ‘discounting’. Hayfever and sensitive teeth don’t go away that easily. As other staples will go through a cycle of worrying about future margins and volumes, we believe Haleon will show to be the staples of staples: economically resilient.”

Shares in Haleon, which began trading at 330p after its separation from GSK in 2022, rose by 8½p, or 2.4 per cent, to close at 358p.

Business Markets

William Kay Tempus

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



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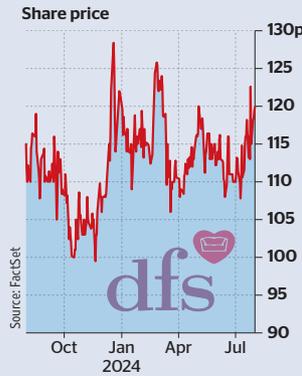
DFS FURNITURE

Market cap £279 million | Dividend 1.9 per cent

While all need furniture, but we don't need to buy it every day and that is both the strength and the weakness of DFS. It's hard to believe that shares in Britain's biggest seller of armchairs and the like were changing hands for 300p only three years ago, after Covid lockdowns forced us to take a long, hard look at our sagging sofas. Staff absences, skills shortages, the cost of living crisis and even the invasion of Ukraine took them down to 105p and they have struggled ever since, despite the best efforts of Helena Bonham-Carter to boost the group's Sofology brand. However, that might be the right backdrop to buy.

In June, DFS cut its profit expectations by nearly 50 per cent, saying that consumer demand in the upholstery sector was at a "record low". As if that wasn't bad enough, the supply pipeline has been disrupted since last October by Houthi militants based in Yemen attacking container shipping in the Red Sea. That has forced many vessels to travel around South Africa instead, taking weeks longer and adding millions of pounds to costs. Even though DFS makes one in five of its sofas in its British factories, the disruption could prevent £14 million of orders being fulfilled this year.

Sofa so good



**ADVICE Buy**  
**WHY** Virtually all the bad news is in the share price

Analysts at Peel Hunt, the broker, say that conditions are "almost unplayable for the upholstery retailers, with difficult selling conditions compounded by cost pressures".

Sir Keir Starmer, calling for the building of 1.5 million houses in this parliament. That should be all that DFS needs, as we buy most of its products when we move home.

Founded in 1969, DFS has been floated on the stock market, taken

Gross sales

2023	£1,423.6m
2022	£1,474.6m
2021	£1,359.4m

Underlying profit (before tax excluding brand amortisation)

2023	£30.6m
2022	£60.3m
2021	£109.2m

Underlying return on capital employed

2023	13.5%
2022	18.7%
2021	38.7%

private and was refloated in 2015, testimony to the ups and downs of the furniture trade. Through all that, the company has expanded to account for a 38 per cent slice of the nation's upholstered household goods sold through 175 branches in Great Britain and Ireland.

Berenberg thinks that DFS faces more challenges before it enters a period of demand resurgence. "We continue to expect subdued end-market demand through to the end of 2024, and note that continued shipping disruption poses upside risks to the cost base and downside risk to consensus estimates," Matthew Abraham, the broker's analyst, said. In the half-year to December 24

last year, sales fell from £705.6 million to £666.2 million and pre-tax profits shrank from £6.8 million to £900,000. For the year to then end of June, Peel Hunt has taken its £19 million forecast down to £10.5 million, and to £22 million instead of £37 million for the year that has just begun. It is understood that the group's banks are standing firm. We will know more when the 2023-24 results are announced in September.

Nevertheless, Jonathan Pritchard, of Peel Hunt, rates the shares as a "buy", arguing that "while life is doubtless very tough at the moment, DFS is still a fine business in our view, well-managed with an enviable market position and plenty of routes to grow profit when the consumer turns. Once the signs of life emerge, the shares will be strong performers." He sees the price-to-earnings ratio dropping from 34 to 9.1 in the next two years and the dividend yield rising from 1.9 per cent to 7.5 per cent at the present share price of 118p or so (the shares were up to 120p yesterday). Jefferies, the investment bank, is another fan, noting the potential for profit margins to recover to 8 per cent. Still, according to Berenberg: "DFS is likely to face further cost challenges prior to a period of demand resurgence."

Clearly, there are uncertainties, not least the economic recovery and resistance to Starmer's housebuilding ambitions, but the darkest hour is when investors' bravery is most likely to be rewarded. In a year's time, today's share price could look cheap.

ALLIANCE PHARMA

Market cap £202 million | 2023 sales £180.7 million

According to Alliance Pharma's advertisement for Kelo-Cote, its silicon scar treatment, you can "help your scar fade to feel your confidence grow". Investors' scars may be more resistant to treatment, though, especially for those who bought the shares in July 2022 when they were priced at 117p. These days they languish below 40p.

The decline was partly prompted by a Times investigation into price increases for prochlorperazine, a nausea, dizziness and migraine

drug. The Competition and Markets Authority later fined Alliance and several other companies for colluding to fix the market, but they successfully appealed against that verdict this year. Meanwhile, investors grew impatient at unrelated delays in producing the 2023 report and accounts.

Alliance originated in a parcel of brands bought in 1998 from Novartis, the Swiss-American pharmaceuticals multinational. Since then, management changes have led to a zig-zag of strategies, settling in 2009 on consumer healthcare through more brand purchases, rather than on research and development. It has bought 17

companies since 2010, increasingly to help damaged skin and to support healthy ageing.

Alliance's shares responded positively to half-year results this week, showing "see-through" revenues up by £2.4 million at £84.8 million. "See-through" includes sales from Nizoral, a medicated anti-dandruff shampoo, as if they had been invoiced by Alliance as principal rather than simply the marketing rights.

Kelo-Cote's sales jumped 18.4 per cent to £29.2 million, nearly half the total, while other brands struggled with destocking and a factory rejig. Nick Sedgwick, a new chief executive, arrived in May, promising

detailed plans in the autumn. Analysts at Investec see the normalised price-to-earnings ratio coming down from 9.2 to 7.3 over the next three years, which seems good value on the face of it.

Any slippage will be seized on by DBay Advisors and Slater Investments, which between them own 40 per cent of the shares and are known for their no-nonsense attitudes and short fuses.

**ADVICE Hold**  
**WHY** Wait for a clearer picture from the new chief executive

NEWS IN BRIEF

Talc unit recalculated

Elementis announced a review of its talc business, writing down its value by \$66 million, as a strong first half led it to boost its full-year outlook. The FTSE 250 chemicals company reported a 5 per cent increase in sales year-on-year to \$383 million for the six months to June 30, saying it now expected its annual performance to be slightly above expectations. However, the writedown pushed Elementis into an operating loss of \$11 million for the first half. Its shares fell 1/4p, or 0.4 per cent, to 159 1/4p.

Mondi package shrinks

Mondi announced a 29 per cent fall in pre-tax profits as the packaging group faced higher costs and lower average selling prices. Mondi reported pre-tax profits of €296 million for the six months to the end of June, down from €418 million in the same period last year. There was a 3.7 per cent decline in half-year revenues to €3.7 billion. Mondi warned that it would be hit by maintenance work in the second half. Its shares rose 21p, or 1.4 per cent, to £5.41 1/2.

Factory output rises

Factories recorded their best month in two years last month as growth in production and new orders strengthened, according to a survey. S&P Global's purchasing managers' index for manufacturing rose to 52.1 in July from 50.9 in June, its highest reading since July 2022. The survey has reported a value above the threshold of 50 that denotes growth for three consecutive months. Output and new orders increased at the fastest rate since February 2022.

Royal Mail bid review

The £3.6 billion bid from Daniel Kretinsky, the Czech entrepreneur, for the owner of Royal Mail has been called in by the government. International Distribution Services, the parent company of Royal Mail, agreed a takeover deal by Kretinsky's EP Group in May. The Cabinet Office is understood to have launched a review process into the bid under the National Security and Investment Act. EP Group and the Cabinet Office declined to comment.

PRICES

Major indices

<b>New York</b>		<b>Zurich</b>	
Dow Jones	40347.97 (-494.82)	SMI Index	12317.44 n/a
Nasdaq Composite	17194.14 (-405.26)	DJ Euro Stoxx 50	4765.72 (-107.22)
S&P 500	5446.68 (-75.62)		
<b>Tokyo</b>		<b>London</b>	
Nikkei 225	38126.33 (-975.49)	FTSE 100	8283.36 (-84.62)
		FTSE 250	21459.23 (+141.48)
<b>Hong Kong</b>		FTSE 350	4588.30 (-44.50)
Hang Seng	17304.96 (-39.64)	FTSE Eurotop 100	4032.97 (-48.05)
		FTSE All-Shares	4544.95 (-43.36)
<b>Amsterdam</b>		FTSE Non Financials	5478.16 n/a
AEX Index	907.14 (-13.48)	techMARK 100	7017.22 (-52.26)
		Bargains	n/a
<b>Sydney</b>		US\$	1.2763 (-0.0088)
AO	8343.80 (+23.40)	Euro	1.1827 (-0.0042)
		:SDR	0.98 (+0.00)
<b>Frankfurt</b>		Exchange Index	84.04 (-0.11)
DAX	18083.05 (-425.60)	Bank of England official close (4pm)	
		CPI	134.07 Jun (2015 = 100)
<b>Singapore</b>		RPI	387.30 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
Straits	3419.84 (-36.10)	RMX	381.90 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
		Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)
<b>Brussels</b>		Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45 (+27.75)
BEL20	4104.84 (-25.36)		
<b>Paris</b>			
CAC-40	7370.45 (-161.04)		

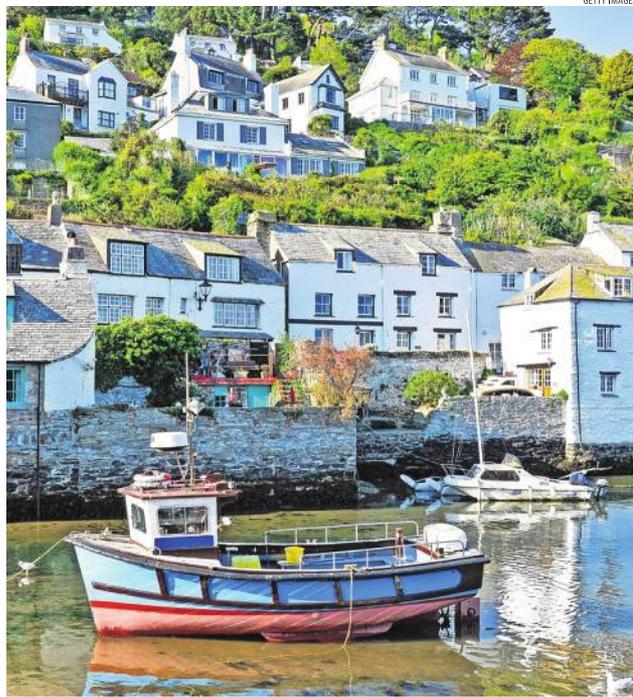
London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Sep 24	99.580	100.42	99.490	100.29	370162	759197
	Dec 24	97.920	98.210	97.920	97.750	4	187
	3-Mth Sterling	Sep 24					
3-Mth Euribor	Sep 24	96.530	96.550	96.525	96.545	138797	535973
	Dec 24	96.905	96.935	96.880	96.925	246132	588218
	3-Mth Euroswiss	Sep 24					
FTSE100	Sep 24	8390.0	8409.0	8257.0	8275.0	95733	485895
	Dec 24	8423.0	8423.0	8423.0	8332.5	1	422
	FTSEurofirst 80	Sep 24					
	Dec 24				6392.5		
	Dec 24				6441.0		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 6.00pm)		Brent (6.00pm)	
Crude Oils (\$/barrel FOB)		Oct	80.26-80.25
Brent Physical	81.52 -0.10	Nov	79.67-79.66
BFOE(Oct)	80.33 -0.40	Dec	79.16-79.14
BFOE(Nov)	79.72 -0.06	Volume: 2098136	
WTIOct	76.17 -0.48		
WTINov	75.36 -0.25		
Products (\$/MT)		<b>LIFFE</b>	
Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)		Cocoa	
Premium Unld	850.00 853.00 -4.00	Sep	6035-6016
Gasoil FCC	731.75 732.75 +0.50	Dec	5238-5226
3.5 Fuel Oil	445.00 450.00 +9.00	Mar	4674-4654
Naphtha	645.00 659.00 +0.00	May	4499-4479
		Jul	4391-4366
		Sep	4274-4251
		Volume: 84453	
<b>ICE Futures</b>		<b>RobustaCoffee</b>	
Gas Oil		Sep	4218-4213
Aug	740.75-740.25	Nov	4078-4074
Sep	742.75-742.50	Dec	3938-3932
Oct	744.50-744.25	Volume: 21865	
	Volume: 676894	<b>White Sugar (FOB)</b>	
		Reuters	
		Aug	512.80-512.10
		Aug	509.80-508.10
		Oct	526.00-525.70
		Dec	517.00-516.90
		Dec	538.00-496.00
		Mar	515.40-515.00
		Volume: 78651	



## Housing market on the rise

House prices are rising at their fastest rate since the end of 2022, with the market "holding relatively steady" even though many people are still struggling to afford their first home (Tom Howard writes). Compared with this time last year, house prices have increased by 2.1 per cent to an average of £266,334, according to Nationwide, Britain's

third largest mortgage lender. That represents the largest year-on-year increase since December 2022, shortly after Kwasi Kwarteng and Liz Truss's mini-budget spooked financial markets, sent borrowing costs soaring and triggered an almost immediate downturn from which the property market is yet to fully recover. Prices have risen in each of the past three months, with Nationwide estimating that they edged 0.3 per cent higher in June. Both readings — the month-on-month change and the annual

rate of inflation — were slightly ahead of what economists had been expecting. The forecast had been for a 0.1 per cent monthly rise and for a year-on-year increase of 1.8 per cent. Nationwide's figures show that the typical mortgage rate for someone with a 25 per cent deposit on a five-year fixed deal was about 1.9 per cent in 2019. Today it is about 4.6 per cent, down from above 6 per cent last summer. Even with rates having eased back from their highs, Gardner noted that "affordability remains stretched for many prospective buyers".

## The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Coats Shares hit record high as strong first half prompts upgrades	12.9%
Next Upgrades full-year guidance	8.3%
Rolls-Royce Resumption of dividend	7.0%
Smith & Nephew First-half profits beat estimates	6.7%
British American Tobacco Benefits from a weaker pound	1.9%
NatWest Negative read-across from French bank's results	-8.1%
Schroders Half-year profits miss expectations	-9.7%
Vesuvius Business recovery won't materialise until next year	-11.8%
Melrose Industries Downgrades revenue outlook	-12.3%
Wizz Air Issues profit warning	-22.6%

# Coats boss bows out with impressive set of results

Jessica Newman Market report

Rajiv Sharma received heartfelt applause from the City after delivering his final set of results as the chief executive of Coats. A return to normal customer buying patterns and inventory levels helped sales at the industrial threads maker to rise by 7 per cent to \$741 million in the six months to the end of June, higher than analysts had expected. The company is confident that sales from its 100 per cent-recycled thread products, which more than doubled to \$159 million in the first half, will surpass \$300 million this year. Operating profits for the period also beat consensus expectations, reaching \$133 million as its adjusted profit margin expanded to a record

## Wall Street report

Weak economic data heightened concerns about future growth and pushed indices lower. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 494.82 points, or 1.2 per cent, to 40,347.97 and the S&P 500 shed 75.62 points, or 1.4 per cent, to 5,446.68.

18 per cent. Because of its strong start of the year, Coats now believes its full-year performance will be "modestly above" market expectations. "Sharma is bowing out on an upgrade to numbers, a likely rarity across our UK industrials coverage this reporting season," analysts at Jefferies wrote. They believe that the stock remains undervalued. Shares in Coats jumped 11½p, or 12.9 per cent, to close at a record high of 101p. Excitement over the Bank of England's decision to cut interest rates was brief, with the FTSE 100 finishing the session sharply lower, down 84.62 points, or 1 per cent, at 8,283.36 as banking shares came under pressure. While banks do tend to benefit from higher rates, the sell-off was driven largely by Société Générale reporting disappointing second-quarter earnings and a cut to a key target for its French retail division. Shares in the French bank tumbled

## FINANCE

# Pershing Square sinks float plan

Bill Ackman has scrapped a planned initial public offering of Pershing Square USA (Louisa Clarence-Smith writes). The billionaire American hedge fund manager had planned a New York listing for the closed-end fund, which he predicted would be one of the largest floats on record. However, in an abrupt U-turn, he abandoned the plan only days before the fund was expected to begin trading on the New York Stock Exchange. The decision comes after Ackman, 58,



Bill Ackman has abandoned his dream of a blockbuster flotation

downsized the IPO plans for the second time in a week, after at least one prominent pledged investor pulled out. On Twitter/X the investor released a four-paragraph statement saying his

team had re-evaluated the fund's structure. "We will report back once we are ready to launch a revised transaction," he wrote. Later Ackman posted again, saying he had "made the decision to withdraw the IPO [on Wednesday morning] when [I] came up with a better transaction structure". Closed-end funds have lost popularity as they often trade at a discount to the securities they hold. None were launched last year and only six were set up in the course of 2022.

by 9 per cent in Paris. On this side of the Channel, NatWest dropped 29½p, or 8.1 per cent, to 338½p; HSBC fell 45½p, or 6.5 per cent, to 658½p; Standard Chartered lost 45½p, or 6 per cent, to 721½p; and Barclays shed 11p, or 4.7 per cent, to 223p. There were bleak results from a batch of London-listed companies, too. Wizz Air descended 433p, or 22.6 per cent, to a nine-month low of £14.80 after slashing its annual profit forecast on the back of a weak start to the year. The airline was the biggest loser on the FTSE 250, which ended the day 141.48 points, or 0.7 per cent, lower at 21,459.23. Investors in Vesuvius were aghast after the engineering group admitted that a recovery in its end markets would not materialise until next year. The FTSE 250 company, which supplies products to the steel and foundry industries, delivered its frustrating outlook as it revealed a 19 per cent drop in pre-tax profits to £76.7 million for the first half. Its

shares tumbled by 57p, or 11.8 per cent, to 426½p. A weaker pound gave a lift to dollar earners such as British American Tobacco, shares of which puffed 52p, or 1.9 per cent, higher to £27.97 and AstraZeneca, which advanced 144p, or 1.2 per cent, to £125.12. Oxford Nanopore jumped 9½p, or 7.6 per cent, to 130p after the genetic sequencing specialist secured a £50 million investment from Novo Holdings, the controlling shareholder of Novo Nordisk, the Danish drugs company behind Wegovy. Gulf Marine Services, whose support vessels are used by renewable energy companies when building their offshore wind farms, leapt 2p, or 11.8 per cent, to 19p after landing a refinancing deal. The additional headroom will give the business greater flexibility, enabling it to acquire new vessels to expand its fleet, and also removes "most" restrictions on dividends and share buybacks.

London Grain Futures					
LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)					
Nov	191.10	Jan	una	Mar	una
May	201.50	Jul	una	Volume:	871
London Metal Exchange (Official)					
Cash	3mth	Dec 22			
Copper Gde A (\$/tonne)					
8997.0-8998.0	9126.0-9127.0	9440.0-9450.0			
Lead (\$/tonne)					
2046.0-2047.0	2077.0-2078.0	2172.0-2177.0			
Zinc Spec Hi Gde (\$/tonne)					
2621.0-2621.5	2684.0-2684.5	2730.0-2735.0			
Alum Hi Gde (\$/tonne)					
2228.0-2228.5	2286.0-2287.0	2445.0-2450.0			
Nickel (\$/tonne)					
15860.0-15870.0	16200.0-16225.0	17220.0-17270.0			
Tin (\$/tonne)					
29615.0-29635.0	29850.0-29900.0	29660.0-29710.0			

## Gold/Precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Wednesday.

Bullion: Open \$2445.84

Close \$2445.75-2446.04 High \$2461.40

Low \$2430.53

AM \$2419.60 PM \$2426.30

Platinum \$ (£)

Silver \$28.47 (£22.30)

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 5.00 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	8.8207-8.8607	8.8245-8.8258	127ds	399ds
Euro	1.1876-1.1823	1.1828-1.1827	9pr	30pr
Montreal	1.7635-1.7759	1.7676-1.7681	9ds	33ds
New York	1.2755-1.2860	1.2763-1.2764	5pr	10pr
Oslo	13.876-14.027	13.931-13.945	60ds	156ds
Stockholm	13.623-13.763	13.666-13.671	220ds	661ds
Tokyo	190.95-193.25	191.20-191.22	81ds	239ds
Zurich	1.1140-1.1287	1.1145-1.1146	37ds	112ds

Premium = pr Discount = ds

## Dollar rates

Australia	1.5339-1.5340
Canada	1.3852-1.3853
Denmark	6.9145-6.9150
Euro	0.9267-0.9267
Hong Kong	7.8146-7.8147
Japan	149.88-149.82
Malaysia	4.5665-4.5715
Norway	10.917-10.925
Singapore	1.3362-1.3363
Sweden	10.708-10.711
Switzerland	0.8732-0.8733

## Other Sterling

Argentina peso	1189.8-1189.8
Australia dollar	1.9578-1.9581
Bahrain dinar	0.4779-0.4850
Brazil real	7.2833-7.2871
Euro	1.1827-1.1828
Hong Kong dollar	9.9734-9.9745
India rupee	106.90-106.91
Indonesia rupiah	20745-20763
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3892-0.3916
Malaysia ringgit	5.8748-5.8812
New Zealand dollar	2.1407-2.1412
Singapore dollar	1.7052-1.7055
S Africa rand	23.215-23.225
U A E dirham	4.7090-4.7093

## Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia \$	1.960	-0.01
Canada \$	1.770	0.00
Denmark Kr	8.845	-0.01
Euro	1.185	-0.01
Hong Kong \$	9.998	-0.04
Hungary	469.531	+1.76
Indonesia	20748.571	-116.68
Israel Shk	4.851	+0.02
Japan Yen	191.977	-1.28
New Zealand \$	2.146	-0.02
Norway Kr	13.936	-0.11
Poland	5.092	-0.01
Russia	109.504	-0.90
S Africa Rd	23.223	-0.14
Sweden Kr	13.671	-0.09
Switzerland Fr	1.118	-0.01
Turkey Lira	42.298	-0.23
USA \$	1.279	-0.01

Rates supplied by Morningstar



Paul King TEP,  
Head of April King Legal

# Couples, protect your home from future care home fees

**IMPORTANT UPDATE - 29.07.2024**

**Government scraps proposed cap on care costs.  
Couples should act now to protect their children's inheritance.**

## Does this sound familiar to you?

*"We've made our wills, leaving everything to each other first and then to the children."*

These are known as mirror wills. Sounds reassuring enough, doesn't it? But your children could end up with very little - or even nothing at all.

If your surviving spouse or partner has to go into care, they will have to use their assets to pay for their care until they get down to the lower limit. Therefore, it's not a good idea to leave your half share of the home to your surviving partner. Instead, leave them the USE of your share. This can be achieved by making new April Wills®.

These legitimate steps must be taken while you are both alive and in reasonably good mental health. It is therefore important for couples to act NOW!

Most of our clients come to us having already made standard mirror wills, or they've been meaning to make a Will but simply haven't got around to it.

With April Wills®, your and your spouse or partner each leave your half share of the home to the children in trust, but state that they are not to receive it during the lifetime of the surviving spouse/partner.

This half would then NOT be included in any future means test calculations for care fees. The surviving spouse or partner is free to sell their share of the home to raise cash or move house should they wish. Your children are powerless to intervene but simply have to wait for their inheritance, as they would have done previously.

April King Legal have prepared a jargon-free guide to protecting your hard-earned assets. Get in touch for your FREE copy today. Your details remain confidential and will never be passed to any third party.

This invaluable information guide explains why we do NOT recommend giving the house to your children/trust during your lifetime (deliberate deprivation) or selling up and moving into an annex in their garden!

It also includes details of Lasting Power of Attorney and how April Wills® can help prevent your children and grandchildren from losing their inheritance due to a child's divorce, remarriage or financial difficulties.

## What our clients say:

“ Our experience could not have been better. We would definitely recommend April King.

- Mr Duncan, via Trustpilot

“ Really attentive, listened to what our concerns were and sorted our wills in record time.

- Mrs Wilson, via Trustpilot

“ The staff are all extremely helpful and make it easy to complete your will and, in turn, protect your family for the future.

- Mr Shaw, via Trustpilot



April King Legal has prepared a FREE, no obligation, information guide which is available by visiting

[www.aprilking.co.uk](http://www.aprilking.co.uk)

or by calling us free on

**0800 788 0408**

Lines open Monday - Friday 8.30am - 8pm,  
Saturday 9am - 5pm, Sunday 10am - 4pm  
April King Legal has locations nationwide.

## Our free guide also includes advice on:

- ✓ **Bloodline Planning** - How to ensure your grandchildren ultimately inherit instead of a daughter-in-law or son-in-law.
- ✓ **Estranged Children** - The steps you should take in your will to avoid future legal challenges to your estate.
- ✓ **Power of Attorney** - How they can be used to protect your health and financial decisions.
- ✓ **Grandchild Trust Funds** - Why including trust funds to grandchild can leave a positive financial legacy.



The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANCE GLOBAL INVESTORS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for various investment funds like Strategic Bond Fund, UK Corp Bond, UK Equity, etc.

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for funds like Corporate Bond, European, Far Eastern, Fund of Inv, etc.

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for funds like Global Income, Global Select, High Income, etc.

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for funds like Equity, Health, UK Growth, etc.

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for funds like Gen Acc, UK Growth, etc.

UK Global Investment Companies

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Euro Acc, Global Income, etc.

CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for European Growth, UK Growth, etc.

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Beacon Inv, etc.

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Corporate Bd, Emerging Mkts, etc.

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FUNDS MANAGEMENT LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Well Blr Bal Acc, Well Blr Growth, etc.

INVESTEC FUND MGRS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Childrens Acc, Corp Bond, etc.

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Amer Spec Sits, American, etc.

EMERGING Mkts Equity Acc

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Emerging Mkts Equity Acc, Global Bond, etc.

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Equity Acc, Euro Ind Inc, etc.

M & G SECURITIES

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Global Growth, UK Index, etc.

FOR ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEICS)

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for All Stks Credit, Asian Div, etc.

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Investors Super, All Stks Credit, etc.

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INSIGHT INVESTMENT FUNDS MANAGEMENT LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Envo Sel Opps Fd, Global Equity, etc.

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for JP Morgan Asset Mgmt, JP Morgan Core, etc.

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Absolute Return, Dividend, etc.

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Morgan Stanley, UK Equity, etc.

GLOBAL BAL SUPT F I ACC

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Global Bal Supt F I Acc, Global Bal Supt F Inc, etc.

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Bal Offset Inc, Bal Port Growth, etc.

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MGRS LTD

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for European Inc, Far Eastem Inc, etc.

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRG MGRS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Overseas Growth, Tracker and Specialist, etc.

UK and Income Investment Funds

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Corp Bond, UK Growth, etc.

OEIC Class

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Overseas Growth, Tracker and Specialist, etc.

UK and Income Investment Funds

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Corp Bond, UK Growth, etc.

OEIC Class

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for UK Growth, UK Sel Growth, etc.

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for AAA Inc CAT, Amer Ex Gwth, etc.

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Equities, Balanced, etc.

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Threadneedle UK, Threadneedle US, etc.

Retail Shares (Class 1)

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Retail Shares, etc.

Ford Resolution see Inis

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Ford Resolution, etc.

British funds

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for British funds, etc.

Index-linked

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Index-linked funds, etc.

Longs (Over 15 years)

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Longs, etc.

Mediums (5-15 years)

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Mediums, etc.

Shorts (under 5 years)

Table with columns: Buy, +/-, Yield % for Shorts, etc.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.



# 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
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

## Automobiles & parts

395%	132%	Aston Martin Lag	152%	-	3%	-1.1
------	------	------------------	------	---	----	------

## Banking & finance

236%	136%	Abrdn	170%	+	1/2	8.5
7%	3	Acuity RM	3	-	1/2	-2.2
2837	2058	Admiral	278	-	26	2.6 24.6
19	10%	ADVF	14	-	-	-5.5
457	249	AI Bell	457	-	2	2.5 23.2
26561%	2140%	Aon Corp	25422%	-	204%	-25.1
1105	877%	Arbutnot Bkg	975	+	2%	4.8 4.3
7%	4	Argo Group	...	-	-	-0.2
232%	166%	Ashmore	168%	-	3%	9.8 11.6
1529%	1225	Aus New Z	1492	+	9%	-12.8
497	369%	Aviva	490%	-	10	6.6 13.1
414	289	Banco Santander	360%	-	11%	4.0 6.2
5420	3065	Bank of Georgia	4385	-	17%	5.1 4.9
230%	129%	Barclays	222%	-	10%	3.4 8.6
1/2	...	Blue Star Capital	...	-	-	-0.1
550	350	BP Marsh&Ptnrs	550	+	7%	1.9 15.1
14%	4	Braheheart Inv	51%	+	1	-2.1
...	...	Brevin Dolphn	51%	+	1	-2.1
291%	16%	Bridgpoint	291%	-	1%	3.0 32.3
37	26%	Centus Sec	37	-	-	-5.9
286	244%	Chesnara	259	-	1%	9.2 10.0
...	...	City of Lon Gp	...	-	-	-0.6
410	301	City Lon Inv Gp	370	+	4	9.0 12.8
945	299%	Close Bros	497%	-	13%	6.8 5.2
339%	89%	CMC Markets	331	-	2%	2.4 89.4
1326%	769%	CommerzBk	1204%	-	68%	-7.8
1404%	800%	Deutsche Bk	1180%	-	37%	-4.8
225%	147	Direct Line Ins	185%	-	2%	2.1 11.8

## Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

## Consumer goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----



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12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
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12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

## Construction & property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

## Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

## Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
---------------	-----	---------	-----------	---------	------------	-----

# Equity prices Business

12 month High	12 month Low	Company	Price (p)	+/ -	Yld%	P/E
20%	6%	IMCO	7	---	-1.8	
---	---	Mediclinic	501	+	1/2	31.3
1%	1/2	NA Pharma	1/2	---	-1.0	
75%	58	NOX Group	63	+ 1	1.6	29.8
100.06	BL63	Novartis	CH99.58	+ 0.10	3.3	---
2%	2	Omega Diags	2 1/2	---	-1.6	
14	1/2	Oveco Bio	1/2	---	-0.3	
450	166%	Orford Biomedical	372	+ 2	-2.2	
2%	1/2	Physiomics	1/2	---	-1.6	
8%	2%	Proteome Scies	3 1/4	+ 1/4	-4.0	
5960	4098	Reckitt Benckiser	4098	- 80	4.6	18.0
37%	8%	RUA Life Sciences	10%	---	-1.2	
105%	10%	Sarum Hlths	30	- 1	-4.8	
1199	896%	Smith & Neph	1199	+ 76	2.7	50.7
266	210	Spire Hare	255 1/2	+ 2	0.8	38.7
9%	3%	Synalgen	4	- 1/2	-0.8	
74	49%	Tissue Regenix	65 1/2	---	---	
12%	4	Totally	10%	- 1/2	1.1	---
900	327%	Tristel	500	+ 10	2.6	39.9
14%	1%	ValRx	2 1/2	---	-1.3	

## Industrials

107	50%	Accsys Tech	55 1/2	+	1/2	-2.4
4630	3421%	BASF	3570 1/2	- 65 1/2	---	
4479%	2137%	Bayer DM50	2300 1/2	- 18 1/2	---	-0.4
175	25	Blome Tech	25	---	-0.6	
1%	---	Byrotol	---	---	-0.2	
---	---	Camb Gbl Timber	6 1/2	---	-9.0	
101	66	Coats Grp	301	+ 11 1/2	2.4	25.1
5956	3899	Croda	3967	- 75	2.7	32.4
845	290	Copper (James)	265	- 5	2.5	7.7
159%	107%	Elementis	159 1/2	- 1/2	1.0	43.1
15%	4%	Hardiex	7 1/2	---	-2.9	
1870	1446%	Johnson Math	1603	- 36	4.7	27.5
1706	1311%	Mondi	1541 1/2	+ 21	4.0	15.6
115	87%	Robinson	110	---	5.0	---
456%	263%	DS Smith	456 1/2	+ 1 1/2	3.9	13.6
730%	486%	Swire Pacific	666 1/2	- 4	- 3.3	
9%	2	Symph Environ	2 1/2	---	-1.9	
629	122%	Synthomer	257 1/2	- 7 1/2	-2.1	
2456	1985%	Takeda Pharm	2178 1/2	- 62 1/2	---	34.8
1%	1/2	Velocys	1/2	---	-0.2	
1594	1082	Victrex	1088	- 12	5.4	31.0
477%	325%	Wynnstay Group	365	---	4.7	12.0
574	276	Zetofarms	506	- 30	1.3	27.2

## Leisure

130	70%	888 Hlths	88%	- 1	-6.7	
759	507	Accesso Tech	688	---	4.9	
530	525	Best of the Best	530	---	5.9	
1377	811%	Carnival	1159 1/2	- 46	45.8	
192%	116	Celcor	177 1/2	---	23.9	
424%	304%	Dominos Pizza	325 1/2	+ 1 1/2	3.2	11.6
1403%	559	Entain	555	- 16	3.1	-3.9
12475	1255	Flutter Ent	15255	- 120	---	---
41%	29%	Gaming Realsm	40	+ 1 1/2	20.4	
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	220	- 15	22.0	
1	1/2	Minoan Gp	1/2	---	-8.9	
317	199%	Mitch & Butlers	317	+ 6	42.8	
178	82%	On The Beach	145 1/2	- 1 1/2	0.6	15.4
103%	62%	Rank Grp	69 1/2	- 1 1/2	-3.4	
68	40	Restaurant Gp	64 1/2	---	---	---
63	42	Rotale	63	---	---	---
175	62%	Sportech	84	+ 9	---	---
257%	144%	SSP	173 1/2	+ 9	2.0	---
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%	Webs Holdings	1	---	-4.8	
847%	613	Wetherspoon JD	756	+ 9 1/2	23.4	
3678	2849	Whitbread	2901	- 9	3.3	18.1
1225	946	Young & Co A	1015	+ 17	2.1	21.2
878	592	Young & Co N/V	700	- 10	3.0	14.6

## Media

107%	54%	Aeorea Comms	58	+ 1	5.2	20.1
52	27%	Altitude Group	38 1/2	- 1/2	53.4	
112	70	Arconetech Grp	97 1/2	- 1 1/2	3.5	11.3
571	317%	Ascential	571	---	---	---

829%	587	Auto Trader	810 1/2	- 4 1/2	1.0	32.0
742	381	Bloomsbury Publi	742	- 2	1.9	18.9
1%	1/2	Bonhill Group	1/2	- 1/2	-1.5	
157%	65	Catalyst Media	85	---	31.7	5.8
1%	1/2	Catalyst	1/2	---	-0.2	
---	---	DCD Media	100	- 30	---	5.0
46%	31	Eblivity	38	---	---	---
1145	577	Future	1120	---	0.3	14.6
243	132	GlobalData	214	- 1	2.1	56.3
---	---	Hyve Group	120 1/2	---	---	---
235	107%	IG Design Grp	230	+ 15	---	---
878%	685%	Informa	857 1/2	- 12	2.0	28.6
84%	59%	ITV	80 1/2	---	6.2	15.4
5	1 1/2	Jaywing	1 1/2	- 1 1/2	-0.1	
1%	1/2	Live Company Gp	1/2	---	---	---
194%	119%	ME Group	194 1/2	+ 1 1/2	3.8	14.6
---	---	Mediastest	---	---	-2.0	
88%	42%	Merit Grp	74	---	-6.3	
---	---	Mirads	1 1/2	- 1 1/2	---	---
44	10%	Mission Group	26	+ 1 1/2	6.5	-2.0
283%	208	Moneysupermarket	226 1/2	- 11 1/2	5.0	16.7
2208%	1491	News Corp A	2135 1/2	- 20 1/2	---	72.9
2274%	1512	News Corp B	2206 1/2	- 20 1/2	---	75.3
1036	354	Next 15 Group	850	- 3	1.8	33.0
1062	812	Pearson	1062	+ 6	2.1	20.1
5%	2%	Primorus Inv	3 1/2	---	-1.9	
172%	107%	Quatro	140	+ 15	---	5.3
107%	59	Reach	107 1/2	+ 2	6.9	15.8
85	62%	REACT Grp	77	---	78.5	
3654	2473	Relx	3590	- 83	1.6	38.1
594%	462%	Rightmove	573	- 3 1/2	1.6	23.4
95	58%	SpaceandPeople	95	---	13.3	
290%	176%	STV Group	278	---	40.9	29.5
770	170	System1 Group	770	- 10	78.5	
2963	226%	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2963	- 10 1/2	---	11.8
2758%	2011%	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2758 1/2	- 10 1/2	---	10.9
---	---	Vela Tech	---	---	---	---
400	294	Williamson	395	---	2.6	19.4
850%	681%	WPP	736 1/2	- 14 1/2	5.2	72.8
97%	67%	Zinc Media	72 1/2	---	-8.0	

## Natural resources

1/2	1/2	ADM Energy	1/2	---	-0.7	
---	---	Advance Energy	1/2	---	-0.1	
24%	12%	AFC Energy	14 1/2	- 1/2	-6.2	
60%	24%	Afentia PLC	52 1/2	- 1 1/2	---	---
1%	---	Alba Mineral Res	---	---	---	---
1%	---	Allen Metals	---	---	2.2	
96%	35	Alumina	74 1/2	- 1 1/2	---	---
2	1/2	Aminex	1 1/2	---	---	---
32	---	Amur Mins Corp	---	---	---	---
4081%	2300%	Anglo Amer Plat	---	---	3.0	---
277%	167%	Anglo American	2821	- 29	3.2	---
90	42	Anglo Asian Mng	78	+ 2	4.1	-4.7
2410	129%	Antofagasta	1925	- 95	1.4	28.9
3%	1%	Arc Minerals	1 1/2	---	-6.7	
3	1%	Ariana Res	2 1/2	---	15.6	
1%	1/2	Arkle Resources	1/2	---	-2.6	
1%	1/2	Armadae Cap	1/2	---	8.1	
1%	1/2	Asiamet Rsrcs	1/2	---	-4.5	
485%	286	Atajaya Mine	375	- 5	1.8	21.5
---	---	Baron Oil	---	---	-9.1	
125	26	Beowulf Mining	26 1/2	---	-2.5	
---	---	Bezzant Res	---	---	1.1	---
2700	2116	BHP Group	2135	- 10	5.6	18.6
3	1%	Border & Shn Pet	2 1/2	- 1 1/2	---	---
---	---	Bousjallville	25 1/2	- 1 1/2	---	---
1%	---	BowlLevers	1	---	-0.5	
558	444%	BP	453 1/2	- 4 1/2	4.9	6.7
8%	2%	Coldene Min	2 1/2	---	-2.0	
2%	1%	Cadogan Petrol	2	---	5.3	
1010	720	Callison Mining	890	---	5.0	---
5	2%	Caspan Sunrises	4 1/2	---	---	---
133%	78%	Centamin	123 1/2	- 3 1/2	2.4	20.0
229%	152%	Cent Asia Metals	195 1/2	- 2 1/2	9.1	12.6
9	1/2	Charat Gold	1/2	---	-0.1	
17%	6%	Chariot Oil & Gas	6 1/2	- 1/2	-4.1	
1%	1%	China Nonfer Gold	1 1/2	---	---	---

---	---	Dantarg Energy	---	---	-4.2	
35	14	Candor Gld	22 1/2	---	---	---
1%	---	Corcel	1/2	---	-0.9	
847%	5286%	DRD Gold	---	---	4.5	---
1%	1/2	ECR Minerals	1/2	---	13.5	
---	---	Emyrean Energy	1/2	---	0.9	
1931	1250	Endeavour	1659	- 71	3.7	---
18%	12	EnQuest	13	- 1/2	-1.1	
3%	1%	Eurasia Mining	2 1/2	+ 1/2	-4.5	
1%	1/2	Europa Oil&Gas	1	---	---	---
95	41%	Ferropo	53	- 4 1/2	-4.7	
639%	440%	Fresnillo	591 1/2	+ 3 1/2	0.7	23.7
---	---	G3 Exploration	28	---	-2.6	
19%	7%	Galantas Gold	8 1/2	---	-1.8	
---	---	GCM Resources	3 1/2	---	-5.6	
18%	7%	Gem Diamonds	13	+ 1/2	---	---
11%	2%	Getech	2 1/2	---	-0.3	
501%	368%	Glencore	445 1/2	- 14 1/2	5.2	15.5
1/2	---	Global Petrol	---	---	-0.7	
1512%	8397%	Gold Fields	---	---	2.3	---
8%	5%	Goldplate	6 1/2	---	4.8	
1%	1/2	Goldstone Res	1 1/2	+ 1/2	-2.3	
11%	5%	GreatBl Gold	7 1/2	---	---	---
164	70	Griffin Mining	130	- 7	20.7	
151%	84%	Gulf Keystone				

## Business

# New jobs with even faster fashion

Artificial intelligence promises to sweep away barriers for the fashion designers of the future, writes **Jane Hamilton**

Fashion design is one of the world's most high-profile careers and, until now, one of the most elite too. However, a new collaboration between the Royal College of Art and Hong Kong's Polytechnic University aims to democratise fashion design, opening up thousands of new roles globally.

Developed between London and Hong Kong, AiDLab is the first research platform that focuses on combining artificial intelligence with design. While the adoption of tech such as computer-aided design in the 1980s resulted in the estimated number of fashion designers worldwide rising from 40,000 to about 120,000, the next generation of AI-supported creativity could sweep away remaining barriers to entering the profession.

A recent report from Goldman Sachs claimed AI was poised to automate up to 26 per cent of tasks in design but proponents are clear that AI will aid human designers, rather than replace them.

"Human creation is the most valuable aspect of design. Designers aren't supposed to be tied to their desks but instead should be outside seeking inspiration for their creations," Calvin Wong, a professor and AiDLab's centre director, says.

"Far from eradicating existing roles, AI will create opportunities to augment and automate processes that are holding designers back from creative freedom. Treating AI as an assistant and embracing it in the creative process will be the future of the fashion industry."

Experts estimate AI adoption can cut the design time for a garment by up to 70 per cent. Designers input a mood board, a selection of prints and a sketch board of their initial design ideas, and the cloud-based system outputs dozens of potential designs, which can then be revised by the human designer.

The system can also generate matching designs for complementary collections. With monthly subscriptions from just £50, AI design systems are affordable not just for established labels but also for SMEs and budding student designers, making it faster and more cost-effective to market their clothing.

Aries Sin, a creative director, is the founder of the fashion label Modement and an early adopter of the technology. She explains: "AI helps designers work smarter and more efficiently. It offers designers more time for trial and error, which is where creativity comes from."

At present the fashion industry supports about one in 25 UK jobs and has a GDP impact of £62 billion. The UK is a world leader in creative design but manufacturing and transportation



## How AI 'speeds up the design process'

Case study

**T**ak Lee, an artistic director and designer (above left), was awarded a first in the menswear MA from the London College of Fashion. The 34-year-old now uses AI to assist in his designs, which are sold globally.

"I have been working in the industry for eight

years but decided to adopt AI to explore the new intersections between conventional fashion techniques and emerging technologies," he said. "Using AI has accelerated the time spent in the design process, particularly in research development and logic analysis.

"These tools streamline

our operations, enhance precision and allow us to experiment with concepts digitally before moving on to detailed work.

"Encouraging collaborations between tech companies and the fashion houses can drive innovation, encourage more young people into fashion design and create new possibilities."

### Tips on becoming an AI fashion designer

Ready to design the future as an AI fashion designer? The professor Calvin Wong says: "Over the last few months there has been a shift of AI acceptance as UK fashion designers and high street brands are incorporating it into part of everyday use." Here's how to land a role in AI fashion design:

- AI fashion design is a tool to support and accelerate the career of budding designers, so it's

best to gain basic training in fashion design first. Search online for available courses which suit your experience.

- Embrace AI and continuously develop a technical skills. It is an area that is highly valued in fashion design yet few people have a high proficiency level, meaning your application will stand out.
- Gain practical experience through internships. Highlight AI

skills on your application and use AI during your work experience to develop your portfolio.

- Showcase the use of AI in your portfolio. Spotlight your designs, even if they are not in production.
- Network through industry events and on social media.
- Enter the first global AI fashion talent mentorship competition. Apply at [culturexai.com](http://culturexai.com) by August 31

costs have prevented some fashion labels growing as quickly as expected.

The consultancy Ideo suggests design businesses that use AI to drive innovation see 38 per cent larger impact on growth, so new tech tools can support small labels to expand by slashing both design time and production costs too.

Wong has predicted that shoppers will eventually be able to "vote" for which AI-generated styles are manufactured and even buy each item prior to immediate production, leading to zero fashion waste.

While the current focus is on the fast-moving fashion design world, the Royal College of Art also sees potential for AI-supported systems to be adopted across all forms of design.

### Six from the best

After a career in consulting, Peter Cheese became chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the professional body for HR and people development. Here he shares his advice for ensuring that organisations are future-fit



- 1 Make work work** We all have a role in making sure the future of work is good for people, for business, and society. We should experiment, innovate and learn together.
- 2 None of us know all the answers** Be prepared to listen, to be curious and to show a level of vulnerability and humility.
- 3 Be agile** Encourage new ideas and challenge, and remove obstacles so people are empowered to innovate.
- 4 Know your key capabilities** Understand the strengths and weaknesses in your teams. Assess what capabilities will be needed and what tasks and skills should you build, borrow, buy or "bot" (automate) in the future.
- 5 Nurture essential skills** Advances in AI and automation will have a significant impact on work but we must also nurture our human skills such as collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.
- 6 Cultivate culture** We are in times of change and we must be able to adapt. Seek to understand culture and mindset, to connect people and align to shared purpose.

### Appointment of the week

#### Are you a people person? HM Revenue needs you

HM Revenue & Customs is seeking to appoint a chief people officer. Working for one of the UK's largest organisations, with 60,000-plus employees, the chief people officer is accountable for setting a clear strategic direction to place colleague experience at the heart of all its work and will be focused on ensuring HMRC has a productive and efficient workforce.

As chief people officer you will deliver an ambitious programme of workforce transformation, supporting the business to deliver operating model changes, HMRC's new learning model and revising HR processes, tools and support.

As a full part of HMRC's executive committee you will also work with members of the board and non-executive directors to champion and deliver excellent workplace and workforce services. As a senior member of the wider civil service HR community, the chief people officer will also work across government and wider networks to anticipate and address future workforce challenges.

Remuneration is up to £170,000. Apply by September 2 at [appointments.thetimes.com](http://appointments.thetimes.com)

### Working week

#### Promotion takes years

Getting a promotion at a big corporation takes an average of two and a half years, a study of 19,000 employees by Standout CV found. Tesla promoted most rapidly, in 10.4 months, followed by JP Morgan at 15.2 months; Rio Tinto workers waited eight years. A spokesman said: "Tesla may have come under fire for its 'ultra-hardcore' work culture but employees can expect to be promoted 20 months before the norm."

#### WPP seeks apprentices

WPP, the world's biggest advertising group, has opened applications for its Creative Tech Apprenticeship. There are 16 places on the coveted nine-month course to equip trainees for marketing and production careers. The course covers creative coding, generative AI, ethics and inclusion. Stephan Pretorius, chief technology officer of WPP, said: "We're not just adapting, we're building the next generation of creative technologists."

#### Introvert? Try accounting

Accounting manager, user experience researcher and software engineer are the best jobs for introverts, a study by the hiring platform Indeed claims. The jobs were deemed to suit the solitude and deep focus typical of introverts. Danny Stacy, of Indeed, said: "Choosing the right career goes beyond just matching skills and educational qualifications. It involves aligning your job with your inherent personality traits."

#### Third of young claim bias

More than a third of younger workers believe they have experienced discrimination during hiring, a fifth of under-25s felt they disadvantaged due to their age, and 15 per cent claimed hair colour was a factor. The study — by the AI hiring site Applied — found only 12 per cent of workers over 55 believed the same. Khyati Sundaram, Applied's chief executive, said: "All humans hold biases. Hiring managers are no exception."



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### Grenfell Site & Memorial Programme Director

As the Programme Director you will play a crucial role in the recovery from the Grenfell tragedy, delivering a memorial determined by the Grenfell bereaved, survivors and immediate community, that honours the memory of those whose lives were lost.

We particularly encourage applications from those of an ethnic minority background and those with disabilities, as well as those based in locations outside of London, who are underrepresented at this level in MHCLG. Please note that, due to the nature of the role, regular travel to London will be required.

#### Job description

As the Grenfell Site & Memorial Programme Director you will join the Safer & Greener Buildings Group reporting to the Director: Community and Memorial, as the SRO for the Grenfell Site and Memorial Programme.

As the successful candidate you will bring a blend of strategic vision, operational excellence and empathetic leadership to this critical role, ensuring the Programme is delivered with integrity, transparency and respect for the Grenfell community.

#### The role includes:

- Ensuring the safe and secure management, operation and maintenance of the tower and site.
- Leading preparation of the site for future use once a decision on the tower has been taken (see published engineering advice [Grenfell Tower Summary note](#). Stage 3 and basement propping is complete).
- Leading delivery of the memorial project, providing programme management across all workstreams: memorial design and construction; any deconstruction work (noting no decision has yet been made on the tower); construction of the memorial either directly or via a partner; ownership, digital memorialisation, second site, tower materials) backed by high quality business cases.
- Keeping the community closely engaged and informed, using trauma aware approaches, as all tower and site related decisions are made and implemented.
- Managing a smooth hand-over to a body, acceptable to the community, when the site is prepared for its long-term future.
- Providing assurance to the SRO, seniors, Ministers and the IPA on delivery of the Programme, as a Major Project within the Government's Major Projects Portfolio.
- Working effectively with stakeholders, including contractors, Ministers, public authorities and other local stakeholders.

#### Key Accountabilities

As the Grenfell Site & Memorial Programme Director, you will be personally responsible for:

- Effective management of the Grenfell Tower site, including strategic and operational decision-making, ensuring expert input as appropriate.
- Leading an open, sensitive, transparent and trauma aware approach that builds the trust and confidence of bereaved, survivors and immediate local community in Government's management of the tower and site, alongside the Deputy Director for Grenfell policy and engagement, and ensuring that all partners and those in the supply chain also deliver in this way.
- Delivery of the Grenfell Site & Memorial Programme in line with the vision of the community, and all related projects including managing performance, meeting success criteria, monitoring and controlling progress, managing costs, engaging fully with assurance processes and responding to recommendations, and identifying, prioritising, assessing and mitigating strategic and operational risks and issues.
- Providing high quality advice and assurance on the delivery of the Grenfell Site & Memorial Programme and related projects to Ministers, senior officials, the IPA and others and inputting into advice and recommendations on key decisions.
- Leading and maintaining the performance of a multi-disciplinary delivery-focused team that includes civil servants and contractors, to successfully deliver the Grenfell Site & Memorial Programme and related projects.
- Creating an environment for success, working effectively with a wide range of internal and external partners, managing their inter-dependencies and driving a high performance 'one team' culture and approach to ensure successful delivery

As one of the Department's senior leaders, you will be a visible role model for the Civil Service leadership behaviours. These can be found in the Civil Service Leadership Statement which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-leadership-statement/civil-service-leadership-statement>

#### Person specification

This is a high profile and important role which requires an ability to think strategically and operationally, to identify and manage risk and delivery and manage a programme of the utmost sensitivity.

You will need to be an experienced Programme Director capable of operating effectively in a high profile, complex, political environment, providing effective governance and assurance to the Programme SRO. You will have extensive construction or built environment experience, including client-side, with an ability to talk to the sector and work effectively with the supply chain. You will have commercial experience and be able to deliver the programme within budget.

You will understand the importance of the Programme and projects and the need to work in a trauma aware way. You will be motivated by a wish to build the trust of the bereaved, survivors and local community to deliver the Programme and project objectives. You will be able to use your judgment, drawing in outside expertise and assurance as needed, to advise Ministers and ensure delivery.

You will be an effective communicator, credible at senior levels, including with Ministers, senior central government officials, private sector CEOs, local councils, and other stakeholders. You will be able to handle and balance a wide range of relationships, internally and externally, including sensitively working with community representatives.

#### Essential Criteria

- Strong proven programme and project delivery experience at a senior level, with in depth knowledge in construction and the built environment, including client-side expertise and experience of managing a complex building/buildings or a construction site, and ensuring that programmes align with industry best practices and standards.
- Proven ability to lead programmes and projects, in a sensitive and complex landscape, with significant stakeholder/community interest, ensuring all actions are taken with the highest degree of consideration.
- Able to manage and control costs, and identify and manage risk, including commercial risk, in a Government environment.
- Able to lead and motivate teams (including virtual groupings across teams) adapting to challenging and changing circumstances and adverse situations, while remaining calm, reassuring others and maintaining high performance.
- Confident communication at all levels including with Ministers, senior officials, drawing on expert advice to communicate complex and technical issues to provide sound expert advice.
- Confident in communicating and engaging with the bereaved, survivors and local community to build trust in government's decisions and delivery.
- Able to establish and develop productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders, bringing people together to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes, and instilling trauma aware approaches throughout.
- Willingness to seek accreditation, or a qualification, from either CIOB, RICS, APM (at PMQ level or above), or other GPP Core Accreditation at Chartered, Certified or Fellow grade.

#### Benefits

Alongside your salary of £90,000, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities contributes £24,300 towards you being a member of the Civil Service Defined Benefit Pension scheme.

- Learning and development tailored to your role
- An environment with flexible working options
- A culture encouraging inclusion and diversity
- A Civil Service pension

**Deadline for applications is 18th August at 23.55**

**To apply please go to [www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk)**



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**Forensic pathologist who inspired the BBC series Silent Witness**  
**Helen Whitwell**  
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## Obituaries

# Mohammed Deif

Commander of Hamas's military wing who masterminded the Gaza tunnels and the terrorist atrocities against Israel on October 7

As Hamas gunmen attacked Israel by land, sea and air on October 7, 2023, killing nearly 1,200 Israelis and foreign citizens, and wounding nearly 3,400, the Palestinian terrorist organisation released a video showing the silhouette of a seated man in a darkened room.

In measured tones the figure said that Hamas had repeatedly warned Israel to halt its expropriation of Palestinian land for settlements, lift its siege of Gaza, stop raiding Palestinian homes and release Palestinian prisoners.

"In light of [Israel's] continuing crimes against our people, its orgy of occupation and its denial of international laws and resolutions, and in light of American and western support and international silence, we've decided to put an end to all this so the enemy understands that he can no longer revel without being held to account," he said.

Few doubted who the man was. Though Mohammed Deif had not appeared in public in decades, and the last known photograph of him had been taken in the 1990s, this was surely the infamous "supreme commander" of Hamas's military wing taking credit for the utterly barbaric attack that he had masterminded.

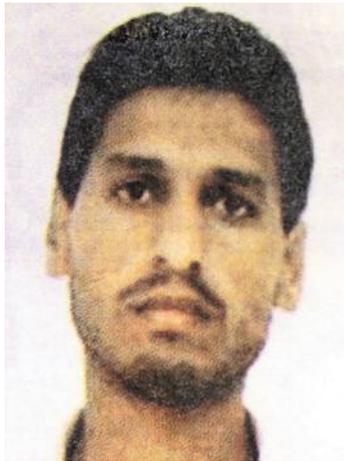
## His nom de guerre meant 'the guest', as he kept on the move

Deif helped to create Hamas's military wing. He was credited with developing the missiles and suicide bombs with which Hamas had so frequently attacked Israeli targets, and the vast network of tunnels within which it operated in Gaza.

He had long been top of Israel's target list, and had survived at least seven assassination attempts (after two of which Israel pronounced him dead). He had lost an eye and at least one limb in the process, and was said to be wheelchair-bound. But through his protracted defiance of Israel's powerful military, and his thwarting of its formidable intelligence apparatus, he had also acquired almost legendary status in Gaza.

Deif, meaning "the guest", was his nom de guerre and an apparent reference to his constant moving from house to house to avoid detection. Infamous and anonymous at the same time, this elusive, shadowy scourge of the Jewish state was also known as "the phantom", "the cat with nine lives" and "the serpent's head".

Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Masri, better known as Mohammed Deif, was born in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in Gaza in 1965. His forebears had fled to the Egyptian-controlled coastal strip from their home near Jerusalem during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Two years after his birth the Israelis seized Gaza in the Six Day War.



Deif, top left and below in photographs believed to be of him. Before going underground he helped to form the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas — above, parading through Khan Yunis on a truck with rockets in 2021

Deif grew up in poverty, and under the thumb of the Israeli military. His father re-upholstered furniture. His friends included Yahya Sinwar, who would go on to become Hamas's chief in Gaza and joint organiser of the October 7 attacks. From school he went on to the Islamic University in Gaza City where he studied chemistry, sat on the student council, and helped to establish a theatre group named The Returners — a reference to the longing of displaced Palestinians to return to the lands they owned before the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

He graduated in 1988, by which time Palestinians furious at the Israeli occupation of their territories had launched the first intifada, and a blind paraplegic imam named Sheikh Ahmed Yassin had founded Hamas. The following year it killed two Israeli soldiers. Israel responded by rounding up hundreds of Hamas supporters, Deif among them. He was imprisoned without trial for the next 16 months.

Released under a prisoner exchange, he helped to launch the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing

of Hamas, and went underground to avoid further Israeli attention.

During the early 1990s his mentor was Yehya Ayyash, a renowned bomb-maker nicknamed "the Engineer", who was killed by the Israelis using a mobile telephone packed with explosives in 1995. Under his tutelage, Deif pioneered the use of suicide bombs and used his chemistry training to make the explosives belts. Israel responded by fencing in Gaza's Palestinians, so Deif started building rockets instead.

He also ceased using mobile phones and other modern communications technology to avoid detection, and began turning the al-Qassam Brigades from a ragtag group of volunteers into a large, disciplined force that recruited disaffected members of Yasser Arafat's dominant Fatah party.

Arafat had signed the Oslo Accords in 1993, establishing a Palestinian Authority in return for recognising Israel, but many Palestinians — Deif among them — came to see the accords as a betrayal and the authority as corrupt, ineffective and a tool of Israel. In 2000 the authority arrested Deif at

Israel's behest, but he soon escaped. That same year the second Palestinian intifada erupted, and this time the violence lasted five years until Ariel Sharon, Israel's prime minister, withdrew all Israeli forces and settlers from Gaza. "Today you are leaving hell, but we promise you that tomorrow all Palestine will be hell for you, God willing," declared Deif who had, by that time, become commander of the al-Qassam Brigades following Israel's assassination of Salah Shehade in 2002.

During that intifada the Israelis also assassinated Sheikh Yassin and his successor as Hamas leader, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, but Deif twice survived attacks by Hellfire missiles fired from Israeli helicopters. In the second attack he reportedly lost an eye, an arm and possibly a leg, and was confined to a wheelchair.

In 2006 the Israelis tried to kill him again. An F-16 fighter plane bombed the home of one of Deif's former university lecturers when he was visiting. Once again Deif survived, but suffered serious head injuries. He required extensive treatment in Egypt and surrendered command of the al-Qassam Brigades to his deputy, Ahmed Jabari, for the next six years.

In his absence Hamas won an election and became Gaza's de facto government. Its leaders downgraded its mili-

tary activities, conducted arms-length negotiations with Israel and grew rich. Jabari drove Fatah out of Gaza, and managed to negotiate the release of more than 1,000 Palestinian soldiers, including Sinwar, for a single Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. Then Jabari, too, was assassinated by the Israelis. Deif returned as head of Hamas's military wing and the party returned to a policy of armed resistance.

Freed of operational command during his recuperation, Deif had courted Iran, which agreed to supply Hamas with sophisticated missiles and money. Deif also began constructing a vast network of tunnels beneath Gaza to infiltrate Israel, and for training, weapons testing and importing materials from Egypt without Israeli drones being able to watch.

In 2014 Israel and Hamas fought a vicious seven-week war that left more than 2,000 Palestinians dead and 10,000 injured but failed to dislodge Hamas. "What your air force and your artillery shelling has failed to accomplish will not be accomplished by ground forces. You are sending your soldiers to a definite slaughterhouse, God willing," Deif warned in a video similar to the one released after the October 7 attacks.

"The Zionist entity will not know security unless the Palestinian people live in peace," he added.

In the course of that war the Israelis bombed Deif's home and killed his wife, Widad Asfura, his three-year-old daughter, Sara, and his infant son, Ali.

In 2017 Sinwar, Deif's childhood

## He pioneered the use of suicide bombs and made the explosives belts

friend, was elected leader of Hamas and the balance of power swung decisively back from its more pragmatic political wing to its hardline military wing, though that was not immediately obvious. Hamas engaged in another 11-day battle with Israel in 2021, but publicly it toned down its warmongering and anti-Israeli rhetoric.

The deadly events of October 7 strongly suggested that this was a deliberate ruse, an exercise in deception that fostered a sense of complacency in Israel. Certainly Israel's formidable defence and intelligence agencies spectacularly failed to foresee or prevent those attacks.

It is equally certain that Deif would have anticipated Israel's furious military response, during which many thousands of Gazans died, tens of thousands were wounded and hundreds of thousands were rendered homeless as Israel reduced much of Gaza to ruins. But he would not have cared. His fellow Palestinians were mere collateral damage in his fanatical, lifelong determination to wage war against the Jewish state, whatever the human cost.

**Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Masri, the Hamas military commander better known as Mohammed Deif, was born in 1965, precise date unknown. According to the Israeli military, he was killed in an airstrike on July 13, 2024, aged 58 or 59**

## Register

## Helen Whitwell

Britain's first female professor of forensic pathology and the inspiration for the long-running BBC series *Silent Witness*

In the mid-1980s Nigel McCrery was a police officer in Nottingham. When investigating murders, he was struck by a particular forensic pathologist who was sometimes called to crime scenes. It was not just that Helen Whitwell was a woman in what was then a man's world. She was also blonde, glamorous, funny and vivacious, her somewhat morbid profession notwithstanding.

Whitwell would on occasion get lost, and call from a telephone box for a panda car to collect her. Once, arriving at a murder scene to find journalists and television cameras already there, she ordered her police driver to divert up someone's private drive. There she proceeded to put on her make-up. "If you think I'm going to face the press at this time of day looking like this, think again," she declared.

A decade later McCrery, by then a writer, had the idea for a book about a forensic pathologist, and immediately thought of Whitwell. He called her. They met in a Birmingham hotel to discuss the project. She was very enthusiastic, and became the inspiration for the hugely successful BBC series *Silent Witness*, which revolves around the adventures of a female forensic pathologist named Sam Ryan and is now in its 27th season.

Whitwell was not only the inspiration for *Silent Witness*. In the programme's early years she visited the film sets, checked the scripts for accuracy and served as a sounding board for McCrery's ideas.

"He used to ring me up, usually at inconvenient times, to ask me what somebody looked like when they've been strangled or whatever," she recalled on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* in 2016. McCrery recalled how he once wrote a scene in which a man was garrotted in a churchyard, and asked Whitwell if that was too far-fetched. Two weeks later she called him and said "Guess what?" She had just been called to a case of a man garrotted in a churchyard.

But for all her sense of fun, and her notorious love of sauvignon blanc and champagne, Whitwell took her profession extremely seriously.

She became Britain's first female professor of forensic pathology and produced two books on her discipline that have become standard texts. Involved in several of the most high-profile murder trials of her time, she was also one of the first forensic pathologists to challenge the notion of shaken baby syndrome (SBS) as the cause of death in various murder cases.

She was "a remarkable woman," said McCrery. "She had one of the most powerful intellects I have ever encountered."

Helen Laura Whitwell was born in Kendal, in what was then the county of Westmorland, in 1955, the eldest of five children. Her father, Edward, was an accountant and a former mayor of Kendal. Her mother, Beryl, was a maths teacher. Their third child, Robin, was



Whitwell liked fun and champagne but was extremely serious in matters of work

born with spina bifida and died in infancy.

She was educated at Kendal High School for Girls, a grammar school, then trained as a doctor at Manchester University, qualifying in 1977 and winning various awards.

From 1979 to 1986 she lectured in neuropathology (the study of brain diseases) at Manchester University before becoming senior consultant neuropathologist at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. But from the mid-1980s she had grown increasingly interested in forensic pathology (determining causes of death by examining corpses) and joined the Home Office register of forensic pathologists in 1988.

At that time there were only a few women on the register. A few years earlier a leading pathologist, Keith Simpson, had surmised in a lecture to the British Association in Forensic Medicine that women were deterred by "the atmosphere of the mortuary, the variety of the more revolting odours

that decomposition brings, the rough and tumble of Criminal Investigation Department inquiry in all weathers, or the pressures of trial. There seems to be the need for more masculine reserves to withstand calmly the assaults of more vigorous cross-examination."

For the next decade she worked as a forensic pathologist in the West Midlands, assisting the police forces of the West Midlands, Warwickshire, West Mercia and Staffordshire and conducting as many as 60 post-mortem examinations a year in cases of suspicious deaths.

"I used to have dreams of people waking up on the mortuary table," she told a magazine. "I know many people think it's a macabre way to earn a living, but it's a lot easier than dealing with someone who's alive and suffering great pain."

In 1990 she married David Stokes, a senior police officer, but they divorced four years later and had no children. "I'm not maternal, nor am I domesticated," she said.



She bought a 17th-century thatched cottage in Great Comberton, near Pershore in Worcestershire, where she grew flowers with wonderful scents. She explained to visitors that pathologists can lose their sense of smell because of the formalin and other chemicals they deal with, but "as long as I can smell my garden I know I'm all right".

In 1995 she helped Kevin Callan, a lorry driver, overturn his conviction for murdering his disabled four-year-old stepdaughter by shaking her. He had taught himself neuropathology in prison and maintained that she had died in a fall.

That same year she testified in the case of Ryan Jenkins, a vet from Burton upon Trent convicted of murdering his wife with the horse tranquiliser Immobilon. The case was the subject of a BBC *Rough Justice* programme, with Whitwell improbably portrayed in a twinset and pearls, and Jenkins's conviction was overturned three years later following the discovery of a suicide note.

In 1999 she appeared as an expert witness for the defence in the case of Sally Clark, a solicitor convicted of murdering her two infant sons. Whitwell was troubled by the conviction, which was based on the statistical improbability of two babies in one family suffering cot deaths, and she was right. Clark's conviction was overturned in 2003.

"I have to get factual evidence, to search for the truth, to give my best opinion on the cause of death. Who it favours doesn't matter," Whitwell said of her work.

Between 1998 and 2000 she lectured at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, a country she loved and where she kept a property for the rest of her life. She returned to Britain in 2000 to become the country's first female professor of forensic pathology at Sheffield University and an inspiration to many young students (including four of her nephews and nieces).

In 2001 she and Jennian Geddes, a neuropathologist in London, published two groundbreaking papers in the journal *Brain* which demonstrated that causes other than SBS — such as short falls — could well be responsible for suspicious infant deaths.

Their work was instrumental in several murder convictions being overturned, but not that of Alan Cherry. In 1995 the Birmingham salesman was convicted of the manslaughter of his girlfriend's 22-month-old daughter, having allegedly shaken her in a fit of anger. Whitwell had been a principal witness for the prosecution at Cherry's first trial, but having changed her view about SBS she bravely testified in his favour at his appeal.

He still lost, but she believed that he was innocent and continued to campaign on his behalf. "She's my hero. She had the guts to stand up for me," said Cherry.

Whitwell left Sheffield in 2004 because the university was closing her department, and returned to practice forensic pathology in the West Midlands.

She had recently served as an expert adviser to the Shipman inquiry into the GP and serial killer Harold Shipman.

Soon she was testifying in the case of Sion Jenkins, a deputy headmaster from Hastings who had been convicted of bludgeoning his foster daughter to death in 1997. The Court of Appeal quashed the conviction and two retrials ended with hung juries, making him the first man in British criminal history to be acquitted after three trials for the same crime.

In 2006 Whitwell was one of four experts invited to Ontario, Canada, to investigate the apparent mishandling of numerous suspicious deaths involving children, mostly as a result of evidence provided by a discredited pathologist named Charles Smith. The so-called Goudge inquiry reviewed 45 cases, found 20 involved wrongful convictions or failures to prosecute, and led to radical reforms.

By her mid-fifties Whitwell was suffering from osteoarthritis in her hands, which made it hard to grip the dissecting knives necessary for her work. She was forced to cease practising forensic pathology in 2009, but continued to travel to international conferences (always "turning left" to business class when boarding planes) and to edit and co-author two standard works — *Forensic Neuropathology* and *Mason's Forensic Medicine for Lawyers*.

Retiring to Great Comberton, she became a campaigner for local train and bus services to isolated communities, secretary of the Friends of Pershore Abbey, and a regular at Pershore's White Horse pub whose owner, Pio Palombo, and his black labrador, Sugar, were her long-time companions.

**Helen Whitwell, forensic pathologist, was born on January 1, 1955. She died of cancer on July 24, 2024, aged 69**

## A life remembered

## Lord Fellowes



Andrew Wynn writes: Queen Elizabeth II made a state visit to the west coast of the US in 1983. As Her Majesty's assistant private secretary, Robert Fellowes (obituary, July 31)

engaged in months of detailed planning with President Reagan's chief of staff,

Michael Deaver. Robert, the ultimate manifestation of the British establishment and unflappable "bloody good manners", was an object of some curiosity in the White House. During a break in the royal progress, the Queen and Prince Philip stayed at the Ahwahnee hotel in Yosemite national park. After dinner, Deaver got behind the piano and there was singing by relaxed White House staff and the royal household. Astonishingly, Deaver jumped up mid-

song and slapped a custard pie in Fellowes's face. The plan, it emerged, had been to crack the perfect shell and provoke some earthy language. It failed. All Fellowes did was wipe pie out of his eye, look at Deaver and say in his calm, deep and very British voice: "Dammit, Deaver, you've put out my cigar."

Zaki Cooper writes: Some years ago, as a big cricket fan in my early twenties, I

was keen to apply for MCC membership. At the time, you needed four current members to put you forward, but I knew only three.

I had a brainwave and, after consulting Dods Parliamentary Companion, decided to write dozens of letters to peers who listed MCC as one of their clubs. I explained my passion for cricket and cheekily asked whether they would nominate me.

Most did not reply, but one response

stood out. I received a letter from Lord Fellowes saying he would be delighted to try to help and I should arrange to come and see him. A few weeks later, I spent an agreeable hour in his company talking about cricket.

It was clear he had a huge passion for the game, but what shone through from this episode was his impromptu act of kindness, which I have never forgotten. As a result, I subsequently became an MCC member.

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**AT THAT** time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children". Matthew 11:25 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

### Births

**ENTWISTLE** on 29th July 2024 to Devon (née Taaffe) and Jonathan, a daughter, Charlotte Theodora. Born in Los Angeles.

**OAKLEY** on 19th July 2024 to Edwina and Conrad, a daughter, Evie Rose, sister to George.

### Forthcoming Marriages

#### MR M. L. P. FAWCETT AND MISS A. S. BOWERS

The engagement is announced between Mungo, elder son of Mr and Mrs James Fawcett of Becca Hall, West Yorkshire, and Alice, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Mark Bowers of Bangkok, Thailand.

### Deaths

**BUCK** Roger Muirhead passed away on 15th July 2024, aged 80. Devoted husband to Helen, much-loved father to Arabella and Alexander and doting grandfather to Aubrey. Funeral service at GreenAcres, Heatherley Wood, Grayshott Road, Headley Down, Hampshire GU35 8LA on Thursday 15th August 2024 at 11am. Family flowers only but donations if desired to RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People) [rnid.org.uk](http://rnid.org.uk) All inquiries to HC Patrick/FD 01252 714884.

**POWELL** Ivan Neville Frederick died peacefully on 20th July 2024, aged 96. It is with great sadness that the family of Ivan N. F. Powell announce his death. Ivan passed away peacefully at his home and will be lovingly remembered by his family and many friends. Ivan was educated at St. Joseph Williamson's school in Kent and enjoyed a long and successful career with NatWest. The funeral service will be held at Saint Mary's Church in Hampton at 2pm on the 16th of August 2024. All are welcome to attend. Family flowers only. Please make any charitable donations to Marie Curie via Lodge Brothers <https://lodge.funeralnotice.com/n/85aff3c3>

**QUILTER** Juliet Elise passed away peacefully at home on 23rd July, aged 59. Much-loved sister, aunt and godmother. Thanksgiving service at St Peter's, Yoxford, Suffolk, IP17 3HN on Thursday 26th September at 2pm.

**RAGGETT** Robert. Sadly passed away at home with his family by his side on 25th July. Bob was a much loved husband, Dad and Grandpa. The funeral service will take place at West Wiltshire Crematorium, Semington on Monday 5th August at 2.45pm, c/o FW Jones and Son, 30 Market Place, Chippenham, SN15 3HP, 01249 652525.

**REED** Robert William Grist (Robin) died peacefully at home on 5th July 2024, aged 92. Adored husband of Renate, much-loved father of Chris, Rory and Nick, and a respected and cherished Grandpa. Funeral at South West Middlesex Crematorium on Tuesday 13th August at 12.40pm. No flowers please, but donations to Macmillan Cancer Support will be welcomed.

### Memorial Services

**DANIELL** Colonel Stephen at the Royal Academy Sandhurst on 12th October 2024 at 2.30pm. If you wish to attend please contact Jim Austin via [regsec@qrhussars.co.uk](mailto:regsec@qrhussars.co.uk) with names and car details.

### In Memoriam - War

**BARKEY** 2nd Lt Hartley Barkby, killed in France. In action, early in the morning of 2nd August 1916, aged 19.

## Court Circular



**St James's Palace**  
1st August, 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 Marseilles, France.

The simple way to place your Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register. Available 24 hours a day. Go to: [newsukadvertising.co.uk](http://newsukadvertising.co.uk)



## Legal Notices

**JOHN JOSEPH KIELY,**  
LATE OF NOTTINGHAM,  
DIED THERE ON 13 JULY 1993  
The kin of the above named are requested to apply to the Treasury Solicitor (BV), 1 Ruskin Square, Croydon CR0 2WF or at [www.gov.uk/bonavacantia](http://www.gov.uk/bonavacantia), failing which the Treasury Solicitor may take steps to administer the estate.

**Government**  
Legal Department

**CHESSIDE HOMES LIMITED**  
(Company Number: 03207542)  
Principal Trading Address: c/o Dickinsons, Brandon House, First Floor, 90 The Broadway, Chesham, HPS 1EG  
Notice is hereby given that creditors of the Company are required on or before 18 September 2024, to prove their debts by delivering their proofs (in the format specified in Rule 14.4 of the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016) to the Joint Liquidators at KRE Corporate Recovery Limited, Unit 8 The Aquarium, 1-7 King Street, Reading, Berks, RG1 2AN or [info@kreccr.co.uk](mailto:info@kreccr.co.uk). It is so required by notice from the Joint Liquidators, creditors must produce any document or other evidence which the Joint Liquidators consider is necessary to substantiate the whole or any part of a claim. Note: The Directors of the Company have made a declaration of solvency and it is expected that all creditors will be paid in full.  
Date of Appointment: 18 July 2024. Office Holder Details: Rob Keyes and Paul Elkson both of KRE Corporate Recovery Limited, Unit 8 The Aquarium, 1-7 King Street, Reading, Berks, RG1 2AN. For further details contact: The Joint Liquidators. Email: [info@kreccr.co.uk](mailto:info@kreccr.co.uk), Tel: 01189 479090. Alternative contact: Lee Lloyd.  
Rob Keyes, Joint Liquidator  
Dated: 29 July 2024

**DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION**  
NOTICE  
**THE GODOLPHIN SCHOOL**  
(URN: 126519)  
**SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE, SP1 2RA**  
PROPOSED ORDER UNDER  
PARAGRAPH 1 OF  
SCHEDULE 14 OF  
THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN:  
1. That upon receiving an application from the Responsible Body of the above establishment, the Secretary of State for Education proposes to make an order under paragraph 1 of Schedule 14 of the Equality Act 2010 in respect of the above-mentioned educational establishment. Paragraph 1 of Schedule 14 allows the Secretary of State for Education to make such modifications that appear to be expedient for removing from or modifying a trust deed or other instrument which concerns property applicable for or in connection with the provision of education in an establishment in England and Wales, which in any way restricts the benefits available under the instrument to persons of one sex only.  
2. The proposed order will enable the above-mentioned establishment to cease operating as a single-sex school providing education to girls only and will start to admit pupils of both sexes on a co-educational purpose to the day and boarding school.  
3. That under paragraphs 1(6) to (10) of Schedule 14, any person interested may within one month of the date of this Notice make representations on the proposed modification in writing to the Secretary of State at the Department's address given below. You can submit representations regarding the proposed order to the Department for Education at: [Registration.ENQUIRIES@education.gov.uk](mailto:Registration.ENQUIRIES@education.gov.uk)  
Dated 2 August 2024

CR-2024-003596  
**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**  
**BUSINESS AND PROPERTY**  
**COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES**  
**COMPANIES COURT (Ch D)**  
**IN THE MATTER OF FORESIGHT**  
**VCT PLC (COMPANY NUMBER**  
**03421340)**  
**AND IN THE MATTER OF THE**  
**COMPANIES ACT 2006**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Claim was made on 19 July 2024 seeking confirmation by His Majesty's High Court of Justice of the cancellations of the sums of £92,765,406 and £1,262,270 standing to the credit of the share premium account and the redemption reserve respectively of the above named company.  
AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the final hearing of the said company's claim is directed to be heard before the Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at The Rolls Building, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL on 13 August 2024.  
ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said cancellation of the share premium account and redemption reserve should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.  
A copy of the said company's Claim Form will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undermentioned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same. DATED this 2nd day of August 2024  
Shakespeare Martineau LLP  
No 1 Colmore Square  
Birmingham  
B4 6AA  
T: 44(0)121 214 0000  
F: 44(0)121 237 3011  
E: [info@shma.co.uk](mailto:info@shma.co.uk)  
DX: 721090 Birmingham 43  
Solicitors for the above named Company

CR-2024-003598  
**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**  
**BUSINESS AND PROPERTY**  
**COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES**  
**COMPANIES COURT (Ch D)**  
**IN THE MATTER OF FORESIGHT**  
**ENTERPRISE VCT PLC (COMPANY**  
**NUMBER 03506579)**  
**AND IN THE MATTER OF**  
**THE COMPANIES ACT 2006**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Claim was made on 19 July 2024 seeking confirmation by His Majesty's High Court of Justice of the cancellations of the sums of £102,801,044 and £679,847 standing to the credit of the share premium account and the redemption reserve respectively of the above named company.  
AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the final hearing of the said company's claim is directed to be heard before the Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at The Rolls Building, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL on 13 August 2024.  
ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said cancellation of the share premium account and redemption reserve should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.  
A copy of the said company's Claim Form will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undermentioned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same. DATED this 2nd day of August 2024  
Shakespeare Martineau LLP  
No 1 Colmore Square  
Birmingham  
B4 6AA  
T: 44(0)121 214 0000  
F: 44(0)121 237 3011  
E: [info@shma.co.uk](mailto:info@shma.co.uk)  
DX: 721090 Birmingham 43  
Solicitors for the above named Company

CR-2024-002117  
**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**  
**BUSINESS AND PROPERTY**  
**COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES**  
**COMPANIES COURT (Ch D)**  
**IN THE MATTER OF SHIRES**  
**INCOME PLC**  
**AND IN THE MATTER OF**  
**THE COMPANIES ACT 2006**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Claim Form was on 24 July 2024 issued in His Majesty's High Court of Justice seeking the confirmation of the cancellation of the share premium account of the above named Company.  
AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Claim Form is directed to be heard before the Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at the Royal Courts of Justice, The Rolls Building, 7 Rolls Building, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL on 13 August 2024 at 10:30 am.  
Any Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said cancellation of share premium account should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.  
A copy of the said Claim Form will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undermentioned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.  
DATED this 2nd day of August 2024  
Howard Kennedy LLP  
No 1 London Bridge  
London SE1 9BG  
Ref: SM17  
Tel: 020 3755 6000  
Fax: 020 3650 6847  
Solicitors for the above-named Company

**Credit Agricole Corporate**  
**And**  
**Investment Bank, London Branch**  
**("Credit Agricole CIB")**

Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, London Branch ("Credit Agricole CIB") has in its possession 14 safety deposit boxes the contents of which were deposited with the bank (also previously known as Société des Indochine, Banque de L'Indochine, Banque de L'Indochine et de Suez, Bank Indosuez, Credit Agricole Indosuez and Calyon) between approximately 1900-1994. Credit Agricole CIB has been seeking to trace persons with the right to possess the goods contained within those 14 safety deposit boxes.  
Credit Agricole CIB has since issued proceedings in the High Court of England & Wales (Chancery Division) in which it is seeking an order that it be given permission to sell certain items, with the proceeds being retained for the benefit of legitimate claimants. If you believe that you have the right to possess the goods contained in one or more of the safety deposit boxes held by Credit Agricole CIB at 5 Appold Street, London, EC2A 2DA and would like to lodge a claim to those goods, please do so by detailing, (with as much information as possible), the exact nature of the item, who it belonged to, when it was left with the bank and the source of your right to possession e.g. grant of probate, by email at: [LondonFSinvestigations@ca-cib.com](mailto:LondonFSinvestigations@ca-cib.com) or by post at Credit Agricole CIB, 5 Appold Street, London, EC2A 2DA, FAO: Philip Walker, Head of Fraud & Complex Investigations / DMLRO (Credit Agricole CIB UK). Any enquiry will be the subject of stringent review against the information held at Credit Agricole CIB. Please also provide an address for service (either email, postal address or both) in order that Credit Agricole CIB can provide you with documents relating to the proceedings that have been issued in the High Court.

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THE  TIMES

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## VOYAGE HIGHLIGHTS

### Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen was founded during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The city owes much of its charm to the buildings erected by Denmark's monarchs, and boasts a treasure trove of late-Renaissance and Rococo architecture. Copenhagen deserves its accolade as the Venice of the North. Founded on a series of islands and islets, the city today is laced with graceful canals and boasts some of the most delightful architecture in Northern Europe.

### Helsinki, Finland

There's no denying that Helsinki is one of the most vibrant and beautiful cities in Scandinavia. Hailed as the "Daughter of the Baltic," Finland's capital is a city of graceful neoclassical buildings, striking modern architecture and spacious boulevards dotted with squares and parks.

### Visby, Sweden

Dramatic 13<sup>th</sup> century city walls surround the former Viking settlement of Visby, Sweden. Recognised by UNESCO as the best-preserved medieval commercial centre in Northern Europe, this quaint town of 20,000 residents, known as the "City of Roses and Ruins," is home to ancient forts, churches and winding streets lined with cafés and cosy cottages.



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### MAY 2025

Sat 31 **Embark *Sky Princess* and depart Southampton**

### JUNE 2025

Mon 2 **Skagen, Denmark**

Tue 3 **Copenhagen, Denmark**

Wed 4 **Berlin (from Warnemunde), Germany** (depart late night)

Fri 6 **Helsinki, Finland**

Sat 7 **Tallinn, Estonia**

From fascinating Baroque architecture to awe-inspiring glass skyscrapers, Estonia is a charming Baltic gem that really gets under the skin of all who visit

Sun 8 **Stockholm, Sweden**

Mon 9 **Visby, Sweden**

Wed 11 **Kristiansand, Norway**

Norway's fifth largest city was founded by Christian IV in the year 1641 and is today one of Norway's most popular holiday destinations

Fri 13 **Arrive in Southampton**

Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea

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**Today** Rain and showers across northern and western areas. Drier further southeast. Max 29C (84F), min 6C (43F)

**Weather Eye**  
Paul Simons



**Y**esterday marked the 170th anniversary of the Met Office, on August 1, 1854. Originally called the Meteorological Office, it was something of a backwater in the Board of Trade, with a staff of three led by Vice-Admiral Robert FitzRoy, famous as the captain of HMS Beagle on Charles Darwin's voyage around the world.

FitzRoy's title was Meteorological Statist and he was tasked with compiling climate statistics for mariners. He arranged for sea captains of merchant ships and the Royal Navy to carry weather instruments to supply marine observations for plotting wind maps over the world's oceans and plan improved shipping routes.

But FitzRoy came to realise that there was a far more urgent need to forecast storms at sea, a threat to all shipping. At that time any notion of forecasting the weather smacked of gazing into crystal balls or reading tea leaves, and no respectable scientist would dare to forecast the weather, which was widely considered too chaotic to predict.

FitzRoy realised that storm warnings could be made by gathering simultaneous weather observations from different places, made possible by the recent invention of the electric telegraph. He set up 24 weather stations across Britain and Europe that relayed observations back to London, from which he could draw up synoptic weather charts that could reveal approaching storms.

The service proved successful and he then proposed extending the forecasts to land, which needed funding from parliament. In a debate in the Commons recorded in Hansard, the MP John Ball argued: "In a few years, notwithstanding the variable climate of this country, we might know in this metropolis the condition of the weather 24 hours beforehand." Hansard noted that this was met with laughter.

FitzRoy's forecasts became established and were later published in The Times, but eventually some wrong predictions led to the forecasts being abandoned.

**Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675**

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

**WeatherQuest**  
weatherquest.co.uk

**Around Britain**

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy, du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder \*\*previous day \*\*no data not available

	Temp C	Rain mm	Sun hr*
24 hrs to 5pm yesterday			
Aberdeen	**	0.0	9.4
Aberporth	18	PC	0.0
Anglesey	20	PC	0.0
Aviemore	19	R	0.0
Barnstaple	21	PC	0.4
Bedford	23	S	0.0
Belfast	18	PC	1.0
Birmingham	**	**	2.8
Bournemouth	27	PC	0.0
Bridlington	17	C	0.0
Bristol	24	PC	0.4
Camborne	19	C	0.4
Cardiff	20	C	0.6
Edinburgh	**	**	0.2
Eskdalemuir	18	C	0.0
Glasgow	16	D	0.6
Hereford	25	S	0.0
Herstmonceux	23	R	1.0
Ipswich	23	C	0.0
Isle of Man	18	C	0.0
Isle of Wight	25	S	0.0
Jersey	21	M	0.0
Keswick	20	C	0.0
Kinloss	**	**	0.0
Leeds	20	S	2.8
Lerwick	15	PC	0.0
Leuchars	19	C	0.6
Lincoln	21	R	0.0
Liverpool	21	PC	0.4
London	25	S	0.0
Lynham	26	S	0.2
Manchester	22	PC	4.4
Margate	21	R	0.0
Milford Haven	23	S	0.0
Newcastle	18	PC	0.2
Nottingham	20	PC	0.6
Orkney	17	PC	0.2
Oxford	25	S	0.0
Plymouth	23	PC	0.0
Portland	21	PC	0.0
Scilly, St Mary's	20	PC	0.0
Shoreham	**	**	0.0
Shrewsbury	22	S	0.2
Snowdonia	21	C	0.2
Southend	**	**	0.0
South Uist	16	C	0.4
Stornoway	16	C	0.0
Tiree	17	C	0.8
Whitehaven	**	**	0.8
Wick	15	PC	0.0
Yeovil	24	PC	1.2

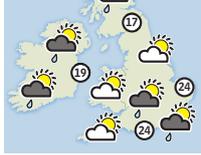
**Five days ahead**

Unsettled across northwestern areas. Drier with some longer sunny spells further southeast

**Tomorrow**

A largely dry day with sunny spells and patchy cloud. The chance of a shower across northwestern and southeastern areas during the afternoon.

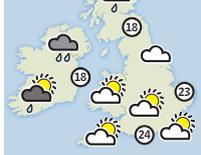
Max 25C, min 7C



**Sunday**

A band of showery rain will spread eastwards into Ireland and western Scotland, perhaps heavy in places. Dry in southeastern areas with long sunny spells.

Max 25C, min 11C



**Monday**

An unsettled day with a band of heavy showery rain spreading eastwards across Ireland and western Britain. Dry in southeastern areas with warm sunny spells.

Max 27C, min 7C



**Tuesday**

Heavy showery rain across southern Britain will clear eastwards in the afternoon. Mainly dry further north and west with sunny spells.

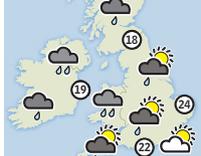
Max 25C, min 8C



**Wednesday**

A rather cloudy day with widespread scattered showers, heaviest across northwestern areas. Mostly dry further southeast with sunny intervals

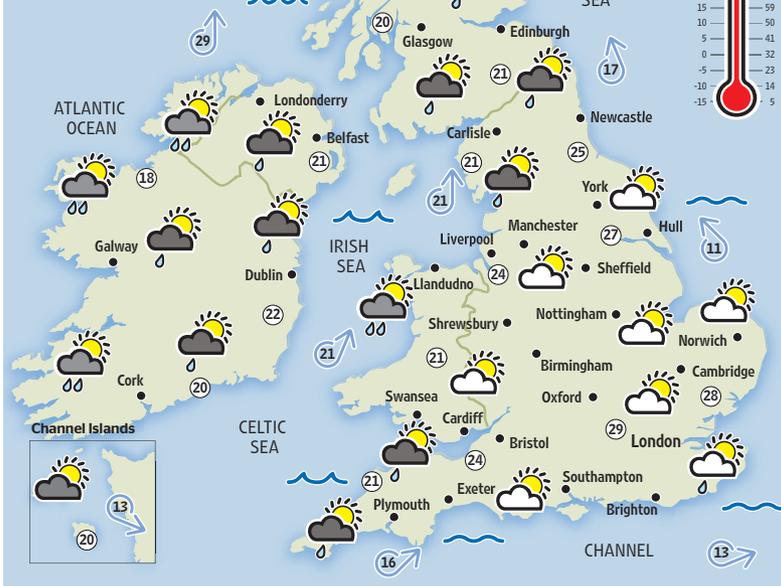
Max 24C, min 7C



The Times weather page is provided by **WeatherQuest**

**Wind speed** 34 (mph)  
**Sea state** Calm, Slight, Moderate, Rough  
**Temperature** 28 (degrees C)

**Flood alerts and warnings**  
At 17:00 on Thursday there were no flood alerts or warnings in England, Wales or Scotland. For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk



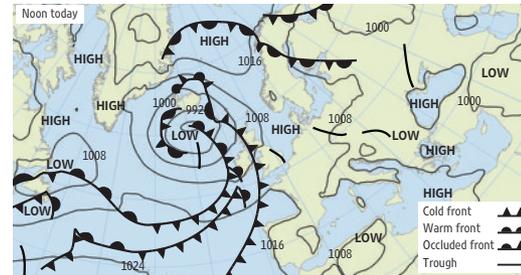
**General situation:** A band of showery rain will spread eastwards across northern and western areas, heavy at times. Drier across southeastern Britain with spells of sunshine.  
**Republic of Ireland, N Ireland:** Unsettled with a band of showery rain spreading in from the west during the morning, heavy in southwestern areas. Drier in the afternoon further west with sunny spells. Light to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 7C (45F).

**NW Scotland, Cen Highland, Argyll, Glasgow, SW Scotland, IoM:** Largely dry in the morning with patchy cloud. A band of persistent rain will spread eastwards in the afternoon. Light to moderate southerly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 7C (45F).  
**N Isles, NE Scotland, Moray Firth, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee, Borders, NE Eng, Cen N Eng, NW Eng, Lake District:** Mostly dry with sunny intervals and patchy cloud. The chance of a shower further west later. Light to moderate southerly winds. Maximum 25C (77F), minimum 6C (43F).

**E Eng, Midlands, E Anglia, Cen S Eng, London, SE Eng:** A mainly dry day with long spells of warm or hot sunshine. Light southwesterly winds. Maximum 29C (84F), minimum 15C (59F).  
**SW Eng, Channel Is:** Rather cloudy across western areas, with the chance of showers further northwest in the afternoon. Light to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 11C (52F).

**Tides**  
Tidal predictions. Heights in metres

	Ht	Ht
Aberdeen	---	13:09 3.8
Avonmouth	06:19 10.8	18:45 11.3
Belfast	10:40 3.1	22:54 3.4
Cardiff	06:16 10.1	18:41 10.5
Devonport	04:56 4.6	17:17 4.9
Dover	10:42 5.8	23:14 5.9
Dublin	11:10 3.6	23:27 3.8
Falmouth	04:32 4.3	16:54 4.6
Greenock	---	12:08 3.0
Harwich	11:00 3.5	23:27 3.7
Holyhead	09:58 4.9	22:16 5.1
Hull	05:23 6.5	17:58 6.5
Leith	01:43 4.9	14:17 4.9
Liverpool	10:36 8.1	22:59 8.4
London Bridge	---	13:20 6.2
Lowestoft	08:45 2.3	21:33 2.3
Milford Haven	05:33 5.8	17:59 6.1
Morcambe	10:48 8.0	23:10 8.4
Newhaven	10:36 5.8	22:54 5.9
Newquay	04:27 5.9	16:52 6.2
Oban	05:46 3.2	17:45 3.4
Penzance	03:58 4.6	16:24 4.9
Portsmouth	11:01 4.2	23:06 4.3
Shoreham	10:49 5.4	23:08 5.5
Southampton	10:52 4.0	22:10 4.1
Swansea	05:37 7.8	18:02 8.2
Tees	02:53 4.8	15:26 4.9
Weymouth	06:00 1.5	18:17 1.8



**Synoptic situation**  
An area of low pressure south of Iceland will push a series of fronts eastwards across the British Isles today. This will bring a band of rain to western and northern areas, heaviest across southeast Ireland and more persistent in western Scotland. Showers will turn lighter as the front spreads eastwards across Britain and begins to weaken.

**Highs and lows**  
24hrs to 5pm yesterday  
Warmest: Southampton, 30.6C  
Coldest: Altnaharra, 2.9C  
Wettest: Hawarden, Clwyd, 14.0mm  
Sunniest: Eskdalemuir, Dumfriesshire, 14.1hrs\*

**Hours of darkness**  
Aberdeen 21:49-04:41  
Belfast 21:52-05:09  
Birmingham 21:27-05:01  
Cardiff 21:28-05:10  
Exeter 21:27-05:14  
Glasgow 21:51-04:56  
Liverpool 21:35-05:02  
London 21:16-04:58  
Manchester 21:32-04:59  
Newcastle 21:36-04:50  
Norwich 21:15-04:48  
Penzance 21:33-05:24  
Sheffield 21:29-04:56

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# Sport

## Lawrence deserves the chance to open

Surrey batsman is a twitchy starter, but he should get the nod if Crawley is ruled out, writes **Steve James**

**Z**ak Crawley knew straight away that it was bad. He had got the position of his hands in an awful tangle, trying to stay low at second slip while keeping his fingers pointing skywards in the manner of the great Australian slippers such as Ricky Ponting. But Ponting is a little shorter than Crawley and the upshot was that a relatively simple chance was dropped. Crawley knew he had damaged the little finger on his right hand. It already looked in a bit of a mess as he rather sheepishly told his captain, Ben Stokes, off whom the chance had been missed, that he had to leave the field.

Immediately the debate began: who would open instead of Crawley when England eventually began their run chase to attempt to win the game? Would everyone just pop up one place in the order so that Ollie Pope would open? Could Joe Root be persuaded to open, as he once did as a youngster?

Would England send in a pinch-hitter, maybe give Mark Wood an opportunity to redeem himself after a failed nighthawk mission in the first innings? It is one of the great joys of watching this England team that one should always expect the unexpected.

As it was, Stokes moved himself up, so that everyone else remained in their usual spots, and proceeded to try to hit every ball for four. He didn't manage that, but he did manage England's fastest Test-match fifty, striking 11 boundaries, with nine fours and two sixes, in an unbeaten 57 from only 28 balls. He won't open again, though, will he, if Crawley is unfit for the first Test against Sri Lanka at Old Trafford from August 21? We should not rule anything out, but to captain, bowl his share of overs and open the batting would seem too much, even for Stokes.



Lawrence is not an opener by trade but his attacking game is suited to the Bazball approach that England now like to take

Mind you, his only other stab at Test opening was at Old Trafford, in 2020, when he and Jos Buttler came out first in England's second innings with quick runs required. Stokes smashed 78 not out from 57 balls. The key here is that when Ben Duckett was in danger of missing the second Test against West Indies at Trent Bridge because of the birth of his first child, England did not summon another opener. The spare batsman already in the squad, Dan Lawrence, was on standby and there was a plan in place, we were told.

What that plan was, and what it may be in Crawley's absence, we do not know, but Lawrence has done so much traipsing around after this England squad (he has never played a Test in the Bazball era) that he deserves a chance. He is 27 and soon it will be time to look at younger options.

Can he open, though? Well, he is not an opener and he is better suited to the middle order, even if he did bat

at No 3 in Surrey's most recent County Championship match. He has a slightly unusual technique, which looks much better since he shelved his extravagant trigger movement, but he does favour the leg side and he is prone to driving dangerously on the up early in the innings.

"When he first goes out there you hide behind the curtains," Michael Vaughan once said of him. Sounds a bit like Crawley, some might opine, but it is easy to overlook how good Crawley and Duckett have become as England's opening partnership since coming together in the winter of 2022.

It is worth noting that Duckett was not opening for Nottinghamshire then either, so that could easily be as eager an encouragement to promote Lawrence as picking Shoab Bashir and Jamie Smith when their counties were not using them as England do.

It has been said that Crawley and Duckett are England's best opening

partnership since Alastair Cook and Andrew Strauss, but then you look at the statistics and discover that they may be better already, if in a different way from the stoicism, patience and technical orthodoxy we have expected from our England Test openers.

Clearly their body of work is not as large (35 innings compared with the 117 of the two sirs, and so only 1,475 runs as opposed to 4,711) but their average is superior at 43.38 compared with 40.96, and as for the run rate, well that is no contest. Crawley and Duckett rattle on at 5.13 runs an over, while Cook and Strauss went at 3.07.

No opening partnership in world cricket can match Crawley and Duckett in that regard. Yet Crawley still has his critics (of which I am not one any longer) and has not made a Test century in 16 innings, but he has made six fifties in that time, and in the Bazball era has motored along at a strike rate of 76.24 and an average of

35.23. As for Duckett, he has been a revelation since returning after four uncomfortable initial Tests some time ago. He averages 46.42 at a speedy strike rate of 88.81. But who else could the selectors turn to for a similarly inspired choice at the top of the order if it is not to be Lawrence or someone already in the side at the moment?

Keaton Jennings and Alex Lees are two already capped, more traditional openers, both left-handers, but it would be a surprise to see either of them summoned. What about Jonny Bairstow? Though he has batted everywhere from three to seven, he has never opened in Tests. When England's opening merry-go-round some years ago was at its dizziest I did suggest that Bairstow could open.

He didn't, and when I interviewed him in 2018 he made it clear what he thought of the suggestion. "I have never opened other than in a dashing role for Yorkshire," he said. "To open the batting in Test cricket is a completely different skill set."

But what about now when he is so desperate to return after being dropped? He was bullish when interviewed recently by Vaughan after Welsh Fire's first match in the Hundred. "All I want to do is play for England. That's end of," he said. "You don't need to ask me that, do you? I think you've known me for long enough to know that."

On that theme, would England consider other white-ball players such as Phil Salt or Will Jacks, neither of whom has played a championship match this year? It would be exciting for sure, but Alex Hales and Jason Roy did not succeed when attempting something similar in Test cricket.

The beauty of the Crawley-Duckett alliance is in the differences: right-hand/left-hand, tall and elegant/short and squat, strong straight/savage square. And so, of the available options — and this is sad to relate for all those hard-working county openers — Lawrence looks the likeliest fit to go and "chase great moments", as the head coach, Brendon McCullum, has always advised Crawley. But I really hope Crawley is fit.

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Sport

Wheatley quits Red Bull to be Audi chief

Formula 1
Molly Hudson
Motor Racing Reporter

Red Bull's turbulent season has taken another turn after it was confirmed that sporting director Jonathan Wheatley will leave at the end of the season to become team principal of Audi's Formula 1 project.

As The Times exclusively reported in May, Wheatley, 56, held long-term ambitions to become a principal and had been sounding out other teams on the grid.

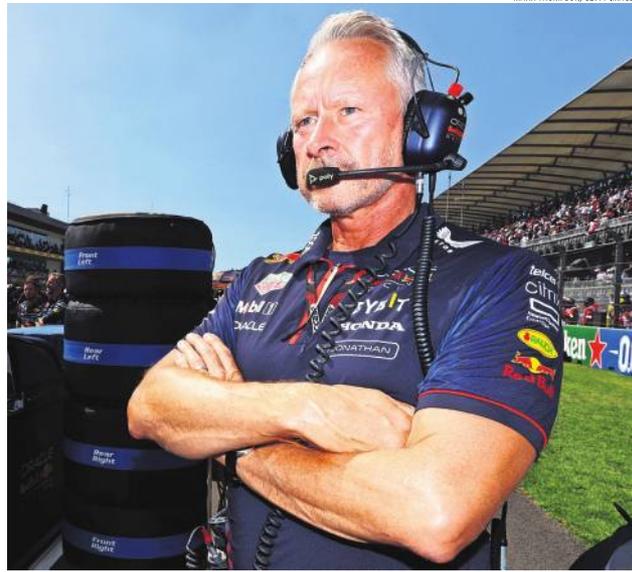
Wheatley will remain at Red Bull until the end of this season in December, before a period of gardening leave at the start of 2025. Audi are taking over the Sauber team, now called Stake F1, and the German company will also be an engine manufacturer in 2026.

"I am extremely proud to have been a part of the Red Bull Racing journey over the last 18 years and will leave with many fond memories," he said.

"However, the opportunity to play an active part in Audi's entry into Formula 1 as head of a factory team is a uniquely exciting prospect, and I am looking forward to the challenge."

Wheatley has been at Red Bull since 2006 and is part of the key senior team. One of his duties as sporting director is to oversee the pitstop crew who have consistently produced the quickest times in recent years, including an excellent double-stack stop, changing the tyres on Max Verstappen and Sergio Pérez's cars in only 3.95 seconds at the Chinese Grand Prix in April.

"It has been a long and successful relationship with Jonathan, over 18 years," Christian Horner, the Red Bull



As sporting director Wheatley has overseen Red Bull's impressive pitstop crew

team principal, said. "His contribution to six world constructors' titles and seven world drivers' championships, first as team manager and latterly sporting director, will for ever be a marker in our team history."

Red Bull have highlighted that his departure "provides opportunity to elevate others", although Wheatley's decision is another key loss to the senior team, after Adrian Newey, their chief technical officer, announced in May that he would leave.

The team had a turbulent start to the year after Horner was embroiled in a case involving a female employee who accused him of controlling behaviour. She is appealing against the verdict of the investigation that cleared him, the result of which is expected imminently. Horner denies any wrongdoing.

Tensions have calmed in recent weeks, but on the track Red Bull's advantage over the rest of the grid has narrowed.

Max Verstappen has managed to extend his lead in the championship to 78 points despite failing to win the past four races, while Red Bull are only 42 points ahead of McLaren in the constructors' battle.

Southwell

Rob Wright
2.00 Lotus Rose 3.45 King Of Ithaca
2.35 Gulf Legend 4.20 Sanat
3.10 Skipper 4.55 Blackjack

Going: standard to slow

Draw: no advantage Racing TV

2.00 Handicap (€2,983: 5f) (8)

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (horse name, jockey, odds, etc.)

5-2 Lotus Rose, 4-1 Poetic Jack, 5-1 The Grey Lass, 6-1 Elzaal, 7-1 Madame Fenella, 8-1 Whiskey Priest, 12-1 Enchanted Night, 14-1 Colors Of Freedom.

2.35 Novice Stakes

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (horse name, jockey, odds, etc.)

3.10 Maiden Stakes (3-Y-O; €3,942: 1m) (14)

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (horse name, jockey, odds, etc.)

3.45 Handicap (€5,234: 7f) (13)

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (horse name, jockey, odds, etc.)

3 (1) 06060 WILDFELL 11 (T) CD J Fagan

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (horse name, jockey, odds, etc.)

4.20 Handicap (3-Y-O; €3,716: 6f) (6)

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (horse name, jockey, odds, etc.)

Yesterday's racing results

Goodwood

Going: good to firm
1.50 (Im If 197yd) 1. Approval (Tom Marquand, 11-2); 2. Brioni (22-1); 3. Midnight Gun (8-5 fav); 10. ran. NR: Arabic Legend, Aviemore, Blake, Per Contra, Nk, nk, W J Haggas.

2.25 (6f) 1. Black Forza (D McMonagle, 9-1); 2. The Strikin Viking (11-10 fav); 3. Intrusively (40-1); 9. ran. Nk, Nk, M O'Callaghan.

3.00 (Im 3f 218yd) 1. Jan Brueghel (R L Moore, 4-5 fav); 2. Bellum Justum (11-4); 3. Sayedaty Sadaty (11-1); 4. ran. NR: Algin The Stars, Nk, Nk, A P O'Brien.

3.35 (Im If 197yd) 1. Opera Singer (R L Moore, 9-4); 2. See The Fire (16-1); 3.

Sparkling Plenty (13-2). 9. ran. NR: Novus. Nk, Nk, A P O'Brien.
4.10 (7f) 1. Mr Chaplin (Rossa Ryan, 10-1); 2. Original Outlaw (9-1); 3. El Burhan (11-4 fav). 16. ran. NR: Defence Missile, Nk, Nk, R M Beckett.

4.45 (5f) 1. Shagraan (Tom Marquand, 7-2 jf fav); 2. Got To Love A Grey (20-1); 3. Toca Madras (66-1). 16. ran. Nk, Nk, M Appleby.

5.20 (7f) 1. Dreamy (R L Moore, 5-2 fav); 2. Bouvier (7-1); 3. Tundra Rose (11-4). 11. ran. NR: Amica, Stellenbosch, Nk, Nk, A P O'Brien.

5.55 (1m) 1. Great Chieftain (J Fanning, 20-1); 2. Ebt's Guard (8-1); 3. Spanish Blaze (11-1). 14. ran. NR: Qirat, Cerulean Bay, Local Hero, Mount Teide, Versatile, Diddy Man, Nk, Nk, P G O Cole.

Jackpot: £14,611.70 - part won. Pool of

£14,027.30 carried forward to Goodwood today.

Quotep: £63.10

Quotep: £18.30

Nottingham

Going: good to firm (good in places)
2.00 (5f 8yd) 1. Skellig Isle (P J McDonald, 22-1); 2. Nightbird (6-1); 3. Shostakova (4-1). 9. ran. Nk, Nk, T Ward.

2.35 (6f 18yd) 1. Sergeant Mayer (Faye McManoman, 3-1 jf fav); 2. Profiteer (G-1 jf fav); 3. Socialise (10-1). 9. ran. NR: Hallie Angel, Nk, Nk, N Tinkler.

3.10 (1m 75yd) 1. Shamrock Bay (R Coakley, Evens fav); 2. Bayadere (5-1); 3. Qatar Wave (125-1). 9. ran. Nk, Nk, D & C Kubler.

3.45 (Im 75yd) 1. Adelaiella (Darragh Keenan, 11-8 fav); 2. Terries Royale (10-1); 3. Wonder Smile (5-2). 8. ran. NR: Lady Ava. 1 1/2, 1 1/2, M Wigham.

4.20 (Im 2f 50yd) 1. Fun Lovell (Rob Hourly, 11-1); 2. Palazo Persico (16-1); 3. Eagle Eyed Tom (20-1). 9. ran. NR: Clear Storm, Suppositoboe, Nk, Nk, R M Beckett.

4.55 (2m) 1. Pfingstberg (Cieren Fallon, 15-8 fav); 2. Wannabeawallaby (2-1); 3. Iron Heart (15-2). 7. ran. NR: Grand Duchesse, 4/4, 1/2, 1/2, D M Simcock.

Placepot: £211.90. Quadpot: £22.70.

Epsom

Going: good to firm (good in places)
6.00 (Im 2f 17yd) 1. Expert Witness (Mia Nicholls, 16-5); 2. Ribal (8-1); 3. Big Bear Hug (9-2). 8. ran. NR: New Heights, Nk, nk, Sir M Todd.

6.30 (7f 3yd) 1. Parole D'oro (Callum Shepherd, 4-9 fav); 2. Imperial Trooper (4-1); 3. Noble Phoenix (15-2). 7. ran. Nk, Nk, 1/4, 1/4, M L Bell.

Abandoned after two races

Wolverhampton

Going: standard
5.45 (6f 21yd) 1. Habooba (L Morris, 9-1); 2. Never Dark (14-1); 3. Lady Dreamer (10-1). 12. ran. NR: Muscika, Nk, Nk, T Kent.

6.15 (6f 21yd) 1. Thunder Blue (Saffie Osborne, 13-2); 2. Blue Day (6-1); 3. Fair Taxes (16-1). 11. ran. Nk, Nk, J A Osborne.

Results

Football

Europa League
Second qualifying round
Second leg
Cercle Brugge (1) 1 Kilmarnock (0) 0
Somers 21
(Cercle Brugge win 2-1 on agg)

Europa Conference League

Second qualifying round
second leg
St Mirren (1) 4 Valur (0) 1
Rooney 16, Haraldsson 75 (pen)
Olusanya 52
O'Hara 65
Iacovitti 87
(St Mirren win 4-1 on agg)

Other results

Caernarfon Town 0 Legia Warsaw 5 (Legia win 11-0 on agg); Vazud 2 St Patrick's Athletic 2 (St Patrick's Athletic win 5-3 on agg).

Cricket

The Hundred

London Spirit v Welsh Fire: men
London Spirit (2pts) beat Welsh Fire by three wickets

Welsh Fire (balls)
T Kohler-Cadmore c Russell b Stone 4 (13)
T M Bairdout b Ellis 12 (11)
L W P Wells c Pepper b Worrall 23 (8)

J M Clarke b Dawson 5 (11)
J B Abell b Davies 12 (16)

D J Phillips c Rossington b Russell 11 (14)
D J Wiley c Pepper b Ellis 13 (15)

M A Payne b Dawson 1 (3)
D J Henry c Lawrence b Ellis 3 (7)

M S Crane not out 4 (2)
H Ruff not out 0 (1)
Extras (b 2, w 2, nb 2) 6

Total (9 wickets, 100 balls) 94

Fall of wickets 1-5, 2-30, 3-37, 4-51, 5-70, 6-78, 7-79, 8-88, 9-93.

Bowling

Worrall 20-16-1; Stone 20-13-10-1; Russell 10-5-22-1; Dawson 20-13-10-3; Lawrence 51-7-0; Ellis 20-10-16-3; Bopara 5-0-11-0.

London Spirit

M S Pepper c Crane b Henry 3 (7)
T A M Rossington c Wells b Henry 9 (9)
O J D Pagan b Abell b Henry 12 (8)

\* W Lawrence c Phillips b Ruff 29 (27)
R S Bopara c Bairdout b Ruff 2 (7)
S O Hetmyer not out 30 (21)

A D Russell b Ruff 0 (1)
L A Dawson c Henry b Crane 4 (5)
O P Stone not out 1 (2)
Extras (b 1, lb 2, w 1, nb 2) 6

Total (7 wickets, 87 balls) 96

N T Ellis and D J Worrall did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-4, 2-17, 3-25, 4-38, 5-64, 6-84, 7-89.

Bowling

Wiley 20-13-16-0; Henry 20-11-19-3; Ruff 17-10-20-3; Payne 10-3-16-0; Phillips 51-4-0; Crane 15-6-18-1.

Women

Lords (Welsh Fire won toss): Welsh Fire (2pts) beat London Spirit by six wickets

London Spirit (balls)
M M Lanning b Davies 31 (20)
G P Redmayne b Langston 4 (8)

C L Griffiths st Brice b Davies 17 (12)
H R Knight c Elwiss b Davies 5 (4)

D R Gibson c Beaumont b Jonassen 41 (25)

D B Sharma not out 39 (26)
C E Dean not out 5 (6)

Extras (w 6, nb 2) 8

Total (5 wickets, 100 balls) 150

E Gray, S Glenn, S E N Munro and T G Norris did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-6, 2-35, 3-60, 4-61, 5-128.

Bowling Davies 20-10-12; Matthews 15-7-29-0; Langston 15-7-26-1; Jonassen 20-4-28-1; Elwiss 15-2-26-0; Davis 15-4-22-1.

Welsh Fire

S R Dunkley c Redmayne b Gibson 17 (21)
T T Beaumont lbw b Norris 6 (5)

H K Matthews not out 78 (46)
J S Bryce c Norris b Gibson 21 (18)

J L Jonassen c Griffith b Glenn 14 (10)

P A Franklin not out 6 (5)

Extras (lb 4, w 3, nb 2) 9

Total (4 wickets, 95 balls) 151

G A Elwiss, E M McCaughan, B A Langston, F R Davies and G K Davis did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-17, 2-33, 3-80, 4-123.

Bowling Dean 15-6-16-0; Munro 10-3-20-0; Norris 10-5-12-1; Gibson 15-4-28-2; Glenn 20-6-27-1; Sharma 20-6-34-0; Gray 51-10-0.

Southern Brave

Uttila Bowl (Southern Brave won toss): Southern Brave (2pts) beat Manchester Originals by seven wickets

Manchester Originals (balls)
\* P D Salt c Pollard b Overton 7 (11)
M D E Holden c Jordan b Overton 2 (3)

J W Madsen not out 43 (37)
S R Butt c Pollard b Mills 13 (16)

P I Walter c Coles b Jordan 25 (19)
J Overton b Mills 25 (19)

U Mir hit wkt b Jordan 11 (7)

Extras (lb 3, w 2, nb 4) 9

Total (6 wickets, 100 balls) 116

T W Hartley, S W Currie, F Farooqi and J Hull did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-9, 2-10, 3-30, 4-41, 5-98, 6-116.

Bowling Hosein 20-8-23-0; Overton 20-12-11-2; Briggs 20-4-28-0; Mills 20-10-26-2; Jordan 20-7-25-2.

Southern Brave

\* A L Davies c Walter b Hartley 24 (12)
\* J M Vince b Mir 20 (23)

J L du Plooy c Walter b Currie 21 (19)

J M Coles not out 10 (10)

L J Evans not out 25 (15)

Extras (lb 5, w 10, nb 2) 17

Total (3 wickets, 78 balls) 117

K A Pollard, C J Jordan, C Overton, A J Hosein, D R Briggs and T S Mills did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-35, 2-68, 3-76.

B\*ham Phoenix 3 2 1 0 0 4 -0.556

Welsh Fire 3 1 2 0 0 2 0.386

London Spirit 3 1 2 0 0 2 0.030

N Superchargers 2 1 1 0 0 2 -0.572

M\*ster Originals 3 0 3 0 0 0 -1.659

Women

Uttila Bowl (Manchester Originals won toss): Manchester Originals (2pts) beat Southern Brave by six wickets

Southern Brave (balls)
M E Boucher b Garth 24 (16)
D N Wyatt c and Ecclestone 61 (46)

C R Knott c Morris b Ecclestone 27 (28)

F L Tryon run out 13 (6)

G L Adams not out 2 (2)

Extras (b 1, w 2, nb 4) 7

Total (5 wickets, 100 balls) 136

N D Dattani, 1R M Southby, L R Cheate, L K Bell and M R Corteen-Coleman did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-51, 2-119, 3-120, 4-122, 5-136.

Bowling Bryce 15-7-23-0; Filer 20-12-19-0; Garth 20-8-33-1; Ecclestone 20-12-17-2; Morris 20-5-38-1; Monaghan 5-2-5-0.

Manchester Originals

L M Mooney c Southby b Cheate 2 (5)
L Wolvaardt not out 78 (52)

E Jones c Knott b Adams 39 (27)

\* Ecclestone c Corteen-Coleman b Adams 7 (3)

F M K Morris run out 0 (2)

K E Bryce not out 11 (9)

Extras (b 1, lb 1, w 1) 3

Total (4 wickets, 98 balls) 140

E L Lamb, K J Garth, T E Threlkeld, A Z Monaghan and L F Filer did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-12, 2-92, 3-100, 4-100.

Bowling Bell 20-8-23-0; Cheate 18-4-34-1; Kemp 10-3-17-0; Knott 10-11-5-0; Corteen-Coleman 20-6-22-0; Tryon 5-2-3-0; Adams 15-2-24-2.

Men

P W L T NR Pts NRR
Oval Invincibles 2 2 0 0 0 4 1.295

Trent Rockets 3 2 1 0 0 4 0.700

Southern Brave 3 2 1 0 0 4 0.493

Tennis

DC Open
Washington: Men: Second round B Shelton (US) bt R Albot (Mold) 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3; D Shapovalov (Can) bt M Keanovanic (Ser) 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; F Corbelli (It) bt A Davidovich Fokina (Sp) 1-6, 7-6 (7-0), 7-6 (9-7); A Michelsen (US) bt Seonghoon Hong (S Kor) 6-3, 6-3.

Women: Second round E Raducanu (GB) bt P Stearns (US) 7-6 (8-6), 6-2; A Sabalenka (Bel) bt K Rakhimova (Russ) 7-5, 4-6, 6-4; C Dolehide (US) bt D Kasatkina (Russ) 2-6, 7, 6-0; V Azarenka (Bel) bt Wang Yafan (China) 6-1, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3

Fixtures

Football
William Hill Scottish Championship Falkirk v Queen's Park (7.45).

Cricket

Metro Bank Cup (11.0): Group A: Derby Derbyshire v Worcestershire, Chester-Le Street Durham v Northamptonshire, Taunton Somerset v Lancashire. Group B: Neath Glamorgan v Sussex, Rugby Warwickshire v Surrey, York Yorkshire v Gloucestershire.

Rugby league

Betfred Super League Castleford 10 Leigh 20; Wigan 28 Huddersfield 14.

P W D L F A Pts
Wigan 19 15 0 0 4 497 260 30

Warrington 19 14 0 5 500 245 28

Hull KR 19 14 0 5 481 254 28

Catalans D 19 12 0 7 365 274 24

Salford 19 12 0 7 355 366 24

St Helens 19 11 0 8 455 256 22

Leeds 19 10 0 9 355 342 20

Leigh 19 9 1 9 392 286 19

Huddersfield 20 7 0 13 350 455 14

Castleford 20 6 1 13 336 523 13

Hull 19 3 0 16 268 566 6

L Broncos 19 1 0 18 198 725 2

The Hundred: Kia Oval Oval Invincibles v Northern Superchargers (women 3.0, men 6.30).

Darts

Marshall Arena, Milton Keynes PDC Players Championship 17.

Rugby league

Betfred Super League Warrington v Hull Kingston Rovers (8.0).

Desperate Hero to show class

Rob Wright Racing Editor

Desperate Hero has made a remarkable improvement in the past year and he is fancied to claim a first success at pattern level in the King George Qatar Stakes (3.35) at Goodwood today.

He put up a career-best effort when thrashing a competitive field in a handicap at Hamilton in June, always up with the strong early pace there but still able to storm clear approaching the final furlong to win with plenty in hand.

Desperate Hero was only third behind Makarova on his first try in group company at Sandown last time but soft ground on that stiff track proved too much of a test for him. Back over a sharp five furlongs on fast ground, he could be tough to peg back here.

Aidan O'Brien, who saddled Kyrios to win the Goodwood Cup on Tuesday, added to his tally with a treble there yesterday, headed by Opera Singer in the group one Qatar Nassau Stakes. She made all the running under jockey Ryan Moore and just had enough in reserve to hold the strong finishes of See The Fire and Sparkling Plenty. Opera Singer is now likely to step up further in distance, with the Yorkshire Oaks and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe both on her agenda.

Goodwood

Rob Wright

- 1.50 Super Superjack 4.10 My Prospero
2.25 Socialite 4.45 Ardennes
3.00 Holloway Boy 5.20 Wafel (nb)
3.35 Desperate Hero (nap)

Going: good to firm Draw: 7f-1m 3f, high numbers best Racing TV

1.50 Coral Goodwood Handicap (€38,655; 2m 4f) (19 runners)

- 1 01-33 NACHTGEST 41 G Moore 4-9-12 C Maggs (7) 85
2 01-133 KYLE OF LOKHALSH 17 R Morrison 4-9-12 B Loughane 95
3 40-540 TRITONIC 45 (C) A King 7-9-8 Rossa Ryan 71
4 02-251 TEMPORIZER 13 (CD) S Hayes 5-9-7 C Beasley 88
5 00-00 PRINCE IMPERIAL 335 (P,T) H Dickinson 7-9-6 J Watson 97
6 5-5364 GET SHIRTY 45 D O'Meara 8-9-6 D Tudhope 87
7 100-00 MASTER MILLINER 13 (CD) E Laville 8-9-5 C Bishop 75
8 5-00 2000ALANDA 34 (P,C) Williams 7-9-4 J Crowley 72
9 53-420 VINO VICTRIX 21 (C) H Morrison 6-9-1 B Sawley 88
10 000000 SPIRIT MIXER 13 A Balding 6-9-1 O Murphy 71
11 453100 TENERIFE SUNSHINE 21 (P,C) Johnston 4-8-13 J Doyle 84
12 000-00 THE GRAND VISIR 45 (P,1B) 10-8-13 R Kingscote 79
13 6-3254 ROBERT JOHNSON 20 T Wagstaff 6-9-12 J Fanning 85
14 106-45 OCEANLINE 20 (B) D Pipe 6-9-11 D Tudhope 80
15 6-512 PREMIER LEGNE 20 (B) H Morrison 5-8-10 D Egan 77
16 326-745 SUPER SUPERJACK 20 (C) O Murphy 7-8-9 T Marquand 83
17 00-000 GOOLOODONG 20 G Baker 4-8-9 C Shepherd 62
18 5-196 SINGLE 14 J Channon 7-8-9 D Probert 73
19 5-196 43-6 TROIANADOR 25 O Murphy 8-8-6 S De Sousa 73
20 1-101 KYLE OF LOKHALSH, 6-1 Tempozir, 8-1 Super Superjack, 10-1 Get Shirley, 12-1 Tritonic, 14-1 others.

Rob Wright's choice: Super Superjack was second in this race two years ago; he now races off a 2lb lower mark Dangers: Tenerife Sunshine, Vino Victrix

2.25 Bonhams Thoroughbred Stakes (Group 3; 3-Y-O; €56,710; 1m) (10)

- 1 (7) 12-001 AI MUSMAK 22 (D) R Varian 9-3 S De Sousa 105
2 (5) 31-062 ATLANTIC COAST 33 (T) J P O'Brien 10-9-3 D McInnes 95
3 (10) 12-210 BOLLING POINT 41 R Varian 9-3 S M Levey 107
4 (6) 15-266 DANCING GEMINI 27 R Teal 9-3 O Murphy 112
5 (5) 5-1145 ICE MAX 19 (B) R Burke 9-3 C Lee 106
6 (8) 13-255 KING'S GAMBLE 18 R Beckett 9-3 D Tudhope 80
7 (2) 213 LEAD ARTIST 12 (B) J R Gordon 9-3 K Shoeman 77
8 (9) 6-005 NATIVE AMERICAN 22 (D) R Fahy 9-3 J Doyle 106
9 (2) 114 SOGALITE 22 H Hills 9-3 T Marquand 99
10 (4) 112-00 TASK FORCE 41 (T) R Beckett 9-3 Rossa Ryan 101
11-4 AI Musmak, 4-1 Lead Artist, Dancing Gemini, 8-1 Task Force, Socialite, 10-1 others.

Wright's choice: Socialite set an overly sharp pace when fourth at AI Musmak at Newmarket; he can reverse that form Dangers: AI Musmak, Task Force

3.00 Coral Golden Mile (€77,310; 1m) (21)

- 1 (13) 4-4352 HOLLOWAY BOY 27 (R) B Burke 4-9-12 S James 94
2 (19) 65-111 REBEL TERRITORY 447 (C,D) A Perrett 6-9-10 J Crowley 96
3 (10) 101-33 PEROTO 27 (H,B,C,D) R Varian 6-9-9 T Marquand 92
4 (9) 406-100 RHOSGOLYN 20 (C,D) D O'Meara 6-8-8 J Doyle 101
5 (15) 013306 SILK EVOLVERE 20 (D) R Hannan 4-9-6 S Hitchcock 99
6 (2) 1-2035 SILENT FLY 27 (D) J Williams 6-9-5 J P Spencer 90
7 (9) 4-0001 BLUE FOR YOU 20 (V,B) D O'Meara 6-9-5(Ex) D Tudhope 90
8 (12) 000300 BOPEDRO 6 (D) D O'Meara 8-9-3 Rossa Ryan 93
9 (7) 110110 TWO TEMPTING 27 (D) J Portman 5-9-2 D Egan 93
10 (18) 06-500 MRSKY 41 (G) D O'Meara 5-9-1 Doubtful 95
11 (16) 10-500 DAVENISH 48 (V,B) R Spencer 8-9-4 J Hart 83
12 (8) 42-400 CLASSIC 27 (D) R Hannan 4-9-2 P Dobbs 76
13 (9) 450315 RICHMOND 20 (V,B) D O'Meara 6-8-12 H Crouch 81
14 (20) 200053 DUTCH DECOY 13 (B,F,D) C Johnston 7-8-11 J Fanning 83
15 (17) 314132 NEW IMAGE 0 (D) D O'Meara 8-8-10 Doubtful 88
16 (1) 3223-0 URBAN SPRAWL 22 (P,C) C Johnston 4-8-9 B Loughane 99
17 (21) -00243 TOIMY SON 36 D Meneuier 5-8-9 O Murphy 88
18 (4) 630014 ORAANAN 27 (B,F,CD) D O'Meara 9-8-8 S De Sousa 74
19 (11) 000133 PISANELLO 15 (B,F,D) D O'Meara 7-8-8 D Probert 89
20 (6) 003042 BENEACE 15 (B,C) C Johnston 4-8-8 V C Ho 84
21 (10) 32-413 NATIVE WARRIOR 42 (C) R Burke 7-8-7 Doubtful
22 (8) 0-2102 STURILLASAN 33 (B,F,D) C Cotter (tre) 3-8-1 D McInnes 102
23 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
24 (8) 0-2120 STURILLASAN 33 (B,F,D) C Cotter (tre) 3-8-1 D McInnes 102
25 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
26 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
27 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
28 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
29 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
30 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114

Wright choice: Holloway Boy has plenty of solid form in group races; he is in good form and can defy top weight Dangers: Urban Sprawl, Pisanello

3.35 King George Qatar Stakes (Group 2; €179,771; 5f) (13)

- 1 (2) 0-9515 KERDOS 45 (D) C Cox 4-9-7 R Kingscote 113
2 (13) 254011 PONTOS 61 (T,D) M Nieslank (AUS) 6-9-7 Sabina Moskova 110
3 (10) -00441 TOMMY SON 36 D Meneuier (AUS) 6-9-7 O Murphy 120
4 (11) -01441 BELIEVING 13 (T,D) G Boughy 4-9-4 B Loughane 106
5 (1) 0-6113 DESPERATE HERO 27 (P,C,D) J Channon 4-9-4 D Probert 114
6 (9) 44-254 LIVE IN THE DREAM 27 (B,F,D) A West 5-9-4 J Hart 109
7 (5) 110-10 MOSS TUCKER 69 (T,D) K J Condon (tre) 6-9-4 W J Lee 114
8 (6) 15-002 ROOFTOP LIGHTNING 20 (H,D) Tom Gower 4-9-4 J Doyle 99
9 (7) 01-113 BIG EYES 45 (B,C) M Appleby 9-9-1 T Marquand 113
10 (4) 00-136 JASOUR 20 (C) C Cox 9-9-1 Doubtful
11 (3) -02013 MARKAROVA 13 (P,T,D) E Walker 5-9-1 H Crouch 115
12 (12) 236101 STARLUST 10 (D) R Beckett 3-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
13 (8) 0-2120 STURILLASAN 33 (B,F,D) C Cotter (tre) 3-8-1 D McInnes 102
14 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
15 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
16 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
17 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
18 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
19 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
20 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114
21 (1) 2232-0 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B) D M Dods 9-9-1 Rossa Ryan 114

Wright choice: Desperate Hero failed to last home when third at Makarova on soft ground at Sandown; conditions here are ideal Dangers: Asforda, Makarova

4.10 Regent Seven Seas Cruises Bentick Conditions Stakes (€38,655; 1m) (8)

- 1 (1) 44210-0 MY PROSPERO 286 (C) W Haggas 5-9-12 T Marquand 94
2 (6) 110-1 CIGEROS'S GIFT 27 (C,D) C Hills 4-9-10 B Loughane 91

- 3 (2) -20420 HAUNTED DREAM 20 (T) H Al Jebani (UAE) 5-9-10 J Doyle 106
4 (4) 0-9100 LIBERTY LANE 20 (T,D) R R Burke 4-9-10 C Lee 104
5 (7) 14 PRAGUE 28 D Cunha 4-9-10 J Gilligan 88
6 (5) 0-2020 CAIRO 45 (P,T) Alice Hayes 4-9-7 S M Levey 94
7 (3) 1- CROWN BOARD 227 (D) J Chapple-Hyam 4-9-7 D Egan 92
8 (8) 2-3465 SIR BUSKER 126 (P,C) W Knight 8-9-7 C Shepherd 80
9-4 My Prospero, 5-2 Cigeros's Gift, 11-2 Liberty Lane, 13-2 Haunted Dream, 12-1 Prague, Cairo, 14-1 Others.

Wright choice: My Prospero raced too keenly when seventh in the Champion Stakes at Ascot; this is a big drop in class Dangers: Haunted Dream, Cigeros's Gift

4.45 Hawes & Curtis Nursery (2-Y-O; €30,924; 6f) (17)

- 1 (15) 2103 THE ACTOR 28 (B) R Hannan 9-9-7 S M Levey 87
2 (2) 2315 DO IT NOW 13 A Keatley 9-9-7 C Beasley 87
3 (12) 1302 SEX ON FIRE 27 S Spencer 9-7 J P Spencer 84
4 (4) 612 ARDENNES 34 (D) E Walker 9-7 T Marquand 74
5 (9) 2411 THE DRAGON KING 18 (C) Cox 9-3 Rossa Ryan 75
6 (10) 1402 ZABEEL ROAD 20 (B) C Johnston 9-3 J Fanning 79
7 (1) 0111 MISSION COMMAND 13 G Scott 9-2 C Shepherd 79
8 (11) 0410 SHAZAN 27 (D) C Johnston 9-2 J Hart 79
9 (7) 2221 CAYMAN TAI 40 (C) Hannan 9-0 P Dobbs 75
10 (5) 1533 TANGERSH 7 F Pflougen 8-9-2 C Bishop 81
11 (6) 3532 BERKSHIRE KAMEO 21 (V,B) A Balding 8-11 D Probert 78
12 (16) 1- YES YIM NAIL 27 (D) R Fahy 8-10 S De Sousa 78
13 (17) 0413 BALZARIN 11 S Williams 8-10 M Ghani 76
14 (13) 0531 HACKNEY DIAMONDS 15 B Meehan 8-10 B Loughane 64
15 (14) 205 ARTAGANAN 27 R Burke 8-9-2 C Lee 75
16 (3) 0643 RARE CHANGE 27 R Hughes 8-9-2 O Murphy 79
17 (8) 550 ALONDRA 49 Hills 8-7 V C Ho 74
18-7 Rare Change, 7-1 Mission Command, 15-2 Sex On Fire, 8-1 The Dragon King, 10-1 Ardennes, 12-1 Others.

Wright choice: Ardennes was unsuited by a drop to five furlongs when second at Newcastle; he is capable of better Dangers: Mission Command, The Actor

5.20 Coral Play Racing Super-Series For Free Handicap (3-Y-O; €18,039; 1m 3f) (14)

- 1 (10) 14-16 DAMBETER 29 (V,B) A Balding 9-9 J Watson 77
2 (12) -3241 BLAKE 27 (D) R Varian 9-9 B Loughane 405
3 (11) 61-00 KAMBOD 43 R Hughes 9-7 R Kingscote 67
4 (3) 323-51 RAPID MISSION 44 (B) S Hills 9-5 C Beasley 83
5 (2) 215 MASTER BUILDER 23 D Meneuier 9-4 K Shoeman 74
6 (5) 42-021 NEW CHELSEA 34 R Beckett 9-3 Rossa Ryan 76
7 (4) 541-24 SUN GOD 21 H Morrison 9-2 D Egan 77
8 (9) -2520 MAFWOOD 21 (B) R Hannan 9-2 J Crowley 81
9 (7) 25-41 WAFEL 36 W Haggas 9-2 J Doyle 77
10 (12) 41-00 CHAMBERLAIN 13 (P,T) Chapple-Hyam 9-2 T Marquand 72
11 (16) 31-430 ASSAILANT 43 (B) J K Gossell 9-2 O Murphy 72
12 (12) 4-6222 MIDNIGHT RUMBLE 27 A King 9-1 D Probert 80
13 (8) 42-245 HUXLEY 16 M Attwater 9-1 J Hart 76
14 (6) 044 GIVE IT TO ME 04 (B) S G Moore 8-13 H Crouch 73
15-2 Wafel, 6-1 Assailant, 10-1 Dambeter, 10-1 New Chelsea, Midnight Rumble, 12-1 Others.

Wright choice: Wafel should relish this trip Dangers: Assailant, New Chelsea

Bath

Rob Wright

- 5.50 Take A Pull 7.35 Time Patrol
2.55 Ladycapspunch 8.05 Savannah Smiles
7.00 Dark Sorceress 8.35 Wedgewood

Going: good to firm, firm in places Draw: no advantage Sky Sports Racing

5.50 Novice Stakes (€3,942; 1m) (5)

- 1 (2) 12 TAKE A PULL 10 (B) A Watson 3-9-4 Louisa Coughlan (3)
2 (3) 560-0 BODICA WINNER 115 (P) J Tickle 5-9-4 T Fisher (3)
3 (5) 06022 DARYNSIA GOLD 30 E A Houghton 3-8-11 Georgia Dobbie
4 (1) 65 VEVIER 14 J Channon 3-8-11 G Bass (3)
5 (4) 40-00 WILLAS BULLETS 25 S Houghton 3-8-11 J Doughey (5)
2-5 Take A Pull, 9-4 Darynsia Gold, 20-1 Slevier, 50-1 Boudica Warrior, 60-1 Villes Bullets.

6.25 Handicap (€2,918; 1m 4f) (9)

- 1 (9) 04510 BLUE HERO 15 (H,C,D) A Winkle 6-9-11 C Hardie
2 (7) 306-4 KONIQUE 34 A Carroll 6-9-4 Molly Gunn (7)
3 (2) 41050 PITSBURG 124 (T) R Potter 8-9-4 J Doughey (5)
4 (4) 45024 ALYSEA 27 (P,C) G & J Moore 6-9-2 T Fisher (3)
5 (2) 04904 ANVANA 17 (P,C) G & J Moore 5-9-2 Anna Gibson (7)
6 (5) -0002 LADYCAPSPUNCH 16 (V) E Harris 5-9-4 C Hutchinson (3)
7 (1) 300-4 SUSANBECKTON 30 (P) Joe Ponting 5-9-4 W Cox
8 (3) 30/0 GAVIN 16 (T) P & M Bowen 6-9-2 T Greathart
9 (6) 46304 UHER PENDRAGON 21 (P,C,D) J S Moore 9-9-0 Hille Wonnacott (5)
11-4 Blue Hero, 4-1 Alysea, 5-1 Alpara, 6-1 Ladycapspunch, 8-1 Konique, 10-1 Gavin, Pittsburg, 14-1 Uher Pendragon, 20-1 Susanbeckton.

7.00 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O; €5,211; 6f) (9)

- 1 (6) 5 CHERKY STANLEY 21 B Baker 9-7 G Rooke
2 (3) 523 COLOCLO 30 (B,F) K P De Foy 9-7 J Doughey (5)
3 (1) 4805 LOVETROCK ROMEO 37 (P) Ollie Sangster 9-7 N Currie
4 (2) 02 MISTER KNOCKOUT 9 F Houghton 9-7 G Dowling
5 (9) 30 DARK SORCERESS 11 Hobsen 9-7 Georgia Dobbie
6 (5) 00 GALETTE 56 J Portman 9-7 Olivia Tubb
7 (7) 00 LA MER WISER 11 A Carroll 9-7 W Carson
8 (4) 00 NANNA GREENE 11 H Nicholls 9-2 Gina Mangan (3)
9 (8) 062 POWER OF TWINS 7 R Hannan 9-2 A Voikhsansky (3)
11-4 Coloclo, 2-1 Lovestrock Romeo, 11-4 Power Of Twins, 12-1 Dark Sorceress, 39-1 Cherky Stanley, 50-1 Mister Knockout, 66-1 others.

7.35 Classified Stakes (€2,983; 6f) (8)

- 1 (7) 000-0 BEDFORD HOUSE 14 A Carroll 5-9-9 Molly Gunn (7)
2 (6) -0555 DALEY T 16 A Carroll 4-9-9 W Carson
3 (5) 6-424 MY DELLAGH 30 (C) A Winkle 4-9-9 C Hardie
4 (4) -2052 TIME PATROL 143 (D) A Carroll 4-9-9 J Doughey (5)
5 (5) -6660 VAUNTED 5 (C) A Winkle 5-9-9 C Hardie
6 (3) 23502 WE'RE REUNITED 10 (D) C M Blake 7-9-9 T Greathart
7 (8) -0006 DOMINANT FORCE 6 (B) A Carroll 3-9-5 Gina Mangan (3)
8 (7) 36000 PANONICA 16 R Hannan 3-9-5 Doubtful
9-4 We're Reunited, 7-2 Vaunted, 4-1 Time Patrol, 5-1 Katar, 6-1 Daley T, 16-1 Bedford House, 20-1 Dominant Force.

8.05 Handicap (€2,983; 6f) (8)

- 1 (7) 40604 FLYING SECRET 8 (B,T) E J Houghton 5-9-11 Georgia Dobbie
2 (8) 62263 RECON MISSION 15 (D) A Carroll 4-9-9 J Doughey (5)
3 (5) 6-424 MY DELLAGH 30 (C) A Winkle 4-9-9 C Hardie
4 (6) 31652 MYMOUTH OF HOPE 9 (P,D) J & R Harris 4-9-4 T Fisher (3)
5 (6) 21452 SAVANNAH SMILES 16 (B) F Flint 4-9-3 J Hutchinson (3)
6 (4) 55630 SOME NIGHTMARE 23 (B,F,D) J O'Shea 7-9-3 Gina Mangan (3)
7 (1) 50012 SISTERS IN THE SKY 16 (P,D) G Hays 5-9-12 G Rooke
8 (3) -0243 DIAMOND COTTAGE 30 (D) M Saunders 7-9-2 W Carson
3-1 Savannah Smiles, 9-2 Sisters In The Sky, 5-1 Flying Secret, 14-1 My Dellagh, 17-1 Symbol Of Hope, Recon Mission, 8-1 Some Nightmare, 31-1 Diamond Cottage.

8.35 Handicap (€2,983; 5f) (5)

- 1 (4) 51641 UNDER CURFEW 9 (CD) A Carroll 8-10-1(24ex) J Doughey (5)
2 (3) 20022 EXCEED 11 (T,D) N Tinkler 4-9-11 A Jary (5)
3 (2) 21421 WEDDING WIFE 10 (C) A Carroll 4-9-4 W Carson
4 (1) -0465 LU WARE 21 S Dixon 4-9-4 Hutchinson (3)
5 (5) -0403 DARKENED EDGE 31 C Mason 4-8-13 Gina Mangan (3)
6-5 Under Curfew, 5-2 Wedgewood, 4-1 Exceed, 10-1 Lu Ware, 12-1 Darkened Edge.

Musselburgh

Rob Wright

- 6.10 Music History 7.50 Coconut Bay
6.45 Curragh Point 8.20 Northern Fighter
7.20 Treble Winners 8.50 Tafsir

Going: good to firm, good in places Draw: 5f, high numbers best Racing TV

6.10 Nursery (2-Y-O; €6,281; 5f) (6)

- 1 (3) 42211 LADY LUZON 15 (D) D O'Meara 9-4 D Nolan
2 (6) 20000 INVINCIBLE ANNIE 13 (CD) R R Burke 9-7 S Feilden (7)
3 (5) 126 WINDURCH 10 (D) M Appleby 9-7 R Elliott (7)
4 (4) 2102 MILITARY GIRL 14 (B,F,D) M Dods 9-6 A Rivlin (7)
5 (2) 5001 MYSICAL HISTORY 10 (C) E Bethall 9-5(See) C Rodriguez
6 (1) 2536 KITTEN IN THE SKY 10 (G) Tuer 9-2 H Shaw
13-6 Music History, 9-4 Lady Luzon, 5-1 Windurch, 8-1 Military Girl, 10-1 Invincible Annie, 12-1 Kitten In The Sky.

6.45 Handicap (€10,468; 5f) (9)

- 1 (3) 05233 WEN MOON 14 (T,D) B Haslam 4-9-12 B Garrity
2 (1) 1-0455 COURT ROYAL 14 (D) J Camacho 4-9-7 C Rodriguez
3 (2) 20382 CURIOUS ROVER 10 (C) K Scott 3-9-5 S B Kirrane
4 (4) 04110 SPRING IS SPRUNG 27 (D) M Middleby 5-9-4 D Nolan
5 (5) 44540 ROCK MELODY 10 (P,C,D) Giddle 5-9-1 Amia Whaley (5)
6 (6) 0-5000 EAH BAH GUN 13 (C) M Coverly, 8-1 R Elliott (7)
7-4 Curious Rover, 2-1 Wen Moon, 5-1 Court Royal, 8-1 Rock Melody, 12-1 Eah Bah Gun, Spring Is Sprung.

7.20 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O; €3,780; 7f) (7)

- 1 (7) 03 KALENDON DREAM 12 (G) Tuer 9-7 H Shaw
2 (5) 6 CILPATRICK PRINCE 21 Alice Haynes 9-7 A Ravlinson
3 (2) 04 MAYOR OF MAGHERA 12 Phillip Makin 9-7 D Nolan
4 (1) SAY WHAT YOU SEE 1 Bailey 9-7 B Garrity
5 (6) 0003 TOY SOLDIER 19 (D) M Scott 9-7 C Rodriguez
6 (5) 35 TREBLE WINNERS 12 M Walford 9-7 J Garrity
7 (3) 00 WEDAB 36 S Johnston 9-7 F Barton
4-1 Toy Soldier, 1-2 Treble Winners, Mayor Of Maghera, 8-1 Kalendon Dream, Wedab, 16-1 Kiltpatrick Prince, 31-1 Say What You See.

7.50 Classified Stakes (€3,664; 7f) (8)

- 1 (8) 21330 COCONUT BAY 18 (D) T Davidson 5-9-9 R Elliott (7)
2 (3) -0426 DOONSDAY 32 (P,D) L Bailey 7-9-9 B Garrity
3 (7) 52322 FANONIE 10 (B,C,D) L Bailey 7-9-9 J Garrity
4 (1) 00060 LEZARDIBURY 13 (G) Tuer 7-9-9 H Shaw
5 (1) 00020 ANTHEBURN 11 (E) Miss L Perrett 4-9-9 D Nolan
6 (4) 095-04 ANGELO ANGEL 32 (P) S Corbett 3-9-3 C Murrigh
7 (6) 62213 CUBAN ROCK 11 (C,D) Giddle 4-9-13 Amie Whaley (5)
8 (7) 24005 SKORCA 4 (C,D) Miss L Perrett 4-9-11 R Elliott (7)
9-4 Fanzone, 3-1 Coconut Bay, 4-1 Doonsday, 5-1 Lezardibury, 7-1 Port And Starburd, 16-1 Too Much Too Young, 25-1 Ontheburny, 66-1 Apache Angel.

8.20 Maiden Stakes (€3,664; 5f) (7)

- 1 (3) 00205 GLORY FIGHTER 21 (C,D) M Walford 8-10-0 D Nolan
2 (6) 30552 WAG FAT MAC 14 (T,D) J Jardine 5-9-13 M Tab (5)
3 (4) 00022 HAVEGOMCEA 16 (P,D) M Dods 6-9-11 C Rodriguez
4 (1) 24244 PROTIST RALLY 15 (P,C,D) L Bailey 4-9-4 B Garrity
5 (7) 66034 MISS ANGEL 4 (C,D) R M Smith 4-9-2 C Murrigh
6 (2) 62213 CUBAN ROCK 11 (C,D) Giddle 4-9-13 Amie Whaley (5)
7 (7) 24005 SKORCA 4 (C,D) Miss L Perrett 4-9-11 R Elliott (7)
8-2 Woe Fat Mac, 7-2 Havogomcea, 5-1 Cuban Rock, 6-1 Glory Fighter, 7-1 Protist Rally, 15-2 Skorca, 10-1 Sil Angel.

8.50 Handicap (€3,477; 1m 5f) (6)

- 1 (2) 03324 TAFSIR 20 (P,C,D) J Giddle 5-11-4 M E Cagney
2 (4) 15643 PRIDE OF NEPAL 4 (B) F Carroll 6-10-0 Miss Missen Mathias (5)
3 (1) 00000 STORM SPARK 41 (T) M Hammond 5-9-12 Miss Becky Smith
4 (3) 00-044 STAR OF MARINICH 10 (H) Graham 6-9-4 Rutherford 8-9-11 Miss Hannah Crawford (5)
11-8 Tafsir, 3-1 Parikarma, 4-1 Pride Of Nepal, 9-2 Cuban Gun, 25-1 Storm Spirit, Star Of Marinich.

Newcastle

Rob Wright

- 2.10 East Tyrone 4.30 Angelica Catalani
2.45 Northern Ticker 5.05 Unbeatable
3.20 Oolong Poobong 5.35 Profit Street
3.55 Captain Potter 6.05 Sassy Soprano

Going: standard to slow Draw: no advantage Sky Sports Racing

2.10 Nursery (2-Y-O; €4,397; 6f) (6)

- 1 (2) 22100 LARCHILL LASS 13 (R) R Burke 9-11 P-L Jamin
2 (4) 5532 CYCLONITE 43 (B,F) J Ferguson 10-9 T Eaves
3 (1) 2641 EAST TYRONE 20 (C) K Ryan 9-6 S Gray
4 (5) 5044 MC COOL 34 J Johnston 9-6 A Mullen
5 (3) 15 SEA OF DIAMONDS 23 (B,F,D) A Watson 9-6 L Morris
6 (6) 04045 SYBARIS JEWEL 7 (D) R Ellison 8-11 S Farmer (7)
2-1 Gydolite, 5-1 East Tyrone, 10-3 Larchill Lass, 11-2 Sea Of Diamonds, 10-1 Mr Cool, 25-1 Sybaris Jewel.

2.45 Novice Stakes (Div 1; 2-Y-O; €3,402; 6f) (9)

- 1 (7) 621 GUTTERATI 21 (A) Watson 9-9 L Morris
2 (3) 55 CALLOUT 2 D Bethell 9-4 P J McDonald
3 (1) LORD ROXY N Tinkler 9-4 R Scott
4 (8) 3 NORTHERN TICKER 27 M Dods 9-4 P Mullenan
5 (9) 02 THINK OF A NAME 22 W Knight 9-4 P-L Jamin
6 (2) CUBAN LYNX Gray Lidster 9-2 S Gray

## Sport Football

# Left back, 17, shines for United – but Rashford adds to worries

## Fulham make £20m bid for McTominay

Paul Hirst San Diego

Manchester United defeated Real Betis 3-2 in their latest pre-season friendly in the United States, thanks to first-half goals from Marcus Rashford (a penalty), Amad Diallo and Casemiro. There were some promising signs — but injuries are threatening to overshadow Erik ten Hag's preparations for the new season.

### US PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS – BUT FANS AREN'T CONVINCED

The Snapdragon Stadium, home of the San Diego State Aztecs American football team, pulled out all the stops for last night's match. US Marines jumped out of a helicopter and paraglided onto the pitch before kick-off to deliver the match ball. Local volunteers held aloft the American flag that was the size of the pitch, while the *Star-Spangled Banner* played.

It is just a shame that more people were not here to see it. The official attendance at the 35,000-seat stadium, which is named after the software company that sponsors United, was 26,248, although there appeared to be more empty seats than stated. You can understand why some stayed away when the most expensive tickets cost £300. The cheapest tickets for the match against La Liga's seventh-best team last season cost £48.

United's first tour match, against Arsenal at the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, was not sold out either. Just over 62,000 fans attended the match in the 70,000-seat arena, where tickets cost a similar price. Arsenal's pre-season match against Bournemouth in LA attracted only 7,000 supporters.

### AMASS, 17, STATES HIS CASE

Granted, Betis are not the best team in the world, and this is only pre-season, but there was much to like about the performance of Harry Amass. The 17-year-old left back has started both tour matches because Luke Shaw is on holiday after the Euros and Tyrell Malacia remains out with a knee injury.

United are trying to sign a full back this summer, but Amass is pushing his case quietly for a place in the first-team squad. One of the highlights of Wednesday



The 17-year-old Amass, who featured for the under-18s and under-21s last season, has started both tour matches so far

night's match was seeing Amass put in two full-blooded tackles on Rodri and Héctor Bellerín in the space of a few seconds in the first half.

The crowd roared with delight when he threw himself into the tackles. He gave the ball away with a poor first touch, but redeemed himself with a surging run down the left and a cross that led to United's second goal, scored by Diallo.

Amass, who signed for United from Watford, featured regularly for the under-18s and under-21s last season and was on the bench for three first-team matches.

### SIGNS OF PRESSING PROGRESS

Watching United train at their base at UCLA last week, it became clear that they are dedicating a lot of time to improving their pressing. They spent a large chunk of the session performing two drills in seven-a-side teams on

small pitches. There was a clear desire to press high up the pitch against Betis.

When Betis had a goal kick, Rashford, Scott McTominay, who is the subject of a £20million bid from Fulham, and Jadon Sancho rushed to the edge of the box and Diallo sat back 15 metres deeper. United were aggressive in the press in open play, too. The most effective player was the energetic McTominay. His crunching tackle set up a chance for Diallo in the first half.

### RASHFORD'S INJURY SCARE

Another day, another injury scare for United. A few hours after the club confirmed that Leny Yoro and Rasmus Hojlund would be out for three months and six weeks respectively because of injuries suffered against Arsenal, Rashford hobbled off in San Diego. The United forward came off in the second half after Pablo Fornals stood on his right foot

during a challenge. The tackle seemed innocuous but Rashford walked off gingerly, complaining to the United doctor. He came out for the post-match lap of appreciation, though, and did not look in discomfort as he left the stadium. Antony also appeared to suffer an injury. He was angry when he left the pitch 25 minutes after coming on as a substitute. It was unclear how he suffered his injury, but he left the field in a huff and walked straight down the tunnel, throwing some tape on the ground as he went.

Antony's performance was far inferior to that of Diallo, who won a penalty and scored a stunning goal with a fierce strike from 15 yards. Diallo, Rashford and Sancho, who played as a false nine, linked up well. Unless Ten Hag decides to give new signing Joshua Zirkzee his debut at Wembley, those three will probably start up front in the Community Shield.

ICON SPORTS/IRE/GETTY IMAGES

Paul Hirst

Fulham have made a second offer, worth £20 million, for Scott McTominay, the Manchester United midfielder. United are likely to reject the bid as they want £25-30 million for the 27-year-old. Fulham's initial bid of £15 million was turned down.

Should he decide to leave United, McTominay will not be short of options. Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe are showing serious interest in the Scotland international, who has one year left on his contract, though the club can extend his deal by a further season.

Everton have been long-term admirers of McTominay but they do not have enough money to buy him. A year ago United rejected a bid of £30 million for McTominay as they wanted £40 million at that stage.

McTominay has been a member of the first-team squad for the past eight seasons. He came through the club's academy and was given his first-team debut in 2017 by José Mourinho. The midfielder has played 252 times for the club and has scored 29 goals.

McTominay started 27 matches last season and scored ten goals, including two in stoppage time during United's thrilling 2-1 win over Brentford in October. He also scored twice in United's 2-1 home win over Chelsea, and in the FA Cup quarter-final and semi-final wins over Liverpool and Coventry City respectively.

After spending more than £90 million on Leny Yoro and Joshua Zirkzee this summer, United need to raise funds to pay for future signings. The need to buy another centre back has been heightened by Yoro's injury. The 18-year-old France defender will be out for three months after breaking a metatarsal in the pre-season friendly against Arsenal. It was only his second appearance for the club since joining from Lille in a deal worth up to £59 million.

● Craig Shakespeare, the coach who helped Leicester City to pull off the greatest shock in Premier League history by winning the title in 2016, has died aged 60. He had announced his cancer diagnosis ten months ago. His most recent role was back at Leicester as an assistant to Dean Smith during Smith's brief spell in charge last year.



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# Which athletics stars have medal hopes?

Keely Hodgkinson and Josh Kerr lead a Team GB squad with plenty of podium potential, writes **Matt Lawton**

It has already been quite the summer for track and field, with the latest generation of racing spikes helping to propel athletes to some seriously fast times.

While the initial focus was on super shoes for the road, the leading sportswear manufacturers have turned more of their attention to the track before the Paris Olympics.

With some seriously bouncy shoes and a new state-of-the-art bouncy track, records could tumble inside the Stade de France. There is certainly a sense of excitement.

An encouraging sign for Team GB is that British athletes have been among those registering some mightily impressive performances, with Keely Hodgkinson, Laura Muir and Matthew Hudson-Smith all bettering their own British records in the build-up to these

Olympics. There are medals in this British team, for sure.

**TOMORROW, AUGUST 3**

**WOMEN'S 100M FINAL, 8.20PM BST**  
Dina Asher-Smith will certainly have her work cut out, with Sha'Carri Richardson of the United States top of the world rankings with a blistering time of 10.71sec this year. However, Asher-Smith performs on the biggest stages and may just sneak a medal.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 4**

**MEN'S 100M FINAL, 8.50PM**

It is hard to see anyone other than Noah Lyles of the US, Botswana's Letsile Tebogo and Jamaica's Oblique Seville on the podium, but Zharnel Hughes is the British record-holder and if he can come good in Paris — he has been struggling with a hamstring injury — he should at least reach the final.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 5**

**WOMEN'S 800M FINAL, 8.47PM**

After silvers in Tokyo and both the 2022 and 2023 World Championships, this feels like Hodgkinson's time. Athling Mu, who beat her at the previous Games in 2021 and in Eugene a year later, failed to qualify for the US team after falling in the trials. Mary Moraa, the erratic Kenyan who won last year's world title, has not been in great form.



Hodgkinson, above, is looking to improve on silver she won in Tokyo, while Asher-Smith, left, goes in 100m

Hodgkinson, however, is flying. The 22-year-old's British record of 1min 54.61sec is also the fastest time in the world this year.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 6**

**MEN'S 1,500M FINAL, 7.50PM**

Josh Kerr is the reigning world champion and someone who is supremely confident when it comes to adding an Olympic gold medal. He

also beat Jakob Ingebrigtsen again in Eugene this summer over a mile. Both Kerr and Jake Wightman have proved that the great Norwegian, who is the defending Olympic champion, is vulnerable to the strongest kickers in a championship race.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7**

**WOMEN'S POLE VAULT FINAL, 6PM**

Having won the world indoor title and set a British record of 4.92m this year, Molly Caudery is certainly in contention for a medal. That said, she will have to be at her best in Paris to make it on to the podium.

**MEN'S 400M FINAL, 8.20PM**

Matthew Hudson-Smith has made it on to World Championship podiums but this could be his year. He is the fastest in the world this season with a British record of 43.74sec, with only one other athlete — the American Quincy Hall — dipping under 44sec. Some big names remain in the event, but Hudson-Smith has to be among the favourites.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 8**

**MEN'S 200M FINAL, 7.30PM**

Another tough ask for Hughes given the form of Lyles, Tebogo and the young American Erriyon Knighton, but he has broken 20sec this season and will continue to command the respect of his main rivals.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 9**

**WOMEN'S 4X100M FINAL, 6.47PM**

Get their baton changes right and the

British quartet, which is likely to include Asher-Smith and another sub-11sec sprinter in Daryll Neita, should certainly get among the medals.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 10**

**MEN'S 800M FINAL, 6.05PM**

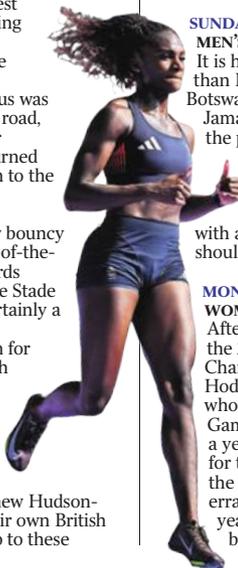
The new shoes have seemed to have a big impact on 800m running, with three athletes going inside Lord Coe's former world record of 1:41.73 — which had been the third-fastest time in history until that point — and six breaking 1:43 in one race. Great Britain's Ben Pattison, a World Championship bronze medallist last year, has also clocked 1:42.27, making him the 14th-quickest in history. He's a fine racer and therefore has a chance.

**WOMEN'S 1,500M FINAL, 7.15PM**

Muir had not been looking her best since that acrimonious split with her former coach, Andy Young, but a British record of 3:53.79 last month suggests she is back to her best and in the hunt for another Olympic medal.

**MEN'S 4X400M RELAY FINAL, 8PM**

It's not just about Hudson-Smith. There is strength in depth in this team, with Charlie Dobson also clocking 44.23sec this season and Sam Reardon running 44.70sec too. On paper, the Americans have five of the ten fastest times this season. But on the last night at the track, Team GB may just sign off with a gold medal here.



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## Sport Paris Olympics 2024

Rick Broadbent

Paris



# Rowers double Tokyo tally as Glover settles for silver

Helen Glover's rowing career has lasted 16 years and she ended up beaten by 0.18 seconds. That is the Olympics in a nutshell and a time capsule. The protagonists channel a spark or inspiration until a dream becomes a plan. Pragmatism takes over. Obsession seeps in. And it can come down to slivers.

It is not always like that. Glover and her crew in the women's four, Esme Booth, Sam Redgrave and Rebecca Shorten, fought out a mesmerising duel with the Netherlands on a boiling lake. They gave it their all but were a fraction short of solving the equation. A day earlier the women's quad had foreshadowed that battle when they beat the Netherlands by 0.15 seconds. Swings and roundabouts, ebb and flow, silver and gold.

However, in the first final of the day, bronze was the colour for Mathilda Hodgkins-Byrne and Becky Wilde in the double sculls. They were far more pleased with that than the women's four were with silver, and for good reason. Hodgkins-Byrne, and not Glover, thus became the first British mother to win a rowing medal at the Olympics.

"That's completely insane," the 29-year-old said. Not nearly as insane as the fact that Wilde, 26, had won an Olympic medal in only her third international race, some ten months after having her arms sliced open to cure compartment syndrome. That is the beauty of the Olympic Games. Everybody has a story and some of the most enthralling come from unexpected authors.

In short: Team GB added three medals on the second day of rowing finals — silver for the women's four and bronzes for the double scullers and the men's four. That makes it four medals, already double the tally from Tokyo, with more to follow.

Guts is not always followed by glory and the difficulty of realising dreams on the only day that matters is that everybody else is trying to prove they are skilled in perfect timing too. And the back stories, status and expectation provide a sliding scale of happiness.

The men's four are the world champions, so a bronze sounds disappointing, but it was as good as they could hope for judging by this week's heats.

"Very mixed," Glover, 38, said of the emotions on the water as her comeback fell just short of a third Olympic gold medal. It could sum up the feelings around the British team.

Glover fell agonisingly short of winning a third Olympic gold when edged out by just 0.18 seconds by the Dutch in the women's four race yesterday but she went on to

For glass half-full folk, the men's four were at least restored to the medals. This boat is steeped in a winning tradition. Before Tokyo, the last time the GB four had failed to make the podium was 1992. From 2000 they won five consecutive gold medals and the names became revered in rowing circles —

Redgrave, Pinsent, Cracknell, Triggs-Hodge and Reed. It was a dynastic triumph and a one-boat armada.

Oli Wilkes, David Ambler, Matt Aldridge and Freddie Davidson were never in the race for gold, but they fended off the Italians to take a bronze that at least stopped the bleeding. Three

years ago they "fully biffed" the Italians, to borrow from Matt Rossiter, and finished fourth. "We've done so well in the last two years and then, when it really matters, we f\*\*\*ed it up," he added.

This time they pulled safely away from the Italians. Ahead of them the United States' victory was significant as

they had fared even worse than the splintering GB team in Tokyo, failing to win a single rowing medal for the first time at any Olympics they had turned up to. They edged New Zealand by 0.85 seconds in an absorbing finale. The GB crew was some three seconds adrift at the end, but after



## If this is the end, there can be no regrets for one of

Glover missed out on gold in what may be her swansong but she must take pride in her legacy, says Owen Slot

It is too early to tell, of course. Helen Glover won silver and nearly made a decent fist of suggesting that she wasn't completely deflated. Then, after the medal ceremony, she returned to her seat at the bow of the boat that she has occupied with her three teammates for what had been, until a few minutes earlier, an unbeaten season, and paddled gently away. Yes, too early to tell, she confirmed, but you could not but wonder if that is the last time we will see her in a boat.

We actually thought she was done after Rio 2016 when her family started to grow, but then there was the first comeback of two, in Tokyo five years later. So who can tell if a 38-year-old mother of three has more competitive years in her? She has made a career of defying expectation. "I'll take my time to decompress," was her answer to the retirement question.

She was only marginally more forthcoming on the silver medal. "Mixed feelings," were her words. They didn't look so mixed when she came off the water, though. This women's four were rowing with one outcome in mind and it wasn't the silver. They had chased

the Dutch boat for the entire race and just about caught it; at the finish, they were short by inches. A thrilling race, not that it counts for much.

Glover also said that, because of the way that she and her teammates, Esme Booth, Sam Redgrave and Rebecca Shorten, had rowed, "there can't be regret". Again, the body

language looked very much as if the regrets they were harbouring were already weighing them down.

The medal ceremony didn't help. The moment that the MC announced the name of the gold medal winners, four joyful Dutch women bounced forward with elation, but Glover was on the end of the row next to them and it seemed that Benthe Boonstra jumped right in front of her. She then blasted out the Dutch national anthem right into her ear.

You just hope that Glover will find a time and a place to celebrate what she won rather than what she lost. The problem with golden expectations is that a silver, which would seem so wonderful to most mere mortals, just irks.

However disappointing that silver may feel right now, though, Glover's remains one of

the greatest careers in British Olympic history. Four Olympic Games, two golds and a silver. Two comebacks. A role model for working mothers and competing mothers. And she will always be associated with that moment in London 2012 when she and Heather Stanning delivered Team GB's first gold of the home Games.

One spectator here at the water's edge at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium with a particularly vested interest was Stanning herself. Glover and Stanning, or Stanning and Glover — we never quite worked that out. One more medal together and they'd have been firmly in Redgrave and Pinsent territory; like Starsky and Hutch, we know perfectly well which way round that one goes. Nevertheless, even though it is eight years since she was last in a boat with Glover, Stanning declared herself "really emotional" about the race that

Glover, far right, and her crew with their medals





GARRY BOWDEN/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

# No one has bounced back from a mistake to land gold like Biles

Rick Broadbent

As introductions go it was pretty good. After watching a sparrow-like genius in Romanian colours leap from the past on a big screen, the crowd in a cavernous Parisian arena welcomed the real thing. Nadia Comaneci was cheered with that old icon love thing, then revealed that she was looking forward to. "The amazing Simone Biles," she said. Who else? Comaneci, 62, is famous for giving the Olympics its first perfect 10. To borrow from Spinal Tap, the "redemption tour", as Biles has dubbed her comeback, has the amps turned to 11. She won the all-around gold eight years after doing so in Rio de Janeiro and reflected on the issues she has faced in the interim.

"I'm proud of myself and the fight I have had mentally and physically just to get back," she said. "Even this morning I saw my therapist at 7am, just making sure I am mentally well."

The American idol skipped into the Bercy Arena to give the Olympics a bucket-list moment. The question was whether she could also deliver another individual gold to go with the team one she had already banked. It was briefly in doubt, but Biles has deep strata of courage to go with the obvious skill.

After an error on the uneven bars, she went to the beam and was double back-flipping, twisting and smiling in the face of jeopardy. "I was trying to pray to every god out there," she said of the error. Bouncing back has rarely been so skilled and any one of those somersaults might have summed up the narrative arc of her career — ups, downs, always head-spinning.

It came down to the floor and she did not leave much wriggle room for doubt. The height on the tumbles was a miracle of ankle joints. Her closest challenger, Rebeca Andrade of Brazil, knew. We all



Biles's ability to smile in the face of jeopardy won her the all-around gold

did. The score was 15.066 and she had a total of 59.131, giving her a large 1.199 advantage over the gracious Andrade. Sunisa Lee, the Tokyo champion and Biles's team-mate, took the bronze. The British duo Alice Kinsella and Georgina Fenton were 12th and 18th respectively. Their comments said it all. "I was in such awe," Kinsella said. "When she was doing the floor I was speechless." Fenton added: "You can't help but look at her and think, 'Oh my God.'"

Biles has got to the point where she now vaults over superlatives and tumbles beyond hype. She is the celebrity of these Games and so celebrities have turned up to watch. Steph Curry, Kevin Durant and Kendall Jenner, stars of reality sport and TV, were the latest. People just want to catch a glimpse of her magic. She is the show, not merely the star. Usain Bolt in sequins.

By now most people know that Biles transcends her vocation, with her stand against abuse and openness about mental health problems. She has spoken up for the silenced and the scared, and of

the trauma of the Tokyo "twisties", a sort of temporary discombobulation that makes a gymnast lose sense of where they are. In Tokyo a team-mate said Biles was giving them a "heart attack". She withdrew, but had still won a bronze by the end. You can guess what followed. So after the trolls and tribulations, the twisties and turns, Biles came back last summer, having thought she was done.

She started on the vault. Andrade tore down the runway like a canary on fire for 1½ twists and nailed the landing. She scored 15.100. Biles was next and opted for a far more difficult vault and was given a huge 15.766.

To the uneven bars, which is not her favoured apparatus. Biles threw herself to the lower bar and the crowd gasped at the mistake. She recovered but it was like watching a trapeze artist without a safety net. She was punished with a low 13.733. Andrade scored 14.666. Down at halfway, it was the beam where Biles restored the old world order with 14.566 to Andrade's 14.1333. Now it was time for fabulous fun on the floor.

For those interested in generational comparisons, Comaneci won five Olympic golds and nine in all. Her second and final Olympics came at the age of 18. Biles is now middle-aged in gymnastics terms, but midway through her third Games she has six golds and nine Olympic medals. Comaneci predicted that the American would soon surpass her tally. Of course she will. Most likely tomorrow.

She admits the GOAT (greatest of all time) necklace is bound to be divisive but she is still grounded for a woman who spends so long in the air. "It's crazy that I am in the conversation of the greatest of all athletes because I still think I'm Simone Biles from Spring, Texas, who loves to flip," she said.

land, are all mothers had shown what is possible. Maybe it is better science, better support networks or just better role models, but the pathway from post-partum to podium is becoming more common across a range of sports.

Hodgkins-Byrne and Wilde enjoyed their moment with the former's two-year-old son in the stands. "It's surreal," Wilde said after standing on the podium with the New Zealand and Romanian duos, who took gold and silver respectively. It was a hard 6min 53.22sec but sometimes success comes quickly.

Later, Glover and her crew had no regrets even if the disappointment was palpable in every forced suggestion that they should be happy. She is one of the greatest British sportswomen, with two gold medals and a silver spanning four Olympic Games. She said she did not plan to come back but there was no "shoot me" directive, as with Redgrave in 1996.

If that is the end, what a sporting life it has been. After 39 hits they broke up the band in Rio when Heather Stanning went back to the army after being promoted to major. Glover went to Cornwall to get married to the TV naturalist Steve Backshall.

That winning streak stands the test of time, but with a new partner in Tokyo, Polly Swann, she came fourth. She deserves credit for coming back for another go, wanting to do it for the kids, at home and in the boat.

They tried but every time it seemed they were set to overhaul the Dutch, the winning boat jerked clear. New Zealand took the bronze. When the disappointment settles, Glover may find a silver lining in what may be the last tilt. The others will dream on.

celebrate with one of her children, top

Tokyo this constitutes a start. Sport is at its best when it is unpredictable. Glover's status as a mother of three and winner of two gold medals drew a large media presence, but the fact that Hodgkins-Byrne and the winners of the double sculls, Brooke Francis and Lucy Spoons of New Zealand

## our Olympic greats

was just about to take place. "I know what she's put into this having been through it with her, because she's a great friend," she said. Indeed, there is a nice arc to this. They have stayed close. Their families are close too. And while Stanning, 39, could never be persuaded back into a boat, it's not as if she has stepped away from her life as a high-performance human. She is still in the army and she finished 19th in the Marathon des Sables earlier this year. Magnificent women, both of them.

So rather than recall that final image of Glover on the medal podium receiving silver, here is another image of her, here in Paris, that has stuck: the opening ceremony and the sight of her and Tom Daley, the two Team GB flagbearers, on the Seine at the front of the British team boat.

They are two of the great British Olympians, two athletes whose long

and successful careers have been inspirational for so many reasons.

They are both also very much products of the system. Both of them were introduced to their sports after going through a talent ID search. Daley was fast-forwarded in diving after the scouts did a tour of schools in Plymouth.

Glover, meanwhile, was a hockey player and a cross-country runner, but the 5ft 10in athlete turned up to a talent ID day called Sporting Giants and was funnelled into rowing instead.

The system in the UK has its critics, but these are achievements to celebrate. When you have an athlete who gets to the age of 38 and has mixed feelings about winning an Olympic silver medal, that demonstrates the calibre of the talent that has been unearthed.

A mediocre silver? Don't hold on to the disappointment for too long.

### How the British got on at the Olympics on day six

#### Archery

Women: Individual: 1/32 elimination B Pitman (GB) bt A Ruiz (Mex) 6-2. 1/16 elimination Li Jiaman (China) bt Pitman 6-0.

#### Athletics

20km race walk: Leading final positions: Men 1, B Pintado (Ec) 1hr 18min 55sec; 2, C Bonfim (Br) 1:19:09; 3, A Martin (Sp) 1:19:11; 4, M Stano (It) 1:19:12; 5, E Dunfee (Can) 1:19:16; 16, C Wilkinson (GB) 1:20:31. Women 1, Yang Jiayu (China) 1:25:54; 2, M Perez (Sp) 1:26:19; 3, J Montag (Aus) 1:26:25; 4, L Arenas (Col) 1:27:03; 5, A Gonzalez (Mex) 1:27:14.

#### Canoeing — slalom

Men: Kayak: Single: Leading positions: Semi-final 1, J Clarke (GB) 89.51; 2, N Hegge (Ger) 91.24; 3, T Castryck (Fr) 91.56; 4, F Oschmaltz (Austria) 91.83; 5, J Grigar (Slovak) 92.00; 6, J Prskavec (Cz) 92.53. Final 1, G de Gennaro (It) 88.22; 2, Castryck 88.42; 3, P Echaniz (Sp) 88.87; 4, M Dougoud (Switz) 89.44; 5, Clarke 89.82; 6, Grigar 90.21.

#### Cycling — BMX racing

Quarter-finals: Leading overall positions: Men 1, S Andre (Fr) 4pts; 2, R Mahieu (Fr) 5; 3, J Daudet (Fr) 5; K Whyte (GB) 12. Women 1, S Sakakibara (Aus) 3; 2, B Shriver (GB) 3; 3, A Willoughby (US) 3.

#### Equestrianism

Jumping: Team: Leading qualifying positions 1, Germany 229.745sec. Open, 2, United States 227.57; 6, 3, Great Britain (B Maher — Dallas Vegas Batilly; H Charles; Romeo; S Brash — Jefferson) 227.79; 8, 4, Belgium 233.51; 8, 5, Netherlands 233.31; 8, 6, Ireland 230.22; 9, 7, France 228.44; 12, 8, Sweden 237.93; 17, 9, Israel 227.90; 20, 10, Mexico 230.14; 20.

#### Golf

Men: Leading first-round scores: 63 H Matsuyama (Japan). 65 X Schauffele (US). 66 J Niemann

#### Archery

(Chile), E Grillo (Arg), T Kim (S Kor). 67 S Valimaki (Fin), E van Rooyen (SA), J Rahm (Sp), A Noren (Swe), R Fox (NZ), T Fleetwood (Eng), S Straka (Austria), S Scheffler (US). 68 C Ortiz (Mex), M Schmid (Ger), A Tosti (Arg), C Conners (Can), R McIlroy (N Ire), L Aberg (Swe), G Migliozzi (It), 69 M Manassero (It), D Puig (Sp), M Pereira (Chile), J Gibrbach (Switz), T Pulikkanen (Fin), CT Pan (Taiwan), J Day (Aus), Zecheng Dou (China).

#### Gymnastics — artistic

Women: All-around: Leading final positions 1, S Biles (US) 59.131; 2, R Andrade (Br) 57.932; 3, S Lee (US) 56.465; 4, A D'Amato (It) 56.333; 5, K Nemour (Alg) 55.899; 6, E Black (Can) 54.799; 7, Qiu Qiuyan (China) 54.766; 8, H Kevric (Ger) 54.598; 9, F Saraiwa (Br) 54.032; 10, N Visser (Neth) 53.965; 12, A Kinsella (GB) 53.799; 18, G-M Fenton (GB) 51.766.

#### Hockey

Men: Pool A France 1 Great Britain 2.

Germany (Q)	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Germany (Q)	4	3	0	1	9	9
GB (Q)	4	2	2	0	5	8
Netherlands (Q)	4	2	1	1	5	7
Spain (Q)	4	2	1	1	1	7

South Africa	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
South Africa	4	0	1	3	-9	1
France	4	0	1	3	-11	1

Pool B Argentina 2 Ireland 1, India 1 Belgium 2, New Zealand 0 Australia 5.						
Belgium (Q)	4	4	0	0	8	12
Australia (Q)	4	3	0	1	3	9
India (Q)	4	2	1	1	2	7
Argentina (Q)	4	2	1	1	2	7
Ireland	4	0	0	4	-6	0
New Zealand	4	0	0	4	-9	0

Women: Pool A Japan 1 France 0.						
Belgium (Q)	3	3	0	0	9	9
Netherlands (Q)	3	3	0	0	9	9
Germany	3	2	0	1	5	6
China	3	1	0	2	1	3
Japan	4	1	0	3	-9	3
France	4	0	0	4	-14	0

Pool B Argentina 3 Australia 3, Spain 1 South Africa 0, United States 2 Great Britain 5.

#### Australia (Q)

Australia (Q)	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Australia (Q)	4	3	1	0	8	10
Argentina (Q)	4	3	1	0	6	9
Spain (Q)	4	2	1	1	7	7
GB (Q)	4	2	0	2	-1	6

United States 4 0 1 3 -9 1

South Africa 4 0 0 4 -5 0

#### Rowing

Leading final positions: Men: Four 1, United States 5min 49.03sec; 2, New Zealand 5:49.88; 3, Great Britain (O Wilkes, D Ambler, M Aldridge, F Davidson) 5:52.42. Women: Double sculls 1, New Zealand 6:50.45; 2, Romania 6:50.69; 3, Great Britain (M Hodgkins-Byrne and R Wilde) 6:53.22. Four 1, Netherlands 6:27.13; 2, Great Britain (H Glover, E Booth, S Redgrave, R Shorten) 6:27.31; 3, New Zealand 6:29.08.

#### Sailing

Dinghy: Leading overall positions: Men (after two races): 1, S Peschiera (Per) 7; 2, M Wearn (Aus) 14; 3, E Marques (Por) 16; 11, M Beckett (GB) 28. Women (after one race): 1, L Cervera (Fr) 1; 2, Gu Min (China) 2; 3, Benini Floriani (It) 3; 17, H Snellgrove (GB) 17.

Skiff: Leading overall positions: Men (after nine races): 1, Spain 35pts; 2, Ireland 46; 3, New Zealand 50; 4, Great Britain (J Peters, F Sterritt) 56.5; United States 58. Women (after nine races): 1, Netherlands 35; 2, France 39; 3, Sweden 57; 4, Norway 61; 5, Germany 62; 17, Great Britain (F Black, S Tidey) 92.

Windsurfing: Leading overall positions: Men (after 13 races): 1, G Morris (Aus) 60pts; 2, T Reuveny (Isr) 63; 3, J Armit (NZ) 66; 4, P Tarnowski (Pol) 66; 4, N Lyons (US) 29; 5, L van Opzeeland (Neth) 69; 8, 5 Sills (GB) 88. Women (after 14 races): 1, E Wilson (GB) 18; 2, S Kantor (Isr) 49; 3, M Maggetti (It) 70; 4, H Noesmoen (Fr) 98; 5, K Sivkova (Cz) 101.

#### Shooting

Women: Rifle 3 positions: Qualifying 1, S Maddalena (US) 593; 4pts; 2, Zhang Qianguye (China)

593-40; 3, C Leone (Switz) 592-29; 12, S McIntosh (GB) 586-38.

#### Swimming

Leading positions: Men: Freestyle: 50m: Heat 6 1, T Fannon (Ire) 21:79sec; 2, J Hribar (Cro) 22:08; 3, M Schreuders (Aru) 22:14; 4, A Cohoon (GB) 22:31. Heat 9 1, B Proud (GB) 21:70; 2, B Armbruster (US) 21:86; 3, J Liendo (Can) 21:92. Semi-final 2 equal 1, C McEvoy (Aus) and Proud 21:38; 2, L Deplano (It) 21:50.

individual medley: 200m: Heat 31, D Scott (GB) 1min 57:77sec; 2, L Marchand (Fr) 1:57:86; 3, A Razzetti (It) 1:58:00. Heat 4 1, D Seto (Japan) 1:57:48; 2, S Casas (US) 1:58:04; 3, Wang Shun (China) 1:58:09; 4, T Dean (GB) 1:58:30. Semi-final 11, C Foster (US) 1:56:37; 2, Scott 1:56:49; 3, Foster 1:56:54; 4, Dean 1:56:92. Women: Freestyle: 4x200m relay: Heat 11, United States 7:52.72; 2, Brazil 7:52.81; 3, Great Britain (F Anderson, A Wood, L Hope, M Harris) 7:53:49. Final 1, Australia (M O'Callaghan, L Pallister, B Throssell, A Timmus) 7:38:08; 2, United States (C Weinstein, P Madden, K Leducky, E Gemmell) 7:40:86; 3, China (Yang Junxuan, Li Bingjie, Ge Chutong, Liu Yaxin) 7:42:34; 5, Britain (F Constance Colbert, Wood, 2:22:57; Anderson, Hope) 7:48:23. Backstroke: 200m: Heat 2 1, K Masse (Can) 2:08:54; 2, H Osrin (GB) 2:09:57; 3, E Szabo-Feltholy (Hun) 2:09:72. Heat 4 1, K McKeown (Aus) 2:09:89; 2, P Bacon (US) 2:09:00; 3, E Terebo (Fr) 2:09:66; 5, K Shanahan (GB) 2:09:52. Semi-final 2 1, McKeown 2:07:57; 2, Osrin 2:07:84; 3, Peng Xuwei (China) 2:07:86; 4, Shanahan 2:08:52. Buterfly: 200m: Final 1, S McIntosh (Can) 2:03:03; 2, R Smith (US) 2:03:84; 3, Zhang Yufei (China) 2:05:09; 8, L Stephens (GB) 2:08:82.

#### Tennis

Quarter-finals: Men: Doubles United States (T Fritz and T Paul) bt Great Britain (A Murray and D Evans) 6-2, 6-4. Mixed doubles Italy (S Errani and J Paolini) bt Great Britain (H Watson and K Boulter) 6-3, 6-1.

## Sport Paris Olympics 2024

## Boxer who ended fight early not

IOC's insane desire for inclusivity endangered Italian but also exposes her opponent to untold harm, writes Owen Slot

The Olympic Games has failed heinously in its duty of care to its athletes. The scandal that has unfolded in the boxing ring has reaped a damage upon two of its competitors that cannot be measured.

There were two boxers who suffered in the ring at the Paris North Arena. One was Italy's Angela Carini, who was placed in extreme danger. The other was Algeria's Imane Khelif, whose biological sex is now the subject for open discussion on the biggest stage in the sporting world.

One has been in genuine physical danger. The other has been laid open to a kind of global humiliation. It is insane that this has been allowed to happen.

It is not as though this boxing scandal hadn't been flagged up to the IOC, yet the governing body ignored all the red flags and allowed these two competitors to share a ring. The IOC has failed utterly in its responsibility to look after them.

The IOC "seeks to promote a safe and welcoming environment for everyone involved in elite-level competition". That is a quote from a governance document it released 2½ years ago. It has not stood by these intentions.

The IOC also seeks to provide fair competition. Fair competition becomes obviously flawed with doping scandals that are, mostly, out of its control. However, in this case, which the IOC does control, it appears that it has actually promoted the unfairness of the contest. It has seen this coming and failed to take appropriate action.

That it involves a boxing contest, in which the athletes' physical safety is paramount, is why it is particularly appalling.

Khelif had already failed a gender eligibility test at the World Championships in Delhi last year. Another boxer, Lin Yu-ting, of Chinese Taipei, who is due to fight today, also failed a gender eligibility test. Both were disqualified from those World Championships. The IOC has banned the IBA, the boxing authority that ran that event, because it has lost its credibility as a governing body. However, it is inexcusable that the IOC would then overlook the findings of these gender eligibility tests.

This terrible oversight led to the farce in the ring yesterday for two athletes whose competitive lives have been dedicated to performing at the Paris Games. Carini is now out of a competition in which it seems she never had a chance. Khelif is being held up as the villain of the piece, but is simultaneously having her gender being picked over by the world's media.

How can the IOC have been so unutterably foolish? The answer, it seems, lies in its obsession with inclusivity, which is, of course, a right and admirable concept. However, it

had attempted to be inclusive towards a number of Russian athletes, for instance, who have been invited here to compete as neutrals, but it soon transpired that two thirds of those Russians had violated the eligibility rules by expressing support for the invasion of Ukraine or by having links to the military.

In other words, good intentions, poor process, negative outcome. That is exactly what we have seen here with the boxing, except that the stakes are so much higher.

In retrospect we could argue that Khelif should have withdrawn from the Olympics after her disqualification from Delhi. However, huge decisions such as these should not be left to the young, ambitious athletes, especially in this situation when Khelif will never have wanted to accept the judgment handed down in Delhi.

It is the governing body — in this case the IOC — that should be doing exactly that: governing. Sometimes hard decisions are hard when you are promoting inclusivity. This one should have been easy.

The boxing scandal will now dominate the next few days of these Olympics, and so it should unless the IOC takes immediate action. In a statement released yesterday evening the governing body said it had no intention of taking any quick action. However, the immediate priority has to be to remove Khelif and Yu ting from the Olympic competition. That is harsh on the pair of them but it is nevertheless the only course of action. The outcome of the 46 seconds that Khelif required to launch two punches into Carina's face made that abundantly clear.

This course of action would also make a statement about the fairness of the competition that the IOC likes to promote. If you believe in fair competition — fair sport for biological females in this case — then you have to put hard decisions before lofty ideals. In the process it would also be showing a greater duty of care to athletes, like Khelif, whose gender eligibility has been found to stand against them.

I recall being there in person when the Caster Semenya situation became public at the World Athletics Championships in Berlin in 2009. On the one hand, there were the best female middle-distance runners in the world being denied the right to fair competition because it would be later confirmed that they had been competing against a DSD (difference in sex development) athlete. On the other, you had Semenya herself, a teenager whose gender was suddenly global headline news. Truly heartbreaking. Everyone loses here.

Here it is happening again. The difference on this occasion, of course, is that you are throwing in physical danger too.

It is madness that the IOC has allowed this problem to arise. It needs to act immediately to prevent the damage to sport, the Games and its competitors from escalating any further.

## INSIDE

I had to act to save my life, says distraught boxer  
Page 3



# the only victim

MOHD RASFAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Carini was emotional, inset left, after stopping her fight with Khelif after only 46 seconds, below left. She had suffered two heavy blows from her opponent, main, that left her on her knees, below centre. Khelif was declared the victor, below right



## Q&A

**How has the IOC got itself into this position of allowing Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting to compete despite them being disqualified from the World Championships?**

The IOC usually leaves eligibility to sports' international federations; however, it does not recognise any world governing body for boxing at the moment (Martyn Ziegler writes). That means that the IOC is running the Olympic boxing competition and is using the same eligibility rules that it applied back in 2016.

Just about every international federation has updated its gender eligibility regulations since then, but the IOC has not. The issue is seen as particularly controversial in boxing because there is a safety element to consider. If the two boxers have differences of sexual development (DSD) where they were raised as girls but have male chromosomes and male testosterone levels, then under the IOC's rules there is nothing to stop them competing in women's competition. Some sports' governing bodies, such as World Athletics, now require DSD athletes to have reduced testosterone.

**Is this case anything to do with transgender athletes?**

No — the two boxers involved were raised as girls from birth, rather than transitioning.

**What do we know about how the boxers were disqualified last year?**

The International Boxing Association (IBA), the governing body that ran the World Championships in New Delhi last year, issued a statement this week saying the athletes "did not undergo a testosterone examination but were subject to a separate and recognised test, whereby the specifics remain confidential". It added that the test "conclusively indicated that both athletes did not meet the required necessary eligibility criteria and were found to have competitive advantages over other female competitors".

The IBA's Russian president, Umar Kremlev, told TASS news agency that the pair had taken DNA tests and had male chromosomes. He said: "According to the results of DNA tests, it was proved that they have XY chromosomes. Such athletes were excluded from the competition."

The background to that World Championships included the IBA disregarding IOC recommendations and allowing Russian fighters to compete under the Russian flag. It was noted that Algeria's Khelif was disqualified only after defeating the Russian boxer Azalia Amineva.

**What will happen for LA 2028?**

The IOC has said boxing needs to have a recognised international federation for the sport to remain for 2028. It seems most likely that World Boxing, which was set up by the British, American and Dutch federations among others after they left the IBA, will secure that recognition. The IOC president's spokesman, Mark Adams, said this week: "One can speculate that they may look at the rules if there is a new federation."

# Scepticism over 'mind-blowing' world record

Craig Lord Paris

Not since the days of Johnny "Tarzan" Weissmuller in 1928 has there been another 100m freestyle Olympic title won by more than a second. The average margin of victory in this blue-riband event is 0.3 seconds. On Wednesday night at La Défense Arena, Pan Zhanle cruised home by a body length, 1.08sec clear of the Australian Kyle Chalmers in second.

In a pool generally considered to be slow, the 19-year-old from China set a world record of 46.40, more than 0.4 faster than his mark from earlier this year. A swimming world reeling from revelations of Chinese doping cases that went unreported between 2016 and 2022 has met this achievement with scepticism.

Michael Phelps, the American who won 23 Olympic golds and is now commenting for NBC, was in disbelief. "That is mind-blowing for me," he said. "I've never seen a win by that margin in that race. And to go 46.4 — that's unheard of. To be that much closer to going 45 seconds in a 100 freestyle, I can't understand that, I really can't."

He is not alone. The Australia sprint coach Brett Hawke could barely contain himself. "You don't beat those guys by one full body length in the 100 freestyle," he told News Corp. "That's not humanly possible, OK, so don't sell it to me, don't shove it down my throat. It's not real."

But it is. The 2016 champion, Chalmers, in second, and the third-placed Romanian, David Popovici — who had previously held the world record at 46.86, before Pan surged into uncharted waters this season — were made to look like club swimmers who had wandered into the wrong gala.

Pan's halfway split of 22.28 would have won a medal in the 50m dash at every Olympics up to Atlanta 1996. Had Pan simply hit the turn wall with his hand — as he would in a straight 50m race — rather than his feet, he would have been good enough to make any 50m podium in history. No one had come close to doing that and then belting back to the 100m wall in 24.12.

No other finalist on Wednesday was close to their best time, reflecting a pattern in the Paris pool. At only 2.15m deep, compared with 3m at the previous four Games, the shallower pool leads to more turbulence. The higher the turbulence, the slower the times. Not for Pan. Stunning though Léon Marchand's achievements in Paris have been, he has not set a world record. Neither has the Australian backstroke ace Kaylee McKeown, nor the Canadian teen sensation Summer McIntosh. On this form, in a 3m pool, Pan might have challenged the 46-second barrier.

After Marchand had missed his own world record in the 400m medley for his first gold last weekend, his coach, Bob Bowman — a mentor to Phelps — pulled a face. "If you're looking at the average times," he said, "a world record here would be very outstanding."

At the turn, most in the Paris pool thought Pan had blown it. It seemed way too fast. The closest thing to it in history was Popovici's 46.86 world record — 22.74 out, 24.12 home. At 22.23, surely Pan would fade. Chalmers on 23.03 was in last place at the turn; Popovici, on 22.94, was seventh. Instead he stretched away, returning in



Pan, right, won the 100m freestyle gold with ease, 1.08sec clear of second place

24.12, compared with Chalmers on 24.45 and Popovici on 24.55.

When a Chinese journalist asked Pan on Wednesday how he had held his speed, he scoffed. "I always have a fast second length," he said. And yet, since the World Aquatics Championships a year ago, when he finished fourth in an Asian record of 47.43, he has improved by more than a second.

There is no suggestion of wrongdoing. The context to this performance, though, is responsible for the scepticism. In April, it was revealed that 23 Chinese swimmers had returned 28 positive tests for the banned heart medication trimetazidine.

The 23, including 13 of those in Paris, were cleared on the grounds of mass contamination, identified by Chinese authorities ten weeks after the swimmers had stayed there. Pan was not one of those cases.

The World Anti-Doping Agency has acknowledged that it was unable to run any independent investigations at the time because of Covid lockdowns. Nevertheless, it accepted the decision of the Chinese agency Chinada to stamp the cases as "no fault" and "confidential".

World Aquatics responded to the crisis by asking the independent International Testing Agency to step up the numbers of tests and to target-test the Chinese on the way to Paris. Pan said that he was tested 27 times last year and on 21 occasions this July alone.

In the pool this week China have been inconsistent. Many Chinese swimmers have raced much slower than their entry times, including Pan in the 200m freestyle when he did not make it out of the heats, some five seconds outside his best. And we have seen slowdowns before from Chinese teams courting controversy.

At the 1998 World Championships, waves of title and medal hopes flopped in morning heats. That came soon after four positive tests on a team already rocked by the seizure of 13 vials of human growth hormone in the kitbag of the swimmer Yuan Yuan, described by customs officers in Sydney as "enough to feed an army for a fortnight".

Speaking alongside Pan after the final, Popovici said that times were not as important as "all of us racing and promoting clean sport". It was unclear whether Pan, who spoke only in Chinese, understood.

But soon after he interrupted the Romanian and stood up. "I want to go now," he said to his entourage. They walked out as Popovici was still talking. Today Pan returns in the medley relays.

## Sport Paris Olympics 2024

# Knight with the biggest heart goes out on his shield

James Gheerbrant

Paris



So this is how it ends: not with a final, one last chance of glory, the Union Jack waiting to be run up a flagpole, but with a straight-sets defeat in fading light on a half-empty Court Suzanne Lenglen; with Andy Murray still chuntering, shaking his fist at the sky, staring down the barrel, saving a match point, refusing to accept it was over until, finally, it was. The brink of glory was a place he came to know well, a place which sometimes brought out the champion in Murray, sometimes the tearful statesman.

But it was the cusp of defeat where the real Murray came alive: defying, denying, drawing on all his powers of resilience and bloody-mindedness, and so it felt fitting that his final minutes as a professional tennis player were spent there: in the hurt locker, the hard yards, the shadow of the lost cause. It was the place he knew best, and which became him like no other.

At Wimbledon a few weeks ago, Murray had what other men might have chosen as the perfect, choreographed fond farewell. Instead, he put himself on the line for one last shot at winning another medal for his country, and came up short. Murray always understood that in order to achieve anything worth achieving in this sport, you had to be prepared to feel not only pain and disappointment, but incompleteness. It was a bargain he made time and again, unflinchingly, over two decades, in what was perhaps the best, most admirable British sporting career of the 21st century, and certainly the one which became most interwoven with the fabric of our collective national life.

That career will not end in a miracle or a fairytale. The history books will record that after 20 years, 1,176 matches, three grand-slam titles, two gold medals, tens of thousands of miles and more

## Andy Murray: the final score

Singles win-loss 739-263  
Doubles win-loss 81-86  
Total prize money £50.5m  
Career high rank 1  
Grand-slam titles 3 (US Open 2012, Wimbledon 2013, 2016)  
ATP Masters victories 14  
Total titles 46  
Total Tour singles matches 1,001

swear words than the entire Quentin Tarantino oeuvre, Murray's final match as a professional tennis player saw him and Dan Evans soundly beaten in the Olympic quarter-final by Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul, the third seeds.

In truth, it was a match which was only ever going one way. The Americans were more dialled-in from the start, and played with the flex and snap of younger men. Murray and Evans never recovered from each dropping serve in their opening games in the first set, and



Never even liked tennis anyway.

9:57 PM · Aug 1, 2024 · 2.5M Views

## Murray had a typically dry response to the end of his tennis career on X

the second followed a similar pattern, with the British pair again finding themselves a double break in arrears before they had got started. It had been a strangely flat occasion, the force of the crowd not really activated, until the moment when Murray and Evans went to their chair 5-2 down in the second set, knowing that the Americans would serve for the match in the next game.

"We looked at each other and said, 'This really would be madness,'" Evans said.

And madness was what followed.

Murray saved a match point with a slamming overhead. Three break points came, lifting the crowd to their feet, and went. At deuce, the two teams played the best point of the match, one

of those miniature pantomimes of ratak volleys and pick-ups, won by Murray and Evans, carving out another break point. Again, Fritz and Paul saved it. Then Murray chiselled out another chance with a cross-court winner, Fritz missed an overhead to give up the break, Evans rattled through his next service game, and briefly we dared to believe in the impossible again.

Murray's was a career of three distinct phases. For the first and longest of them, he was Sisypheus, rolling that enormous boulder of hope and expectation all the way to the mountaintop. For a while, but not long enough, Murray was able to divest himself of that weight as he rested at the peak of the game. Ever since, he has been on the downslope of his career, with the boulder chasing him, the rolling stone of time and accumulated pain that no athlete can ever outrun for ever.

Afterwards, Murray spoke, as always, in that slightly raspy, level monotone, with total, scrupulous honesty. "Pain-wise, I feel bad," he said. "The discomfort in my body is not good, and that's why I'm happy to be finishing." Murray had surgery on his back a few weeks ago. "[I was told that] if the cyst continues to grow it turns into an emergency situation where you can't control your bladder and lose control of your other leg. That was when I knew it was time."

Murray's struggle with physical disrepair has run in parallel with his career. He went to war on his body, so that his body could go to war on his behalf. In the 2012 US Open final, his first grand slam win, he played with two black toenails. He now has a hip made of cobalt and chromium. In March, he ruptured two ligaments in his ankle. All the while he has been playing this game, pieces of Andy Murray have been degrading, falling off.

And yet the more the game diminished him physically, the more it enlarged his stature in our mind's eye. As we saw him rage against the ravages of time and the attrition of his sport, our appreciation of him deepened.

It felt fitting that it was here, in the cradle of sport, in the crucible of pure endeavour, that Murray went out on his shield. Wimbledon is the place with which he will be indelibly associated, but in truth Murray always felt of a different substance from the Panama hats, garden-party politesse and delicate sensibilities of SW19. It was a place which grew to love him, where he came gradually to feel at home.

At the Olympics, the love, the sense of finding his place in the world, being among his own tribe, was there from the start. "I've loved living in the village," Murray said, "with people from pretty much every country in the world, being around all the athletes, chatting to some amazing people... just being part of something bigger than yourself."

At the end, Murray shared a long hug with Evans, who encouraged his partner to go to the centre of the court and soak up the acclaim of the crowd, which he did, with tears in his eyes and the Olympic rings over his shoulder. Then he turned, and with that, the youngest knight bade his long goodnight.



Murray came alive on the cusp of defeat, as he's done so many times during his

## Even as they read

This felt like a fitting way for curtain to come down on a tennis career that defied credulity, writes Matthew Syed

It was an emotional ending and we're all disappointed to see him go but I can't help thinking that this was the perfect way for Andy Murray to end his sparkling career: fighting against the odds, saving match points, daring to believe when nobody else did; not unlike the Black Knight in *Monty Python*.

"It's only a flesh wound," he seemed to say, when the opening-round match against Japan's Taro Daniel and Kei Nishikori was — to everyone else — terminal. Confronting five match points, he was still up for it, still believing, still encouraging Dan Evans, his equally heroic partner. The same happened in the second round when they saved two more match

points as the audience whooped and fans back home starting singing at full volume, "I believe in miracles, I believe in miracles!" — or was that just me?

Yesterday's quarter-final against the USA pair of Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul was, to be frank, a step too far — the two Americans have been in fine fettle this year and came through in straight sets — but the defeat took nothing away from the Murray swansong.

I've watched him win grand-slam titles and Olympic gold medals, but I'm not sure he has ever looked more inspirational than when snarling "come on" while being outplayed, along with his partner, in almost every department but still fighting like hell.

I guess we've all thought of Dylan Thomas's line about "rage against the dying of the light" these past few days, but I also found myself contemplating the line from Christ in the Gospel of Matthew: "All things are possible to him who believes."

I remember interviewing a young Murray at a museum in Scotland in



Murray gets a hug from Evans in what would be his final competitive match

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER MARC ASPLAND



career, but his powers of resilience weren't enough to turn things around against Fritz and Paul, the No 3 seeds from the US

# the last rites, he still believed

**Leading medals table**

	G	S	B	Total
1 China	11	7	5	24
2 United States	9	15	13	37
3 France	8	11	8	27
4 Australia	8	6	4	18
5 Japan	8	3	5	16
6 Great Britain	6	7	7	20
7 South Korea	6	3	3	12
8 Italy	5	7	4	16
9 Canada	3	2	3	8
10 Germany	2	2	2	6

front of a live audience after he'd lost a succession of grand-slam finals and I made the mistake of speculating: "I suppose it's possible you'll never take the final step." He fixed me with those grey eyes: "I will win a grand-slam," he said. "I will!"

It's perhaps also fitting that Murray bows out the night after Rafael Nadal, against whom he vied so often and so thrillingly. Nobody — not even a proud Scot — would begin to compare Murray's achievements with those of the Spaniard or, for that

matter, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. The concept of the "big four" was always rather absurd, and uniquely British. But it is worth remembering that there was a short period when Murray vied on equal terms with the golden triumvirate, reaching world No 1 and defeating a peak Djokovic in two grand-slam finals. Those were halcyon days.

Many have worried that a pall would be cast over the game when this generation retired and, to be candid, it may never be the same.

I'm not sure there has been a sport in which the top three players in history, along with a wonderful supporting cast, competed across a full decade and a half in a succession of matches that featured not just fierce competitiveness but also exemplary sportsmanship. Yet the good news is that there is an emerging frisson emanating not only from Carlos Alcaraz but also Jannik Sinner, who I suspect will grow into player of huge stature (sadly he is not in Paris owing to tonsillitis).

But what to say of Murray? Perhaps the most fitting tribute is to describe

the eighth game of yesterday's second set. The Britons, having been blasted off the court 6-2 in the first set, were down 5-2. They hadn't come close to breaking serve and the commentators were, like priests, reading the last rites. But even after all these years, all these comebacks, they hadn't counted on tennis's Lazarus, dancing on the baseline, marshalling his spirit, mouthing words of encouragement to Evans as they faced yet another match point.

Against all odds, all logic, all expectation, they managed to break, with one of the deuce rallies involving multiple volleys, ground strokes, snarls, screams — a point so epic that Tolstoy could have written a novel about it.

The Britons ultimately lost the set 6-4 and the great Scot shed tears as he walked into the middle of arena to acknowledge the ovation of the audience and his opponents (a nice touch), and a now weeping Evans. Somehow, I couldn't help thinking, it was the perfect bookend for a remarkable, redoubtable, credulity-defying career.

## Your guide to day seven

### GOLDS UP FOR GRABS 23

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
**Diving** Men's synchronised 3m springboard, featuring Jack Laugher and Anthony Harding  
**Rowing** Men's pairs final (10.30am) and women's lightweight double sculls final (11.22am)  
**Swimming** Men's 200m individual medley final, featuring Duncan Scott and Léon Marchand

**WITH YOUR BREAKFAST**  
 The track and field athletics get under way at the Stade de France, with the men's decathlon 100m the opening event just after 9am. Josh Kerr is expected to take to the start line in his 1,500m heat from 10.05am, while the first round of the women's 100m is to start from 10.50am. The coxless pairs finals will start from 9.40am, with world silver medallists Oliver Wynne-Griffith and Tom George among the men's favourites. The lightweight double sculls medals will also be decided from 10am, where Emily Craig and Imogen Grant are reigning women's world champions. The men's synchronised 3m springboard final starts at 10am, with Jack Laugher and Anthony Harding out to dislodge



Page will compete in the women's trampolines final

the Chinese champions Long Daoyi and Wang Zongyuan. The women's 50m rifle final starts at 8.30am, while the second round of the men's golf begins at 9am.

**WITH YOUR LUNCH**  
 Play over at Roland-Garros starts at 11am as the men's singles reaches the semi-final stage, while the women's bronze-medal final rounds off the day. Bryony Page and Izzy Songhurst will be in action in the women's trampolines final from 12.50pm. The men's and women's windsurfing medals will be decided, with Sam Sills and Emma Wilson the British hopefuls, and the mixed team archery is into its final rounds. The table tennis singles is also down to its final four, while the pick of the swimming heats is the women's 200m individual

medley, the women's 800m freestyle, and the mixed 4x100m relay.

**INTO THE EVENING**  
 The men's 10,000m final is the showpiece athletics event at 8.20pm. Before then, Team GB play their final group game against Germany in the men's hockey at 7.15pm. The finals of the BMX racing will begin at 8.35pm, featuring Beth Shriever and Kye Whyte. In the men's 200m individual medley final, Duncan Scott will be pitted against the home favourite Léon Marchand. That is scheduled for 7.50pm, after the men's 50m freestyle and women's 200m backstroke finals.

**GLOBAL STARS**  
 Teddy Riner, at 6ft 8in, is one of the host nation's most recognised athletes and he will be among the favourites in the men's +100kg judo.

### TODAY'S ACTION IN FULL (TEAM GB INVOLVEMENT IN BLUE)

- Archery**  
Mixed team: 8.30am 1/8 round. 1.15pm Quarter-finals. 2.31 Semi-finals. 3.24 Bronze medal match. 3.43 Gold medal match.
- Athletics**  
9.05am Men's decathlon 100m. 9.10 Men's hammer qualification group A. 9.15 Women's high jump qualification. 9.35 Women's 100m preliminaries. 9.55 Men's decathlon long jump. 10.05 Men's 1,500m first round. 10.35 Men's hammer qualification group B. 10.50 Women's 100m first round. 11.15 Men's decathlon shot put. 5pm Men's decathlon high jump. 5.10 Women's 500m first round. 5.15 Women's triple jump qualification. 5.55 Women's discus qualification group A. 6.10 4x400m mixed relay first round. 6.45 Women's 800m first round. 7.10 Men's shot put qualification. 7.20 Women's discus qualification group B. 7.50 Men's decathlon 400m. 8.20 Men's 10,000m final.
- Badminton**  
7.30am Women's doubles semi-finals. 9.50 Men's doubles semi-finals. 2pm Mixed doubles bronze medal match. 3.10 Gold medal match. Men's singles quarter-finals from 4.40.
- Basketball**  
10am and 8pm men's group B. 12.30 and 4.15 men's group A.
- Basketball 3x3**  
Men's and women's pool rounds from 8am.
- Beach volleyball**  
Men's and women's preliminary matches from 8am.
- Boxing**  
2.30pm Women's 57kg round of 32. 3.34 Men's 51kg quarter-finals. 4.06 Men's 80kg quarter-finals. 4.38 Men's +92kg quarter-finals. 7.04 Women's 57kg round of 16. 8.04 Men's 51kg quarter-finals. 8.36 Men's 80kg quarter-finals. 9.08 Men's +92kg quarter-finals.
- Canoing — slalom**  
Kayak cross: time-trials. 2.30 women. 3.40 men.
- Cycling — BMX racing**  
Men's and women's semi-finals from 7pm. 8.35 Men's final. 8.50 Women's final.
- Diving**  
10am Men's synchronised 3m springboard final.
- Equestrian**  
1pm Jumping team final.
- Fencing**  
12.30pm Men's team épée table of 8. 2pm Classifications 5-8. 2.50 Semi-finals. 3.40 Placement 5-6, 7-8. 6.30 Bronze medal match. 7.30 Gold medal match.
- Football**  
Men's quarter-finals 2pm, 4.0, 6.0, 8.0.
- Golf**  
8am Men's second round.
- Gymnastics — trampolines**  
11am Women's qualification. 12.50pm Final. 5.0 Men's qualification. 6.45 Final.
- Handball**  
Men's group B 8am, 10.0, 8pm. Group A 1.0, 3.0, 6.0.
- Hockey**  
Women's pool A 9am, 11.45. Men's pool A 9.30, 6.45, 7.15. Pool A Great Britain v Germany. Pool B 12.15, 4.0, 4.30.
- Judo**  
9am Round of 64: men +100kg; women +78kg. 9.28 Round of 32: men +100kg; women +78kg. 11.20 Round of 16: men +100kg; women +78kg. 12.16 quarter-finals: men +100kg; women +78kg. 3.0 Women +78kg repechage. 3.17 semi-finals. 3.34 Men +100kg repechage. 3.51 semi-finals. 4.18 Women +78kg bronze medal A. 4.28 Bronze medal B. 4.38 Final. 4.49 Men +100kg bronze medal A. 4.59 bronze medal B. 5.09 Final.
- Rowing**  
8.30 Men's single sculls final F. 8.42 Women's single sculls final F. 8.54 Men's single sculls final E. 9.06 Women's single sculls final E. 9.18 Men's single sculls final D. 9.30 Women's single sculls final D. 9.42 Men's pair final B. 9.54 Women's pair final B. 10.06 Lightweight men's double sculls final B. 10.18 Lightweight women's double sculls final B. 10.30 Men's pair final A. 10.42 Women's pair final A. 11.02 Lightweight men's double sculls final A. 11.22 Lightweight women's double sculls final A.
- Sailing**  
Dinghy men's, women's and mixed races. Windsurfing men's and women's quarter-finals, semi-finals and final.
- Shooting**  
8am Men's skeet qualification. 8am 25m women's pistol precision qualification. 8.30 Women's 50m rifle 3 positions final.
- Swimming**  
10am Heats: men's 100m butterfly; women's 200m individual medley; women's 800m freestyle; mixed 4x100m medley relay. 7.30 Men's 50m freestyle final. 7.39 Women's 200m backstroke final. 7.49 Men's 200m individual medley final. 8.09 Men's 100m butterfly semi-finals. 8.34 Women's 200m individual medley semi-finals.
- Table tennis**  
Men's and women's singles semi-finals from 9am.
- Tennis**  
11am Men's singles semi-final; women's singles bronze medal match; men's doubles bronze medal match; mixed doubles bronze medal match. 6pm Men's singles semi-final; mixed doubles gold medal match.
- Volleyball**  
Men's preliminaries from 8am.
- Water polo**  
Women's group A 1pm, 7.05. Group B 2.35, 5.30.

# Sport

## Owen Slot

IOC has failed in duty of care to boxers at heart of row  
Pages 60-61



## Biles rules supreme

Legend wins all-around title with dazzling display  
Page 59



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER MARK ASPLAND

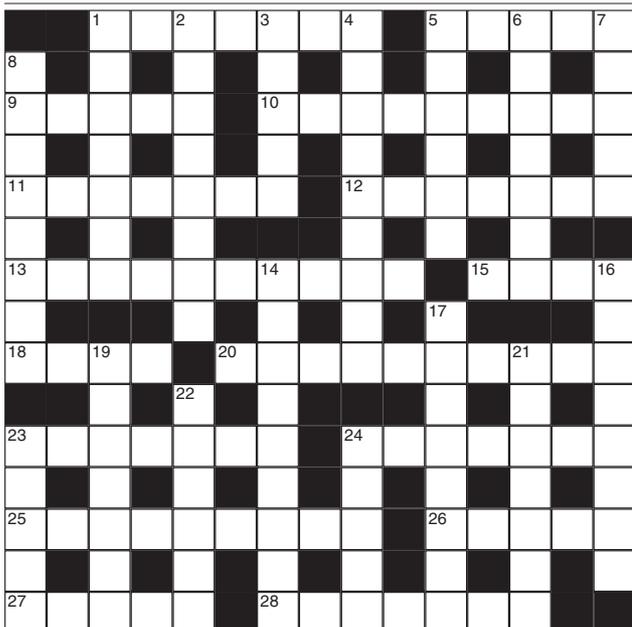


# Goodbye, Andy

Murray's farewell tour comes to an end in Paris (but not without a fight)

James Gheerbrant and Matthew Syed, pages 62-63

## Times Crossword 28,985



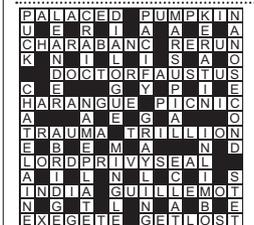
### ACROSS

- 1 The greatest Abba hit, a children's favourite? (3,4)
- 5 Novelist's irritation loudly expressed (5)
- 9 Odds you might be given about English workers being framed? (3,2)
- 10 One watching language in vehicle carrying a communist west (9)
- 11 A couple of Conservatives exploited the defendant (7)
- 12 Controversial test, one welcomed by Apple consumer (7)
- 13 Naive assembly that's full of hot air? (10)
- 15 Went back, being lost? (4)
- 18 A second spasm, might one say? (4)
- 20 Supporter providing free can of beer? About time! (10)
- 23 Almost all university students — about 1000 — graduate (7)
- 24 Claim papers concealing government department's U-turn (7)
- 25 Get involved, teen cried out (9)
- 26 Picture of cricket, perhaps, Charlie ignored (5)
- 27 Battlefield tree stripped bare (5)
- 28 Loser having grand time? It creates resentment (7)

### DOWN

- 1 This could be a feature in Daily Express (7)
- 2 Striking statement by a model? (8)
- 3 Cockney injured but ready to fight (5)
- 4 Who will receive unfinished speech on bishop's responsibility? (9)
- 5 Mark time (6)
- 6 Seated thus on horse I stared around (7)
- 7 Book's heroine enthralling one in high position (5)
- 8 Key language a bit of a mouthful? (8)
- 14 Treasurer's problem concerning specific objective (9)
- 16 Aggrieved parties getting hold of a scrounger (8)
- 17 Woman related to Charles I? (8)
- 19 Grumble about watch (7)
- 21 Eritrea's onslaught providing cover for rebellion (7)
- 22 Briefly a way in for this painter (6)
- 23 Goodwill expressed by woman visiting relations? On the contrary (5)
- 24 Fraud will be prosecuted, did you say? (5)

### Yesterday's solution 28,984



Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

### Newspapers support recycling

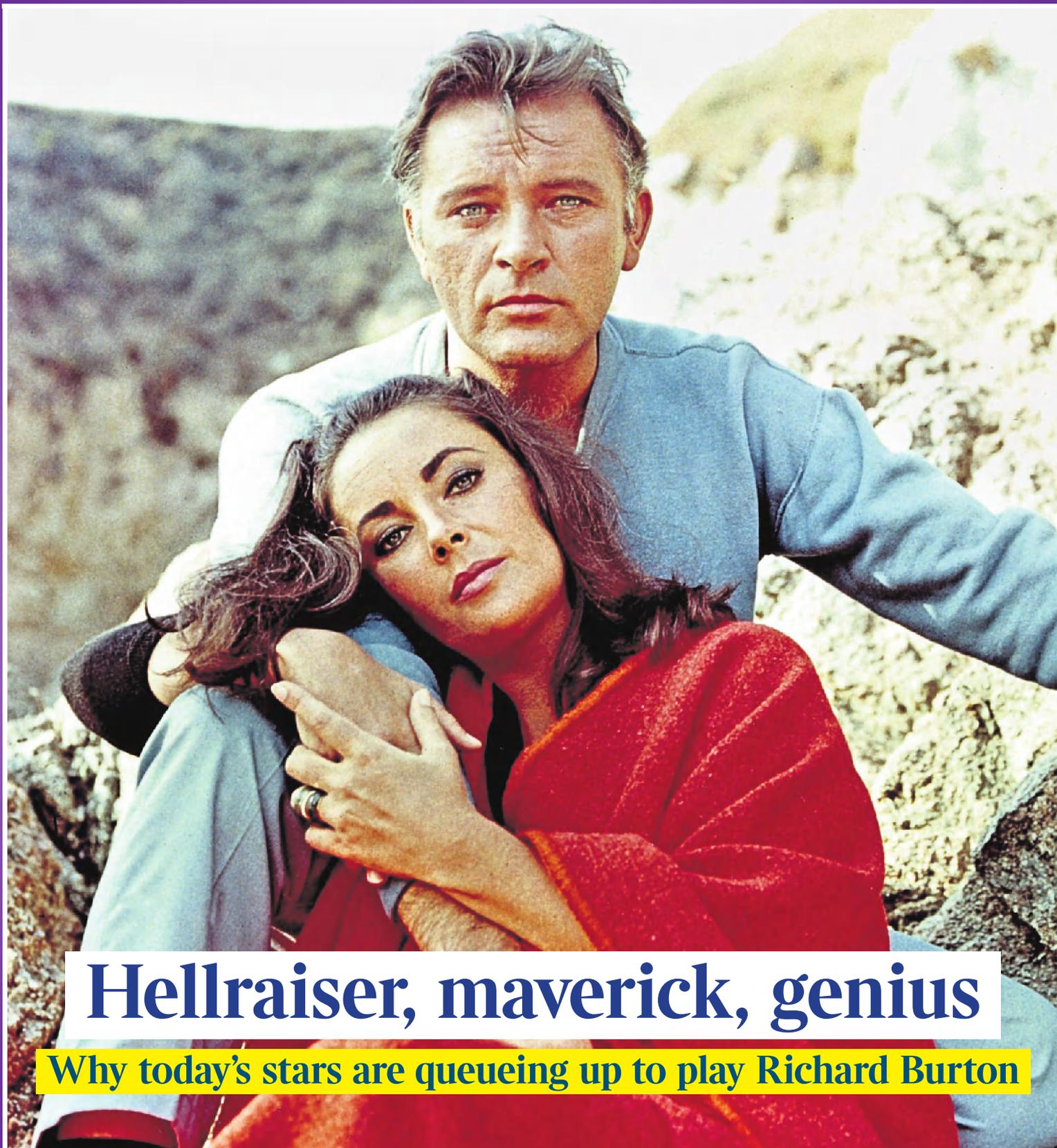
The recycled paper content of UK newspapers in 2023 was 45.5%



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# 2 ARTS



## Hellraiser, maverick, genius

Why today's stars are queueing up to play Richard Burton

## the arts column

## Clive Aslet

Angela Rayner doesn't know what a 'beautiful' building is. She should visit Siena



Oh dear, how sad. Since the dawn of time people have been trying to beautify their surroundings. Alas, Angela Rayner this week abandoned this noble ambition. She has deleted "beautiful" as a planning requirement for being too subjective a concept. In an interview with Jeremy Vine she explained: "Beautiful means nothing, really — it means one thing to one person and another thing to another."

Admittedly the Tories only cottoned on to beauty in 2019, when they established the Building Better, Building Beautiful (BBBB) commission to find out what it was. Still, better for them to have come late to the party than not at all.

Beauty is supposed to be in the eye of the beholder, meaning that we all like different things. But that is not really the case with architecture. If it were, a mansion in Belgravia would not sell for many multiples of a flat in a high-rise block built in the 1960s, many of which have now been demolished. Most people like the same things. They prefer leafy streets, broad pavements, houses with front doors — architecture that is familiar and easily understood — to Corbusian towers, whose lifts probably don't work, set in a wasteland roamed by bored youth.

All right, I am not stating the comparison fairly, but there's a point. Materials such as brick, stone and wood weather attractively and seem friendlier to humans than acres of stained and spalling concrete. Some of the best social housing projects are now paragons of carefully chosen brickwork: congratulations to Al-Jawad Pike, whose infill terrace of Chowdhury Walk in Hackney, east London, was this week shortlisted for the Stirling prize.

This can be demonstrated. WFH has highlighted the commonality of values. As exhibit A, I give you Cumbernauld New Town in Lanarkshire. Hurry to see it because the brutalist town centre, completed in 1967, is scheduled for demolition. It is "very dire" — not my verdict but that of a local resident writing on Mumsnet. At a time of national housing shortage, a whole street of slum dwellings has been compulsorily purchased by the council to tear down.

Exhibit B is practically any university town or cathedral city. In the digital age, many workers can choose where they live and



Architectural ideal: Siena

consequently they are piling into places such as Cambridge, which not only has good state schools but King's College chapel, lots of green space and the bicycle as its preferred mode of transport.

Siena is also dreamy. When the Blair government was worried about where to put all the new housing that was desperately needed, it commissioned the grooviest architect it could think of, Richard Rogers, to chair a task force into the problem. Half Italian, Rogers recommended building new settlements on the model of Tuscan hill towns — strangely, there was barely a wafer to put between his ideal and that

“Our deepest instincts favour old buildings

of King Charles, then Prince of Wales, despite them occupying opposite ends of the architectural spectrum. But that was a quarter of a century ago and what has happened since then, beyond the near-completion of the Duchy of Cornwall's Poundbury? There still aren't enough houses being built.

To class warriors, this may sound bouji. I don't believe that it is. Aesthetic appreciation crosses the divide. Our deepest instincts favour old buildings. This can be traced to the aesthetic tastes of the Georgian aristocracy with their love of ruins in landscape parks. Then came the Industrial Revolution, whose consequences were so terrible that John Ruskin devised a social philosophy dedicated to recapturing an idealised Middle Ages.

Ruskin, a romantic Tory, begat William Morris, the ardent socialist who founded the Arts

and Crafts movement. These are very British tastes. How many modern architects live in Georgian or Victorian terraced homes? A lot. Roger Scruton, the philosopher of aesthetics who first chaired the BBBB commission, thought that these instincts were in fact hard-wired into human nature, which explains why children, when asked to draw a house, invariably produce a box with a roof, a central front door and symmetrically placed windows. His thinking has been carried forward by Create Streets, founded by his successor at the BBBB, Nicholas Boys Smith.

Intriguingly, they helped Rayner to prepare her vision of what building could look like under the Labour government — streets with mansion blocks and pavement cafés. Pretty nice, most of us might agree, although the planning principles — everything needful within walking distance, cars taking second place — are more important than style.

I suspect modern buildings also evoke similar responses from a majority of the population. Thumbs up to everything around King's Cross station, including the Stirling prize-nominated Google headquarters by Thomas Heatherwick, because it's cool and elegant; thumbs down to the Walkie Talkie in the City of London because it is outsized and crass. The Elizabeth Line, also on the Stirling prize shortlist, is as popular with the public as the great Victorian termini such as St Pancras, an old building brilliantly revamped in 2007 as a creative union of old and new.

Where the Tories failed in their pursuit of beauty was in implementation. They created independent design panels to vet the planning system, adding another level of bureaucracy — a dreadful idea. Better to introduce design codes based on a study of the vernacular in every local authority area. In housing this won't cramp the architect's style because volume house builders don't employ architects (at least not creative ones). Georgian Bloomsbury, Bath, Edinburgh's New Town — all are recognised as triumphs of town planning yet depend on a simple repetition of elements any good builder could emulate. Codify their essence and transmute it into the next revision of the national planning policy framework. We really could achieve beauty after all.

Clive Aslet is visiting professor of architecture at the University of Cambridge. His latest book is *Sir Edwin Lutyens: Britain's Greatest Architect? (Triglyph)*. Richard Morrison is away

# I tried Anne Hathaway's dress. Can it save Gap?

The designer Zac Posen has been hired to revive the label. Will this £120 frock do it, asks Anna Murphy

If you type "white dress" into the Gap website, six come up. Five of them are entirely unremarkable. One of them will grab your attention, however. That's even if you don't know that this is a version of a dress that has had its red-carpet moment, worn by a movie star, accessorised with a seven-figure sum's worth of jewels and styled so that a matching snow-white corset peeped out from underneath. It's a long way from Gap chinos.

When Anne Hathaway shimmered in that dress in Rome in May, it went viral, and the limited numbers that were made, available in America only, sold out in six hours. Now it's for sale for the first time in this country, again as a limited edition (£120, gap.co.uk).

I got to road-test it this week. I love it. I have always been a fan of a shirtdress; would go as far as to say it is an item that every woman should have in her wardrobe, because it is just so flattering, not to mention forgiving.

That said, this one — which requires bare arms and also offers the option of what's known in the business as a leg pop, as per Hathaway — asks a lot more of its wearer than your average shirtwaister. Still, no danger of being mistaken for a nurse, which is what happened to me a couple of times when I wore a long-ago white shirtdress of more ward-appropriate sensibilities.

So, it's a great frock. But that doesn't explain why on earth Hathaway was wearing it. This is a woman who has her pick of the posh brands and, what's more, gets paid to be seen in them. The reason is because Gap's creative director is Zac Posen, the designer who was once America's most sought-after red carpet whisperer and remains one of its best-connected designers. This dress has been, as the website description underlines, "created" by the man himself.

Posen has form, in other words, plus he is a mate of Hathaway's, along with

pretty much every other American screen siren of note. It's also worth pointing out that Gap will have paid the actress at least as much as a luxury label, very possibly more given the potential tarnishing to her brand that might come from being associated with — horror — the high street.

Back in his pomp Posen, who is still only 43, made his name making women such as Kate Winslet and Glenn Close looked even more wonderful than they do anyway. He celebrated women's curves, worked with them rather than attempting to iron them out, or — even worse — only dress the growing numbers of Hollywood stars who didn't have them in the first place.

He majored in sculptural cuts, corsetry-adjacent styling and dramatic detailing. See Winslet in 2009 in a black gown with the pointed décolletage that was one of his signatures, fashion's answer to a classic Cadillac's fins. Or Close in 2012 in a forest-green fantasia of fishtail gown and matching tuxedo. Knockout.

No wonder Posen was seen by many

“This dress offers the option of a 'leg pop', as per Hathaway

as part of a renaissance of New York fashion, in the doldrums since the Donna Karan days of the 1980s and 1990s, along with similarly well-connected peers such as Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez of Proenza Schouler.

But it's hard sustaining your luxury label these days. Just ask Christopher Kane, a huge British talent, who shuttered his business last year, or *The Vampire's Wife*, which ceased operating in May. Depressingly, several other British labels are also close to the edge thanks to the demise this year of matchesfashion.com. Posen closed his namesake brand in 2019.

It's also tough at the other end of the business, the high street, as borne witness to by the recent travails of Gap. Anyone my age will remember the time when Gap was exciting, exotic even. All those lovely plain shirts — Posen's cited inspiration for this dress — all those great jeans and chinos.

ELISABETTA VILVA/GETTY IMAGES; GREY HUTTON FOR THE TIMES



**Anne Hathaway and Anna Murphy in the Gap Zac Posen dress**

When I was a teenager walking into my local store was the fashion equivalent of a long, cool drink of water — an American expression, tellingly. And then there were its advertising campaigns, consistently the smartest around by some margin, be it the clever historical mash-ups (photos of Hemingway and Dalí in chinos), or the amazing hirings: Madonna and Missy Elliott performing together in one television advert, Daft Punk roboting in matching double denim and gold helmets in another.

Gap's problem was that it got swallowed up by stuff. It became about quantity over quality. Marks & Spencer is just one example of a homegrown operation that went down the same route, and is only beginning to find its way back.

Posen has presumably been brought in as Gap's pathfinder, the aforementioned forgettability of those other five white dresses on the website an indication of how much work there is for him to do. Because the problem with a behemoth like Gap — one of the many problems — is that one viral dress doth not a brand turnaround make. And there's no word from Gap as to what — and when — he will be “creating” next.

Still, Posen is more suited to the job than the first, celebrity-spangled

entries on his CV might suggest. He was creative director of womenswear at Brooks Brothers from 2014 to 2020, another US chain that likes a button-down shirt even more than Gap does.

And his is a path that has historical precedent in the transition of Isaac Mizrahi, once another darling of the American red carpet, to working for Target, American chain number three, in the Noughties. Mizrahi's diffusion line was a huge hit with customers.

There's a big difference between a diffusion line, a circumscribed proposition, and heading up the main attraction. But if you can face me introducing American chain number four, let's factor in J Crew.

Remember its former executive creative director Jenna Lyons, she of the enormous glasses, magpie eye for jewellery and mix-it-up love of wearing denim with cocktail attire (and now, incidentally, an unlikely star of *Real Housewives of New York*)? She is proof that a bold-face aesthetic visionary can shape a creative point of difference across a mass-market fashion business. The necklace I am sporting in this photo, an old and much-loved feature of my accessories line-up, is one of hers. J Crew has yet to recover from Lyons's enforced departure in 2017.

So that dress is a good start, Zac. But what's next?

## No, Donald, Kamala did not decide to ‘turn black’

The former president's jibe at his rival is his stupidest remark yet, says Sathnam Sanghera

**L**et's face it, former president Donald Trump is responsible for some of the stupidest remarks ever uttered in the history of US politics. But he hit a new low on Wednesday when he claimed at a gathering of black journalists in Chicago that his Democratic rival, vice-president Kamala Harris, “happened to turn black” a few years ago, and that “all of a sudden, she made a turn” in her identity.

“She was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage,” he opined. “I didn't know she was black until a number of years ago, when she happened to turn black, and now she wants to be known as black. So I don't know, is she Indian or is she black?”

“I respect either one, but she obviously doesn't, because she was Indian all the way, and then all of a sudden she made a turn and she went — she became a black person. I think somebody should look into that too.”

The audience at the convention of the National Association of Black Journalists laughed, which is the only possible response. It's hard to know where to begin taking on the vapidity of it all — we should probably just ignore him, but Mother Jones, the non-profit magazine, got to the point where it reported the remarks under the headline “White man tells black journalists that his black opponent is not black”.

In America's bloody and violent history of racism, white men have long wielded the right to decide who is which race, to condemn or save them accordingly, and Trump was attempting to continue the tradition. What he didn't seem to realise is that, in the 21st century, things have changed and a white man does not get to decide whether a mixed-race person calls themselves black or Indian.

Especially a white man who, as his interlocutor Rachel Scott pointed out at the start of the interview, has pushed false claims about Barack Obama, saying he was not born in the United States; who has told four congresswomen — women of colour who were American citizens — to go back to where they came from; who has used words like “animal” to describe black district attorneys; who has attacked black journalists, calling them “losers” (saying the questions they ask are “stupid and racist”); and who has had dinner with a white supremacist at Mar-a-Lago.

The simple fact is that Kamala Harris is both black and Indian, at the same time, and it's up to her to talk about her identity however she wants to. It's certainly no secret that her mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, was born in Chennai, India, and that her father, Donald Harris, was born in Jamaica and that she attended college at Howard

University, a historically black university, in Washington DC.

It's all there in her 2019 memoir, although Donald Trump is reportedly not one for books or written words of any kind, with his former economic adviser Gary Cohn once revealing in an email that “it's worse than you can imagine ... Trump won't read anything — not one-page memos, not the brief policy papers, nothing.”

In being mixed race, Harris is part of a rapidly growing demographic in the US. In the 2020 census, 33.8 million people, or 10.2 per cent of the population, self-identified as multiracial, an increase of 276 per cent from 2010.

There has also been rapid growth in this mixed-race demographic in Britain, with numbers tripling since 2001. Though, as the actor Jassa Ahluwalia explains in *Both Not Half*, his new book on mixed-race identity, higher numbers have not necessarily resulted in greater understanding. In it, he rails against the way



**Kamala Harris**

“**The simple fact is that Kamala Harris is both black and Indian**

mixed-race people like him are still sometimes referred to as “half caste”.

“None of us are half anything. All of us are both something,” he says. “I'm both Punjabi and white, and not half of anything. This non-binary approach is a rejection of easy distinction and historical prejudice.”

“Whatever our backgrounds we are each whole individuals whose constituent parts cannot be separated. Power structures love labels. Labels facilitate division and, ultimately, control. They allow people to whip up tales of ‘us and them’. Oversimplified propaganda. Divide and rule.”

Or, as Congressman Ted Lieu put it on Twitter/X: “Kamala Harris is an American. She also happens to be black and Asian American. This is not hard to understand, unless you are weird or racist or both.”

## cover story

# The second coming of Richard Burton

Forty years after he died, the hellraiser who seduced Hollywood and Elizabeth Taylor is the subject of three new films. Dominic West and Michael Sheen reveal the secret of his appeal. By **John Bleasdale**

**R**ichard Burton was 58 when he died in his sleep at home in Switzerland. In his final film role, playing the master manipulator O'Brien in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he had looked weary and ten years older than he was, his hair shorn to the bone. The news of his death from a brain haemorrhage came as a shock but not a surprise. In the 20th century hard-living legends rarely lived into old age — Humphrey Bogart died at 57, Clark Gable at 59 — and Burton had been a mighty hellraiser.

But 40 years after his death on August 5, 1984, the actor is inspiring a fresh raft of work, with the industry's hottest talents queueing up to play him. Last year's splendidly titled *Erotic Vagrancy* by Roger Lewis, a joint biography of Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, is being turned into a TV series by the producer behind *A Very British Scandal*, with *One Day's* Leo Woodall or *Game of Thrones's* Richard Madden among those tipped to take the lead; the BBC has commissioned a drama-documentary with Michael Sheen as Burton; and a feature film, *Mr Burton*, will star the *Industry* heart-throb Harry Lawtey as the young miner's son opposite Toby Jones as Philip Burton, the English teacher who adopted him. Jack Thorne's play *The Motive and the Cue*, starring Johnny Flynn

**Right: Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in 1964. Below: Dominic West and Helena Bonham Carter as the duo in the 2013 TV film *Burton and Taylor***

(Ripley) as Burton, transfers to Broadway next spring.

Lewis's book takes its title from a 1962 Vatican missive, which denounced Burton and Taylor for their adulterous affair on the set of *Cleopatra* in Rome: "You will finish in an erotic vagrancy, without end or without a safe port." Such notoriety catapulted the couple into a celebrity stratosphere they largely invented. If the Pope's statement was meant as a condemnation, the Burtons seemed to take it as a challenge. In his book, Lewis goes so far as to imagine the noises they made while making love: Taylor mewling while Burton barks.

It was a lustful, excessive and very public affair that led to two marriages — and two divorces — many trashed hotel rooms and 11 films, among them *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* When I speak to those who have played or are preparing to play Burton, Lawtey tells me this last is his favourite performance: "He and Elizabeth are at their ferocious best. They almost consent to the line between their personal and professional worlds being blurred." For Tony Palmer, who directed Burton in *Wagner* (1983), an eight-hour television biopic, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is emblematic of Burton's talent: "Every time we see Richard, he's just there. Doing nothing. A presence. But oh boy, he's giving a performance to die for. It's



appalling he wasn't given the Oscar for that." Burton was nominated seven times and never won. Perhaps it was Hollywood's revenge for taking their Liz, who won her second Academy Award for the film.

Why does Burton's appeal endure? His natural gifts were obvious: that voice "like seawater washing over a scallop shell", as Lewis puts it, twinned with those ice-blue eyes which, when he played a diabolical author in *The Medusa Touch* in 1978, did most of the diabolical lifting. He had a prodigious memory, quoting from heart swatches of his beloved Dylan Thomas and reciting Shakespeare sonnets backwards as a party trick.

Laurence Olivier may have worked harder and made more effective use of his talent as an actor and director. John Gielgud was perhaps the finer interpreter of Shakespeare, with a longevity that took him from the silents — his first role was in *Who Is the Man?* in 1924 — to Pope Pius V in

*Elizabeth* in 1998. The cohort of working-class actors with regional backgrounds who came to dominate screen acting in the 1960s — Peter O'Toole, Richard Harris, Albert Finney — were perhaps physically more alluring. But none has had Burton's lasting impact.

Lewis tells me that Burton was "the last of the great Victorian actors — nothing of the Method to him". He recently told the *Daily Mail*, "There are two people whom I think would be brilliant as my Burton: that boy who was in *One Day*, Leo Woodall, or Richard Madden. The important thing is to be incredibly sexy."

For Lawtey, Burton "was the quintessential working-class hero, an archetype come true. The journey from where he started to where he ended is staggering, completely transcending his own socio-economic background, all the while remaining proudly, unequivocally Welsh." That Welshness means a lot to Sheen too,

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life was precarious. It's staggering how hard those guys worked, even though they were the biggest film stars in the world."

Palmer, who as well as *Wagner* made a documentary about Burton immediately after his death, says his appeal was a mystery to Burton himself. "The most important thing, oddly enough, is that Richard never understood the fascination. He told me, 'My eyebrows are all over the place. My eyes aren't quite level. My nose is bent. My skin is pockmarked. My hair's a mess. I suppose it's my voice. But I can't really hear that myself.' He accepted it but he was greatly puzzled by the extent to which people found him fascinating — not as

## “Anyone who plays Burton has to be incredibly sexy

an actor but as a physical human being.”

My own relationship with Burton began in Christmas 1978 when Santa delivered an LP of Jeff Wayne's *War of the Worlds* and I heard the actor's voice purring through the crackle of the vinyl: "No one would have believed in the last years of the 19th century that human affairs were being watched from the timeless worlds of space." A year later, on Boxing Day 1979, *Where Eagles Dare* got its UK television premiere and the phrase "Broadsword calling Danny Boy" was seared into a generation of children's brains, making Burton my favourite actor for life.

The essayist Geoff Dyer used that phrase, spoken by Burton's character Major Smith as a secret radio call sign, for the title of his hilarious monograph on the film. As Dyer notes, this chunky alcoholic Welshman with a bad back is the powerhouse engine of

the film, bossing the Hollywood he-man Clint Eastwood into providing cover while Burton lobs grenades, kicks people off the icy roofs of cable cars and finally persuades the baddie to jump out of a plane — all through the mellifluous timbre of his voice.

Palmer points out that, in fact, Eastwood and Burton have much in common. "Burton's greatness as an actor on screen was a feeling of stillness. Clint Eastwood had exactly that same, utter stillness. You think he's not doing anything but, in fact, he's doing everything, dragging you into the part. Harrison Ford does exactly the same thing." Burton described Eastwood's acting as a "dynamic lethargy" but could easily have been talking about himself.

Lewis thinks that Burton's films were underrated in his lifetime. Many of his flops — such as *Boom!* (1968), directed by Joseph Losey and written by Tennessee Williams (and, incidentally, one of the director John Waters's favourite films), and *Equus* (1977), directed by Sidney Lumet and adapted by Peter Shaffer from his play — are now considered classics. "Some people claim not to like *Cleopatra* but I think it's wonderful," Lewis says. In my opinion, even the so-called bad films — *The Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977) and *The Klansman* (1974) — deserve their place in the pantheon, as Burton elevated them into the ridiculous sublime.

West thinks that the couple "must have been hilarious together" and tells me the story of how she volunteered to be a part of a knife-throwing act in a circus in Mexico. When Burton sought to intercede, Taylor — already tied to a wheel with balloons between her legs — shouted: "Stop it, Richard, you're making him nervous!" West finishes the story: "They were really funny. Those were more robust stars — they had more of the earth in them than we do now. He's got the working-class grit and the toughness and the rugged voice and looks. But he shone more brightly than anyone now, as a star."

The charge often levelled at Burton is one of waste, a talent gone to the dogs through celebrity, alcohol and the hurricane years with Taylor. As

Palmer puts it: "When making my documentary about him, *In from the Cold?*, the one thing we frequently encountered was people dismissing him as 'that old Welsh drunk'. And I would always reply, there are half a dozen films which are among the greatest films, in terms of acting, ever made. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, *Becket* and so on. You can't ever take that away from him."

Those films, those performances and that voice are still with us. And the epic scale on which his life was lived — from the coal hills of Wales to the Taylor-Burton diamond (the most expensive bought at the time) — meant his life, as proved by the books and films still seeking to capture him, was as fascinating as the art he created. If he hadn't existed, Dylan Thomas and Shakespeare would have had to go on the ale and dream him up. "Broadsword calling Danny Boy" indeed.

## 6 must-see Burton films

### **The Night of the Iguana (1964, buy/rent)**

Tennessee Williams was very much Elizabeth Taylor's writer, but here Burton took on the role of a defrocked alcoholic priest, working as a tour guide south of the border in Mexico. John Huston directed and Burton is at his most dissolute and deranged amid the feverish troika of women, Deborah Kerr, Sue Lyon and the Taylor-ish Ava Gardner.

### **The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (1965, buy/rent)**

John le Carré's Cold War thriller is as far from James Bond — which Burton was offered twice — as it's possible to be. Here he plays Alec Leamas, a despairing cold warrior who feigns a defection to sow disinformation on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The morality is as murky as the black-and-white photography and Burton plays the antihero.

### **The Taming of the Shrew (1967, Now)**

William Shakespeare's battle of the sexes rom-com allowed Burton and Taylor to bring their real-life chemistry to play. It's feisty with a capital "Fie" and gives you a feel for what the "Battling Burtons" must have been like at their most rambunctious. Franco Zeffirelli keeps the athletic jousting between the two entertaining. Burton's Petruchio looks good in a beard and Taylor's Kate is built for a bodice.



Burton and Ava Gardner in *The Night of the Iguana*

### **Staircase (1969, DVD)**

Burton was open about having tinkered

with homosexual experiences and was bold, for the time, in choosing to play a gay hairdresser whose partner (played by a privately very nervous Rex Harrison) is due in court on a cottaging charge. There's humour to the bickering but the director Stanley Donen (*Singin' in the Rain*) gives the film real poignancy and humanity.

### **Villain (1971, Studio Canal/Prime Video)**

Here's Burton as you've never seen him before, playing Vic, the East End gangster with more than a passing resemblance to Ronnie Kray. The Cockney accent requires some getting used to, but Burton is at his snarliest and chomps on his lines with real gusto, revelling in the violence, the beatings and brutality, even as he loves his old mum.

### **The Wild Geese (1978, Prime Video)**

Before Sylvester Stallone became an *Expendable*, Burton invented the geriatric mercenary movie. He's the old soak who must rescue an African freedom fighter from a fictional country. It's a men-on-a-mission movie with Roger Moore, Hardy Krüger and Richard Harris, and though its politics are dodgy, it would take a stronger man than me to watch Burton and Harris's last scene with a dry eye. **JB**

who likes to recount an anecdote about a local boy who called on Burton's sister when the actor was visiting with Taylor, to express his admiration and get some advice. Burton invited the Port Talbot lad inside for tea and chatted a while. The name of the young boy? Anthony Hopkins, who grew up to tell his fellow Port Talbot lad Sheen this story.

In his memoir *Walking with Ghosts*, Gabriel Byrne recalls sitting on a balcony in Venice overlooking the Grand Canal and drinking with Burton, who told him: "I'm rather ashamed to be an actor sometimes. I've done the most appalling shit for money. I detest the self, mirrored back to me by others. A kind of fractured reality. I can't see me." Burton told the young actor, then appearing in one of his first films, to give it all he had while remembering they weren't curing cancer: "It's only a bloody movie."

Dominic West, who played Burton opposite Helena Bonham Carter in the TV movie *Burton and Taylor* in 2013, is full of admiration for his theatre work. "The workload. The stamina," he tells me. "He did four months of *Hamlet* in New York. He did eight shows a week of *Camelot*. No wonder he drank and that his



Clockwise from top left: Michael Sheen, Leo Woodall, Harry Lawley and Richard Madden

# THE CRITICS

## Adolescent angst in the MySpace era

**A touching tale of an Asian-American teen growing up (with fart bantz), says Ed Potton**

Chris Wang (Izaak Wang) is a Taiwanese-American teenager living in Noughties California, where adolescence diverges from the expectations of his doughty grandmother (Chang Li Hua). “You’re supposed to be playing with crickets by the river,” she says. Fat chance,



Izaak Wang, Chang Li Hua, Joan Chen and Shirley Chen in Sean Wang’s coming-of-age film *Didi*

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Yet there are still plenty of telling vignettes here from the first era of digital culture, as Chris swaps fart bantz with friends on MySpace, uploads skate videos and courts a classmate, Madi (Mahaela Park), via instant messaging. When she asks him what films he likes, he quickly looks up her favourites on Facebook and professes an unlikely admiration for the slushy romance *A Walk to Remember*. That goes down so well that he is soon looking up how-to-kiss guides on YouTube. “You’re pretty cute for an Asian,” Madi tells him.

Astutely played by Wang, Chris is an unsympathetic hero — taciturn, awkward and quick to dump his mates if cooler ones come along. Asian-Americans are becoming more prominent in popular culture — from the Oscar-winning film *Minari* to the Netflix series *Beef* — and *Didi*, a semi-autobiographical tale written and directed by the Taiwanese-American film-maker Sean Wang, is insightful on racial self-loathing as well as bigotry. There’s a sting of plausibility to the disdain with which Chris treats his patient mother (Joan Chen from *Twin Peaks*), snorting, “So Asian!” when she eats McDonald’s with a knife and fork. **In cinemas**

### Didi

15, 94min

★★★★☆

grandma — think more casual homophobia and blowing up dead squirrels in mailboxes, then sharing the results online.

*Didi*, named after Chris’s family nickname, is being billed as one of the first great films about teens and the internet, which is slightly over the top. The comedian Bo Burnham did it first and more poignantly in 2018 when he directed *Eighth Grade*, which followed the cyber-inflected adolescence of a girl of similar age to Chris.

### Kensuke’s Kingdom

PG, 85min

★★★★☆

When you think of children and desert islands, *Lord of the Flies* is likely to be the first thing that comes to mind, such ruddy grumps we’ve all become. It wasn’t always like this. *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *The Coral Island* were two twists on the old Robinson Crusoe saga to involve children and show how ingenious and good we can be when stripped of the comforts and trappings of civilisation.

Neil Boyle and Kirk Hendry’s animated version of Michael Morpurgo’s novel *Kensuke’s Kingdom*, adapted by the children’s laureate and veteran screenwriter Frank Cottrell-Boyce, is definitely in this more optimistic mode.

We meet young Michael (voiced by Aaron MacGregor) while he’s sailing around the world with his mum (Sally Hawkins), dad (Cillian Murphy) and sister (Raffey Cassidy). He’s a moody lad, who seems wholly unimpressed by the adventure his family has embarked on.

When a freak wave washes him overboard, he finds himself stranded on a desert island, accompanied by his faithful dog, Stella. Luckily the island comes with its own Friday, in the form of Ken Watanabe’s ageing Japanese war veteran, Kensuke, who is nursing his griefs as well as serving as a protector to the island’s wildlife.

There’s not much dialogue once Michael is off the boat — Kensuke

doesn’t speak English — so the story is told almost entirely through the visuals of 2D hand-drawn animation, which is frequently beautiful in its no-thrills simplicity. After all, this is the studio that brought Raymond Briggs’s *The Snowman* to life. There are moments of real splendour, especially in the evocations of the seascapes and the island.

In fact, the environment and Stella are given the most love, as though young Michael is only a sketch of who he’s going to become. A sequence when Kensuke imagines what

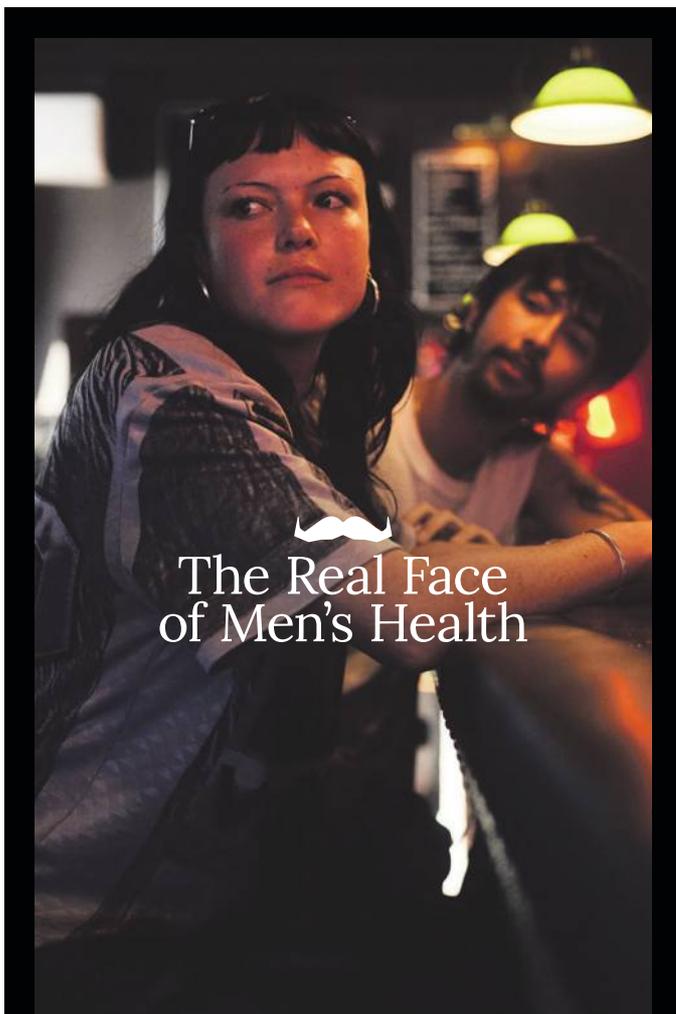


**Kensuke (voiced by Ken Watanabe) and Michael (Aaron MacGregor) in the Michael Morpurgo adaptation**

happened to his family in Nagasaki takes the traditional Japanese painting style of Nihonga as a visual reference and is a standout moment, both aesthetically and emotionally.

The late arrival of a group of wicked hunting men with shotguns feels like an interloper from the world of clichés, but isn’t enough to break the spell of beguiling straightforwardness.

**John Bleasdale**  
**In cinemas**



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HOPPER STONE

the classic film

The NeverEnding Story (1984)

U, 94min  
★★★★☆

It may not have been the best of the spate of Eighties sword-and-sorcery flicks that also included *Legend*, *Labyrinth* and *Willow* — the last of those gets my vote. *The NeverEnding Story* certainly had the best theme song, though — the Giorgio Moroder-produced synth-pop hit of the same name by Limahl of Kajagoogoo, which was memorably exhumed in *Stranger Things* in 2019.

Some of the sets look distinctly cardboard by today's standards but the puppets and animatronics are fantastic, especially Falkor, the dog-like "luck dragon", Morla the giant turtle and the stony-skinned Rockbiter. Noah Hathaway became a teen pin-up after playing the shiny-locked hero, Atreyu, owner of the horse, Artax, whose demise in a swamp traumatised a generation of children. Don't worry — despite persistent playground rumours, the animal didn't actually die.

The movie was based on the fantasy novel by the German writer Michael Ende and, it's easy to forget, was the English-language debut of Wolfgang Petersen, the German director of *Das Boot* and *In the Line of Fire*. From luck dragons to presidential bodyguards in less than a decade — now that's range. **EP**  
In selected cinemas



Noah Hathaway as Atreyu with Falkor the luck dragon



Lil Rel Howery as Moose and Zachary Levi as Harold

A hero who's quick on the draw

A big-hearted ode to the power of young imagination, this is a children's fantasy about a gormless man-child who can create whatever he wants with his magic crayon. Stop sniggering — it's not aimed at you, and it could just rescue an empty afternoon during the school holidays.

Despite being directed by Carlos Saldanha, the Brazilian who made *Rio* and several *Ice Age* films, produced by a big studio in Columbia Pictures and featuring a fair amount of CGI, it feels like quite a modest and old-fashioned movie. That may be because it is based on the 1955 children's book, written and illustrated by the American author Crockett Johnson, whose drawings get pastiched at the start of the film, right.

Zachary Levi, who played a boy turned superhero in *Shazam!*, slips into garish Lycra once more as the blue-suited Harold, who draws a door from his animated dimension into the real world and steps through it with his cartoon friends, Moose and Porcupine. Created by Harold with the crayon, they became humans played respectively by Lil Rel Howery from

the big film

A wholesome fantasy about a man with a magical crayon is just the thing to fill children's holidays, writes Ed Potton

Harold and the Purple Crayon

PG, 92min  
★★★★☆



*Get Out* and Tanya Reynolds, the sci-fi nerd from *Sex Education*. We get a bit too much Moose and not quite enough of the weirder and more engaging Porcupine.

The trio's naivety gets them into scrapes, which they escape from by using the crayon to conjure up a helicopter, a wrecking ball and a selection of animal hybrids including a gruesome spider-fly and a dragon-lion-alligator called Carl. When the single mother Terri (Zoëy Deschanel) knocks Harold and Moose off their purple tandem bicycle in her car, she and her son Mel (Benjamin Bottani) let them stay the night. Harold is blown away by Terri's job stacking shelves at a supermarket, or as he calls it, "the shop that sells everything".

Yes, Deschanel is playing the

straight woman to an overgrown kid again, as she did in *Elf*, and it's a role she does well. Levi isn't quite in Will Ferrell's class as a physical comedian but he's an amiable presence and there are also flashes of *Big* in his interactions with Terri, although thankfully no creepy bedroom action. Jemaine Clement of *Flight of the Conchords* blends villainy and silliness in just the right proportions as "Library Gary", an admirer of Terri and a failed fantasy novelist who recognises the potential of the purple crayon to bring his sword-and-sorcery delusions to life.

"You're just a cartoon drawing from the young readers section," Gary sneers at Harold. "My stuff's a little darker, ages 14 and up."

The film will probably play best with 7 to 12-year-olds and its wholesome message about the importance of creativity is surely one we can all get behind. There's even a touch of philosophy: "If I drew you guys," Harold asks Moose and Porcupine, "who drew me?" That would be Crockett Johnson himself, voiced by a beatific Alfred Molina. Writers as gods? That must be better than politicians and tech billionaires.

In cinemas

A Story of Bones

12, 95min  
★★★★☆

Saint Helena, the island in the South Atlantic, could be mistaken for a crumb on the map. But it was thrust into world history when it became Napoleon Bonaparte's final resting place. However, as Joseph Curran and Dominic Aubrey de Vere's documentary reveals, Saint Helena also played a role in a less celebrated chapter of world history. During the early 19th century, the British Navy would release "liberated" slaves on

Saint Helena, where they lived under terrible conditions and frequently died as a result.

In the 21st century, Saint Helena is as remote as ever. Until recently the only way of arriving there was a six-day journey via the Royal Mail Ship. Then in 2010 a £285 million airport was planned to encourage tourism and the activist Annina Van Neel and the activist Annina Van Neel was employed as the island's environmental officer. Curran and de Vere's documentary shows Van Neel, newly arrived from Mali, as she tries to fit in. But when workers

Annina Van Neel, the environmental officer on Saint Helena



come across a mass burial ground she becomes increasingly concerned about how these bodies are treated.

Bones in shallow graves tell their own story — a child buried with a mother, curling together with beads and pieces of cloth — but no one wants to pay attention to this.

What saves the film from becoming preachy is charismatic Van Neel, whom we accompany as she learns the history of the island with compassion and horror. She attempts to engage the local community with faltering results, before taking her fight global, with the aid of the African-American

preservationist Peggy King Jorde. We see her son grow from a baby to a young boy as the stalemate over a proper memorialisation for 325 bodies stored in a warehouse continues.

The unhappy conclusion is that we'd rather glorify Napoleon's (now empty) tomb — a man who reinstated French involvement in the slave trade, by the way — rather than honour the one existing physical site of the Middle Passage, through which 12.5 million human beings were forcibly transported. *A Story of Bones* is of global historical significance, told at a human level that will at once move and outrage you. **JB**  
In cinemas

## music reviews

## Baldwin tribute oozes style and soul

Melody meets politics in Meshell Ndegeocello's jazz-tinged work, says Will Hodgkinson

**O**n the centenary of James Baldwin's birth, Meshell Ndegeocello has paid tribute to the American writer with a complex, freewheeling, jazz-inflected album that reflects the worldview of someone who sought to articulate the African-American reality during the second half of the 20th century.

The author of classics such as *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room* wrote with an awareness of being "at the mercy of the reflexes the colour of one's skin caused in other people" while also stating, "To be a negro in the US and to be relatively conscious is to be in a state of rage almost all of the time." That's where Baldwin left off and Ndegeocello, a Berlin-born, Washington DC-raised singer who came of age in the Nineties neo-soul movement, picks up.

"Back then there was no hypocrisy about the system being stacked against anyone with a smidgin of melanin staining the history of their skin," states the poet Staceyann Chin on *Raise the Roof*, a spoken-word piece in which she compares the more openly racist age Baldwin was writing about with the more covert inequality of the US today. "I am shot at 12 years old for waving a toy gun you sell to me every Christmas," she says. "My death must mean something more than a footnote in the media frenzy of our time."

For all the strident, unapologetic protest at the lack of progress, 60 years after Baldwin became such an erudite voice of the civil rights



James Baldwin in 1963

## pop

**Meshell Ndegeocello**  
**No More Water: The Gospel of James Baldwin**

Blue Note  
★★★★☆

## T

**Jazz album**

**The Tim Armacost Chordless Quintet keep things effortless, simple — and great. Review at [thetimes.com/culture](https://www.thetimes.com/culture)**

movement, Ndegeocello's album is also reflective — as gentle as it is angry and musically rich.

"Put down your gun and take your hands off me," she sings in the sweetest voice against a folky acoustic guitar line on the lullaby-like *The Price of the Ticket*. Baldwin was sympathetic to the complexities of his era, arguing that racism oppressed the oppressor as much as the victim, and that is reflected here. "Officer I know you're afraid, just like me," she sings, "but look at my hands. Please don't shoot me." As a summation of the Black Lives Matter era, the message is strengthened by the calm way in which it is delivered.

Elsewhere there are touches of Fela Kuti-style Afrobeat, rousing gospel and free jazz, all bound together by the

message Baldwin was trying to promote of capturing the black American experience and going beyond it too. There is a great piece of rich soul music called *Love* alongside spoken-word pieces like *Tsunami Rising*, which points out that all humans have the same essential biological make-up, all die after seven days without water, and any constructs on racial disparity can only be there to benefit the people constructing them.

This is all pretty serious, but it is presented with stylistic flourishes echoing the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and an uninhibited poetic spirit, ensuring it goes beyond mere tub-thumping and into art. James Baldwin, you like to think, would be proud.

**Tones and I**  
**Beautifully Ordinary**

Warner Music Group  
★★★★☆

Toni Watson was both blessed and cursed in 2019 by *Dance Monkey*, a song so catchy it went to No 1 in 30 countries and transformed a former busker into an overexposed pop sensation. The Australian's second album deals with the fallout. "Does anybody care any more?" she wonders on *To Be Loved*, a cri de coeur in which she bemoans the pressures of fame. From there begins an overly sentimental work that sounds like a clear attempt to line up alongside Adele; there is even a piano tune addressed to an old flame called *Lose Someone Like Me*. Watson has a good voice and there are moments of real thought, but this mainstream dance-pop and heart-string-tugging balladry blend is not original enough to be truly convincing or moving.

**Khalid**  
**Sincere**

RCA  
★★★★☆

El Paso's Khalid Robinson broke through as a teenager in 2017 with *Young Dumb & Broke*. Now less young, less broke and hopefully less dumb, Khalid doubles down on his signature laid-back, nonchalant style of electronic R&B on a third album. The standard-issue synthetic backing is pretty uninspiring but Khalid does have a way of conveying emotion with restraint: the super-smooth *Please Don't Fall in Love with Me* has a dreamlike sadness at its core. Here and there, Khalid's lack of dynamism works to his advantage: *Heatstroke* is a summery tune with shades of 1980s Fleetwood Mac, making you think that lying around in the sun and not doing much might just be a great idea.

**X**  
**Smoke & Fiction**

Fat Possum  
★★★★☆

Almost 50 years after launching as one of the most innovative LA punk bands, X are calling it quits with one last album. On *Big Black X* they reminisce on their chaotic glory days, with the singer Exene Cervenka claiming, "We knew the gutter but also the future."

The Ramones-like approach of rushing through ten songs of thrashing guitar and pop melody serves as a testament to misspent youth and growing old inappropriately. "Let's go round the bend, get in trouble again," says Cervenka and her ex-husband, the bassist-singer John Doe, on *Sweet Til the Bitter End*. There are touches of the Doors' baroque psychedelia too — the Doors' organist Ray Manzarek produced X's early albums. But in the main this is an appealing tribute to punk youth and punk old age.



## Vivaldi concertos conjure a unique sound world

**D**uring the first lockdown, Adrian Chandler, below, the founder and director of the baroque ensemble La Serenissima, edited the manuscript of one of Vivaldi's violin concertos per day — of which there are about 230.

The latest product of Chandler's passion is this spirited and excellently recorded sequel to La Serenissima's album of selected Vivaldi double concertos. Seven are galloped through within 70 minutes (concertos in the early 18th century famously didn't waste time). There are concertos for pairs of violins, cellos, flutes and oboes, while one of them manages to handle seven soloists prancing through the semiquavers and dotted rhythms against the usual string background.



The playing style is forthright without being strident, and the notes are dispatched without the quirky additions (folksy improvisations, stamped feet) beloved of free spirits such as Nigel Kennedy. The

seven-strong concerto, named after the shape-shifting Greek river god Proteus, is particularly fetching, while the one with two cellos burrowing away conjures a sound world like no other. Every offering brings its own delights, thoughtfully displayed by the recording engineer with enough of a gap between each item to avoid listener indigestion.

You need a clear head to listen to an opera by Alexander von Zemlinsky, one of those early 20th-century composers liable to swamp the ears with florid orchestral writing and

## classical

**Adrian Chandler**  
**Vivaldi x2<sup>2</sup>**

Signum Classics  
★★★★☆

**Marc Albrecht**  
**Eine florentinische Tragödie**

Pentatone  
★★★★☆

harmonies that writhe about or get tied up in knots. The sole drawback to the new recording taken from the Dutch National Opera's 2017 production of Zemlinsky's one-act zinger based on Oscar Wilde's unfinished play *A Florentine Tragedy* is that one of the cast, John Lundgren, doesn't sail over the orchestra quite as boldly as the others.

Even so, the conductor Marc Albrecht extracts such colourful and impassioned playing from the Netherlands Philharmonic that the opera's hot-house score still dazzles. And the triangular drama played out in 16th-century Florence between a cuckolded merchant (Lundgren), his wife (Ausrine Stundyte) and her lover (Nikolai Schukoff) exerts its own pull, especially if you enjoy operas where characters sing in German about "the churlish moon", "strangling fingers" and "the falling midnight of your hair".  
**Geoff Brown**

# When the Harry Potter kids take on JK Rowling

This satire was set to be the Fringe's biggest furore, says **Allan Radcliffe**

If you believe the old adage about there being no such thing as bad publicity, this new show from the Civil Disobedience theatre company should have got off to a flying start at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The play, by the American screenwriter and playwright Joshua Kaplan, which imagines the actors Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson confronting the Harry Potter author JK Rowling about her gender-critical views, switched venue at the last minute, after becoming embroiled in an online backlash.

Kaplan's claim to be "surprised" at the apparent controversy sounds reasonable until you consider the script's original title, *Terf C\*\*t*. The producers had reportedly put in place procedures to circumvent public protests. A transgender member of the cast has remained unnamed due to concerns for her safety.

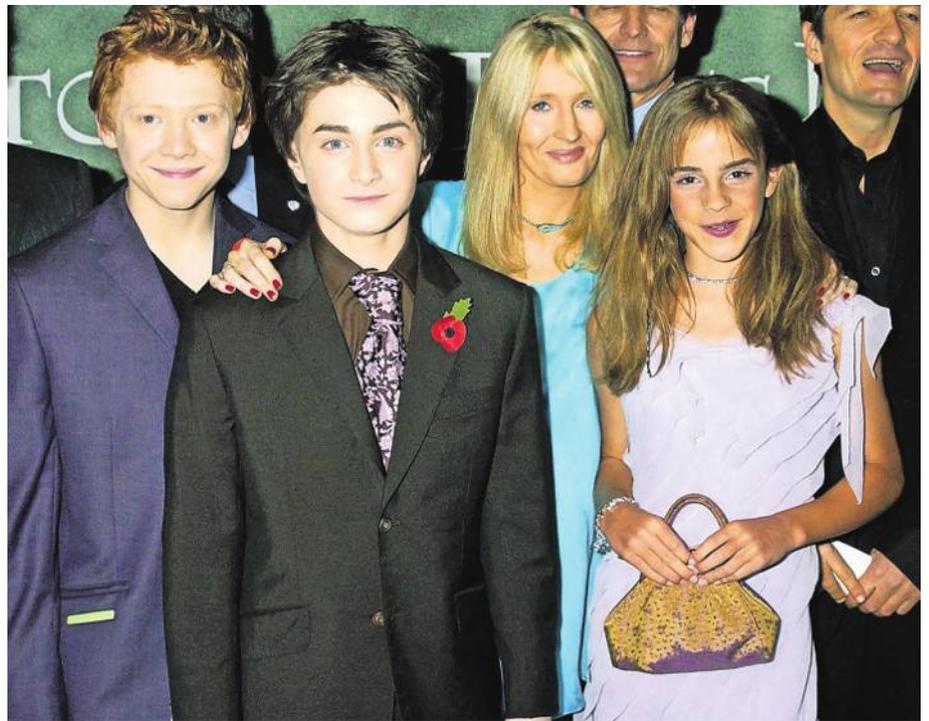
Of course, the Fringe is no stranger to hullabaloo and protest, but judging by the complete absence of chanting and placards outside the Assembly Rooms on the opening day of the

festival — not to mention the modest turnout of about 40 souls in a 350-seat venue — it would appear that *Disgusted of Morningside* didn't get the memo about this one.

Perhaps the days when the Tory councillor Moira Knox railed against the Fringe outrages of *The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow* (1993), or when crowds picketed a 1999 run of *Corpus Christi*, a play depicting Jesus in a gay relationship with Judas, are long gone. Or could it be that, despite the clamour around trans rights — notably the Gender Recognition Reform bill that proved such a headache for the Scottish government — this is not as inflammatory an issue as some would have us believe?

Controversy aside, the title, *Terf* (an acronym for trans-exclusionary radical feminist), with its connotations of angry online provocation and abuse, is in fact deployed ironically by Kaplan, to explore how nuance and complexity are the first casualties of any public disagreement in our social media age.

In the opening scene, we hear verbatim transcripts



**Rupert Grint, Daniel Radcliffe, JK Rowling and Emma Watson at the premiere of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* in 2002. Left: Laura Kay Bailey as Rowling in *Terf***

of tweets from both Rowling and her activist detractors, which are at best, cruel and unpleasant, and at worst, disturbing — a powerful illustration of the ways in which antagonists double-down online, as though their words will have no impact in the real world. The only trans character in the show remains largely mute, with tape across her mouth, suggesting the lack of trans voices in the debate about their rights and women's rights.

In focusing on the spat between Rowling (played by Laura Kay Bailey) and her "surrogate children", Radcliffe (Piers MacKenzie), Watson (Trelawny Kean) and Grint (Tom Longmire), the play posits itself as pulling back the curtains on a family argument, always a delicious prospect for drama.

The problem here is that, rather

than mining this premise for all its worth, Kaplan muddies the waters with flashbacks to earlier events in Rowling's life, apparently to add depth and motivation, but in fact breaking the dramatic tension. Although the central point about people being complex individuals rather than representatives of a social group or ideology is clearly made (if hardly revelatory), at 80 minutes, the show ends up an overlong and rather messy slog rather than the sharp satire of the online age it could have been.

It might have retained a sense of urgency and dynamism in a smaller space; in the Assembly Rooms ballroom the production looks lost and flavourless, adding to an overall sense of missed opportunity.

**To August 25, [assemblyfestival.com](http://assemblyfestival.com)**

## Theatre

### Terf

Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh (80min)

★★★★☆

# Call it the Olympic effect — I was right about French music

**Encore! Édith Piaf leads a Gallic revival, says**

**Will Hodgkinson**

Two weeks ago I committed an act of treason in these pages by stating that French rock and pop are as good — actually, are better — than our own illustrious heritage of musical greats. Then came the quintessentially French Olympics opening ceremony, complete with a French-Malian chanteuse, a parade of Parisian drag queens, and melodrama courtesy of the Canadian balladeer Céline Dion singing Édith Piaf, and viewers around the world concluded: *il sont fous, ces Gaulois*. Yet there must have been a method to the madness because there has since been a boom in streaming numbers for the artists involved.

Growing up in the Paris suburb of Aulnay-sous-Bois, the Malian-born

singer Aya Nakamura combines chanson with slang in a way that has angered the far right. That's why her inclusion in the ceremony, weeks after a left-wing electoral alliance saw off Marine Le Pen's National Rally, had political significance.

The ceremony also resulted in Nakamura's streaming numbers growing by 40 per cent on Spotify. *Hymne à l'amour*, the Édith Piaf classic, could be an alternative French national anthem, and since Dion sang her heart out to it for the grand finale the song has had a 317 per cent streaming growth. Gojira, a respected band on the heavy metal circuit but mostly unknown beyond it, have had a 129 per cent increase. French music, derided as hopelessly solipsistic and sentimental, is having its moment.

France has always punched above its weight musically. As a lyricist, provocateur and smoker of unfiltered Gauloises, it doesn't get better than Serge Gainsbourg. From making an extremely rude proposition to Whitney Houston on a chat show to incorporating clever wordplay into laid-back, suggestive classics,

Gainsbourg matched John Lennon's outspokenness and Leonard Cohen's poetry.

Dance music is, alongside rap, the predominant genre of the modern age and much of that comes down to Daft Punk, two school friends from Paris who in the early Nineties forged a minimal, thudding style that is still copied today. And this year I went to one of the best concerts of my life: a recreation of the 1998 space age easy-listening classic *Moon Safari* by Daft Punk's fellow Parisians Air. It still felt like the future, 25 years after the album was released.

According to my daughter, who just spent six months in the city, Parisian dance music has since fallen behind the times. All the clubs are playing the same faceless techno. Elsewhere, though, the

**Édith Piaf, top, whose music is experiencing a boom, and dance pioneers Daft Punk**



country's music is booming. Rap from Marseilles is becoming a phenomenon in part thanks to Jul, a French-Corsican

34-year-old who lit the Olympic cauldron as the flame reached Marseilles, and whose albums have sold almost five million copies.

Less commercially impactful but critically lauded is Bertrand Burgalat, who combines classical sophistication with a love of French 1960s yé-yé pop, while the moody new wave band

Indochine — like

Depeche Mode but more

Gallic — are the first

French band to have

sold out the 80,000-

capacity Stade de

France in Paris. One

benefit of the

streaming age is the way it

has made music from

around the world popular

and now it's France's turn.

Perhaps those Gauls aren't

so crazy after all.

# first night

## classical

### BBCPO/Storgards

Royal Albert Hall

★★★★☆

Sometimes a new composition is best appreciated by letting it wash over you without knowing what prompted it. Reading the programme notes about Cassandra Miller's new viola concerto after hearing it, I was struck by the complex web of ideas that triggered the piece: quotations from the French philosopher Simone Weil (one of which, "I cannot love without trembling", gives the half-hour concerto its title); references to Plato; and musical homages to the flickering improvisatory style of northern Greek folk song.

All of which, I'm sure, would have bamboozled me had I tried to digest it in advance. Whereas the concerto itself, unfolded with sublime assurance and a transcendental gentleness by the superb soloist Lawrence Power and the BBC Philharmonic directed by John Storgards, made such a beguiling impact on the ear and so direct an appeal to the emotions that it almost rendered intellectual analysis unnecessary.

Almost, but not quite. The entire piece sounds like a solo improvisation over a drone. But it's far more subtle than that. The soloist proceeds by microtone slithers, melodramatic vibratos that quiver into full-blown trills, and raw octaves that evoke some ancestral Balkan folk lament.

Meanwhile, the orchestra refines that drone in a thousand different ways, sometimes making it sound like the far-off swell of the ocean, at other times shooting dazzling flecks of woodwind through the texture or, just before the end, accompanying the viola with strummed pizzicatos in what sounds like, but probably isn't, a nod towards Elgar's Violin Concerto. It's a work that deserves many performances.

Following such a delicate piece with Shostakovich's brutal Fourth Symphony — the one he didn't dare have performed while Stalin was alive — was quite a savage lurch. But although the strings sounded under pressure in places, the performance of this frenetic and nihilistic masterpiece blazed with intensity.

**Richard Morrison**  
On BBC Sounds

Deborah Findlay,  
Anjli Mohindra, Gina  
McKee, Harmony  
Rose-Bremner and  
Romola Garai



# A swoon-worthy smash

An abortion scene made men pass out but this is great theatre, says **Dominic Maxwell**

## theatre

### The Years

Almeida, NI  
(115min)

★★★★☆

First things first — unlike the men who reportedly passed out earlier in the week during this remarkable new play's kitchen table abortion scene, I didn't faint. I did, however, laugh, cry, gasp and remain rapt throughout most of this exploration of the life and times of one Frenchwoman, played by five British women.

Still worried about what you're getting? Well, *The Years* is a hard play to sum up. In the way it smashes the unflinchingly personal up against the panoramically sociopolitical it feels new. The content warnings are there for all to see, though. First staged in the Hague in 2022, the Norwegian director Eline Arbo's Dutch adaptation of the French writer Annie Ernaux's autobiographical novel contains "a graphic depiction of an abortion ... blood ... a coerced sexual encounter ..."

I'll add a content warning of my own: don't fret if the first 20-odd minutes feel like a muddle. The cast of Harmony Rose-Bremner, Anjli Mohindra, Romola Garai, Gina McKee and Deborah Findlay establish a gang-show sensibility with strenuous jollity.

It only slowly becomes clear that they will take turns playing Annie, from girlhood to grandmotherhood. They wheel props on a circular track, and play and sing everything from chanson and rock'n'roll to Pink Floyd.

Once you know its rules, though, *The Years* is pretty stunning. Mohindra plays Annie as a Fifties teen triumphantly yet furtively discovering masturbation to plenty of laughs from the women in the audience. The others play friends, lovers and family, narrating Annie's frustrations and epiphanies. One moment, deep personal pain; the next, transistor radios and "you could be alone without feeling alone".

Garai is Sixties Anna, whose illegal abortion is rendered in a startling scene that features cries of pain, blood and vivid talk of what is happening. From there, Annie heads through the free-loving Seventies into the free-market Eighties. Arbo and her English translator Stephanie Bain pack in a lot of life, yet an outstanding cast help ensure it's too human, sometimes too humorous, to feel like bullet points.

The longer it goes on, the more joyous it feels, even as it looks decay and obsolescence in the face. You leave understanding this woman's place in the world — and your own — in a new way. It's a real eye-opener. **To August 31, almeida.co.uk**

## opera

### Tristan und Isolde

Glyndebourne

★★★★☆

It's not unusual to come away from a Wagner opera reminded of just how demanding his work can be. The premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* famously (allegedly) did for its star tenor after just four performances.

After the opening night of this revival of Nikolaus Lehnhoff's beautifully abstracted 2003 production placing Wagner's high fantasy of feuding knights and magic-wielding maids in an alluringly backlit theatre of the mind, there is a question mark over how many of the seven dates our star tenor, Stuart Skelton, will be able to stand. Despite sounding stretched in an inauspicious first act, Skelton managed to rise in the second to meet his Isolde, sung not overly powerfully but sensitively and reliably, and with a persistent air of doom, by Miina-Liisa Varela, reprising the role from 2021.

By the final act, Skelton seemed to revive — at the point when his character is at death's door — only to sink a little beneath the waves again.

I don't mean to pile it on. One hopes Skelton battles through to the end. Also, he was only the weakest link. The central lovers were wreathed by an extremely strong supporting cast.

Shenyang brought a consistent intensity to Kurwenal, Tristan's right-hand man, while his fellow bass Franz-Josef Selig was a moving King Marke, finding vocal colours that made his character's sense of betrayal upon discovering his loyal knight and bride-to-be in each other's arms palpable.

The evening's finest performances weren't even on stage. An injured Karen Cargill — a victim, perhaps, of the curvaceous set, with its Barbara Hepworth-esque centrepiece — sang Isolde's handmaid Brangane to the side of the auditorium while Marlene Lichtenberg mimed. Cargill's was the most compelling vocal force and a match for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, who excelled themselves. Rarely have woodwinds sounded so alive. The conductor Robin Ticciati, who made his Wagnerian debut with this production in 2021, evinced a connectedness from this mercurial score that made the opera feel like one sweeping gesture, as Wagner intended.

**Daniel Lewis**  
**To August 25, glyndebourne.com**

## theatre

### The Grapes of Wrath

Lyttelton, National Theatre  
(165min)

★★★★☆

What a miserable evening! Granted, you don't turn up to *The Grapes of Wrath* expecting *Deadpool* & Wolverine-style breezy banter. If you know John Steinbeck's bestselling, Pulitzer-winning, syllabus-hugging 1939 novel, which depicts the Joad family's journey from hard times in Depression-era Oklahoma to even harder times in the promised land of California, you'll know it's a purposely punishing tale. Nobody will leave this show in any doubt as to the effects of poverty or economic migrancy.

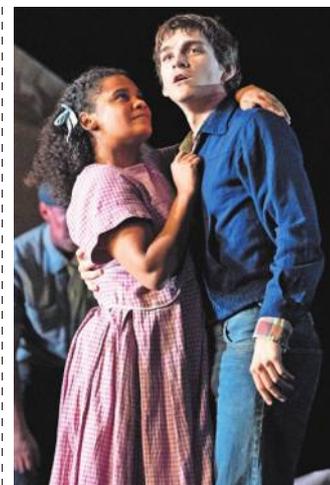
Yet there's something so doggedly doleful about Carrie Cracknell's almost three-hour production that it's hard work sitting through it. The show peaks with a spectacular opening: people battle against Dust Bowl gales, and the sharp look and theatrical physicality suggest a visually acute masterpiece afoot.

Alas, we soon settle into a faithful, handsome but stolid retelling of the book, with folk songs by Maimuna Memon that deepen the atmosphere and cover the scene changes but lengthen the running time too.

This is not an evening that's in a hurry. Frank Galati's adaptation, a Tony winner when first seen on Broadway in 1990, now feels old-fashioned. It assembles the characters and events as steadily as a mason might assemble a dry brick wall.

The first half gets the Joads to California, 13 of them in a small truck moved slowly around the lamplit stage. It's no spoiler to say that not everyone makes it there awake. Sorry, I mean alive. Everyone in the cast of 27 gives it their all but, with so little incident, there is time to be jarred by any imperfections in their accents.

Harry Treadaway as the morally outraged Tom Joad is a sturdy rather than magnetic central presence. Natey



**Robyn Sinclair as Agnes Wainwright and Tucker St Ivany as Al Joad**

Jones is compelling as the former pastor Jim Casy, though, and the Broadway star Cherry Jones has an effortless, startling toughness as Ma Joad. Everything doubles in resonance when she is centre stage.

Moment by moment, it's handsomely done. There's a splash about in a pool, a nifty camp set, a barn dance. Yet while Alex Eales's restrained set design is elegant, all this lamplight can drag you down. Characters don't leap out of the gloom and there is precious little humour to help to frame all the sadness.

By the time the Joads are taking on bent employers, pernicious policing, deaths and biblical flooding, agony has piled on agony to the point where it's hard to feel anything. There is no lack of things to admire in this staging but numbingly little to enjoy. **DM**

**To September 14, nationaltheatre.org.uk**

# The bloodsuckers are back but lack a little bite

## Carol Midgley TV review



### Interview with the Vampire

BBC2

★★★★☆

Did you enjoy the full-blooded violence and full-on sexual fang-dango of the first series of *Interview with the Vampire*? Then you possibly found the opener to series two a little anaemic. Yes, there's a fair quota of neck-chomping, a beheading and a self-immolation by a very unhappy vampiress, but the mood is bleaker and less camp as the action shifts from New Orleans to Romania at the end of the Second World War. Louis (Jacob Anderson) is travelling with the ever-peckish Claudia, who sharp-eyed readers will notice has shapeshifted and is now

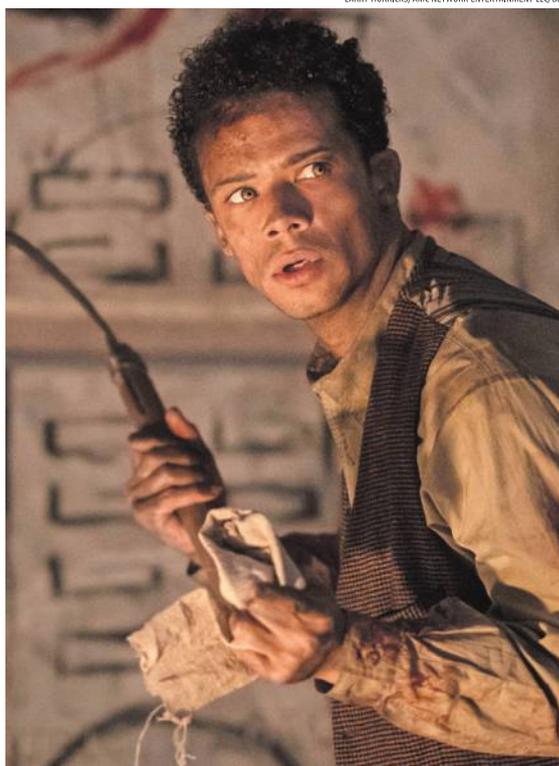
played by Delainey Haines, not Bailey Bass. No idea why.

Bass was terrific, though Delainey is a good replacement who channels that same "teen psychopath" air. They are visiting the Motherland to find other bloodsuckers and evidence of Vlad the Impaler. Claudia is amused to see the locals wearing garlic necklaces and soldiers shooting through coffins to ward off vampires. Disappointingly we don't meet Count Dracula.

Louis and Claudia are searching for community now that Louis has "killed" Lestat (Sam Reid). But they find that the blood of their European victims is much below par, curdled by the horror of war. "We are drinking misery, hopelessness," Louis says. That's how I feel when a pub only serves Foster's.

Having found an aesthetically unpleasing child vampire feasting on soldiers in the forest — like "a p\*\*\*ing catfish with teeth", Louis says — they aren't really liking their "poorly timed European holiday". That was a good line but the dry wit so abundant in series one is largely lacking here.

But still ... it finds its stride from episode two when they decide to travel to France and things get camped up to the rafters. The idea of them finding a coven of vampires near the Pigalle who put on a theatrical vampire show for delighted human punters, who think it's all faux horror when it's



Jacob Anderson returns as the vampire Louis de Pointe du Lac

really a cover for real vampy exploits, is a tasty one. You could say it has bite.

While the series suffers from not enough Lestat, who is seen for much of the time only in Louis' memories and hallucinations, it makes up for it via the introduction of Santiago, the leading vampire thespian of the theatre group, who is brilliantly played by Ben Daniels. He injects energy into what is often a sluggish pace as Louis is interviewed at length in his Dubai penthouse by Daniel Molloy (the splendidly sarcastic Eric Bogosian) alongside his new vampire boyfriend, the slippery Armand (Assad Zaman). Things can get repetitive.

But the dialogue does sparkle as the series flits seamlessly between the silly and the profound, questioning the meaning of existence, the difference between enduring and living, but with modern references to, for example, Siri and Prince Harry, as well as tongue-in-cheek mentions of the "sun-challenged" vampire community.

There must have been a hefty contact lens budget, as the vampires all have eyes that look like coloured marbles.

One of the best episodes is the eighth and last, which delivers a nice reunion and a great twist that I think was wasted. It is mentioned in such a light-touch way that it leaves you demanding to know what happened next as the credits roll. Ah, duh — right, I see. That'll be series three, then.

## Radio choice

Ben Dowell



### Live BBC Proms

Radio 3, 8pm

Yes, every Proms season has the usual debates: should they wave the flags and sing *Rule, Britannia*? And what about some of the headline-grabbing acts that are clearly more populist than Purcell or Prokofiev? One of this year's talking points is the presence on the bill of the genderqueer pop star Sam Smith, above, performing seminal debut solo album *In the Lonely Hour* ten years on from its release. Decide for yourself as Linton Stephens presents the BBC Concert Orchestra and the conductor Simon Hale, alongside Ruth O'Mahony-Brady (piano), Ben Thomas (guitar), Steve Pearce (bass) and Ralph Salmins (drums).

### OUR TV NEWSLETTER

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## Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app  
**5.00am** Rosie Wright with Early Breakfast  
**6.00** Chloe Tilley and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Mornings on Times Radio. Political interviews and conversation **1.00pm** Ayesha Hazarika **4.00** Times Radio Drive. Conversation with political and economic guests **7.00** Ed Vaizey. The Conservative peer sits in bringing his take on the day's news **10.00** Henry Bonsu. Late night news and discussion **1.00am** The Story **1.30** The Best of Times Radio

## Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz  
**7.00am** The Gaby Roslin Breakfast Show  
**10.00** Gary Davies **12.00** Jeremy Vine  
**2.00pm** Scott Mills **3.30** Scott Mills' Wonder Years **4.00** Sara Cox **7.00** Michelle Visage **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits. Feelgood party classics handpicked by Michelle. This evening's theme is Vay-cay Slay with non-stop summer holiday bops **9.00** UK Garage Classics with DJ Spooky. A concert from the Royal Albert Hall to mark the movement that revolutionised dance music in the '90s, '00s and still resonates today **11.00** The Rock Show with Johnnie Walker. The host introduces a selection of new and classic rock tracks **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop **1.00am** CMA Fest **2.00** CMA Fest **3.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin (r) **4.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco

## Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz  
**6.30am** Breakfast  
Petroc Trelawny presents classical breakfast show with the Friday poem and music that captures the mood of the morning  
**9.30** Essential Classics  
Ian Skelly plays a selection of music and features, including new discoveries, some musical surprises and familiar favourites **1.00pm** Classical Live  
With Elizabeth Alker, including another chance to hear last night's Prom from the Royal Albert Hall in which the Philharmonia Chorus, and the RPO played by works by Ives, Ravel, Debussy and Tchaikovsky. Haydn (*Te Deum* No. 2 in C); Bosmans (Piano Trio); Casella (Concerto for Orchestra); Bach (*Tocatta in C minor BWV 911*); Ives (*Three Places in New England*); Ravel (Piano Concerto in G major); Debussy (*Nocturnes*); and Tchaikovsky (*Francesca da Rimini*)

## 4.00 Composer of the Week:

**Musical Olympians — Ethel Smyth**  
Donald Macleod explores the world of composer Ethel Smyth through five love affairs that shaped her life and music. Today, her last grand passion, the writer Virginia Woolf. Smyth (*Soul's Joy, Now I am Gone; Two Interlinked French Melodies from Entente Cordiale; Odelette — Four Songs, No 1; Mass — Sanctus/Benedictus; The Prison — Nos 14-16 and Double Concerto for Horn and Violin II — Elegy*)

## 5.00 In Tune

Sean Rafferty with songs from the *Great American Songbook* performed by Susan Bullock and Richard Sisson. Plus a live set from saxophonist Julian Costello

## 7.30 Classical Mixtape

A selection of classical favourites mixed with jazz, folk and music from around the world

## 8.00 Live BBC Proms 2024

From the Royal Albert Hall, Linton Stephens presents as the BBC Concert Orchestra and conductor Simon Hale with singer Sam Smith perform their seminal debut solo album *In the Lonely Hour*. Ten years on from its original release, the album's autobiographical tracks on the theme of unrequited love are reimagined with full orchestral support. In tracks such as *Stay With Me, Lay Me Down* and other songs from Sam Smith's later work, expect the singer's unmatched voice and raw honesty to feature front and centre. Linton Stephens also speaks to the singer about performing with the BBC Concert Orchestra, and is joined by drag queen and singer Divina de Campo. **See Radio Choice**

## 10.15 Late Junction

Jennifer Lucy Allan fires the starting gun on a musical Olympics and features a remote collaboration between Sofia Jenbergs, Saint Abdullah and Viki Steiri  
**11.30** 'Round Midnight  
Soweto Kinch presents the best in jazz with a particular focus on the British scene  
**12.30am** Through the Night (r)

## 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 Amol Rajan and Justin Webb  
**9.00** Desert Island Discs  
Gardener and writer Sarah Raven talks to presenter Lauren Laverne about her life, and selects eight favourite recordings to take to the BBC's mythical island (12/14) (r)

## 10.00 Woman's Hour

Presented by Anita Rani  
**11.00** The Food Programme  
Investigating every aspect of food  
**11.45** Status  
Journalist Carl Honore explores the ways social status is changing (5/5)  
**12.04pm** Rare Earth  
Meeting people with fresh ideas to combat the problem of rising sea levels (9/10)  
**1.00** The World at One  
**1.45** NatureBang  
Becky Ripley and Emily Knight dig deep into underground plant roots and fungi (5/5)  
**2.00** The Archers (r)  
**2.15** Drama: *The Skies Are Watching*  
By Jon Frechette. Heather, Jana and Constance rendezvous with members of a UFO cult under JD's orders to find out if Vance's prediction came true. Starring Caitlin Stacey and Jake 'The Snake' Roberts (5/5)  
**2.45** Communicating with Ros Atkins  
The presenter talks to personal finance journalist and campaigner Martin Lewis on communicating efficiently (7/8)  
**3.00** Gardeners' Question Time  
Experts answer listeners' queries in Exeter  
**3.45** Short Works  
*White Ferrari*, by Caleb Azumah Nelson  
**4.00** Last Word  
A selection of obituaries  
**4.30** Sideways  
Matthew Syed questions the ethics of space exploration. Last in the series (r)  
**5.00** PM  
**6.00** Six O'Clock News  
**6.30** Catherine Bohart: TL;DR  
Catherine Bohart unpacks the news agenda, in a show that goes beyond the headlines and finds the funny in the detail (2/6)  
**7.00** The Archers  
George accepts an invitation  
**7.15** ScreenShot  
Ellen E Jones and Mark Kermod take a deep 'dive' into the world of mermaids on screen, marking the 40th anniversary of romantic comedy *Splash* hitting the big screen (5/6)  
**8.00** Any Questions?  
Topical discussion, chaired by Alex Forsyth  
**8.50** A Point of View  
A reflection on a topical issue  
**9.00** Voice in the Machine  
Jon Briggs and Emma Hignett discuss the history and evolution of technology that speaks and listens to humans (r)  
**10.00** The World Tonight  
With Shaun Ley  
**10.45** Book at Bedtime:  
Giovanni's Room  
By James Baldwin (5/5)

## 10.00 Americast

Analysis of the huge cultural and social stories that define political debate in the US  
**11.30** The Science of... *Knife Crime*  
The work of trauma doctor Saleeha Ahsan (r)  
**12.00** News and Weather  
**12.30am** Status (5/5) (r)  
**12.48** Shipping Forecast  
**1.00** As BBC World Service

## 11.00 Americast

Analysis of the huge cultural and social stories that define political debate in the US  
**11.30** The Science of... *Knife Crime*  
The work of trauma doctor Saleeha Ahsan (r)  
**12.00** News and Weather  
**12.30am** Status (5/5) (r)  
**12.48** Shipping Forecast  
**1.00** As BBC World Service

## Radio 4 Extra

Digital only  
**8.00am** Daliso Chaponda: Citizen of Nowhere **8.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics **8.45** Shifting the Leaves **9.00** Time of the Week **9.30** Wow! How Did They Do That? **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Soul Music **10.30** James Baldwin's Last Amen **11.00** Lord Jim **11.30** Berkely Mather — Returned Without Thanks **12.00** Second Thoughts **12.30pm** Share and Share Alike **1.00** Daliso Chaponda: Citizen of Nowhere **1.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics **1.45** Shifting the Leaves **2.00** All the Way from Memphis **2.30** Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me **3.00** James Baldwin's Last Amen **4.00** Soul Music **4.30** James Baldwin's Last Amen **5.00** Lord Jim **5.30** Berkely Mather — Returned Without Thanks **6.00** Second Thoughts **6.30** Share and Share Alike **7.00** Daliso Chaponda: Citizen of Nowhere. People who do not want the relationship between the UK and Africa to work **7.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics. By Don Black. Last in the series **7.45** Shifting the Leaves. Drama, by Dave Sheehy. Last in the series **8.00** All the Way from Memphis. Music quiz hosted by James Walton **8.30** Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me. George celebrates his 70th birthday. First aired in 2005. Last in the series **9.00** James Baldwin's Last Amen. Clarke Peters appraises the late writer's observations on race, power and black identity **10.00** Comedy Club: Time of the Week. Chloe Sack finds out if a song can induce labour **10.30** The Million Pound Radio Show. Comedy with Nick Revell and Andy Hamilton. Last in the series **11.00** Absolute Power. An old flame pits spinmeisters Charles and Martin against each other **11.30** As Told to Craig Brown. The satirist focuses on inventions and CCTV

## Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909  
**5.00am** Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **10.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** 5 Live Olympics. Coverage of show jumping and boxing events

**3.30** 5 Live Olympics. Featuring coverage of badminton, archery, and tennis **6.30** 5 Live Olympics. Featuring coverage of swimming, athletics, tennis, and BMX cycling **10.00** Stephen Nolan **1.00am** Lisa McCormick

## talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz  
**5.00am** Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Shebann Aherne & Rory Jennings **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** talkSPORT Drive with Andy Goldstein **7.00** Olympic Kick-Off Paris 2024. Debating all the sporting issues **10.00** Sports Bar Weekender **1.00am** Extra Time with Martin Kelner

## Talk

Digital only  
**5.00am** James Max **6.30** Mike Graham **10.00** Alex Phillips **1.00pm** Nick de Bois **4.00** Peter Cardwell **7.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **9.00** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan **10.00** Andre Walker Jr. Ash **1.00am** Martin Kelner

## 6 Music

Digital only  
**5.00am** The Remix with Chris Hawkins **5.30** Chris Hawkins **7.30** Lauren Laverne **10.30** Mary Anne Hobbs **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Emily Pilbeam **7.00** The People's Party with Afrodeutsche **9.00** Indie Forever **11.00** The Ravers Hour **12.00** Rave Forever **1.00am** 6 Music's Emo Forever **2.00** Focus Beats **4.00** Ambient Focus

## Virgin Radio

Digital only  
**6.30am** Nick Grimshaw with The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with webuyanycar **10.00** The Ryan Tubridy Show **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00** Leigh Francis **7.00** Ben Jones. Music and chat **10.00** Stu Elmore **1.00am** Harpz Kaur **4.00** Rich Williams

## 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** Classic FM at the Movies with Jonathan Ross **9.00** Perfect Pitch with Karthi Gnanasegaram **10.00** Calm Classics. With Myleene Klass. **1.00am** Katie Breathwick **4.00** Sam Pittis

# television & radio

## Viewing Guide Toby Earle

**Miriam Margolyes: A New Australian Adventure**  
BBC2, 9pm

**Top pick** Miriam Margolyes has changed. This is a new Miriam, physically and

mentally. Her blocked aortic valve has been replaced with a cow's valve and she now feels more anxious about her life. Hours after sharing this outlook Margolyes is in Western Australia watching jet skiers noisily churn the ocean. "Jet skis ... I think they are moronic, dangerous, defiling instruments of death," she comments. Why,

she has changed beyond all recognition. At the outset of this three-part series Margolyes states that the purpose of this trip to three locations is to find out why people end up in certain tribes, what drives that sense of belonging, and if Australia is a country that allows them to find acceptance. The

principal strand that unifies this first episode is how people deal with change, whether that's meeting British migrants at a Jaguar owners' car club or Kylie Forth, a world champion blind sailor and amputee whose sea leg causes Miriam to feel some shame. Of all the life changes she encounters none are as extreme as those

experienced by Clive, Tony and Jim, First Nation Australians and members of the Stolen Generation. For decades the authorities abducted children from their families and forced them into white missions, where they were stripped of their identity. Margolyes rages at the inhuman policy, and so will you.

## Olympics: Paris 2024

BBC1, from 8am  
Team GB's success story has a page ready for addition: Bryony Page, who wants to write a golden script in the Women's Trampoline Final (BBC1, 12.50pm). She's won the European and World Championships on the bounce, and will

be aiming to add a gold to her collection. Two sets of riders also take to the air. Ben Maher will compete in his fifth games in the Team Showjumping (Eurosport 2, 1pm), while Beth Shriver defends her gold and Kye Whyte looks to upgrade his Tokyo silver in the Women's and Men's BMX Finals (BBC1, 8.35pm).

### BBC1

**Early**

**6.00am** Breakfast **8.00** Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Jeanette Kwakye and JJ Chalmers present action from day seven. Athletics at the Stade de France takes centre stage with the women's 100m heats which start at **9.35** and the men's heats for the 1500m from **10.05**. Plus diving at the Aquatics Centre, featuring men's synchronised 3m springboard final from **10.00**, and rowing at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium, with the men's pair final at **10.30** and women's lightweight double sculls at **11.22**. Plus, the women's trampoline final at the Bercy Arena and the women's shooting 50m rifle 3 position final at the Chateaux Shooting Centre. See *Viewing Guide* **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 of the equestrian jumping team final at the Chateau de Versailles. There are also medals to be decided in badminton's mixed doubles at the Porte de la Chapelle Arena and in judo at the Champ de Mars Arena, with Teddy Riner the star name in the men's heavyweight +100 division **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather **6.30** BBC Regional News; Weather

### BBC2

**6.30am** Sign Zone: Great Coastal Railway Journeys (r) (AD, SL) **7.00** Dr Xand's Con or Cure (r) (SL) **7.30** Big Little Crimes (r) (SL) **8.00** 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) (AD) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD) **12.15pm** Bargain Hunt (r) (AD) **1.00** Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Continued coverage of day seven of the Paris Games, with British trampolinist Bryony Page in action at the Bercy Arena **1.45** Make Me a Dealer. Novice antiques dealers from Telford and Bedfordshire learn the trade (r) **2.30** The Customer Is Always Right. Items include a specially designed pram (r) **3.00** Escape to the Country. A couple looking for a home in the border between Staffordshire and Derbyshire (r) (AD) **3.45** Ricky & Ralf's Very Northern Road Trip. The Royle campervan hits the North-East to visit the Angel of the North (r) **4.30** The Repair Shop. The team restores a dilapidated gramophone (r) (AD) **5.15** Flog It! Valuing antiques in Longleat, Wiltshire (r) **6.00** Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Athletics at the Stade de France, featuring the first round of the mixed 4x400m relay and women's 800m

### ITV1

**6.00am** Good Morning Britain **9.00** Lorraine. Entertainment, current affairs and fashion news, as well as showbiz stories and celebrity gossip. Presented by Lorraine Kelly **10.00** This Morning. Daily magazine, featuring a mix of celebrity chat, showbusiness news, lifestyle features, topical discussion, health and beauty advice and more. Including Local Weather **12.30pm** Loose Women. Topical debate from a female perspective **1.00** ITV News; Weather **1.20** Regional News; Weather **1.30** Live ITV Racing. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani present coverage of day four of the festival, which is headlined by the Qatar King George Stakes. With analysis from Jason Weaver and Leona 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 hosts as contestants from Enfield, Sheffield, Leeds and Glasgow come together in the hope that they can take one of the Chasers as a team and leave with thousands of pounds (r) **6.00** Regional News; Weather **6.30** ITV News; Weather

### Channel 4

**6.25am** Cheers (r) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) **9.05** Frasier (r) (AD) **11.05** The Simpsons (r) (AD) **12.05pm** Channel 4 News Summary **12.10** A New Life in the Sun. In Normandy, a couple battle a blocked toilet to get a room ready for guests (r) **1.10** Car SOS. Tim and Fuzz take on carpenter Mike's 1980 Ford Escort RS2000 (r) (AD) **2.10** Countdown. Helen Lederer is in Dictionary Corner **3.00** A Place in the Sun. Craig Rowe helps a photographer and videographer to find a holiday home on the Caribbean island of Barbados (r) **4.00** The Great House Giveaway. A fashion stylist is paired up with a painter-decorator and given a terraced house in the Birmingham borough of Ladywood to revamp **5.00** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? A return to Portugal to check in on a bar owner who fell foul of Covid lockdown rules. Plus, owners of a gite complex reveal whether they have managed to keep it afloat (r) **6.00** Come Dine with Me. The final night in and around north London features a menu of Greek Cypriot classics (r) **6.30** The Simpsons. An all-female reboot of Krusty's show leads Bart to join a group of protesters who commit crimes against the patriarchy (r) (AD)

### Channel 5

**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. Rachel ends her relationship with Paolo (r) (AD) **1.10** Friends. Chandler catches a glimpse of Rachel in the nude (r) (AD) **1.40** 5 News at Lunchtime **1.45** Home and Away. Tom Givens gasps for air in a devastated Mackenzie's arms, the Allens continue to demand Mali call Iluka. Meanwhile, Leah confronts Irene (r) (AD) **2.20** FILM: **Deadly Divorce Party** (PG, TVM, 2022) A woman falls for a man who seemingly meets every demand she has for a partner, leading her to ignore warnings about him. Thriller starring Glenda Braganza, Jeff Teravainen and Tomas Chovancek **4.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. A hair salon and cafe owner plans an afternoon treat for her staff, and cameras follow a car boot upcycler. Plus in Ojei, a man has fallen in love with a drag queen (r) **5.00** 5 News at 5 **6.00** Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles. The presenter embarks on the railway journey of a lifetime across the extraordinary landscapes of Peru to magical Machu Picchu. He begins his journey at Puno on Lake Titicaca (r) **6.55** 5 News Update



# Your 10 minute

Our unique daily podcast delivers three big stories from around the world, providing you with everything you need to know in global news, sports and entertainment.

**7PM** **7.00** Live Olympics: Paris 2024 Gabby Logan and Clare Balding host an evening of athletics, swimming and BMX Racing. The men's 50m freestyle final kicks things off at **7.30** at La Defense Arena, with Great Britain's Ben Proud hoping to compete. That is followed by the women's 200m backstroke final at **7.39**, featuring Scotland's Katie Shanahan, before a star-studded men's 200m individual medley at **7.49**. Over at the Stade de France, the men's 10,000m final is the main attraction in the athletics this evening at **8.20**, while there will be a chance to catch a first glimpse of Brits Keely Hodgkinson and Gemma Reekie as the women's 800m event gets under way. There's also British interest at the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines BMX Stadium, with Kye White vying to improve on his Tokyo men's silver and Beth Shriver seeking to retain her Olympic title in the women's race, with the respective finals at **8.35** and **8.50**

**8PM** **10.00** BBC News at Ten

**9PM** **10.30** BBC Regional News and Weather

**10PM** **10.40** Olympics: Paris 2024 — Tonight at the Games Isa Guha and Mark Chapman look back on a frenetic seventh day of Olympic action featuring swimming, trampolining, BMX racing and rowing, as 23 finalists took place with British athletes among the favourites in several of them

**11PM** **12.00am** FILM: **Pride (15, 2014)** Gay rights activists gather in London for a Pride march in 1984, and decide they have a common cause with the miners' strike — prompting them travel to a Welsh pit village to show their support in person. Fact-based drama starring Ben Schnetzer and Bill Nighy (AD) **2.00-6.00** BBC News

**7.00** Richard Osman's House of Games Malorie Blackman, Matt Dawson, Chris McCausland and Ranvir Singh take part on the general knowledge quiz (r)

**7.30** Beechgrove Garden Carole Baxter and Brian Cunningham dig into the first crop of potatoes that were planted in containers earlier in the year

**8.00** Gardeners' World Monty Don prunes his philadelphus, and takes cuttings, while Sue Kent assesses her summer borders and takes wallflower cuttings and Advolly Richmond visits the romantic masterpiece of Plas Brondanw, a visionary garden set in the majestic Eryri National Park

**9.00** Miriam Margolyes: A New Australian Adventure New series. The actress returns to one of her favourite countries. Her first stop is Perth, Western Australia, where she goes in search of fun and her own identity. See *Viewing Guide* (1/3) (AD)

**10.00** Mum A woman forced to deal with the death of her husband determines to find out who she is. Family comedy starring Lesley Manville (1/6) (r) (AD)

**10.30** Newsnight With Katie Razzall

**11.05** Official Secrets (15, 2019) Fact-based drama about the publication of a leaked GCHQ memo in the run-up to the Iraq war and the consequences for the whistleblower, who was put on trial for breaching the Official Secrets Act. Keira Knightley, Matt Smith and Rhys Ifans star. See *Viewing Guide*

**12.50am** Sign Zone: The Apartheid Killer An investigation into a series of shootings in 1980s South Africa, when private security guard Louis van Schoor killed at least 39 people, all of them black (r) (AD, SL) **2.05-3.05** Why Trains Crash. The aftermath of the 2023 train crash in India's eastern Odisha state (r) (AD, SL)

**7.30** Emmerdale Police arrive at Home Farm inquiring about Rose, Moira is affronted by the Dingles' priorities, and Caleb is the main suspect (AD)

**8.00** Coronation Street Max comforts Lauren after she is mugged at the precinct, Kirk's error threatens to expose Beth's scam, and Lisa charges someone for the arson attack (AD)

**9.00** Champions: Full Gallop The series continues with cameras focusing on trainer Paul Nicholls, as well as his former assistant Dan Skelton and Irish trainer Willie Mullins (3/6) (AD)

**10.00** ITV News at Ten

**10.30** Regional News

**10.45** For Your Eyes Only (PG, 1981) James Bond goes in search of a British weapons system aboard a sunken vessel before it falls into the hands of enemies who will use it to deactivate all Western submarines. Unfortunately, his mission is hindered by a crossbow-toting woman out to avenge her father's murder. Spy thriller starring Roger Moore, Topol, Julian Glover, Carole Bouquet and Jill Bennett (AD)

**12.55am** Shop on TV **3.00** Love & Death. As their affair continues, Candy fears that she and Allan are at risk of breaking their first rule about having no feelings for each other (r) (AD, SL) **3.55** Unwind with ITV **5.10-6.00** Jimmy & Shivi's Farmhouse Breakfast. Composer, pianist and producer Alexis Ffrench is the guest (r) (AD)

**7.00** Channel 4 News

**8.00** Lake District Rescue A fallen scrambler with head and neck injuries is precariously lodged at the edge of a waterfall for several hours and moving him threatens further problems. However, with the mountain water bringing him close to hypothermia, the team has little choice (r) (r) (AD)

**9.00** 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Jimmy Carr hosts as Alan Carr and Munya Chawawa take on Sarah Millican and Gary Delaney. Mathematician Rachel Riley looks after the letters and numbers, while Don Rodolfo — aka Ciarán Dowd — joins lexicographer Susie Dent in Dictionary Corner

**10.00** Jimmy Carr's I Literally Just Told You Jimmy Carr hosts this game show in which four contestants are given every answer with the questions written as the show is happening

**11.05** Gogglebox An edition from November 2023. Shows including *The Challenge*, *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!*, *The Crown*, *Planet Earth III* and *Saving Lives at Sea* are appraised (r) (AD)

**12.10am** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) **1.00** FILM: **Friends with Benefits (15, 2011)** Romantic comedy (AD) **2.50** Ramsay's Hotel Hell (r) (AD, SL) **3.35** Come Dine with Me (r) (AD) **4.50** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (r) (AD, SL) **4.55** Come Dine with Me (r) (AD) **5.45-6.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)

**7.00** Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders A police inspector receives a hug from a stranded motorist after a roadside rescue, but later stops a car with a filthy numberplate and gets an earful from the driver (4/10) (r) (AD)

**7.55** 5 News Update

**8.00** Motorway: Hell on the Highway Disasters caused by drivers making misjudgements at junctions, including a head-on smash between two vehicles on a blind bend near Harrogate and a lorry sent flying in a collision with another rig in Washington State, USA

**9.00** Terror at 30,000 Feet The series focuses on Britannia Airways Flight 266A, a holiday flight from Cardiff to the Costa Brava which hit a terrifying electrical storm and battled the elements as it tried to land

**10.00** When Movies Go Horribly Wrong Big screen slip-ups from the likes of Tom Cruise, Bruce Willis and Tippi Hedren. Mark Ruffalo puts his foot in it when he reveals the plot of *Avengers: Infinity War*. Fans are left baffled by Hollywood blockbuster *Cats*, and poor CGI befalls *Justice League*. Plus, Robert Downey Jr's Welsh accent in *Dolittle* leaves fans scratching their heads, and there is an uproar at the release of Monty Python's *Life of Brian*. Contributors include John Thomson, Patsy Kensit, comedian Rufus Hound and veteran actors Madeline Smith, Valerie Leon and Darren Nesbitt. Sean Pertwee narrates (r)

**1.00am** PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.00** Carol Klein's Great British Gardens. The garden of acclaimed nurseryman Graham Gough (r) **3.50** Health Focus: Are They a Con? (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)



# MindGames

## Backgammon Chris Bray

### World Team Championships

This year the World Team Championships were held in Stockholm. The UK women did extremely well in qualifying for the final, but sadly lost to a very strong US team. So congratulations to Julia Hayward (captain), Anna Parker, Anna Price, Merrin Rose, Becca Bell and Rachel Rhodes.

Despite fielding our strongest ever team, the UK men narrowly failed to reach the final where Austria beat Italy to take the title. In one of the early rounds the men had a remarkable result, beating the Japanese team 5-0.

On the top board, Seb Wilkinson beat Masayuki Mochizuki (Mochy). Mochy had a very respectable Performance Rating (PR) of 3.38, but he was outplayed by Seb whose PR was a truly remarkable 1.60. Mochy made a couple of very uncharacteristic errors, including one in this week's position.

Seb (Black) was leading 8-4 to 11 and doubled. At 0-0 this would be a huge pass but, as we have seen before, the match score has a significant influence on doubling deci-

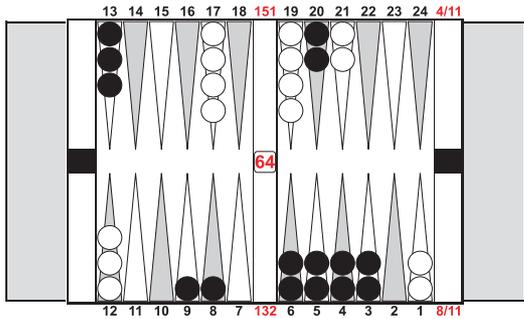
sions. Mochy's Rule states that you should take a minimum of 12 seconds over any doubling decision, but Mochy failed to apply his own rule and passed very quickly to give Seb a 9-4 lead. Seb won the match in the next game.

Can this possibly be a take for White? The answer is "yes", and in fact it is nearly a blunder to pass. The first thing to note is that Black does not get full value from his gammons as he only needs three points to win the match and a gammon gets him four points, one of which is therefore unneeded.

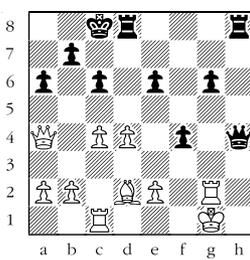
Second, all of White's checkers are in play and well-placed, other than his two checkers on Black's ace-point.

Finally, White will be very quick to redouble if he manages to turn the game around. With the cube on four, a gammon for White would win the match for him. Mochy made the cardinal error of making a money game decision in a match-play situation. I have no doubt that when he reviews the match, he will be very annoyed with himself.

The key lesson here is something I have often mentioned before: never ever forget the score.



## Winning Move

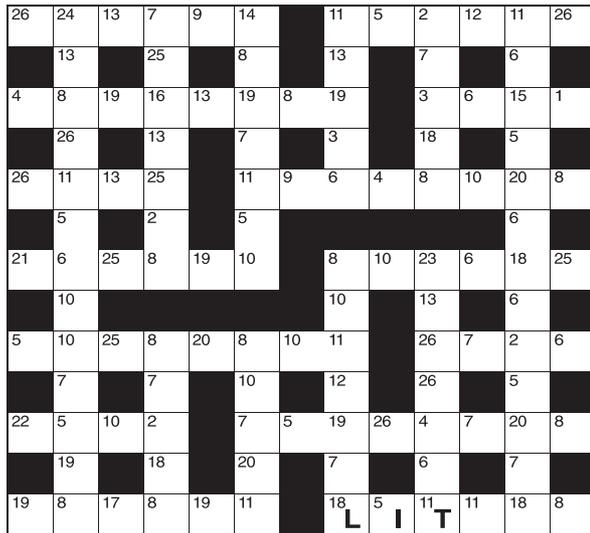


### Black to play.

This position is from Jarocka-Injac, Titled Tuesday, chess.com 2024.

Black has sacrificed a piece for a promising attack. The queen and rook on the h-file are bearing down menacingly and the white king lacks defenders. However, as is often the case in chess, Black now needs to open a second front in order to create decisive threats. Can you spot the ingenious way he did this?

## Codeword No 5283



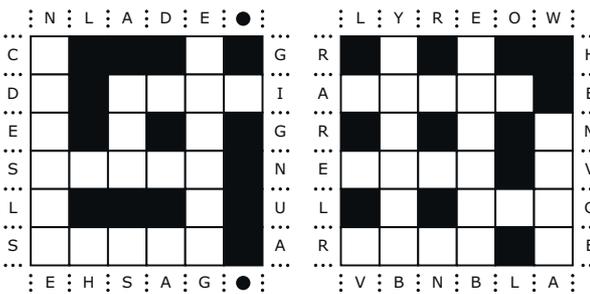
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

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*

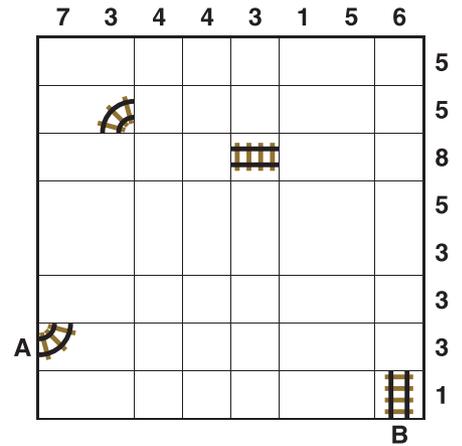
**Cueclines Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

## Lexica Easy No 7569 Hard No 7570



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 2311



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

- 1 Throw up? (3)
- 2 Wool to take to the cleaners (6)
- 3 Sit outside a Post Office carrying pouch (7)
- 4 City company board corrupt (7)
- 5 Fighter happy one by a hill (9)

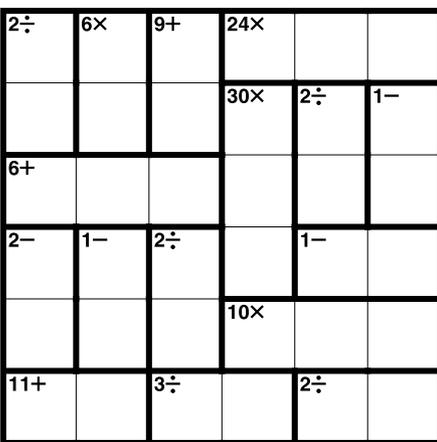
A	A	A	A	B	B	C	C
D	D	E	E	E	E	F	G
I	L	L	L	O	O	O	O
O	O	P	P	R	R	S	T

Challenge your mind with puzzle books from The Times



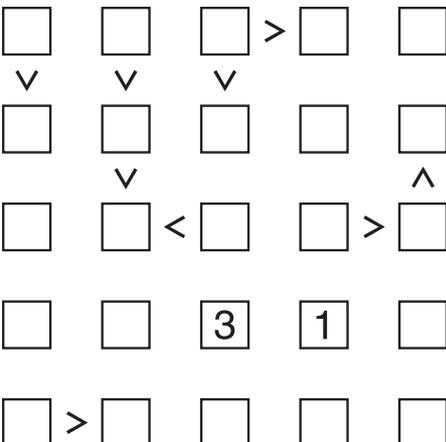
What are your favourite puzzles in MindGames?  
Email: [puzzles@thetimes.co.uk](mailto:puzzles@thetimes.co.uk)

## KenKen Difficult No 6275



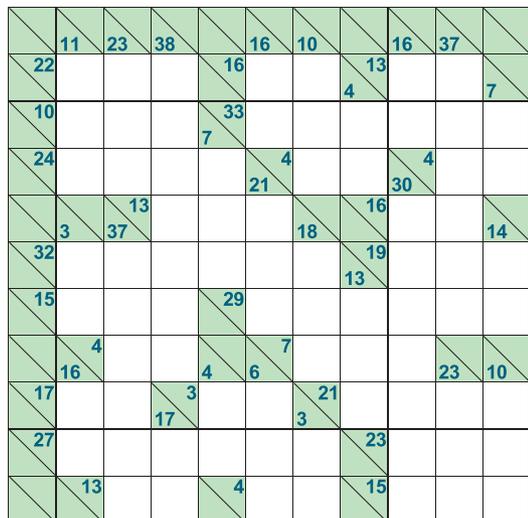
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

## Futoshiki No 4823



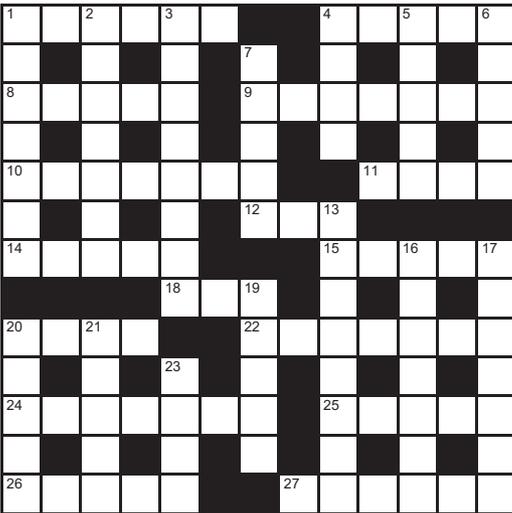
Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

## Kakuro No 3782



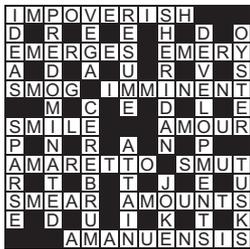
Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

times2 Crossword No 9599



- Across**  
 1 Floor of a fireplace (6)  
 4 Rifle's aiming aid (5)  
 8 Of the neighbourhood (5)  
 9 Large ornate wardrobe (7)  
 10 Brief view (7)  
 11 Happy, satisfied (4)  
 12 Definite article (3)  
 14 Group of nine players (5)  
 15 The food of love? (5)
- Down**  
 18 Chop, hack (3)  
 20 Gallbladder substance (4)  
 22 Ailment (7)  
 24 Breathe (7)  
 25 Democratic Republic of Congo's former name (5)  
 26 Set ablaze (5)  
 27 In ---, as one (6)

Solution to Crossword 9598



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

Twenty Bidding Maxims  
 18. If you're 90% sure of the final contract, just bid it

Don't fuff about confusing partner and giving information to the opponents if you are pretty sure where you'll end up.

You open 1♥ and partner jumps to 3♥. What now with these two?

- ♠KQ
- ♥AQ973
- ♦74
- ♣AK42
- ♠A42
- ♥AKJ972
- ♦AK102
- ♣AQ102

On the first, the decision is whether or not to look for slam. First, construct a perfect hand for partner and assess whether 6♥ is a good slam. Two aces and the king of hearts is too good for a limit raise but partner could have this highly suitable (indeed minimum) hand ♠Axx, ♥J10xx, ♦Axxx, ♣xx. Even if the opponents find their best lead of a diamond, you'll win dummy's ♠A, cross to ♠KQ, cash ♠AK, ruff ♠2 and cash ♠A, dropping ♠7. You can now run ♥J and later ruff ♠4, probably making Six or Seven depending on the location of ♥K.

Get real. Even down to the doubleton club, this is a perfect. For every one such hand opposite, there are at least nine where 6♥ is hopeless or near-hopeless (especially on a diamond lead, which you may pinpoint if you investigate). Just raise to 4♥.

On our second, a really fabulous hand, it's clearly a question of Six or Seven. Construct a perfect. How or ♠Kx, ♥Q10xx, ♦xxx, ♣KJxx (only barely a 3 bid)? Facing that dummy, 7♥ is easy.

Should you investigate?

No. First, will you ever be able to bid 7♥ with confidence (or even 7♣, which could be superior eg facing ♠Kxx, ♥Qxxx, ♦xx, ♣KJ9x)? Second, your erudite conversation will assist the opponents with their lead and defence. Just blast 6♥.

Dealer S

♠86	♠A74	♠97643
♥Q952	♥J74	♥AKJ4
♦Q106	♦Q102	♦AKJ4
♣K95	♣AKJ4	♣KJ953
	♠1073	♠82
	♥AKJ8	♥AKJ8
	♦Q1062	♦Q1062
	♠5	♠A83

S	W	N	E
1♥	Pass	2♥(1)	Pass
4♥(2)	End		

- Scraping up the raise with the huge ♥Axx, a jack and a doubleton.
- Not fuffing about with eg 2♣. You're pretty sure you want to play 4♥ (it's a lovely shapely, control-rich hand, after all); so don't give the opponents gratuitous information.

Any lead but a spade would have sunk 4♥. However, with South keeping her spades unmentioned, out popped ♠2. Declarer beat ♠10 with ♠J and led ♠5. East won and switched to ♥2 (best), declarer beating West's ♥10 with ♥A. Declarer now crossed to ♠AK (dropping ♠4) then led ♠4, dropping ♠8 as she let West's ♠Q win (key play). Unable to attack hearts profitably from her side, West switched to ♠5. Declarer beat East's ♠Q with ♠A, ruffed ♠3, ruffed ♥4, ruffed ♠8, ruffed ♠6, cashed ♥K and merely gave up to ♥Q. Ten tricks made. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

**EASY** 27 x 3 - 9 ÷ 12 SQUARE IT 3/4 OF IT + 6 2/3 OF IT x 4 - 9

**MEDIUM** 87 x 4 + 42 90% OF IT + 97 + 1/2 OF IT - 54 + 1/2 OF IT + 57 25% OF IT

**HARDER** 178 + 472 + 1/2 OF IT x 3 + 795 90% OF IT + 876 7/8 OF IT + 759 8/9 OF IT

Polygon

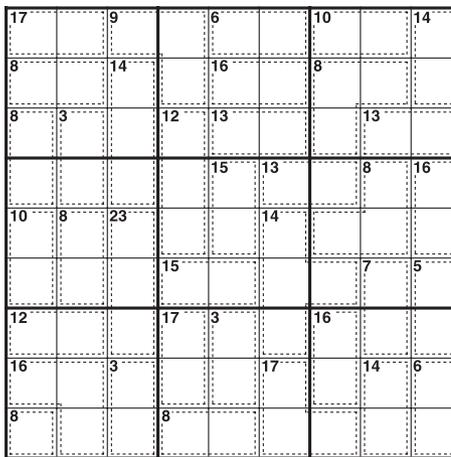


From these letters, make words of four or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. How you rate 14 words, average; 19, good; 25, very good; 31, excellent

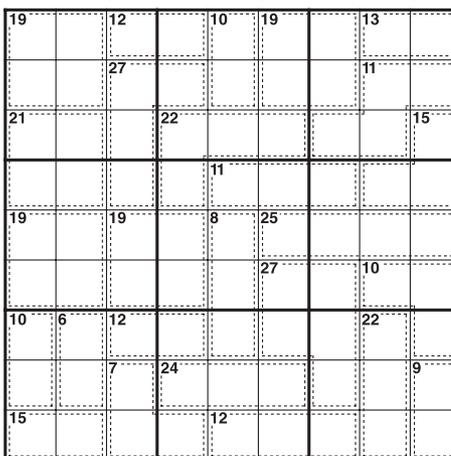
Yesterday's answers

acer, acre, allure, caller, care, cell, cella, cellar, cellular, clear, clue, cruel, culler, cure, earl, ecru, lace, laurel, lead, luce, lure, lure, race, rale, real, recall, rule, ulcer, urea

Killer Moderate No 9604



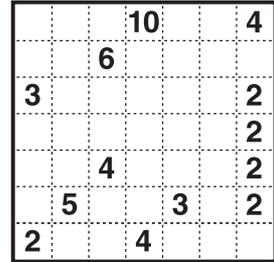
Killer Deadly No 9605



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 5166



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 3785

$$\begin{matrix} \times & \div & = & 16 \\ + & \div & \times & \\ + & \times & 7 & = & 77 \\ \times & + & - & \\ + & 5 & - & = & 2 \\ = & = & = & \\ 15 & 9 & 17 & \end{matrix}$$

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 2743**  
 CROWDED M O  
 A B E ETERNAL  
 NASCENT D C A  
 T O M ANISEED  
 TABLE I O Y  
 N E TENACIOUS  
 K T A R R F  
 ELECTABLE G I  
 R T U DIAM  
 O P P R E S S I N G  
 U A R T U R B I N E  
 S U R R E A L I S R  
 E D E X P R E S S

**Codeword 5282**  
 S V E R B B U Z Z J  
 C O O R A A E K E  
 R O O V A U N T M  
 U N D O K J F I L M  
 M O D E P O T T Y  
 R O A R L O C H E  
 P A L E T T E  
 T S E P A M A P E X  
 T H O E X T O L S  
 R O U T Y U L S C U M  
 U I E L E G Y H I  
 T I N E H E R R  
 H E X A M T H A W K

**Kakuro 3781**  
 2 4 4 2 1 7 9 4  
 1 3 6 1 3 7 9 8 2  
 5 7 9 8 5 8 6 1  
 7 2 9 8 6 8 6  
 3 1 7 5 6 5 6  
 6 8 9 7 5 2 1  
 3 1 8 6 9 4 3  
 1 6 4 2 9 8 7 5  
 3 8 9 6 7 1 2 1 2  
 2 9 7 9 3 1 3 1

**Sudoku 15,114**  
 7 8 9 5 2 4 1 6 3  
 1 2 5 6 8 3 9 4 7  
 4 6 3 7 9 1 5 8 2  
 9 5 8 4 3 2 6 7 1  
 3 7 6 1 5 8 2 9 4  
 2 4 1 9 6 7 8 3 5  
 5 9 4 2 7 6 3 1 8  
 8 1 2 3 4 9 7 5 6  
 6 3 7 8 1 5 4 2 9

**Tetonor 488**  
 20 156 27 55  
 2 + 18 13 x 12 20 + 7 11 x 5  
 144 12 196 39  
 4 x 36 5 + 7 2 x 98 5 + 34  
 36 140 25 100  
 2 x 18 7 x 20 12 + 13 98 + 2  
 40 35 170 16  
 4 + 36 7 x 5 34 x 5 5 + 31

**Sudoku 15,115**  
 4 2 8 6 3 5 1 9 7  
 5 1 9 8 7 4 6 3 2  
 3 7 6 1 2 9 5 8 4  
 8 3 7 9 5 6 4 2 1  
 9 4 2 3 1 7 8 6 5  
 1 6 5 2 4 8 9 7 3  
 6 5 4 7 8 3 2 1 9  
 2 9 3 4 6 1 7 5 8  
 7 8 1 5 9 2 3 4 6

**Cell Blocks 5165**  
 2 5 14  
 6 3  
 4 3  
 3 5  
 3 4

**Set Square 3784**  

$$\begin{matrix} 9 \times 4 + 8 \\ + \times - \times \\ 7 - 1 + 6 \\ - \times - \div \\ 5 + 2 - 3 \end{matrix}$$

**Lexica 7567**  
 A T I O  
 R A T I O  
 K J L O  
 V E I L  
 M A I N L Y

**Sudoku 15,116**  
 3 8 7 4 5 6 9 1 2  
 5 2 6 1 8 9 4 3 7  
 9 4 1 2 7 3 8 6 5  
 2 3 5 7 4 8 1 9 6  
 7 6 8 5 9 1 3 2 4  
 4 1 9 3 6 2 5 7 8  
 8 9 2 6 3 4 7 5 1  
 1 5 3 8 2 7 6 4 9  
 6 7 4 9 1 5 2 8 3

**Futoshiki 4822**  
 5 1 2 4 4 3  
 4 3 2 1 < 2  
 1 4 3 2 5  
 2 1 5 4 3 6  
 3 2 > 1 5 4  
 3 2 > 1 5 4

**KenKen 6274**  
 4 6 1 3 2 5  
 6 2 3 1 5 4  
 1 5 4 2 6 3  
 2 1 5 4 3 6  
 5 3 2 6 4 1  
 3 4 6 5 1 2

**Lexica 7568**  
 R E T I N G  
 A L L L  
 T O T L  
 Y E E  
 U N E A S Y

Today's solutions

**Concise Quintagram**  
 1 Earl  
 2 Wilson  
 3 Walker  
 4 Rudolph  
 5 Jefferson

**Cryptic Quintagram**  
 1 Lob  
 2 Fleeces  
 3 Panopse  
 4 Cordoba  
 5 Gladiator

**Suko 4184**  
 9 1 16  
 3 4 2  
 10 21  
 5 7 8

**Brain Trainer**  
 Easy 79  
 Medium 246  
 Harder 3,960

**Word watch**  
 Nucleiform (b) Bearing nuts (Collins)  
 Vigorish (b) A fee deducted from a gambler's winnings (OED)  
 Gradatory (c) A flight of steps, esp in a church (OED)

**Chess - Winning Move**  
 1... f3! leads to a decisive opening of further lines against the white king. After 2 exf3 Qxd4+ 3 Rf2 (3 Kf1 Rh1+ wins) Black concludes with the clever tactic 3... Rh1+! 4 Kxh1 Qxf2 5 Bc3 Rd7! and mate follows with ... Rh7

**Quiz**  
 1 Heart 2 Honey  
 3 Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea  
 4 Olive Oyl 5 Daniel Craig  
 6 Keir Hardie  
 7 Alfred the Great  
 8 Anthony Hopkins  
 9 Iceland 10 Suzanne Vega  
 11 Celtic 12 North York Moors  
 13 Philip VI  
 14 White's king  
 15 Micah Richards

# MindGames

## Word watch

David Parfitt

- Nuciferous**  
**a** Forming clouds  
**b** Bearing nuts  
**c** Of the nape of the neck
- Vigorous**  
**a** An ancient Germanic language  
**b** A fee deducted from a gambler's winnings  
**c** Full of enthusiasm
- Gradatory**  
**a** Fixated on facts and figures  
**b** (Of traffic) flowing in a circular manner  
**c** A flight of steps

Answers on page 15

## Sudoku Mild No 15,117

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

## Difficult No 15,118

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

## Fiendish No 15,119

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

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

JAMES GILL-DANEHOUSE/GETTY IMAGES

- Cardiac muscle makes up the thick middle layer of which organ?
- Which sweet foodstuff is obtained through apiculture?
- Which 1870 Jules Verne novel was reimaged by Dave Eggers in *The Story of Captain Nemo*?
- Shelley Duvall played which role in Robert Altman's 1981 musical film *Popeye*?
- Which star of five James Bond films is fronting Loewe's Fall/Winter 2024 men's campaign?
- In 1900, which Labour Party founder became the socialist

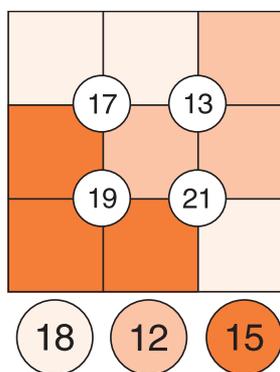


- 15 MP for Merthyr Tydfil?
- 7 Which king of Wessex agreed the Treaty of Wedmore (878) with the Viking ruler Guthrum?
- 8 Which Welsh actor plays the Roman emperor Vespasian in the 2024 TV drama *Those About to Die*?
- 9 Oraefajokull is which island country's tallest volcano?
- 10 *Luka* is a 1987 single

- by which American singer-songwriter?
- 11 A reference to his Irish heritage, what is the Secret Service code name of the US president Joe Biden?
- 12 Which national park is home to the Kilburn White Horse?
- 13 Jeanne de Clisson (1300-1359) became a pirate after which French king had her husband Olivier IV executed?
- 14 In chess, which piece begins the game on e1?
- 15 Who is this football pundit and former Manchester City player?

Answers on page 15

## Suko No 4184



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](http://thetimes.com)

## Let's talk about money with Bread & Honey

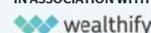
How much money would you need to make you happy? Are couples always better off financially? Why don't we all just escape to the country? And is the second wine on the menu really the worst?

Join hosts Georgie Frost and Martyn James, plus special guests, as they delve into the thornier money issues for the brand new video series from Times Money Mentor - where nothing is off the table.



To watch our *Bread & Honey* series go to the Times Money Mentor YouTube channel or scan the QR code



IN ASSOCIATION WITH 

THE  TIMES money mentor

## The Times Quick Cryptic No 2744 by Cheeko

1		2		3		4		5	6		7
							8				
9				10							
	11										
12											
13		14				15					
					16						
17									18		
											19
20							21				
22					23						

- Across**
- Grabbing glimpse of decisive victory, punch cheat (8)
  - Unlimited information relating to *The Listener*? (4)
  - Excellent lingerie, very alluring up-front (5)
  - Tip with change, having no time at all for port (7)
  - Digital outlier that's manually located? (6,6)
  - Book van, going back round Northern Ireland (6)
  - Introduction of soft metal with nickel backing (4-2)
  - What would assess final appeal of criminal computer user (7,5)
  - Old dons deserve being in media, periodically (7)
  - Snatch letters, reportedly (5)
  - Window frame needs front of seasoned wood (4)
  - My oracle, unfortunately mine (8)

- Down**
- Tramp primarily has overpowering personal whiff (4)
  - Unconfined tapir chasing fine animal (5)
  - Have whittled fragments — that's annoying (4,3,5)
  - Fixed trouble in elevated study (6)
  - Got temperature wearing hairpiece (7)
  - Sticking together recent changes about erected house (8)
  - Song from dreadful egoists, maybe (2,4,4,2)
  - Hero sussed most of you out (8)
  - Threadbare Italian city embraces saint (7)
  - Entertaining both sides in election, face refusal (6)
  - Hard-nosed type that might charge you (5)
  - There's unwrapped present (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

# Bricks & Mortar

## Buyer beware

HOW PROPERTY LISTINGS CAN MISLEAD

pages 6-7

# Home of the week

This lavish trophy home was once owned by Michael Flatley – and a royal mistress

It's unusual to find a house where the kitchen stove is worth more than the average UK flat, but this house on Park Place Villas, home to the custom-made Molteni cooker, which can cost £200,000, is no ordinary property. The Molteni stove was imported from France and delivered to the house via the canal in Little Venice, west London, by the previous owner, Michael Flatley, the Irish-American *Riverdance* creator and performer, whose lavish marks on this 8,178 sq ft property are omnipresent.

From the fireplace in the crimson-coloured dining room that Flatley imported from France and which bears his initials to the mahogany-panelled den styled on a gentlemen's club, his flourishes are everywhere.

Flatley bought the grade II listed, seven-bedroom Italianate villa in 1997 from the businessman George Apter in a typically show-stopping fashion: he gazumped Madonna by £500,000 on the day the pop singer was meant to be exchanging on it. Barbra Streisand was also said to have been interested.

"On the day of the exchange, Apter called me to say that he had an offer of £500,000 more and he could scarcely believe it," Michael Sulkin, the director at the luxury estate agency Aston Chase, says. "That was Flatley and it sealed the deal."

The dancer paid £5 million for the house and Sulkin says the equivalent in today's prices would be someone offering "a couple of million" more for a home.

Before selling the house in 2004, Flatley transformed it with the help of the architect and interior designer Peter Inston.

Other highlights of the property include the basement swimming pool where the walls are dedicated to a mural of the dancer's Irish estate, and the diamond-patterned marble flooring in the entrance hall. Plus, of course, the kitchen with that exorbitant art deco-style French stove, which remained in the property after Flatley sold it.

For nearly a decade Flatley threw parties attended by members of the Ireland football team, the royal family and others. And yet, the history of the property extends beyond him. Built in 1840, it was the home of the actress and socialite Lillie Langtry and where she entertained her lover Bertie, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII).

The English country garden still contains the gazebo with the seat where Langtry sat with the prince. A pair of stone lions stand guard at the front door and there is a high boundary wall with twin gates and a carriage driveway, which is said to have been installed so that the prince's carriage could enter and exit without being noticed.

The house is full of Victorian nooks and the garden room, with its glass ceiling, has French doors that open onto the terrace and back garden.

Langtry eventually went bankrupt and was forced to sell many of her possessions, including the villa in 1880.

Today, this rambling property is on the market for the first time in 20 years because its present owners (who bought it from Flatley) have decided to downsize. Sulkin describes it as a "generational house", while Mark Pollack, his colleague at Aston Chase, says it is "one of the finest trophy homes in London".

**David Byers**

£26 million, [astonchase.com](http://astonchase.com)



£26 million



## W9 The postcode in numbers

In this part of London, 26 per cent of properties are under offer, falling to 10 per cent of those costing £2.5 million or more.



Increase in buyer demand in the past year

£928,835 is the average house price

### TAKING THE TEMPERATURE BUYERS' MARKET

The hotter the market, the quicker and easier it should be to sell a home



## What £850,000 buys you in...

### Suffolk

Great Cornard is a village that was mentioned in the Domesday Book as Cornierda, and stands on the fringes of the market town of Sudbury. This handsome Victorian villa is set in grounds of about a quarter of an acre. The ground floor has a bay-fronted sitting room and a knocked-through lounge-diner, both with feature fireplaces. The kitchen-diner to the rear of the house opens to the garden. Upstairs is the main bathroom and two of the four bedrooms have en suite shower rooms. The cellar has been tanked. Outbuildings include an office and one used for storage. There is parking for up to seven cars.

**EPC** C (current and potential) — on a scale of A (best) to G (worst)

**Upside** Kerb appeal.

**Downside** It's on a B road.

**Contact** [jackson-stops.co.uk](http://jackson-stops.co.uk)



£850,000

### Norfolk

Dating from the 16th century, grade II listed Old Cottage comprises two properties that have been renovated and joined into one. It's in the village of Shotesham All Saints, about six miles south of Norwich. It has four bedrooms, two reception rooms with large inglenook fireplaces, wood-burning stoves and beamed ceilings. The kitchen has an Aga, and there are two staircases up to the first floor, where two of the four bedrooms have vaulted ceilings and one has a mezzanine. The thatched property is set back from the road behind two cottages and is surrounded by mature gardens and a gravel driveway with plenty of space for parking.

**EPC** Exempt

**Upside** Spacious — over 2,100 sq ft of accommodation.

**Downside** Oil-fired central heating.

**Contact** [durrants.com](http://durrants.com)



£850,000



Michael Flatley

## Brief encounter

### Ask the expert

**Q** We are buying a home on the banks of a river, but our solicitors can't say where the boundary is between the water and the garden. Is the riverbank part of the property?

**A** The owners of land next to natural water are known as "riparian" owners.

The boundary between their land and the water usually depends on whether it is tidal.

If the land is next to the sea or a tidal river the boundary is presumed to run along the high-tide mark, as measured on a date halfway between the neap and spring tides. Everything above the high-tide mark belongs to the riparian owner, while the foreshore and seabed or riverbed belong to the Crown.

With non-tidal rivers and streams, the "ad medium filum" (up to the middle line) presumption applies.

Adjoining riparian owners are presumed to own part of the riverbed up to the middle. Problems can occur when a river changes course. If it changes gradually, the riparian owners gain or lose a bit of land on the riverbank over time, a process known as "accretion", but if the course of the river or stream

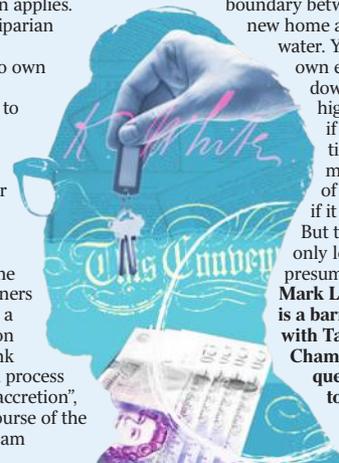
changes during a storm, the old boundaries remain where they were.

These riparian rules do not apply to artificial watercourses such as canals. What's more, the legal presumptions can be displaced by agreements between the riparian owners or the Crown. For example, in the 2017 case of *Pearson v Foster*, the High Court resolved a dispute about fishing rights on the River Frome by deciding that an agreement marked out in two 1930s conveyancing documents made the "ad medium filum" presumption of ownership inapplicable.

Your solicitor is right to be cautious about locating the boundary between your new home and the water. You will

own everything down to the high-tide mark if the river is tidal, or the mid-stream of the river if it is not.

But these are only legal presumptions. **Mark Loveday is a barrister with Tanfield Chambers. Email questions to [brief. encounter@theti mes.co.uk](mailto:brief. encounter@theti mes.co.uk)**



## Cumbria

Croft Farm occupies nearly 14 acres in the north Pennines. The property is a traditional stone-built farmhouse, and there are outbuildings and barns, plus a byre and streams on the land. On the ground floor there is a sitting room, dining room, library and office. The kitchen has an Aga cooker, a Belfast sink and Shaker-style cabinets, with doors that lead to a garden room. Upstairs, there is an impressive triple-aspect main bedroom with built-in storage, three more bedrooms and two bathrooms. The closest village is Kirkoswald, which is about five miles away. Penrith and Carlisle are both a 30-minute drive away.

**EPC D** (potential A)

**Upside** Croglin Water at the northern boundary has pools for wild swimming.

**Downside** No pubs nearby.

**Contact** [finestproperties.co.uk](http://finestproperties.co.uk)



£850,000

## Portugal

A four-minute drive, or 20-minute stroll, from the beach at Praia da Luz, this bright and airy villa is on a small plot in Quinta da Bela Vista. You get more than 2,700 sq ft of living space: an entrance hall leads to the open-plan living/dining room, with a wood-burning fireplace for cooler days, and the kitchen with granite worktops. This space opens on to the upper terrace where you'll find a sheltered dining area complete with a barbecue. There are four bedrooms, one of which is being used as an office. A second living room leads, via sliding doors, out on to the swimming pool, and the grounds are watered by an automatic irrigation system. It takes about an hour to drive to Faro airport.

**Upside** A quiet cul-de-sac location.

**Downside** The Algarve's premium price tag.

**Contact** [knightfrank.com](http://knightfrank.com)



€995,000

## Moving stories

Your tales from up and down the property ladder

### 'After upsizing to Orkney in retirement, I finally feel at home'

Seven years ago I moved from Liverpool to Orkney [says Dorothy Taylor, 73]. My cousin used to live on Orkney and I'd visited her several times and often thought that it was somewhere I'd like to live. I was drawn to the space, the feeling of safety and the sea.

One year while I was visiting, I thought, why not do it? It was almost an impulse decision — I was retired (I had worked for arts support agencies) and had never lived outside a city. I grew up in Manchester and had lived in Liverpool for 40 years, but I wanted somewhere different.

In Liverpool, I lived in a small terraced house about two miles from the city centre in Dingle. It used to be a nice place with friendly neighbours, but not long before I moved, there was a machete attack up the road. There had been shootings and burglaries there too. According to my son, who still lives in Dingle, it has gentrified since I left, but Orkney has given me a sense of

freedom. I don't worry about walking out at night — for half the year it's light until ten o'clock, anyway.

I didn't have a car at first so I settled in Kirkwall, Orkney's main town. I found a spacious two-bedroom flat in a converted 19th-century sawmill with a view over the bay for which I paid about £85,000. I was fortunate in already having friends there that my cousin had introduced me to. I also joined a choir and volunteered for Citizens Advice, which helped me to make some new friends.

There's plenty to do on Orkney — there are a lot of artists. There's a cinema in Kirkwall and a cinema club in Stromness. There are theatre groups, choirs and orchestras. I belong to a music group that does Afro-Cuban drumming. And there's fabulous walking as well.

Many people from the mainland have visited, fallen in love with the place and moved here, including a lot of retired people. There are plenty of GPs and a hospital. For more serious health issues, people can be flown to Aberdeen.



Dorothy Taylor in her garden near Kirkwall, Orkney

The downside of my flat was that it was on the second floor, so I had to carry shopping up two flights of stairs. My knees aren't getting any stronger and I thought I'd need to move eventually.

Last year, sadly, my sister died. She left me an inheritance, so I decided to put it towards a new home. As it turned out, a friend was moving to Edinburgh and needed to sell her bungalow, which is a few miles outside Kirkwall. The more I thought about it, the more it seemed like a good idea to buy it.

In January I offered £270,000 on the bungalow, which was accepted, but it took much longer than I expected for the inheritance to come through. If I missed the completion date, it would have been catastrophic. In May my financial adviser suggested that I contact the loan provider Together to ask about

a bridging loan. I had a deposit of £113,000 from my savings and the sale of my flat. Together lent me £157,000. They charge me 1 per cent interest a month and I have a year to pay it back.

The bungalow has three bedrooms and a large living room with enormous windows, as well as a large kitchen and dining area. I have a view of the sea and a garden that is full of willow trees with farmland beyond. It's not remote — I have neighbours — but they don't interrupt my view.

I've never owned a house with a garden before. My terraced house in Liverpool only had a small backyard. I'm so glad to have that space — somewhere to sit outside when the sun shines. My cats love it too. The garden has a blackcurrant bush, daffodils and snowdrops, and I think I'll plant some tulips and foxgloves and sow some wildflowers. There's a greenhouse, too, so I plan to grow tomatoes, peas, beans and cucumbers. The garden will be a challenge, but a nice one.

Most people my age are downsizing and I understand that — I'm trying not to leave a load of rubbish for others to sort out — but downsizing isn't for everyone. I think having space around you is good for the soul and I don't want to feel cramped.

Sometimes I think, am I really here? I may not have long to enjoy it, but it's been worth the effort. I would say to anybody, don't worry if you don't have much time left — get enjoyment from your home. I always wanted a house with a garden and I didn't know if that would happen. My flat felt temporary, but now I finally feel like I'm home.

**Interview by Hugh Graham**

**Have your say**  
Would you like to share your moving story?  
Email [carol.lewis@thetimes.co.uk](mailto:carol.lewis@thetimes.co.uk)

## Classical-inspired luxury homes in Oxfordshire

Sponsored Content

**The Crescent is a prestigious new residential development set within seven acres of parkland in the heart of Thame, near Oxford.**

Its elegant architecture is inspired by the nineteenth century 'rus in urbe' classical style, and incorporates the best in contemporary design, alongside sustainable materials and technologies.

The sweeping crescent comprises four and five bedroom villas, with generous footprints of 3,350 to 3,475 square feet. They encompass features such as double-height atriums and rooflights, and a rich specification, including bespoke fitted kitchens and joinery. The homes are also designed to take full advantage of their beautiful natural surroundings, with large windows and private courtyard garden while balconies and terraces overlook the parkland.

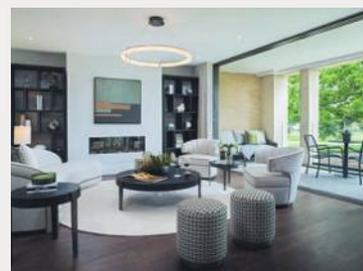
Situated within tranquil grounds, The Crescent is just a one minute walk from the centre of Thame, a historic and vibrant market town known for its independent shops, restaurants and pubs. Being close to Oxford and with excellent links to London by car or train from 44 minutes, it presents an exciting opportunity to enjoy much sought-after connected countryside living.

Guide prices at The Crescent start at £2.25 million.  
A show home is available to view by appointment only.

To find out more, please contact [oxfordnewhomes@savills.com](mailto:oxfordnewhomes@savills.com).



Freehold.  
EPC = B



savills

FT FINANCIAL TIMES  
statista

1000 EUROPE'S  
FASTEST GROWING  
COMPANIES 2024

BuyAssociation

Exclusive New Launch

Exclusive Residential launch in  
Liverpool's historic downtown  
starting from just **£178,000**



- Prices starting from just £178,000.
- Delivered by a proven developer with a strong track-record.
- 46 units available - one- and two-bedroom apartments.
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# Can you really trust property

Buyers are being misled by false information on housing portals – here's how it should be done.  
By Melissa York

## COVER STORY

For most people looking to buy or rent a new home, the journey starts on a property portal. Despite estate agents' hyperbole, though, too many would-be buyers discover that vital details are often missing from the sales listing leading to frustration, wasted time and lost money.

"My partner and I found it incredibly frustrating how opaque many listings were with lots of missing or incorrect information," says Marianna Hunt, 29, who started house-hunting last year. "Some had photos of garages and gardens but they turned out not to come with either."

"Trying to find info about EWS1 [external wall cladding] forms was like getting blood out of a stone. We saw properties with service charges listed that were completely different to what the vendor later told us. There's no penalty for estate agents who consistently list wrong or incomplete information, so there's no incentive for things to improve."

Incomplete listings can lead inexperienced buyers to make a poor investment on what is usually the biggest purchase of their life because they don't know what information they should be asking for.

"It's often what's missing from the listing that's just as important as what's included," Charlie Warner, a partner at the buying agency Heaton and Partners, says.

The average visitor to the property portal Zoopla spends less than three minutes looking at a listing and, its data shows, "only a small proportion" (less than 10 per cent) of visitors bother to look at maps, floorplans and images before booking a viewing. Even when buyers are more discerning, they are often met with incomplete information.

In some cases the properties listed online aren't even for sale. In January 2021 the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) upheld a complaint about a listing on [overstreet.co.uk](http://overstreet.co.uk) and [manchestersalerent.co.uk](http://manchestersalerent.co.uk) that advertised a "four-bedroom detached house for sale in Rackenford" described as "stunning" with a virtual tour and a button directing buyers to book a viewing. The advertising watchdog ordered that the listing should be taken down because it understood that the property had not been on sale since 2017.

Another buyer, who wishes to remain



anonymous, says he asked to view two properties he saw online listed with the estate agency Dexters only to be told they were under offer. "It is done purely to get more applicants to call them and offer other properties," he says. Dexters declined to comment.

It has been an offence to leave out important information on property listings since 2008, but in reality there is a lack of consistency on property portals and estate agency websites on which details are included.

In 2022 National Trading Standards introduced guidance on what should be in a property listing and it gave estate agents a year to comply. The consumer watchdog mandated that all listings should include council tax band or rate; the price ("offers invited" or "price on application" are no longer allowed); reservation fees for new-builds; and tenure information (freehold or leasehold).

Paula Higgins, from the HomeOwners Alliance, a consumer rights organisation, says: "Many estate agents don't even realise that these obligations exist. That said, anyone can rock up and be an estate agent with no qualifications or training."

Camilla Dell, the founder of the London buying agency Black Brick, is "always amazed by how many properties I see advertised that don't have basic information such as the service charge, ground rent, lease length", all of which can have a dramatic impact on the value of a property and whether the buyer can get a mortgage for it." Dell advises buyers to seek

A three-bedroom flat in Manchester is on sale for £650,000 on Zoopla via Gascoigne Halman. Why the listing is good: Gives details on leasehold length, service charge and ground rent.



A flat in Camberwell, southeast London, is on sale for £495,000 through Winkworth. Why the listing is good: Leasehold, ground rent, utility and broadband details.



Marianna Hunt



independent legal advice for the cost of a lease extension and never take the seller or estate agent's word for it. She says: "We've seen cases where a buyer is told the extension will cost a certain amount and then finds out it's a lot more expensive."

In May 2021 the ASA ruled that an advertisement for shared ownership was misleading, in part because it did not include information about the "significant" cost of extending a lease, which can run into tens of thousands of pounds. The percentage of the share of the property being bought and the rent must also be displayed under new Trading Standards rules.

The National Leasehold Campaign, which campaigns to abolish leasehold, thinks a copy of the Land Registry title document should accompany online listings because it's "the only way to ensure accurate and complete information is provided by agents".

In November 2023 Trading Standards added to its guidance for estate agents so that the type of property (house/flat/bungalow) is included alongside building materials used, the number of rooms, parking, and information about utilities including broadband type/speed and mobile phone coverage.

This is particularly important for rural property listings. A "pet hate" for Warner is when the advertisement doesn't make it clear that the property is a wing or part of a bigger house. "One of the other things common with selling agents that don't regularly work with country properties is not including acreage," he says. "They can talk about paddocks but don't always realise how important the total size of land is to some buyers."

Size — in square feet or metres — is often left out on listings too. This isn't just vital for buyers wanting more house for their money. If the property doesn't



# y listings?



A two-bedroom flat in Bath is on sale for £385,000 with Wild & Lye via On The Market **Why the listing is good** Marked as an accessible building



A three-bedroom flat in Clifton, Bristol, is listed for rent at £2,500 a month through Sarah Kenny via On The Market **Why the listing is good** Flagged as a "greener choice" as it has a parking space with an EV charger

meet certain space requirements, it could be impossible to buy with a mortgage or let to private tenants. For rental properties fees applicable such as the deposit should be stated close to the asking rent.

The latest guidance also means that sales listings should declare any flood risks, restrictive covenants on the property or land, building safety such as unsafe cladding, and rights and easements such as public rights of way and shared driveways.

While most buyers would expect prices, locations and features to be accurate, the ASA expects images for new-builds, even computer-generated ones, to accurately reflect the quality of finish of the property being advertised. Images that show a higher quality finish than the buyer can expect should have a qualifying caption such as "image includes optional upgrades at additional cost".

However, listings are improving. On the Market recently became the first big property portal to allow buyers to search for accessibility, so wheelchair users and other people with mobility needs can find homes with wide doorways, ramped access, wet rooms and other useful adaptations. It also has a "greener choice" filter that shows only properties with an EPC (energy performance certificate) rating of A or B, and eco-features such as solar panels or rainwater harvesting.

Last week Zoopla added a tenure filter to make it easier for buyers to search for freehold, leasehold or share of freehold properties. It also added a search based on the number of bathrooms. To determine whether a property is overpriced, Zoopla also has a listing history on the same page as the sales listing that displays how long the property has been on the market and any asking price reductions. Property Log, a free Google Chrome browser extension, shows price reductions on Rightmove.

Rich Hayes, the chief operating officer at Zoopla, says: "There are also plenty of other handy features Zoopla users can use to maximise their property search experience and ensure they're served properties that are curated to their needs, be it filtering by leasehold or freehold or using 'market stats' on listings to get a sense of what similar properties in the area have sold for."



## 'Now I can afford to live in the Cotswolds'

The community schemes allowing priced-out locals to rent new-builds under the market rate. By Hugh Graham

Soha Farmhouse has done wonders for the local economy since the London members' club opened an outpost in 2015 near Great Tew, Oxfordshire. However, the flipside is that as the edge of the Cotswolds gentrifies, local people are finding it impossible to find affordable housing. Just ask Rachel Cronin. For years the artist, 41, has been living with her parents in the nearby village of Hook Norton.

Cronin would often check property portals for rentals, but one-bedroom properties in the area were almost non-existent and two-bedroom houses, if they came up at all, cost £1,200 to £1,300 a month. The rise of Airbnb and the Covid-era race for space exacerbated the problem. The average rent in Hook Norton's postcode has risen 43 per cent since 2016 to £1,532 a month, according to the estate agency Hamptons.

So it's something of a miracle that last Friday Cronin took the keys of a new-build one-bedroom flat with the rent of £772 a month. Designed by the architect and television presenter Charlie Luxton, it has an open-plan living room/kitchen and a south-facing garden. Not only that, but she will have cheap electricity bills as the flats have an EPC rating of A (the highest possible) and solar panels that feed a microgrid on site from which homeowners draw electricity.

It sounds too good to be true. How on earth did she find this holy grail of the property world? The answer lies in three words: Community Land Trust (CLT). These are community owned, non-profit organisations that own and develop land for the benefit of the neighbourhood, setting rents or sale prices at below the market rate. There are 263 CLTs in England and Wales, and they have been cited as part of the solution to the housing crisis.



Rachel Cronin, below, rents a one-bedroom flat for £772 a month

The Hook Norton Community Land Trust (HNCLT) was formed in 2019 with the goal of developing Bourne Green, a group of 12 affordable,

sustainable homes that would allow villagers to remain living locally. The CLT

approached Cherwell district council and asked to buy a piece of scrubland beside the village cricket club at a discount.

Sixty-three investors clubbed together to fund the project — shares cost £250 each and pay a 6 per cent annual return after three years. The investor funds were

supplemented by £80,000 in public and private grants. Eight of the 12 properties are affordable rentals, allocated via the Soha Housing Association, and four of the flats are for private sale at market rate: two bedrooms from £275,000 to £292,000. The proceeds of the private sales are to subsidise the construction of the affordable rental homes.

To be eligible to rent, applicants must be on the council housing register and work or live in the village. Buyers of the private homes are forbidden to use them as buy-to-let investments or second homes.

Cronin can hardly believe her luck. She grew up in Banbury, Oxfordshire, and worked there in arts administration until she was made redundant in 2017. She gave up the lease on her basement flat and moved in with her parents who had moved to Hook Norton. She planned to stay for six months while she established herself as a freelance art teacher before getting a place of her own.

Life interfered with her plans. In late 2018 she fell ill with endometriosis and had surgery in 2019, missing work for seven months. During her recovery, Covid broke out, hindering her career plans. As the lockdowns dragged on, she worked on her paintings, converting her parents' garage into an art studio. After publicising her work on Instagram, she was picked up by three art galleries and began looking for rentals again.

As lockdown eased, her mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She died in February 2023, and Cronin stayed on at home to help her father. However, in early July she learnt that she had been approved to move into a CLT flat (she had applied years previously). She's thrilled to have found a place near her father. "He can see the roof of my house from the end of his driveway. And I'm back in the studio in his garage every day working, so I see him then."

It's a fresh start. "When I was young I probably assumed I would be able to afford to live in the area where I grew up. When I was in my thirties I was in a relationship and thought we were going to get married and have kids, but that all came to an end. I thought it wouldn't be long before I met someone else and be able to afford somewhere as part of a two-income relationship. But now I'm not sure that's true because I'm watching my cousins and their partners struggle just as much as me."

"I would like to tell you that I had a plan B but I didn't — I would have stayed with Dad. There wasn't any other option that was financially feasible other than hit the dating apps and hope to find a partner to spread the cost with."

Cronin thinks having a secure and affordable home will help her career and benefit the village. She runs the local art group. "This allows me to afford to exist in the Cotswolds. Because if we can't stay here, these communities are all the poorer for it. They lose their art class, they lose their village shop, their clubs and societies — all the people who make the community interesting. It can't just be for rich people, otherwise the heart and soul disappears."

Cronin is aware of biting the hand that feeds. "I'm happy for the tourists to come and buy my paintings and I'm pleased that local businesses are doing well, but you've got to look after everybody. There has to be a balance."

"I feel relieved, elated and stressed at the same time. I've just got to see how the next few years pan out, and hopefully it will signal the next chapter of my life."



Some had photos of garages and gardens but they turned out not to come with either



## Labour's big plan

What the government's overhaul of the planning system will mean, from building targets to new towns. By Carol Lewis

Labour fired the starting gun on its race to build 1.5 million homes during its first term in government by announcing an overhaul of the planning system and a consultation on its plan for new towns this week.

Angela Rayner, the deputy prime minister and housing secretary, announced a consultation on housebuilding targets, a review of the green belt and a new way for local authorities to determine how many homes are needed — and a surprise doubling of planning fees for homeowners. Here are the details.

### What are the targets?

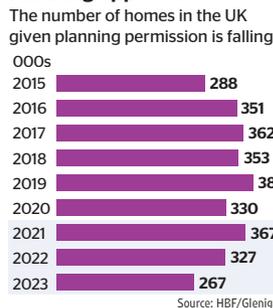
After targets were quietly let slide under the last government, Rayner has said that all councils in England will be sent mandatory goals to help Labour to achieve its aim of 370,000 new homes a year. The targets will be incorporated in plans that councils must draw up by next year identifying where the homes will be built.

Rayner says: "The method used to calculate [targets], which relied on decade-old data, will be updated. The new method will require councils to ensure homes are built in the right places and development is proportionate to the size of existing communities, while adding an extra level of ambition in the most unaffordable areas."

Many areas will see a large increase in the number of homes to be built, except London where the aspiration to build 100,000 homes a year falls to 80,000.

Some of the hardest hit areas include Cheshire West and Cheshire where the number of homes to be built each year rises from 532 to 2,017, Kensington and Chelsea (1,381 to 4,271), Redcar and Cleveland (45 to 642), and Burnley (51 to 369). Meanwhile, in Kings

### Planning approvals



Lynn and West Norfolk the target rises from 554 to 1,042, in the New Forest from 729 to 1,465 and in Cornwall from 2,707 to 4,454.

### Where will homes be built?

"The first port of call for development will be brownfield land [previously developed land]," Rayner told MPs, adding that the government will "promote homebuilding at greater densities in urban centres, like towns and cities".

However, Rayner said that "councils will have to review their green belt land if needed to meet their target, identifying and prioritising 'grey belt' land". The government has defined grey belt as "land in the green belt comprising previously developed land and any other parcels and/or areas of green belt land that make a limited contribution to the five green belt purposes".

These purposes are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The government has said, though, that "golden rules" will need to be adhered to if big developments are to be built on land released from the green belt. These rules are: that at least half of the housing is affordable, with "an appropriate proportion" being for social rent; that necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure, including delivery of new schools, GP surgeries, transport links, care homes and nursery places are made; and the provision of new, or improvements to existing, local green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home.

The government says it believes "local areas are best placed to decide the right mix of affordable housing for their communities, including a mix of affordable homes for ownership and rent". As a consequence, it will remove the need for at least 10 per cent of homes on big development sites to be affordable-home ownership.

### What about new towns?

Separately, the government published a policy statement on new towns in England that says: "This government's new towns programme will include large-scale new communities built on greenfield land and separated from other nearby settlements, but also a larger number of urban extensions and urban regeneration schemes that will work with the grain of development in any given area. The unifying principle will be that each of the new settlements will contain at least 10,000 homes, although we expect a number to be far larger in size."

Adding: "The next generation of new towns must be well-connected, well-designed, sustainable and attractive places where people want to live and have all the infrastructure, amenities and services necessary to sustain thriving communities. Our New Towns Code [yet to be announced] will ensure they deliver to the highest standards and help meet housing need by targeting rates of 40 per cent affordable housing with a focus on genuinely affordable social rented homes."

A taskforce has been set up to advise on suitable locations for the new towns. It is expected to publish a shortlist within a year. The exact number of new towns is yet to be announced, but the architecture firm Urbanist Architecture has pinpointed 20 possible locations for new towns based on their strategic economic potential and infrastructure.

### Anything else I need to know?

It is proposed that the planning fee for homeowners will be increased from £258 to £528 by the end of the year. Fees are also being considered for previously free applications such as listed building consents, permission to undertake a demolition in a conservation area, and any works to trees that are protected. The government is also seeking views on whether to allow councils to set their own fees.

The planning consultation is open until 11.45pm on September 24; gov.uk/government/consultations

# Window stopping

One couple wants to cut bills and save energy by installing double-glazing. But their council isn't happy... By Ben Cooke

Look up at those windows," Adrie Rensen says, gesturing to the first and second storeys of his Victorian terraced house in Highbury, north London. "Which of them is double glazed? The planning officer says he can tell, but he must be eagle-eyed because at this distance they look the same to me."

Standing in the back garden, I can't tell the difference either. The lower one — an original 1890s sash window — looks identical to the energy-efficient imitation above it. Rensen designed the upper window with his wife and fellow architect Jo Edwards, with whom he runs the company Edwards Rensen from an office on their home's first floor.



It was in that office that they decided to redesign their front windows. For ten years they had sat opposite each other in the same seats — Edwards by the radiator and Rensen by the draughty window. Then one winter day, they swapped. "I realised it was bloody freezing," Edwards says. "We didn't want to crank up the radiators because it seemed so wasteful."

Before they could get to work on their windows they needed the permission of Islington council, because their house is in a conservation area. But the council's planning officers refused, judging that the reflections from the double-glazed windows would disrupt the historic character of the street.

"The idea that our neighbours need protecting from slightly more reflective windows seems crazy to me," Rensen says. "They wouldn't even notice."

"We have no intention of threatening the elegance of our beautiful conservation area," Edwards adds.

They were annoyed that the council saw "no material public benefits" to their plan. Edwards describes it as "ridiculous" that Islington council, which has declared a climate emergency and seeks to reach net zero 20 years before the rest of the country, apparently does not consider energy efficiency a public good. They have made an appeal to the planning inspectorate and expect to hear its verdict next month.

"The council likes to appear green," Edwards says, "but in the conservation areas that make up the majority of the housing stock in Islington it won't allow things that will save energy."

She adds that unless the council gives

residents more leeway to insulate historic homes, its net zero ambition for 2030 "ain't going to happen". The council declined to comment.

With a third of its carbon emissions coming from domestic buildings and half its area designated for conservation, Islington council is embroiled in a dilemma that, to a lesser extent, faces the entire country: by how much should we adapt our historic buildings to combat climate change?

Roughly one in ten homes in England is in a conservation area. If these residents want to make many of the

changes that will be necessary to limit climate change, such as insulating leaky roofs and walls or installing heat pumps and solar panels, they may require permission from planning officers to do so. These officers follow national guidance about what to permit, but they also have some liberty to strike their own balance between maintaining the character of buildings and making them more energy efficient.

Councils have used that liberty in various ways. In Bath, for example, the council has sought to demystify the planning process for conservation areas by inviting residents to pay £66 to have an officer visit their home and advise them on what energy-efficiency upgrades should be appropriate, saving them from submitting hopeless planning applications. In Islington, meanwhile, residents have mounted a campaign accusing the council of stopping them from insulating their homes.

In Edwards and Rensen's case the council proposed a compromise, suggesting they install windows with





**Adrie Rensen and Jo Edwards outside their Victorian house in Islington, north London**

thinner double glazing and bars that are integrated rather than stuck on. The couple say that these windows would cost in excess of £4,000 each, more than twice as much as their own design, and that they would save less than half as much energy.

Edwards and Rensen had never expected to save money by installing their own windows; their designs are expensive enough that the couple would have to live there for decades before they recouped the investment through energy savings. But the council's choice is so expensive that if the planning inspectorate doesn't rule in the couple's favour, they won't be replacing their windows.

Rensen says the council's suggestion is "not realistic. The planners can all go home happy saying, 'What's your problem? We're allowing you to change your windows.' But [their suggestion] is not as good and it's twice as expensive."

The couple believe that if they win their appeal they will set a precedent that will make it easier for other homeowners in the area to change their windows. "I know there are other houses on the street that are considering it and waiting to see what happens," Edwards says.

Victory against the council would also be good for their business because many of their clients are owners of historic homes. "We would be able to save more energy in those houses, which would be wonderful," she says. "But even if we lose, I still feel we will have gained something, which is clarity."

Historic England has been working to give clarity to residents of conservation

“The idea that our neighbours need protecting from slightly more reflective windows seems crazy

areas. This month it published advice for councils on a range of energy-efficiency upgrades, stating that slim-profile double glazing would be “generally acceptable” in listed buildings and conservation areas, as would the installation of a heat pump, loft insulation and floor insulation.

“We know that decision-making by local authorities has been inconsistent, with some taking a proactive, positive view and others taking a protectionist view,” Ian Morrison, the director of policy and evidence at Historic England, says. “In this advice note we have tried to set out in detail what works don't need consent and should be allowed to happen anyway, and how local authorities should be responding to those that do need consent.

“Every single historic building can be made more energy efficient. The worst outcome would be for historic buildings not to be adapted to be desirable places to live and work in.”

Edwards says that Historic England's advice on window upgrades is “too general to be decisive in our case”. But she echoes Morrison's belief that heritage conservation and energy efficiency can go hand-in-hand. “As architects working on refurbishing and upgrading Victorian and Georgian houses, we work to protect and enhance aesthetics,” she says.

“But this does not need to prevent thermal upgrades. Carefully done, they can be great, but planners need to stop preventing energy savings by treating houses in conservation areas as if they were grade I listed monuments.”

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Compiled by Victoria Maw



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▶ Freya blend loose incense by Stag & Seer, with rose and damiana, £8, stagseer.com

# Spending money like water

At Lake Como, demand – and prices – keep soaring, especially for waterfront villas, says Cathy Hawker

In the 1st century, the Roman writer Pliny the Younger wanted a house on Lake Como but faced a dilemma. Should he live directly on the water's edge, or should he head up the steep mountainside for cooler summer air and wonderful views? History doesn't record how long Pliny pondered this choice but it does record his solution. He bought two villas, an elevated one that he called Tragedy and another, named Comedy, beside the lake.

Pliny was an early adopter to the Lake Como lifestyle, but his choice is one that purchasers still face today. For the very wealthiest buyers — those able to handle a prime price premium that averages 40-50 per cent — lakefront wins, says Tania Morabito, owner of La Reale Domus, Knight Frank's associate in Lake Como.

"Lake access is such an exclusive feature," Morabito says. "But the drastic lack of *pied dans l'eau* properties directly on the water is one reason why prime prices on Lake Como grew 6.2 per cent in 2023."

Savills figures are even more upbeat. They put prime price increases at close to 20 per cent last year, well ahead of Italy's other two most visited northern lakes, Maggiore and Garda.

Lake Como is arguably the most romantic of them all, a scenic jumble

of green hillsides, deep waters, charming villages and classical architecture. Its beauty, proximity to Milan and star-studded celebrity fans are all part of the appeal, with a reputation established long before the American actor George Clooney moved into his 18th-century villa — waterfront, of course — in Laglio.

Their first view of Lake Como in 2012 proved instantly appealing to Brian and Linda Maynard, Canadian nationals living in Switzerland.

"We drove over the border and saw the lake with the mountains behind," says Brian, 65, a retired mining executive. "It was quite a moment."

When they started their search, advice from the owner of their B&B proved invaluable. "She warned us about how the steep mountains put many places in shadow for much of the day," Brian says. "That's one reason why we chose our townhouse in Tremezzina, an especially sunny spot."

After owning that property for five years, the Maynards, by now based in London with British citizenship, traded up to a detached house in the neighbouring street with room to add a pool. After applying for Italian residency and becoming Italian taxpayers, they now spend most of the year there.

"We are three streets above the water, with a 270-degree lake view," Brian says. "We can be totally private in the house or, within minutes, join in with the local café culture. Como town is 30 minutes away and home to Europe's largest seaplane base, a bonus for me as a qualified seaplane pilot."

Lake Como is shaped like an inverted Y with the silk-producing town of Como at the southern tip, 40 minutes from Milan's Malpensa airport. Homes in the southwestern branch are the most prestigious, running from Como up towards Menaggio, with Cernobbio, Moltrasio and Laglio among names to note. Opposite, prime villages include Blevio, Torno and Bellagio.

"Como town is a period market town, becoming increasingly international in its outlook yet remaining authentically Italian," says Paola Cleps of Savills associates Habitat Real Estate. "With several new five-star hotels and restaurants opening around the lake in recent years, the area appeals even more to international visitors. It's a healthy, beautiful place to live, with the bonus that within about two and a half hours, you have Alpine resorts, the Italian Riviera beaches and Tuscan countryside."

Typical prime prices on the lake are about €10,000 per square metre, but that



hefty lakefront premium of 40 per cent plus means prices escalate sharply. Lone Heron, sales manager at Property at Lake Como, sees typical budgets of €2 million to €10 million, but she's also noticing increasing demand for lakefront villas from €10 million to €30 million.

**“The lack of homes on the water is one reason why prime prices grew 6.2 per cent in 2023**

"Since 2000, prices and demand have risen significantly every year, not only thanks to George Clooney's purchase but also supported by a larger base of high-net-worth individuals," Heron says. "Lake Como is considered Italy's most prestigious and glamorous lake, and due to the current low inventory, prices for

**Top: Varenna, on Lake Como. Above left: Brian and Linda Maynard. Above: a villa in Bellano, Lake Como, is on sale for €3.5 million with propertyat lakecomo.com**

high-end trophy properties are expected to increase further."

Italy's flat tax regime has proved another motivation for wealthy international purchasers. Introduced in 2017, it allows those transferring their tax residency to Italy to pay an annual €100,000 lump sum on all non-Italian sourced income, with full exemption from inheritance tax on overseas assets.

"We've experienced an uptick in buyer registrations across the board for Italy but most notably for Lake Como," says Andrew Blandford-Newson from Knight Frank. "Buyers have always looked to Lake Como for exclusivity and sophistication and now it has become a magnet for ultra-high-net-worth individuals seeking to establish permanent homes."

Italian property portal Gate-away.com confirms that Lake Como tops the list of Italian destinations for their international clients, with American buyers especially dominant, helped by the recent strength of the dollar.

"Wealthy families move here from across northern Europe, looking for easy access to Milan for work and the international schools," Cleps says. "Their most common request is for a large period home, on the water or with direct access, with original features but also modern comforts, good space for entertaining and preferably a separate guest house."

The trend set by Pliny, 2,000 years ago, continues.



**A six-bedroom villa in Ossuccio, part of Tremezzina on Lake Como is on sale for €7 million with Knight Frank**

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