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‘Silent killer’ heatwaves in Europe claim 50,000 lives

Climate alarm as huge death toll from hottest year on record revealed

Ajit Niranjan
Europe environment correspondent

Hot weather inflamed by carbon pollution killed nearly 50,000 people in Europe last year, with the continent warming much faster than other parts of the world, research has found.

The findings were revealed as wildfires tore through forests near Athens, France issued excessive heat warnings for large swaths of the country and the UK baked through the hottest day of the year so far.

Doctors call heat a “silent killer” because it claims far more lives than most people realise. The devastating mortality rate in 2023 would have been 80% higher if people had not adapted to rising temperatures in the past two decades, according to the study published in Nature Medicine.

Elisa Gallo, an environmental epidemiologist at ISGlobal and lead author of the study, said the results showed that efforts to adapt societies to heatwaves had been effective.

“But the number of heat-related deaths is still too high,” she warned. “Europe is warming at twice the rate of the global average – we can’t rest on our laurels.”

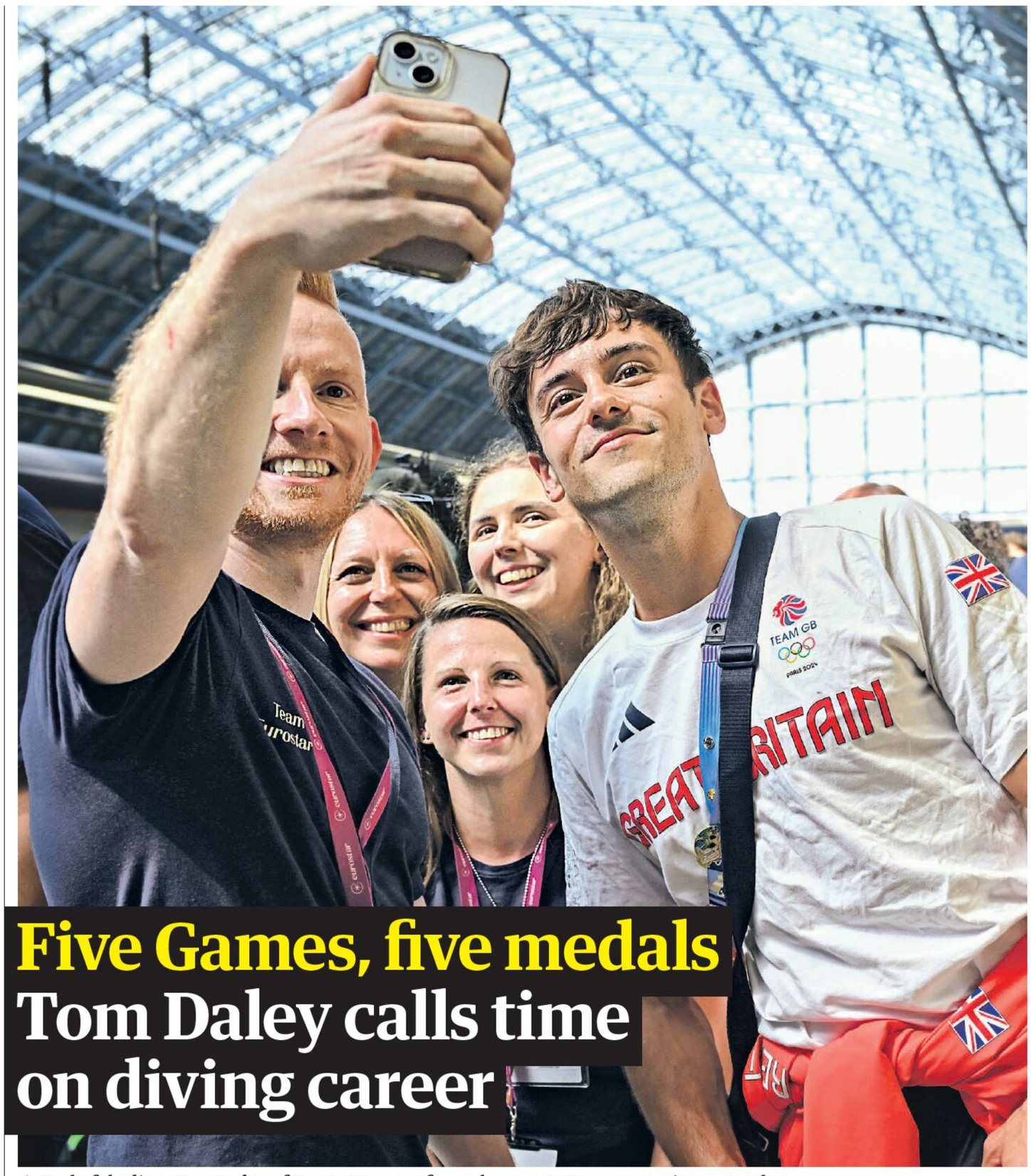
Heatwaves have grown hotter, longer and more common as fossil fuels have been burned and nature destroyed – clogging the atmosphere with gases that act like a greenhouse and heat the planet.

Globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record. Scientists expect 2024 to take its place.

Researchers have found that cooler countries in Europe such as the UK, Norway and Switzerland will face the greatest relative rise in the number of uncomfortably hot days. But the absolute death toll will continue to be greatest in southern Europe, which is better adapted to hot weather but more exposed to scorching temperatures.

The scientists found heat-related mortality in 2023 was highest in Greece, with 393 deaths per million people, followed by

6 →



Five Games, five medals Tom Daley calls time on diving career

▲ *End of the line: Tom Daley of Team GB poses for a photo at St Pancras station yesterday* PHOTOGRAPH LEON NEAL/GETTY

Euphoria and fear on border after Ukraine’s incursion into Russia

Dan Sabbagh
Sumy

Last Tuesday, Oksana and her two children could not escape fast enough. Though they did not know it, Ukrainian regular forces had entered Russia for the first time, and Moscow’s military wasted little time in hitting back, bombing their village 7 miles from the border.

“It was 9am and the first glide bomb hit the village,” she said, and its ferocity – “very scary, much bigger” than ordinary shelling – was such that they immediately knew they had to escape. “Our neighbour drove his children first and then came back and picked up me and my sister and family,” she explained.

Like hundreds of others from the Ukrainian borderlands where last week’s surprise attack was launched, Oksana and her family travelled to Sumy, normally a 40-minute drive. Having rented a property, they were working out what to do next at a crowded refugee centre in the city.

Others lining up to

22 →

Spread of far-right hate drives Labour MPs off X

Exclusive
Eleni Courea
Political correspondent

Labour MPs have begun quitting X in alarm at the state of the site, with one saying Elon Musk had turned it into “a megaphone for foreign adversaries and far-right fringe groups”.

Over the weekend newly elected MPs raised growing concerns in WhatsApp groups about the role X had played in the spread of misinformation amid far-right riots in parts of England and Northern Ireland.

Two Labour MPs are known to have told colleagues they were leaving the platform. One of them, Noah Law, has disabled his

10 →

Inside *13/08/24*
Four sections every day

News and Sport

Leicester Square attack
Man arrested after girl, 11, and her mother stabbed in London tourist area
Page 5

Journal Outside G2
Opinions and ideas

Olympics should trigger sustained investment in facilities for grassroots sport
David Goldblatt
Page 4

G2 Centre pullout
Features and arts

Burning bright
Lucy Mangan on a glorious show about tigers and the people who protect them
Page 10

Save up to 29% with a subscription to the Guardian and the Observer
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Weather
Page 32

Quick crossword
Back of G2

Cartoon
Journal, page 4

Cryptic crossword
Back of Journal

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Hundreds of thousands of students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will get their A-level results on Thursday
PHOTOGRAPH: MARK WAUGH/MANCHESTER PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY

Inequalities 'baked in' to England's education system, Phillipson warns

Sally Weale
Education correspondent

The education secretary, Bridget Phillipson, has warned of "massive" inequality in England's education system as students brace themselves for this week's A-level results.

After 14 years of Conservative government educational inequalities were "baked in", Phillipson said, citing regional disparities in results and attainment gaps between children at state and private schools.

On Thursday, hundreds of thousands of 18-year-olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will collect grades that, for many, will decide whether they get into their university of choice. But experts warn that England's north-south attainment gap is likely to persist, while privately educated students are expected to continue to outperform their state-educated peers.

Amid fears that some students are being deterred from progressing into higher education because of financial concerns, Phillipson did not rule out bringing back the maintenance grant for poorer students that was cut by the Conservatives in 2016.

She said the task of reversing the last government's legacy of educational inequality was "enormous", but promised reform of the system, with fewer children living in poverty and better support for schools.

Phillipson told the PA Media news agency: "I want to make sure that all young people, whatever their background, have the chance to get on in life, and that's the mission of the Labour government.

"But my concern, as we approach the first of the results days, is that after 14 years the Conservatives have baked in massive inequality into the education system, including regional disparities and differences between outcomes for children at state and private schools, and I'm determined to turn that around."

Last year there was an 8% gap between students getting A*-A grades in south-east England and those in the north-east – wider than the 5% gap in 2019 – while pupils in private schools were more than twice as likely to achieve top grades as those in the state sector.

Phillipson highlighted the need for high-quality teaching. "But it's also what goes on beyond the school gates, and that's where we've also seen big failures over the last 14 years.



Bridget Phillipson blames the Tories for entrenching regional inequalities

"And it will take us time to get that right, but I am determined that we bring down the numbers of children living in poverty.

"It's a moral cause but it's also a big driver of some of these disparities that we see, and it's why we need to take action to support schools. This is an enormous task and I don't shy away from that for one second."

With thousands of undergraduate places still unfilled a week before results day, Phillipson said university was "a fantastic option" but that many people still did not think it was for them. She added: "I want to work with universities to ensure that we are widening access, but also we're making sure that young people have the support that they need to complete their courses."

Asked whether she would bring back maintenance grants, she said: "I'm acutely aware of the pressures that many students are under at the moment. And it concerns me that when I visit universities and meet with students, I hear that they're working 30 hours a week in retail jobs in order to meet the cost of housing and other costs.

"I am determined that we reform the system … but I don't want young people to be put off applying to university on the basis of financial imperative. And sadly, I think increasingly we're seeing young people making decisions based on their finances."

Meanwhile, a headteachers' union has called for the English baccalaureate (Ebacc) to be scrapped after analysis showed that A-level entries in creative arts and technology subjects had plummeted since its introduction in 2011.

The Ebacc, made up of core academic subjects, is used as a school accountability measure. Since its introduction, the Association of School and College Leaders says, entries for performing arts have declined by 73%, music and design and technology by 45%, and drama by 43%. Recent data from the exam regulator, Ofqual, showed a continuing downward trend.

Poor may face greater health risks from moderate drinking

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

Harms associated with moderate or even low levels of drinking may be greater among people who are poorer or in worse health, research suggests.

The study comes just weeks after another piece of research indicated that the benefits of booze had been exaggerated and its harms played down by previous studies.

Dr Rosario Ortolá, a co-author of the study from the Autonomous University of Madrid, said drinking low amounts of alcohol may have some benefits for older people at a higher risk of cardiovascular disease but that such benefits were small and may be achieved in other ways – for example, with a better diet or more exercise.

"Also, it is clear that alcohol consumption is related to a higher risk of cancer from the first drop, so we think that medical advice should not recommend consuming alcohol to improve health," she said.

Writing in the journal Jama Network Open, Ortolá and colleagues report how they used data provided to the UK Biobank health database by participants who signed up between 2006 and 2010.

The researchers looked at data from 135,103 participants aged 60 and over and assigned each to one of four categories based on their average daily alcohol intake: occasional, low-risk, moderate risk and high risk.

While the "occasional" category works out at less than a quarter of a small glass of wine a day, "high risk" is equal to at least two pints of cider a day for men or one pint of cider a day for women.

The researchers then looked at which patients died up to the end of September 2021, finding a total of 15,833 deaths.

After taking into account factors such as participants' age and sex, the team found that, compared with occasional drinking, high-risk drinking was associated with a 33% greater risk of dying from any cause during the course of the study, as well as a higher risk of dying from cancer or cardiovascular disease.

Moderate-risk drinking was associated with a 10% greater risk of death from any cause compared with occasional drinking, and a 15% greater risk of death from cancer. Even low-risk drinking was associated with an 11% greater risk of death from cancer, compared with occasional drinking.

When the team dug deeper they found moderate- or low-risk drinking was worse for people who lived in more deprived areas or had poorer health to begin with. "There is evidence that socioeconomically disadvantaged populations have higher rates of alcohol-related harms for equivalent and even lower amounts of alcohol, probably owing to the coexistence of other health challenges," Ortolá said.

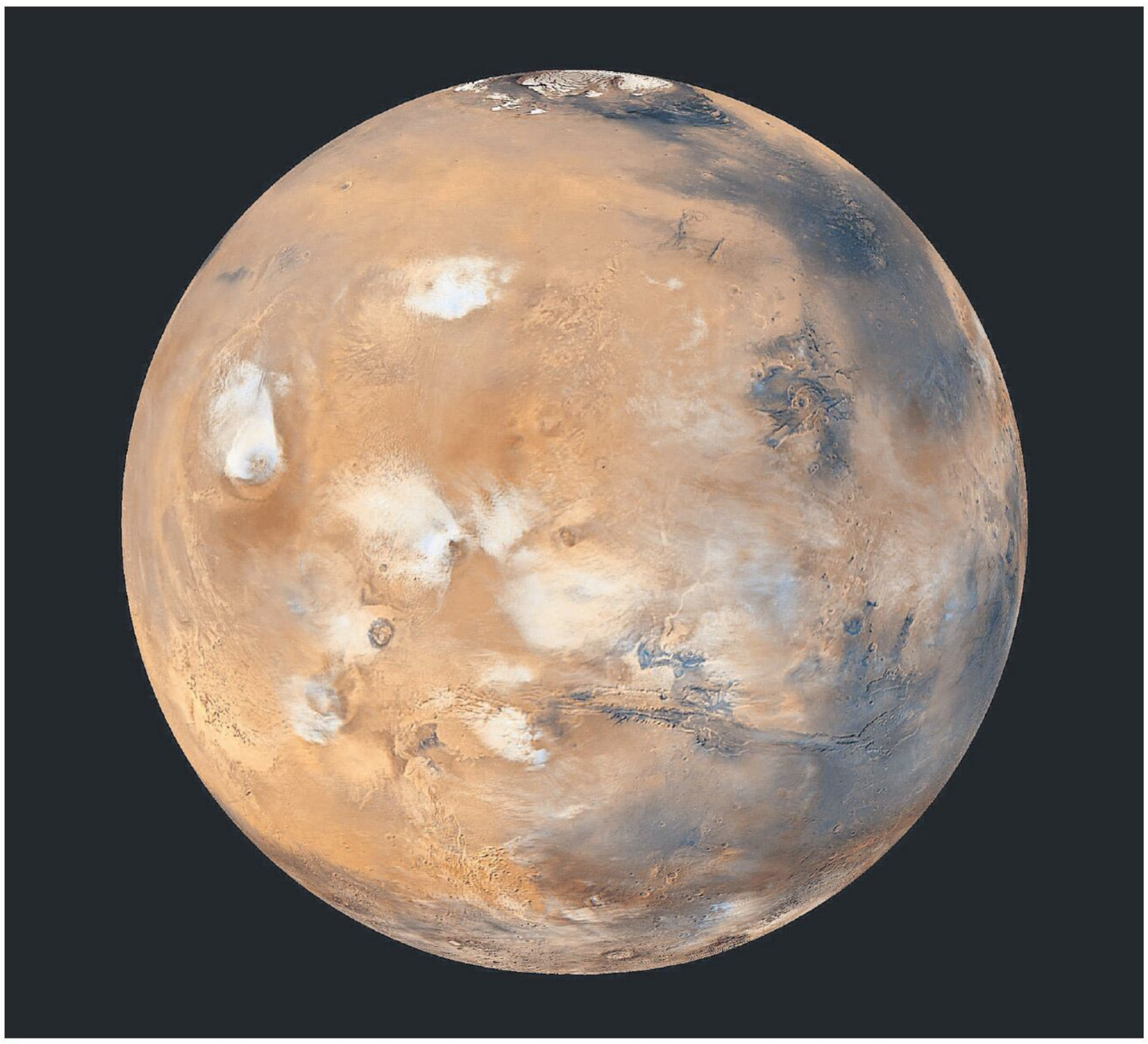
The team found that a strong preference for wine, or only drinking with meals, appeared to reduce the risk of death independently of the amount of alcohol consumed, although this only held for those with poor health or high deprivation.

However, the study has limitations, including that the drinking data was based on self-reporting, and it cannot show cause and effect.

Colin Angus, a medical research fellow from the University of Sheffield who was not involved in the work, said the study provided further confirmation that even low levels of drinking increase cancer risks.

However, he said more research was needed to prove that associations between low levels of drinking and higher mortality were stronger for those in poorer health or lower socioeconomic groups.

Vital ingredient? New hope for life on Mars as study finds water may exist within crust



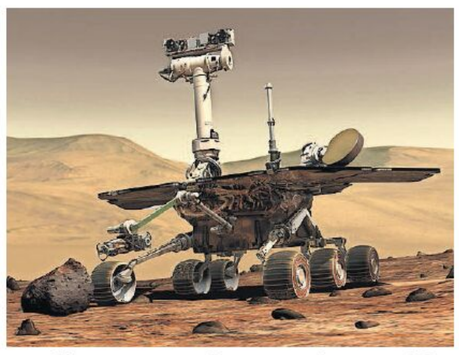
▲ *A computer-generated image of weather patterns on Mars, which has permafrost ice at its poles* PHOTOGRAPH: NASA

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

Vast amounts of water could be trapped deep within the crust of Mars, scientists have said, raising fresh questions about the possibility of life on the red planet.

Scientists say that more than 3bn years ago, Mars not only had lakes and rivers but oceans on its surface. However, as the planet lost its atmosphere, these bodies disappeared. All that is visible today is permafrost ice at the planet's poles.

While it is thought some of the water was lost to space, research has suggested that is not the full story, and that water could have been incorporated into minerals, buried as ice, or even exist in liquid form deep within the planet's crust.



An illustration of a rover designed for Nasa's Mars exploration programme

'Mars at least contains a key ingredient for life as we know it'

Dr Vashan Wright
University of California

Now scientists say their calculations suggest vast quantities of liquid water could be found trapped within rocks about 11.5-20km (7-12.5 miles) below the Martian surface.

"Our liquid water estimate is more than the water volumes proposed to have filled possible ancient Martian oceans," said Dr Vashan Wright, a co-author of the study from Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego.

Writing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Wright and colleagues report how they made calculations based on gravity data for Mars and measurements recorded by Nasa's InSight lander. The latter reveal how the speed of seismic waves - created by Marsquakes and meteorite impacts - change with depth inside the crust of the red planet.

"A mid-crust whose rocks are cracked and filled with liquid water best explains both seismic and gravity data," Wright said.

Wright added that if the measurements at the Insight lander location were representative of the whole planet, the amount of water trapped in the rock fractures would fill a 1-2km-deep ocean on Mars.

"On Earth, groundwater underground infiltrated from the surface, and we expect this process to have occurred on Mars," he said. "The infiltration must have happened during a time when the upper crust was warmer than it is today."

While the results do not rule out the possibility that water has also been lost to space or trapped in minerals, Wright said the work allowed scientists to re-assess the relative contributions of these different mechanisms to the loss of past Martian surface water.

The study also raises a tantalising possibility. "The presence of water does not signify that there is life, but water is thought to be an important ingredient for life," said Wright.

"We know that life can exist in the deep subsurface of the Earth, where there is water. The mid-crust of Mars at least contains a key ingredient for habitability and life as we know it."

Bethany Ehlmann, a professor of planetary science at the Keck Institute for Space Studies, who was not involved in the work, said it was now necessary to make a definitive measurement that showed whether or not there was deep liquid water on Mars - and, if so, exactly where.

"On Earth, where there is liquid water, there is life, so if liquid water aquifers are present on Mars now, they are a prime target in the search for life," she added.

Dr Jon Wade, of the University of Oxford, said he would not be surprised by life on Mars. "Early in its history, Mars would be as conducive to simple life as Earth, if not more so."

Dr Steven Banham, of Imperial College London, added that identifying liquid water in the mid-crust would also help geophysicists and geologists understand the internal structure of Mars and how it behaved.

However, Banham raised doubts over whether such water could provide a resource for crewed missions to Mars. "Yes the amount of water down in the crust is potentially vast, but it will be difficult to access or utilise," he said. "It might not make much difference to human exploration, at least initially."

The findings in figures

20km
How far below the surface of Mars vast quantities of liquid may be trapped, according to scientists

2km
Potential depth of an ocean that could be filled with water posited to be trapped in the planet's crust

3bn
The number of years since Mars had lakes, rivers and oceans - before it lost its atmosphere

Dublin zoo enlists mothers to teach orangutan to breastfeed

Rory Carroll
Ireland correspondent

When staff at Dublin zoo discovered an orangutan named Mujur was pregnant, they decided to stage some maternal workshops.

The 19-year-old female had not sufficiently bonded with either of her previous infants, who died in 2019 and 2022, so when she became pregnant earlier this year the zoo enlisted breastfeeding human mothers to try to show her how it was done.

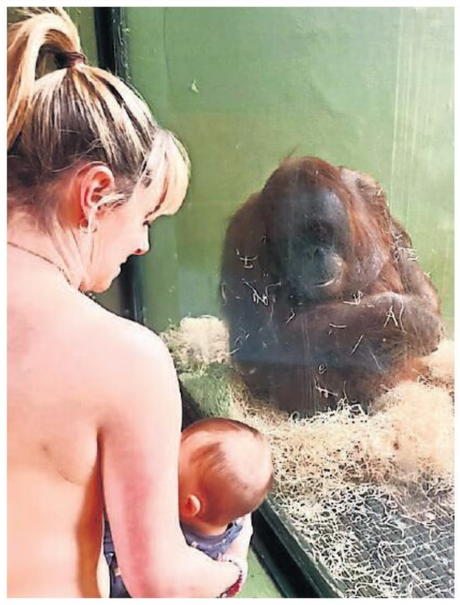
Lizzie Reeves, a midwife and lactation specialist who is part of the breastfeeding team at the National Maternity hospital in Dublin, organised a roster of 30 mothers to take turns teaching the ape, whose species is critically endangered.

The orangutan house was closed off while the women breastfed their own infants. "Mujur was extremely interested in watching the women feed their babies through the glass, even mirroring some of their actions," the zoo said in a statement yesterday.

"A lot of women said: 'Look, an orangutan doesn't wear a T-shirt.' So they whipped off their T-shirts and theirs bras so Mujur could literally see everything," Reeves told the Irish Times.

Nora Murphy, a first-time mother from Rathfarnham, thought it would be a great story to eventually tell her daughter Elodi, now 10 months old. "You are going from being a mother yourself to trying to help a mother-to-be. You would be talking to her, saying: 'Look, this is what you are meant to do,'" she said.

Mujur was also shown videos of other orangutans feeding their babies as part of the tuition. She gave birth on 31 July to a healthy male and showed "good maternal care", suggesting the teaching had an impact, but did not hold the infant in quite the correct place for feeding, the zoo said.



▲ *Nora Murphy and her baby, Elodi, show orangutan Mujur how it's done*

The institution would normally have let nature take its course, but given the infant's genetic profile - his father was Sibu, a patriarch who died in February - it intervened. "The difficult decision was made to separate the infant from Mujur and commence bottle-feeding him," it said.

The infant will be transferred in several weeks to Monkey World, a 65-acre institution in Dorset that has experience in raising orangutans. "The whole team has already fallen hopelessly in love with him, and it will be difficult to say goodbye. However, we are confident that he is being sent to the best possible place for him to continue to develop and thrive," said the zoo.

BBC defends interviewer accused of bias towards Palestine



▶ *Mishal Husain was accused live on air by an Israeli government spokesperson of 'blindly repeating' Hamas's claims*
PHOTOGRAPH: PA/ALAMY



▼ *Palestinians look at the damage after an Israeli strike on a school turned shelter in Gaza City on Saturday*
PHOTOGRAPH: MAHMOUD ISSA/ REUTERS

Harriet Sherwood

The BBC has defended Mishal Husain, a presenter on its Radio 4 Today programme, after she was accused by an Israeli government spokesperson live on air of "blindly repeating what terrorist organisations ... feed you".

In a tetchy interview on yesterday's programme, David Mencer said Husain warranted the "pro-Palestinian reporter of the year award".

He added: "You producing reports on this war one-sidedly, without context, ends up with attacks on Jews on the streets of Britain. It ends up with cars going up the Finchley Road saying: 'Jews, we're going to rape your daughters.'"

A BBC spokesperson said the corporation rejected his allegations. "As the listener could hear, Mishal Husain was asking legitimate and important questions in a professional, fair and courteous manner."

The interview began with Husain asking Mencer about an Israeli strike on a school compound in Gaza. The BBC interviewed Dr Khamis Elessi, who said the casualties had included elderly people, women and children. The Israeli army claimed the school compound was being used as a Hamas command centre.

Mencer rejected Elessi's account, saying Israel was "extremely sceptical about pseudo medical staff" who had "inflated" casualty figures throughout the war in Gaza. He said 19 Hamas fighters were "eliminated" in the strike, and that "there were no women and children present".

Mencer went on to say that Israel was fighting a "very dirty war" in Gaza. It was winning on the military battlefield and was "destroying Hamas", he said, but was losing on the media battlefield.

"You as the BBC, you do no credit to ordinary Gazans by just blindly repeating what terrorist organisations, Isis-like organisations, the information which they feed you. It simply doesn't bear any resemblance to the truth," he said.

Journalists covering the war in Gaza were not doing their homework, he said. "You do this subject no justice when you repeat their figures."

When Husain raised claims by the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem that Palestinian prisoners had been tortured, Mencer said: "I think you just warrant the pro-Palestinian reporter of the year award, and I congratulate you for that."

He later said: "So let me tell you why it is important that you cover this war fairly. Because you producing reports on this war one-sidedly, without context, ends up with attacks on Jews on the streets of Britain. It ends up with cars going up the Finchley Road saying: 'Jews, we're going to rape your daughters.' That is the result of partial reporting."

B'Tselem's claims were a "fringe opinion", he said. "And you guys parroting it just produces radicalism, which makes Jews in the UK afraid to walk the streets."

Husain is one of BBC News's most respected interviewers and is widely admired for her tenacity and her calm and courteous manner. She has been a presenter on the Today programme for 11 years and also presents BBC television news. She has been tipped to replace Huw Edwards as the BBC's top news presenter.

Mencer is a British media and public relations specialist, who has acted as a spokesperson for the Israeli government since last autumn. He is a former director of Labour Friends of Israel.

In their interview, Husain raised the Israeli government's ban on international journalists reporting from Gaza, which has been in place since the war began last October.

Mencer said the presence of international journalists would complicate Israel's efforts to free hostages being held by Hamas and other organisations. "There is no shortage of news coming out of Gaza. For heaven's sake, it's the most reported conflict of modern times," he said.

International news organisations have been frustrated by the ban, which has made it difficult to verify claims made by both sides.

At least 113 journalists and media workers have been killed in the war so far - 108 from Palestine, two from Israel and three from Lebanon, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

> ***'Mishal Husain was asking legitimate and important questions in a professional ... courteous manner'***
>
> **BBC spokesperson**

'We are things of loss': Nick Cave on grieving for two of his sons

Walter Marsh

Nick Cave has described how the deaths of two of his four sons have made him prioritise being "a father and a husband and a kind of person of the world" over "the concept of being an artist" in an interview aired last night in Australia.

"For most of my life I was just sort of in awe of my own genius, you know, and I had an office and would sit there and write every day and whatever else happened in my life was peripheral," the singer-songwriter told ABC's Australian Story presenter, Leigh Sales.

"This just collapsed completely and I just saw the folly of that, the kind of disgraceful self-indulgence of the whole thing."

Grief has been a defining influence in Cave's work and public persona since his 15-year-old son Arthur, one of his twin sons with his wife, Susie, died after falling from a cliff near Brighton in July 2015.

In 2022, Cave announced that his eldest son, Jethro Lazenby, had died, at the age of 31, not long after he was found guilty of unlawful assault for attacking his mother, Beau Lazenby.

Cave revealed that the interview, which was recorded in May, was taking place on the second anniversary of Jethro's death.

"I had an understanding of the process because I'd been through it already," he said of grieving.

"There is the initial cataclysmic event that we eventually absorb or rearrange ourselves so that we become creatures of loss as we get older. But this is part of our fundamental fabric of what we are as human beings.

"We are things of loss, and this is not a tragic element to our lives but rather a deepening element that brings incredible meaning into our life," he added.



▲ *Nick Cave spoke about the deaths of his sons Jethro, 31, and Arthur, 15*

Cave explained how his relationship with the public evolved after Arthur's death. His Red Hand Files website receives "hundreds and hundreds of letters" each week, all of which he reads before replying to a select handful each month.

"It was also a kind of lifeline for me. It's something that's just allowed me to remain open to the world rather than shut down," he said.

"There's a great beauty in the Red Hand Files that, you know, it's an extreme privilege to be receiving these letters from people. It's this bizarre opportunity for people to indulge to some degree in their grief."

Deadly errors
'Devastating' report on Nottingham killer
Page 8

Feathered fathers
Same-sex flamingos rear chick in zoo
Page 15



National



Shooting party Kilt-clad hunters mark the Glorious Twelfth, the traditional official August start to the grouse shooting season in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which runs till 10 December, on the moors in the Lammermuir hills near Gifford in East Lothian.

PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BARLOW/PA

Almost half of GP surgeries in England are 'involved in work-to-rule'

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Almost half of GP surgeries in England are staging industrial action for the first time in 60 years amid a row over funding, with one in four capping the number of patients they see to 25 a day, a survey suggests.

Family doctors voted overwhelmingly in favour of collective action this month in protest at the last government increasing their budget by only 1.9% this year. The new government has pledged to increase funding for 2024-25 to 6%.

Senior NHS leaders fear "alarming" and "dangerous" disruption until Christmas and potentially into 2025, with hospitals, A&E units and mental health services braced for a surge in demand from thousands of patients turning to them for help.

A letter sent to NHS managers from the national primary care director, Dr Amanda Doyle, said the NHS was preparing for a "worst-case scenario" and 999 services could be affected.

Now a snapshot of GP practices suggests 46% are already taking work-to-rule action, with 26% limiting the number of patients seen each day to 25.

The study of 283 GP partners from different practices by Pulse magazine found a further 20% will be taking collective action in future. Another 22% are considering it. Only 7% ruled out taking any action.

Twenty-five per cent said they believed the action would harm patients in the short-term.

GP partners can choose what form of action to take from 10 measures set out by the British Medical Association. As well as capping the number of patients, they can stop work they are not formally contracted to undertake, and ignore "rationing" restrictions by "prescribing whatever is in the patient's best interest".

Fifty per cent of those surveyed said they would be willing to escalate industrial action, which could involve full strike action.

Rachel Power, the chief executive of the Patients Association, said she recognised the the pressures GPs were under. But she added: "Any industrial action that might affect a patient's access to care in general practice is bad news for millions of people and we think there has to be another way for the BMA and the government to work out their differences."

Doyle said it was critical that patients continued to come forward. The government did not respond to a request for comment.

Girl, 11, and mother stabbed in 'horrific' shopping street attack

Matthew Weaver
Vikram Dodd
Caroline Davies

A shop security guard has described how he overpowered a knifeman who stabbed an 11-year-old girl and her mother, 34, in a "horrific" and apparently random attack in London's busy Leicester Square.

The mother and daughter were taken to hospital by paramedics after a man, who is not thought to have been known to them, was disarmed and pinned to the ground.

Witnesses said the girl was stabbed as she was grabbed and held in a headlock. She suffered serious injuries, though her condition is not said to be life-threatening. Her mother suffered minor injuries.

The incident is not thought to be terror related, the Metropolitan police said.

A 32-year-old man was arrested at the scene. The security guard, who works at TWG Tea and gave his name as Abdullah, 29, described how he "jumped on" and took a knife from the man who he said stabbed the child. He said his colleagues had administered first aid.

"I heard a scream," he told PA Media news agency. "I saw there was one person ... and he was like stabbing a kid - I jumped on him, held the hand in which he was [carrying] a knife, and just put him down on the floor and just held him and took the knife away from him.

"Then a couple more people joined as well, and we just held him until the police came, it took maybe three to four minutes for the police to arrive and then they just took him into custody."

He added: "I just saw a kid getting stabbed and I just tried to save her. It's my duty to just save them."

Another witness said that the suspect had focused the attack on the girl, putting her in a headlock and stabbing her.

Desmond, 45, who performs as Darth Vader on the square, said: "When I looked to my side I saw a young man ... was stabbing her several [times] with a knife.

"It was so terrible. I saw the woman was screaming with all her strength."

A man who did not want to be named said he saw the suspect earlier in the day "standing, doing nothing, eating and talking to himself".



▲ *The suspected attacker being arrested yesterday in London*

Ezat Katerzis, a manager with the tour bus company Toot buses, said that the attacker appeared to be "mentally disturbed", adding that the the man "just stabbed the girl out of the blue".

He said the girl appeared to have been stabbed near her right eye.

"The blood was pouring out of her face," he said. "She was European looking, but I couldn't really tell because there was blood all over her face. They looked like tourists. They picked her up and she stood [on her] feet.

"I don't think it was a robbery. He just started stabbing her for no reason. There was a lot of blood."

Joy Akan, who also works for Toot buses, filmed the suspect after he was arrested. The video showed a lightly built man in a black T-shirt with an Abbey Road logo on the front. He was wearing black tracksuit trousers. The video was time stamped at 11.41am.

Det Ch Supt Christina Jessah, in charge of policing for Westminster, described it as a "horrific incident".

She paid tribute to "the members of the public, including staff from local businesses, who bravely intervened in this incident. They put themselves at risk and showed the best of London in doing so.

Hot weather aggravated by carbon pollution 'killed 50,000 in Europe last year'

Continued from page 1

Italy with 209 deaths per million and Spain with 175 deaths per million.

Firefighters in Greece yesterday battled wildfires near Athens that forced the authorities to evacuate several suburbs in the capital and a children's hospital. Repeated heatwaves had dried out the surrounding forest and turned trees into tinder.

By yesterday, the fire had formed a 12-mile front as firefighters struggled to contain it. The town was facing a "biblical catastrophe", said the mayor of Marathon, Stergios Tsirkas. "Our whole town is engulfed in flames and going through difficult times," he told the Skai television channel.

In 2003, a heatwave killed 70,000 people across the continent and sent officials scrambling to save lives by setting up early warning systems and prevention plans. But nearly two decades later, the death toll from the record-breaking heat in 2022, which claimed more than 60,000 lives, left researchers wondering how effective the measures had been.

The scientists modelled the effects of heat on health for different time periods since the turn of the century and estimated last year's death toll to be 47,690. They found the mortality rate would have been 80% greater if the temperatures of 2023 had hit in the period 2000-2004 than in the pre-pandemic reference period 2015-2019. For people over 80, the heat would have proven twice as deadly.



▲ *Punters in Cambridge yesterday on the UK's hottest day of the year*

Dominic Royé, the head of data science at the Climate Research Foundation, who was not involved in the study, said the results were consistent with published studies. He added that there was a need to better monitor the effects of heat on groups most at risk, as well as to implement plans to prevent deaths.

"We monitor temperature very well, but not health impacts in the same way," said Royé. "Social adaptation to rising temperatures has played a crucial role in preventing mortality in Europe but remains insufficient."

In the UK, 34.8C was recorded in Cambridge yesterday on the hottest day of the year so far. The UK Health Security Agency put in place a yellow heat health alert until 9am today in London, the south-west, south-east and east of England, the East Midlands and the West Midlands.

Scientists say governments can keep people safe from heatwaves by designing cool cities with more parks and less concrete, setting up early warning systems to alert people to imminent danger, and strengthening healthcare systems so doctors and nurses are not pushed into overdrive when temperatures soar.

But individual actions such as staying indoors and drinking water also have powerful effects on death tolls. Checking in on older neighbours and relatives who live alone can spell the difference between life and death.

Dr Santi Di Pietro, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Pavia, said his colleagues were treating more patients a day than they had done in early January during the flu season.

Heatwaves must be tackled at all levels, he said, but people could take "simple measures" to protect themselves and loved ones.

These included avoiding the sun during the hottest hours of the day, seeking shade when outside and swapping alcohol for water. "As obvious as it may sound, drinking water is paramount to prevent dehydration," he said. "Elderly people often do not perceive thirst, so we should keep an extra eye on them."

More work was needed to adapt to climate change and mitigate the rise in temperatures, said Gallo. "Climate change needs to be considered as a health issue."

World leaders promised to stop the planet from heating 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century but are pursuing policies that put it on track for about 2.5C. With every small step that global temperatures inch higher, the chances of violent extremes soar upwards.

In July, scientists from Copernicus Climate Change Service found that the world had baked for 12 consecutive months in temperatures 1.5C greater than their average before the fossil fuel era. The year-long heat does not mean climate goals are already out of reach – the 1.5C target is measured over decades rather than single years – but it has alarmed scientists and doctors aware of the damage that a temporary overshoot will wreak on people and ecosystems.

'Quite uncomfortable'

Temperature reaches 34.8C on UK's hottest day

Temperatures in the UK have surged to their highest point of the year so far with 34.8C recorded in Cambridge yesterday, the Met Office said.

The previous high in 2024 was 32C, recorded at Heathrow and Kew Gardens, south-west London, on 29 July.

The Met Office wrote on X: "It's been the hottest day of 2024 so far with 34.8C recorded in Cambridge today.

"Provisionally this is only the 11th year since 1961 temperatures as high as this have been recorded. Eight of those years have been since 2000 and six of them have been in the last decade."

A yellow heat health alert was issued for the East and West Midlands, east of England, south-east, south-west, north-west and London by the UK Health Security Agency until 9am tomorrow.

Craig Snell, a Met Office forecaster, said: "The weather is coming with a lot of humidity, so it will feel quite uncomfortable out there across central eastern England. Elsewhere, it's still going to be warm and humid, but the hottest weather will be in central eastern England."

The heatwave is linked to a kink in the jet stream, caused by Tropical Storm Debby in the US, which has pushed hot air northward. Temperatures are expected to return to normal for the time of year by midweek.

The hottest day ever in the UK was recorded in the village of Coningsby, Lincolnshire, on 19 July 2022, when the mercury hit 40.3C.

Nadeem Badshah
Matthew Weaver



◀ *A person attempts to hide from the sun at lunchtime in Green Park, London, yesterday*



Greece Area near Athens evacuated as wildfire moves 'like lightning'

Helena Smith
Athens

Authorities are evacuating people from towns, villages and hospitals on the outskirts of Athens as firefighters battle to contain a massive blaze that is moving "like lightning", ripping through trees, homes and cars.

Propelled by gale-force winds, the wildfire tore towards residential areas of the Greek capital yesterday and left a trail of destruction behind it. Late in the day, despite the "superhuman" efforts of forest commandos and an army of volunteers to bring the fires under control, the inferno had reached the city's northern suburbs, threatening the national observatory on a hill in Penteli.

Residents, some wearing masks, could be seen with buckets, hoses and even olive branches desperately trying to douse flames as they encroached on homes.

The observatory's meteorological service said the blaze was "threatening important facilities, technologies and years of research efforts".

In what would be the first loss of life since the fires erupted, authorities announced late yesterday that the charred remains of a woman – thought to be an immigrant worker – had been found in a factory in the northern suburb of Vrilissia.

Greece's climate crisis and civil protection minister said firefighters were struggling in "dramatic conditions" that had been exacerbated by a prolonged drought.

Greece has experienced an exceptionally hot and dry year. Yesterday it called for help in tackling the fire from other EU states, and assistance

Areas damaged by wildfires in the past seven days



Source: Effis, 5 Aug to morning of 12 Aug 2024







Clockwise from main: a firefighter tackles a large blaze just a few miles north-east of Athens; Penteli, a village near the Greek capital, is evacuated; women embrace after being rescued from a wildfire in Varnavas

PHOTOGRAPHS: SOCRATES BALTAGIANNIS/DPA; ANGELOS TZORTZINIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Italy Hospitals report sharp increase in heat cases at tourist spots

Angela Giuffrida
Rome

The number of people accessing emergency care for heat-related illnesses has risen sharply in some of Italy's most popular tourist cities, as the country experiences an intense heatwave that is failing to deter visitors.

Italy has been engulfed in consecutive heatwaves since the middle of June. Some central and southern areas are expected to record temperatures above 40C in the coming days.

Yesterday the health ministry placed 17 cities on red alert, meaning even healthy people could be at risk from the heat. People living in or visiting places on red alert are advised to avoid direct sunlight between 11am and 6pm.

Fabio De Iaco, the president of the Italian Society of Emergency Medicine, told the Corriere della Sera newspaper that as the heat had intensified there had been a 20% rise in the number of people accessing emergency care for heat-related illnesses in cities including Rome, Florence, Venice and Naples.

In Rome there have been cases of people fainting in the heat in St Peter's Square and while congregating at popular monuments such as the Trevi fountain.

Dr Pierpaolo Ciocchetti, the director of the emergency department at the Fatebenefratelli hospital in central Rome, said most of the people requiring care were elderly and suffering from other illnesses.

"But younger people should not underestimate the effects of the heat," he told Corriere della Sera. He advised people not to go to emergency units with illnesses that could be managed at home, adding that hospital admissions for Covid had also been increasing. Most of the cases of heat-related illnesses are resolved through rehydration.

Four people are reported to have died in Italy in July of illnesses related to the extreme heat. Last week a 26-year-old woman underwent an emergency liver transplant at a hospital in Turin after collapsing owing to heatstroke while working on a farm.

The heat is not deterring tourists, with the number of foreign visitors to Italy estimated to be 2.5% higher than in 2023.



▲ *Tourists try to cool down at a fountain in front of the Colosseum*

is expected from France, Italy, the Czech Republic and Romania.

"Its an extremely dangerous fire that we've been battling for over 20 hours in dramatic conditions because of the very strong winds and prolonged dryness," the minister for climate crisis, Vassilis Kikilias, said.

More than 670 firefighters, backed by 17 water-bombing planes and 15 helicopters, were trying to bring the fire under control and forces were being "continually reinforced", he said. "Right now the battle is being waged on two fronts: one in the area of Kallitechnoupoli and the other in [the village of] Grammatiko. We will continue with all our might until ... the last front is put out."

At least 25 areas across the stricken Attica region, including the ancient town of Marathon, were forced to evacuate residents.

The mayor of Marathon, Stergios Tsirkas, said the town, which gave its name to the long-distance race, was facing a "biblical catastrophe".

"Our whole town is engulfed in flames and going through difficult times," he told the Skai TV channel.

The Greek prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, cut short his summer break on Crete to return to Athens and oversee the response.

The fire began in the vicinity of Varnavas, a village about 20 miles north-east of Athens, sending gigantic clouds of ash smoke billowing over the capital. From the outset, firefighting efforts were hampered by strong winds. At least half of the country was under a "red alert" – the highest level of extreme fire risk in its five-tier system.



▲ *A local man flees the flames in Dion* PHOTOGRAPH: ANGELOS TZORTZINIS/AFP/GETTY



▲ *Volunteers battle a blaze in Nea Penteli* PHOTOGRAPH: ELIAS MARCOU/REUTERS

> ***'Our whole town is engulfed in flames and going through difficult times'***
>
> **Stergios Tsirkas**
> *Mayor of Marathon*

A fire brigade spokesperson, Vassileios Vathrakogiannis, said on Sunday that flames fanned by the gusts were up to 25 metres (80ft) high. The winds were constantly changing the course of the fires, hampering efforts to bring them under control.

With the strong winds showing no sign of abating, meteorologists predicted that the days ahead would be critical. Health officials urged residents in the region to limit their movements and stay inside, saying the smoke had seriously affected air quality across the Attica basin.

By mid-afternoon on Sunday, within hours of the blaze erupting, the skies above the Greek parliament in central Syntagma Square had turned a yellowish brown as ash clouds were blown southward. Greek media reported people being taken to hospital with respiratory problems.

Unprecedented temperatures – June and July were the hottest on record – after the warmest winter on record have resulted in wildfires becoming increasingly common and intense in Greece. In a first, this summer the country registered a week-long heatwave before mid-June, a sign of the accelerated pace at which the climate is breaking down, environmentalists said.

Meteorologists believe 2024 will be the hottest Greek summer on record.

At least 10 tourists, including the TV presenter Michael Mosley, died earlier this summer from heat exhaustion.

Mosley is believed to have succumbed to the heat two hours after he set off on a walk on Symi as temperatures topped 40C (104F).

In Sport

After the splurge of spending, when will the results start to come for Chelsea?

Page 33 →



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Multiple care failures led to Nottingham killer being discharged, review finds

Jessica Murray
Midlands correspondent

A "series of errors and misjudgments" in Valdo Calocane's mental health care led to him being discharged, despite repeatedly not taking medication and showing signs of aggression, months before he killed three people in Nottingham, a report has said.

A review by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) of the treatment that Calocane received from Nottinghamshire healthcare NHS foundation trust over two years between May 2020 and September 2022 found: "The risk he presented to the public was not managed well."

The report concluded: "In Calocane's case there was no single point of failure but a series of errors, omissions and misjudgments."

It said there were "systemic issues with community mental health care which, without immediate action, will continue to pose an inherent risk to patient and public safety".

Calocane killed Grace O'Malley-Kumar and Barnaby Webber, both 19 and university students, and Ian Coates, 65, a school caretaker, in a knife rampage through Nottingham in the early hours of 13 June last year. He then stole Coates' van and drove into three pedestrians, who were seriously injured.

In January, Calocane was given an indefinite hospital order after pleading guilty to three counts of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility because of a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia, which experts concluded had caused him to carry out the killings.

In a joint statement, the Coates, O'Malley-Kumar and Webber families said the CQC report made for "devastating reading".

"Clinicians involved at every stage of Calocane's care must bear a heavy burden of responsibility for their failure and poor decision-making," they said, adding that departments and individual professionals had "blood on their hands".

"Alarmingly, there seems to be little or no accountability among the senior management team within the mental health trust. We question how and why these people are still in position."

A public inquiry into Calocane's case will take place, as confirmed during a meeting with the health secretary and the attorney general last week, the families said.

Calocane was first referred to mental health services when he was arrested in May 2020 for breaking down the door of a neighbour's flat. He was assessed and sent home, but arrested again an hour later after breaking into another flat, where a woman was injured jumping out of a first-floor window to escape.

Over the next two years, Calocane was hospitalised on four occasions, each time displaying "threatening and assaultive behaviour as a result of psychosis", the CQC report said.

It said Calocane frequently "provided misleading information" and showed "little understanding or acceptance of his condition". Evidence showed he was not taking his medication at home.

The report said Calocane's family repeatedly contacted the trust to share concerns about his deteriorating mental state, but these were not always acted upon.

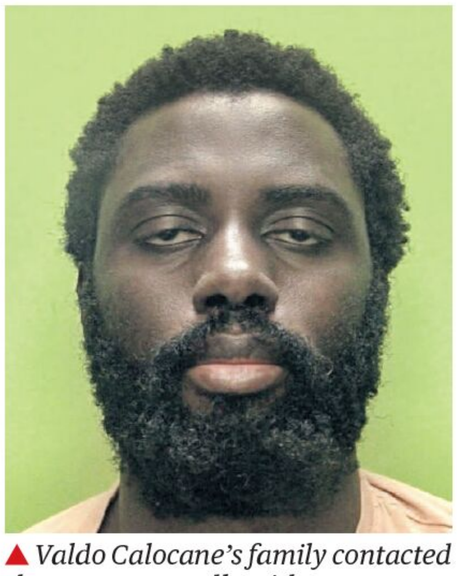
The CQC criticised the trust for not assessing whether Calocane was in a position to make his own decisions about his treatment, and for not opting to medicate him through depot injection, a slow-releasing form of medication, since he was not taking it himself.

Hospital records show that in July 2020 a psychiatrist noted: "There seems to be no insight or remorse and the danger is that this will happen again and perhaps Valdo will end up killing someone."

The CQC report said it was "beyond any real doubt" that Calocane would relapse into "potentially aggressive or intrusive behaviour" without antipsychotic medicine and monitoring. It recommended that NHS England should issue new guidance on care for people with complex psychosis and paranoid schizophrenia within 12 months.

The Nottinghamshire healthcare trust's chief executive, Ifti Majid, said: "We acknowledge and accept the conclusions of this report and have significantly improved processes and standards since the review was carried out.

"Our teams have much more contact with people waiting to be seen in the community to agree crisis plans and ensure they have an up-to-date risk assessment even when they are struggling to engage with our services or primary care."



▲ *Valdo Calocane's family contacted the trust repeatedly with concerns*

'There was no single point of failure but a series of errors and misjudgments'

Report by the Care Quality Commission

‘End of an era’: Tom Daley to retire from diving after 16 years as a sporting hero





◀ *Daley is lifted by fellow diver Ben Swain at the Beijing Olympics, 2008. Above: training at 14 in Plymouth*

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS/THE GUARDIAN

Paul MacInnes

Tom Daley, one of the heroes of Britain’s Olympic renaissance, has confirmed that the Paris Games were his last. The 30-year-old is to retire from competitive diving after five Games, five medals and a legacy that goes well beyond the unparalleled success he achieved in his sport.

Daley returned to the UK yesterday after another successful Olympics for Team GB. The silver medal he achieved alongside Noah Williams in the synchronised 10m platform event was one of 65 British medals, a total that was one up on that in Tokyo three years ago. Daley, who served as a British flagbearer at the opening ceremony, acknowledged it was “the end of an era” but that “it was the right time to call it a day”.

In an interview with Vogue, Daley said he had made the decision to retire before competition began in Paris and that the experience of taking to the board in the sync final, knowing it would be his ultimate effort, had been “surreal”.

“I felt so incredibly nervous going into this, knowing it was my last Olympics,” he said. “It was emotional at the end, up there on the platform, knowing it was going to be my last competitive dive. But I have to make the decision at some point, and it feels like the right time. It’s the right time to call it a day.”

Speaking to the BBC after Team GB’s arrival in London yesterday, Daley said the emotion of his decision was “a lot” but that he was happy with how his swansong had played out. “It’s really hard when you say goodbye to your sport,” he said. “I think it’s the right time. This year felt like such a bonus. I got to compete in front of my family, in front of my kids, I got to be the flagbearer. There were a lot of bucket-list items ticked off.”

Competing for the Plymouth Diving club from the age of seven, Daley made his Olympic debut at the age of 14 in Beijing in 2008. He won a bronze in the individual men’s 10m platform at London 2012, and another in the men’s synchronised 10m, at Rio 2016. In Tokyo, he took another bronze in the individual 10m as well as the crowning moment of his career: a gold medal in the synchronised 10m alongside Matty Lee.



Daley in a hand-knitted flamingo jumper. He took up the craft at the Tokyo Olympics

The most successful diver in British Olympic history, Daley has also won gold at four world championships and five European championships as well as four golds at the Commonwealth Games. He gave indications that he would retire after his success in Tokyo, but last year said he would seek to compete in Paris.

In his 16 years in the public eye, Daley’s life has been marked by challenges, but his response to adversity helped establish him as a national hero. His emergence in Beijing led to bullying at his school, while his father, Robert, who was also his coach, died of a brain tumour in 2011, just six days after Daley’s 17th birthday. Despite his success in London, Daley was also the object of extensive online abuse in 2012.

> ***‘It was emotional up there on the platform, knowing it was my last competitive dive … but it’s the right time’***
>
> **Tom Daley**
> *UK’s most successful diver*

A year later, Daley came out as gay, announcing his relationship with the man who would later become his husband, Dustin Lance Black. “In spring, my life changed massively when I met someone,” he said on YouTube. “They make me feel so happy, so safe. Everything just feels great, and that someone is a guy.”

Daley’s bravery, his willingness to embrace joy, his natural aptitude for social media (and, yes, his stunning abdominal muscles) have helped him build a public presence that transcends sport.

He has become one of the most prominent LGBTQ+ faces in Britain and despite complicated feelings over the desire for gay athletes to serve as role models, has latterly leaned into activism, having argued that the Olympic movement should not allow countries where homosexuality is punishable by death to compete in the Games.

It is his role as a father of two boys that guided his life choices in recent years, however, and Daley said it was his eldest son, Robbie, who had made him decide to try for Paris. After a visit to the US Olympic and Paralympic Museum in Colorado Springs last year, Daley told the Guardian that Robbie had said: “Papa, I want to see you dive at the Olympics,” and this wish had “lit a new fire inside me”.

Daley told Vogue that stepping out on to the board in Paris had confirmed to him that he made the right choice. “There was a lot of pressure and expectation. I was eager for it to be done … but when I walked out, and saw my husband and kids and my friends and family in the audience, I was like, you know what? This is exactly why I did this. I’m here, and no matter what happens in the competition itself, I’m going to be happy.”

Daley’s next step will be eagerly awaited, but if all else fails he can turn to knitting and crocheting, a hobby he picked up in Tokyo that became a passion. His various designs, including Olympic medal warmers, can be found on Instagram: @madewithlovebytomdaley.

Australians celebrate unlikely Olympic star who ‘had a crack’

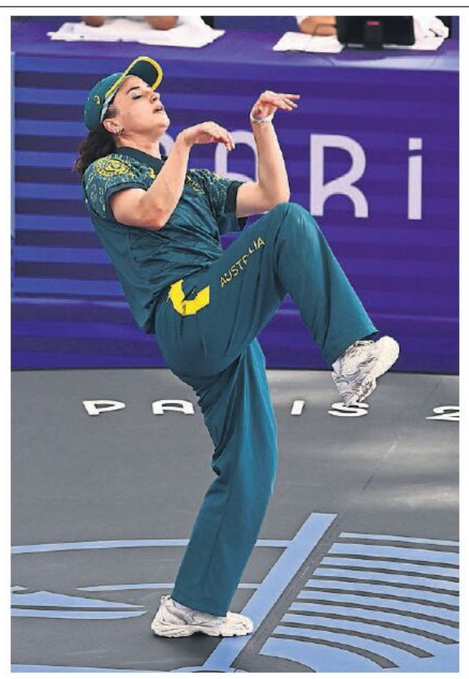
Emily Wind

In Australia’s most successful Olympics, one of their unlikeliest stars took to the streets of Paris in celebration, despite having come bottom of her competition and receiving zero points from the judges.

Rachael Gunn, AKA Raygun, 36, a university lecturer with a PhD in cultural studies, became a viral sensation after her unusual performance in breaking, or breakdancing. Before the closing ceremony she was filmed by other Australian Olympians joyfully breaking out some of her moves again. The diver Domonic Bedggood shared footage on Instagram and wrote: “Put it in the Louvre.”

The Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese, said the Olympics was all about participation. “Raygun had a crack, good on her, and a big shout-out to her,” he told reporters. “That is in the Australian tradition of people having a go.”

The former Socceroos (national men’s football team) captain Craig Foster said: “Australians shouldn’t leave people behind because they do things differently. We get around them. And lift them up. That’s what we learn as team athletes, anyway. Raygun stepped up and did her stuff in front of the world, her way.







◀ *Raygun’s memorable breaking moves included a kangaroo hop*

“Not everyone can say that in life. It took guts to be different. And certainly to keep smiling, and dancing after the barrage she received.”

Australia’s Olympic team chef de mission, Anna Meares, said Raygun was an “absolutely loved member” of the team. “What has occurred on social media with trolls and keyboard warriors, and taking those comments and giving them airtime, has been really disappointing,” she said.

“I absolutely love her courage. I love her character.”

Labour MPs start to quit X over 'disinformation and hate' on Musk site

Continued from page 1

account. Other MPs who still use X have begun examining alternatives including Threads, owned by Facebook's parent company, Meta, and the open-source platform Bluesky.

Musk, who bought Twitter in 2022 and renamed it X, has been embroiled in a public spat with Keir Starmer since the tech billionaire suggested that the riots meant "civil war is inevitable" in the UK. Musk has been criticised for failing to crack down on misinformation on the platform as well as sharing fake news himself.

In an article in today's Guardian, a former Twitter executive, Bruce Daisley, says Musk should face "personal sanctions" and even an "arrest warrant" if he continues to stir up public disorder online.

Over the weekend Jess Phillips, a Home Office minister who has more than 700,000 followers on X, said she wanted to scale back her use of the platform as it had become a "bit despotic" and "a place of misery". Another minister also said they had reduced their posts on X and that Musk's actions had made them "very reluctant to return".

Musk – who has cast himself as a proponent of free speech, reinstating to X figures including Donald Trump and the far-right activist Tommy Robinson – was due to conduct an interview with Trump last night on X.

Josh Simons, the Labour MP for Makerfield in Greater Manchester, said he was looking into alternative platforms such as Bluesky. "What matters about Musk is not only what he said, but how he changed X's algorithms," he said. "He's turned X into a megaphone for foreign adversaries and far-right fringe groups seeking to corrupt our public sphere. Nobody should have that power.

"A new generation of legislators are flexing their muscles, people who've grown up understanding the power of these platforms. By talking down Britain, Musk has placed X firmly in our sights."

Lewis Atkinson, the Labour MP for Sunderland Central, has begun collating a list of MPs from his party who use Threads and said: "Any platform that has lots of hate and disinformation is not very appealing to use.

"I've noticed in recent weeks some people moving away from X because of their experiences there, so I've expanded where I'm posting to include some X alternatives – Threads and Bluesky. Using multiple platforms gives constituents and journalists a choice of what they use. I don't plan to quit X, but I don't see why it (or any platform) should have a monopoly on politicians posting."

Jo Platt, the Labour MP for Leigh and Atherton in Greater Manchester, quit X before the general election after witnessing the "deterioration" of the platform and is now a Threads user. "I used to love it. I was on it since 2009," Platt said. "That deterioration of it has just happened quite quickly."

She cited "the misinformation and disinformation that you see on there, without it being challenged, and you know that it's not going to be removed".

Far-right-led unrest was whipped up by activists online who falsely claimed that a Muslim asylum seeker carried out the stabbing attack that left three children dead in Southport two weeks ago.

Downing Street indicated yesterday that social media companies could face stronger regulation if they fail to take robust action against disinformation. Peter Kyle, the technology secretary, met social media executives last week, and another meeting is expected this week.

The prime minister's spokesperson said: "We're very clear that social media companies have a responsibility for ensuring that there is no safe place for hatred and illegality.

"Our immediate response has been responding to the disorder and working with police. But as the PM said last week, he does agree that we're going to need to look more broadly at social media after this disorder."

She said ministers were focused on implementing the Online Safety Act as soon as possible.

Yesterday, in response to a post by the Reform party leader, Nigel Farage, saying: "Keir Starmer poses the biggest threat to free speech we've seen in our history," Musk replied: "True".

The prime minister's spokesperson said he would "disagree with that completely", but stressed that Starmer would not enter a tit-for-tat spat with Musk, who has repeatedly attacked the UK government, police and justice system on X and has branded the prison sentences handed to two far-right rioters "messed up".

The spokesperson said the government had no plans to review its use of X, adding: "It's important to make sure that we reach the broadest possible audience and that is one of a number of channels we use to ensure we're doing that."

'Threaten boss with arrest'

Elon Musk should face "personal sanctions" and even the threat of an arrest warrant if found to be stirring up public disorder on his social media platform, a former Twitter executive has said.

It cannot be right that the billionaire owner of X, and other tech executives, be allowed to sow discord without personal risks, Bruce Daisley, formerly Twitter's vice-president for Europe, Middle East and Africa, writes in the Guardian.

He says Keir Starmer should "beef up" online safety laws and reflect on whether the media regulator, Ofcom, "is fit to deal with the blurringly fast actions of the likes of Musk".

"In my experience, that threat of personal sanction is much more effective on executives than the risk of corporate fines," Daisley writes, arguing that such sanctions could affect the jet-setting lifestyles of tech billionaires.

The government has called on social media platforms to act responsibly after the violent unrest in England and Northern Ireland that followed the fatal stabbing of three young girls at a Taylor Swift-themed holiday dance class in Southport last month.

The prime minister has blamed social media firms for allowing the spread of false claims that the attacker was an asylum seeker.

Daisley, who worked at Twitter, now X, from 2012 to 2020, describes Musk as someone who "has taken on the aura of a teenager on the bus with no headphones, creating lots of noise".

He adds: "Were Musk to continue stirring up unrest, an arrest warrant for him might produce fireworks from his fingertips, but as an international jet-setter it would have the effect of focusing his mind."
Caroline Davies

Journal Page 1 →



The Home Office minister Jess Phillips said she was scaling back her use of X, which had become 'a place of misery'



Courts Boy, 12, admits to two separate acts of violent disorder in Manchester

Emily Dugan

A 12-year-old boy has admitted to participating in two separate incidents of disorder in Manchester after he was caught throwing a missile at a police van and kicking the window of a vape shop.

The boy was one of two 12-year-olds who became the youngest to be convicted of criminal offences relating to nationwide disorder earlier this month. They were among a string of offenders in courts across the country who yesterday pleaded guilty to charges relating to the unrest.

Jail terms of up to three years were also issued to those who had admitted to crimes at earlier hearings.

The boy admitted two charges of violent disorder at Manchester magistrates court, sitting as a youth court.

District judge Joanne Hirst said the "very serious" case was the first she had dealt with in which someone had taken part in two separate incidents in the city.

He attacked a bus outside a Holiday Inn housing asylum seekers on 31 July, kicking it and handing a rock to another youth. Then on 3 August he was filmed kicking the front window of a vape shop during disorder in Manchester city centre.

Hirst said: "He's more involved in the violence and disorder than any other defendant I've seen coming through these courts, adult or child."

Another 12-year-old who was filmed throwing an object at police and riding off on his bike during unrest in Southport on 30 July pleaded guilty to violent disorder at Liverpool youth court.

A 13-year-old girl is due to appear at Basingstoke magistrates court today to face a charge of violent disorder over a protest in Aldershot, Hampshire police said.

The girl, who is from Aldershot,

▼ *Ricky Hardman was sentenced yesterday after brandishing a plank of wood during a riot in Rotherham*

PHOTOGRAPH: JOEL GOODMAN/LNP



was charged following reports of disorder outside Potters international hotel on 31 July.

A 40-year-old man, Steven Tiquin, will also appear at the court charged with assaulting police officers.

In Northern Ireland, an 11-year-old boy has been charged with rioting and throwing petrol bombs. He will appear at Belfast youth court on 6 September.

The milestone of 1,000 arrests relating to the disorder is expected to be reached imminently. So far, 975 people have been arrested and at least 545 charged, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) said yesterday.

While most of those appearing in court were men, two women admitted being "agitators" in disorder outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Manchester on 31 July.

Tracy Pearson, 53, and Michelle Jibson, 45, admitted violent disorder at Manchester magistrates court.

The prosecution said Jibson was seen to "strike out at a police officer" during the disorder while Pearson was "advancing towards police lines".

After being remanded into custody, Pearson shouted over the judge: "Don't care. Freedom of speech is gone. Joke."

Nevey Smith, 21, from Oldham, also admitted to throwing water at police during the same incident while her child was in a buggy.

Elsewhere, Ricky Hardman, 41, a haulier from Barnsley, was jailed for two years and eight months at Sheffield crown court yesterday after he was pictured in the media brandishing a plank of wood during riots outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Rotherham.





▲ *(Top) Cole Stewart, 18, hit a police officer; Thomas Rogers, 22, threw a vacuum cleaner through a window*

Hardman was told that being a father would not be a mitigation in sentencing. The recorder of Sheffield, Judge Jeremy Richardson KC, said: "What a disgraceful example you are to your child."

A 22-year-old man who threw a vacuum cleaner through a Nigerian student's window during riots in Middlesbrough and told a police officer "I hope your children get raped" was jailed for 26 months at Teesside crown court.

Thomas Rogers pleaded guilty to violent disorder and possession of an offensive weapon after he was seen throwing bricks at police.

His sentence was reduced as a result of his poor mental health and learning difficulty.

At the same court, a teenager seen "celebrating with his arms in the air" after hitting a police officer with a rock during riots in Darlington was jailed for 18 months. Cole Stewart, 18, was part of a group of around 30 who gathered outside a mosque in the town on 5 August.

The longest sentence of the day went to Guy Sullivan, 43, who was jailed for three years after he grabbed a police officer's baton in Plymouth and ran off with it during disorder in the city. He admitted a charge of violent disorder relating to his conduct at the protests on 5 August.

Dublin Query over Tommy Robinson's Irish passport

Ben Quinn

Irish parliamentarians have called on their government to investigate how an Irish passport was obtained by Tommy Robinson, who has been accused of inciting riots from abroad.

The Luton-born far-right leader travels on an Irish passport in his real name - Stephen Yaxley-Lennon - and was believed to have qualified for it via his mother, an Irish immigrant to Britain.

However, questions have been raised about its validity after an official form issued to Robinson when he was detained by Canadian immigration authorities in June stated that his place of birth was Ireland.

Charles Flanagan, a former justice minister who chairs the Irish parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee, said: "Any questions over the integrity of the Irish passport system must be taken most seriously.

"Eligibility for Irish citizenship and grounds for holding an Irish passport are clearly defined in law. Any alleged violation must not only be taken seriously but acted upon and subject to formal investigation by the appropriate authorities."

Duncan Smith, a Labour party Dáil member, said: "If there are any question marks over the integrity of someone's passport then that must be investigated. Accurate country of birth information is integral to any passport application."

He called on the UK Foreign Office and Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs to liaise. "We must take on all far-right activism when we see it. If someone is travelling on an Irish passport and fomenting far-right hate then we have a responsibility to explore all methods of pressure to stop it," Smith added.

Paul Murphy, a socialist parliamentarian, said: "It is concerning that someone who is inciting racist violence across Britain and Ireland appears to be travelling on an Irish passport. It is doubly concerning that the Canadian documentation suggests that his place of birth was falsely given as Ireland. Is that what it says on his passport? If so, his passport would have been issued on a fraudulent basis and could be revoked."

Robinson has a number of criminal convictions, including assaulting an off-duty police officer, stalking, fraud and drug possession. In 2013, he was jailed for 10 months for using someone else's passport to travel to the US.

He was arrested in June in Canada on suspicion of committing an immigration offence. The image of the immigration authority form was tweeted by him after he was detained, having been ordered to stay in the country and hand over his passport.

He has been cultivating links with the emerging Irish far right and visited Ireland in February last year, telling followers he had come to "report" on anti-immigrant sentiment.



▲ *Stephen Yaxley-Lennon was born in Luton, but has an Irish passport*

Jail crowding Rioters could be freed early, says No 10

Aletha Adu
Political correspondent

People jailed for taking part in the violent disorder after the Southport stabbing attack could be released early, Downing Street has said.

Police said on Friday 302 people had been charged with offences including theft, antisocial behaviour and "spreading online hate" since the incident in Southport on 29 July and more charges would follow.

However, the government has changed the law to allow some criminals to leave jail early because of overcrowding and No 10 said rioters would not be excluded from this, meaning some will be able to leave after serving 40% of their sentence.

The early release scheme is to run for at least 18 months, and is expect to release more than 20,000 prisoners, as jails had been operating at 99% capacity for a year and a half.

When asked whether rioters could be excluded from the scheme, a No 10 spokesperson said: "There's no specific exclusion for the rioters."

They added: "Those who are convicted of serious violence and serve sentences of four years and over, or a terrorism offence, will be excluded."

Criminals serving time for domestic abuse and sex offences are also exempt from being released early.

The justice secretary, Shabana Mahmood, last week said more than 500 prison places would be opened up to help detain rioters who had been sentenced.

While tensions appeared to subside over the weekend, Downing Street said the government would remain on "high alert" for any flare-up of violence. The prime minister, Keir Starmer, had cancelled a planned holiday in order to "ensure that we can respond to the disorder".

The home secretary, Yvette Cooper, has condemned "senior politicians and pundits who sought to undermine the legitimacy and authority of the police".

Writing in the Telegraph, Cooper said she hoped to work with police "rather than just blaming them from afar, to tackle problems and raise standards", in an apparent criticism of those who had claimed the UK had "two-tier policing".

Girl with severe dairy allergy 'died after sip of Costa drink'

Geneva Abdul

A 13-year-old girl with a severe dairy allergy suffered an "immediate reaction" after a sip of a hot chocolate drink from Costa Coffee that was meant to have been made with soya, an inquest has heard.

Hannah Jacobs, of Barking, east London, was allergic to dairy products and had opted for a "complete avoidance" since she was a toddler.

She died within hours of having the takeaway drink her mother, Abimbola Duyile, had ordered on 8 February 2022.

"I made sure that the staff was aware that this was not a joke," Duyile told the East London coroner's court yesterday, adding that she had been "extra picky" and specific about the order and that she might have sounded "like a crazy mum". Duyile said she needed "to be straight with the staff" before the drink was made.

She said the server agreed that the jug would be cleaned owing to Hannah's severe allergy to cow's milk.

At that point, "Hannah was busy telling me off for being so picky," she added.

Of the reaction of the female staff member behind the counter to her request, Duyile said: "I feel that she did not understand what I was saying, which is why I leaned forwards so that she could hear what I was saying."

After arriving at the dentist a short walk away, Hannah abruptly got up and went to the toilet, shouting: "That was not soya milk," Duyile recalled. She said her daughter's reaction "happened quickly" as she was coughing up phlegm and complained of chest pains.

Hannah was rushed to a nearby chemist as she was itching and her lips and mouth were swollen, Duyile told the inquest.

She added: "My initial response was of anger to the Costa Coffee staff. It gave way to terror."

At the chemist shop, a pharmacist gave Hannah an EpiPen adrenaline injection in her leg after she collapsed.

Attempts to resuscitate the girl were started and continued by paramedics who soon arrived after being called by a customer. Hannah was rushed to hospital and declared dead by 1pm, according to her family's lawyers.

Duyile said her daughter had avoided eating milk, eggs, wheat and fish to manage her allergies and had been "diligent" about her diet.



Hannah Jacobs, 13, had an 'immediate reaction' after one sip of a hot chocolate that was supposed to be dairy-free, an inquest heard

PHOTOGRAPH: LEIGH DAY SOLICITORS/PA

Hannah understood that "managing her allergies was just part of life", Duyile said, adding that her daughter never ate at friends' houses and only at "known and trusted" restaurants.

An early dose of adrenaline could have been key to Hannah's treatment, and since she weighed 7st 5lb (47kg) and was a teenager, she would have needed more than 150 micrograms, the court heard.

> ***'I made sure that the staff was aware that this was not a joke'***
>
> **Abimbola Duyile**
> *Hannah's mother*

Dr Rahul Chodhari, who had been involved in the management of Hannah's allergies, said that while it was hard to predict, "150 micrograms was certainly too small a dose".

When asked by the coroner if Hannah would have survived had she received an intra-muscular adrenaline injection within the nine minutes of consuming the drink and leaving the dentist, Chodhari said: "Yes."

Duyile said in tribute to her daughter: "She would have made a great lawyer. [She] had a strong sense of right and wrong, if she thought something was unfair she would speak her mind no matter what."

She recalled how Hannah would clean the family's house without being asked to and looked after her sister.

"I know that she would have achieved anything she set her mind to. I loved my child so much and my heart is broken," said Duyile.

The inquest is due to last six days.



Representative example	Duration of agreement	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total Amount Payable	Interest Rate Fixed	Representative APR	Device Cash Price (to buy outright)	Airtime Plan	Airtime Plan June 2024 - April 2025	Airtime Plan May 2025 - March 2026
iPad 9th Gen	48 months	£20	£9.40	£451.10	£471.10	0%	0%	£471.10	£4.00	£4.00 + RPI% announced in Feb 2025 + 3.9% = Price A	Price A + RPI% announced in Feb 2026 +3.9%

RPI rate is announced in February each year. Data allowances must be used within the month and cannot be carried over. Subject to availability. £9.40 Device Plan for 48 months and £4.00 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. £20 upfront. **48 Months O2 Refresh custom plans:** Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 48 months. Like new devices available for 3 to 36 months. The device cost will be the same whatever you choose. There may be an upfront cost. You can pay off your Device Plan at any time and choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or leave. If you are in the first 24 months of your Device Plan and you cancel your Airtime Plan you will have to pay the remainder of your Device Plan in full. After 24 months you can keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or end it without affecting your Device Plan. Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, RG2 6UU. Telefónica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms.

Johnson 'courted for executive role at Daily Telegraph' as Zahawi plots bid

Jane Croft

Boris Johnson has reportedly been courted for an executive role with the Daily Telegraph by a potential bidder for the newspaper group.

The former Conservative prime minister is said to have been sounded out by his former chancellor Nadhim Zahawi, who has approached a number of wealthy backers about assembling a potential bid for the Telegraph newspapers and the Spectator magazine.

Zahawi has held preliminary, informal talks and raised the idea with investors of Johnson becoming the Telegraph's global editor-in-chief - though there is no firm agreement in place and there are no formal talks, according to Sky News.

Johnson writes a column for the Daily Mail, but he has longstanding links with the Telegraph, where he began his career as its star Brussels correspondent writing exaggerated stories about EU regulations before returning to the UK to be a political columnist and entering politics.

Zahawi stepped down as an MP in July after he decided not to stand again in his Stratford-on-Avon constituency.

He was originally involved in discussions over the future of the Telegraph as a "middleman", introducing Redbird IMI, a United Arab Emirates-backed consortium, to the Barclay family.

RedBird IMI - a partnership backed by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the UAE's vice-president, and the US investment firm RedBird Capital Partners - took control of



▲ *Boris Johnson writes for the Mail but has longstanding Telegraph links*

the Telegraph newspapers and the Spectator magazine in December when it repaid the Barclay family's debts, including a £600m loan against the titles.

However, RedBird IMI was in effect blocked from completing its planned deal for the Telegraph after the government drew up legislation in March designed to stop foreign states or associated individuals from owning newspaper assets in the UK.

The planned Abu Dhabi-led takeover of a newspaper widely seen as the in-house journal of the Conservative party had been fiercely opposed by many Tory MPs and peers. Their concerns about past breaches of press freedom in the UAE, which provided the financial backing for 75% of RedBird IMI, led ministers to draw up new legislation.

After it became clear the bid would not be approved under the proposed new rules, Redbird IMI put the newspaper group back up for sale in April; the deadline for first-round bids closed in mid-July. The sale is now expected to be completed later this year.

A number of interested parties have already walked away, including Lord Rothermere, the owner of the Daily Mail, who pulled out of the auction owing to fears that his newspaper group would be drawn into a long and complex battle to allow any takeover to overcome competition and political hurdles.

A bid from Lord Saatchi, the former Tory co-chair responsible for the party's best-known advertising campaigns, and Lady de Rothschild has also not made it to the second round.

A consortium led by the hedge fund tycoon Sir Paul Marshall and backed by the billionaire Ken Griffin is among the interested bidders.

Zahawi, who in May was named the chair of the Barclay family-owned retailer Very Group, is said to have approached potential backers including the Reuben family, who own a stake in Newcastle United and a large property portfolio.

Zahawi and Johnson have declined to comment.

It emerged in June that the Telegraph Media Group fell into the red last year after it set aside nearly £280m to cover loans made to the Barclay family that may not be repaid. In its accounts, the group said that, despite a resilient financial performance, it had made losses of £244.6m in 2023 due to the provision.

Pro-foxhunt campaigners claim hunters qualify as an ethnic group

Matthew Weaver

A pro-foxhunting group says it has prepared a legal case to try to prove that hunters are an ethnic minority whose hunts should be protected under equality laws.

Ed Swales, the chair of Hunting Kind, claims he has been advised by a leading human rights lawyer that hunters unequivocally qualify for legal protection under the UK Equality Act 2010.

Speaking to the Fieldsports Channel podcast, Swales said: "The qualifications of an ethnic group, there are five of them, and we hit every one straight in the bullseye."

He said he had spent three years preparing a legal challenge that had now been reviewed by a human rights KC "who sits on the council of the European court of human rights".

Swales said: "The outcome of that from the human rights silk is that as a protected minority group under the Equality Act, we qualify, undoubtedly 10 out of 10."

He said the group would try to mount legal challenges to prove that those who supported hunting had suffered discrimination such as losing work or contracts, or been abused on social media.

If successful, such action would give hunters the same protection as minority groups such as the Roma community or LGBTQ+ groups.



▲ *Hunting Kind says hunters qualify '10 out of 10' to gain protection under the terms of the Equality Act*
PHOTOGRAPH: DANNY LAWSON/PA

Swales accused "the animal rights extremist movement" of launching "a person-on-person conflict" against hunters under "the excuse of animal welfare".

The former Labour minister Mike Foster said the group had lost the plot. He wrote on X: "'Show me an example of people who have lost the plot,' the hunt lobby never fail to disappoint."

In a video on the group's website, Swales claimed Keir Starmer would understand the legal challenge.

He said: "Keir Starmer, in his position as prime minister with a legal background, would one hopes understand the detail and the plain fact of the matter that we are a minority ethnic group of British people that hunt."

Hunting Kind believes hunting is an extension of natural selection.

In the video, Swales said: "We see it as a really important part of wildlife management ... We're actually doing people a service.

"We're picking up the foxes or the hares or the deer or the rabbits that are either old, they've got no teeth, they can die of starvation, or they've got the disease, or they're just not adapted to outperforming a dog in that chase. So we're happy with that natural selectivity."

He also said hunting was not cruel. "I can tell you for a fact it is not cruel because I take no delights in the suffering of an animal. I am as animal welfare friendly as anyone I have come across, and my hunting compatriots are the same."

In the video Swales said the group was committed to reversing the "Bambi effect". He added: "Animal rights unfortunately are coming at it from a very uneducated and anthropomorphic point of view, and they're blinkered to what we see as rural reality and wildlife management reality. And they're also deaf. They don't want to listen."

Selected stores only – subject to availability. © Marks and Spencer plc.



New homes push will grant councils power to buy green belt land without overpaying

Jack Simpson

Councils and public bodies in England will be enabled to buy green belt land without overpaying as part of the government's drive to build 1.5m homes by 2030.

Landowners who decline to sell would face compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) if the site could host a "quality housing scheme" in the public interest.

Under the proposed rules, now being consulted on, landowners could be forced to sell at a capped benchmark value that the government has said will provide "fair but not excessive return" for the seller, and "maximise community benefits".

The proposals come two weeks after the deputy prime minister, Angela Rayner, set out wide-reaching planning and housing policy reforms aimed at accelerating housebuilding.

These included new mandatory housing targets for councils, under which authorities would have to identify enough land in their local plans to meet housing need.

In some areas this would result in significant rises in the number of new homes required, such as the north-west, whose target rose from 21,500 to 38,000 homes, and the east, where the target rose from 35,000 to 45,000.

The government also said it wanted to take a "more strategic approach to [green belt] land designation".

The green belt was introduced nationwide in England in 1947 under the Town and Country Planning Act to prevent urban sprawl and protect areas on the edge of towns and cities from development. It covers 6,300 sq miles, about 13% of England's area.

Much of the green belt is owned by farmers, with about 65% of it used for agriculture. However, investors have been buying up green belt land in recent years in the hope that planning rules would be loosened, and some could now attempt to cash in.

To address this, ministers propose changes to compensation rules, first reported by the Times, which will "remove inflated values of land based on the prospect of planning permission" and ensure schemes that are in the public interest can progress.

If a price cannot be agreed, the government is considering giving powers to allow local authorities and Homes England, the government's housing delivery agency, to "take a proactive role in the assembly of the land supported where necessary by compulsory purchase powers".

The prime minister's spokesperson confirmed that the government was consulting on plans to cap the amount landowners could receive, with details to come after the consultation closes.

Some planning experts have said Labour will only be able to hit its goal of 1.5m new homes by 2030 if more homes are built on green belt land.

A Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government spokesperson said: "We will reform the outdated compulsory purchase process to remove inflated values of land and ensure compensation paid to landowners is fair but not excessive. This is part of our plan to get Britain building again and deliver the homes the country desperately needs."

England's green belts



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



Curtis and Arthur, a Chilean flamingo couple at Paignton zoo, are rasing the chick together

PHOTOGRAPH: WILD PLANET TRUST/ COVER IMAGES

Life finds a way: same-sex flamingo couple hatch egg

Neha Gohil

A pair of same-sex flamingos has successfully hatched an egg at a zoo in Devon, staff say.

The chick is one of several new additions hatched by Chilean flamingo couples at Paignton zoo, marking its first successful hatchings of the species since 2018.

The bird curator, Pete Smallbones, said he was not entirely sure how the same-sex pair, Curtis and Arthur, acquired the chick but this was a "known phenomenon in Chilean flamingos as well as other bird flocks".

Smallbones said: "The most likely scenario is that the egg was abandoned by another couple, so this pair have adopted it ... We have had several all-male pairings over the years, but this is the first season that an egg has been successfully hatched by a same-sex pair."

"The bird department aren't surprised that the same-sex pair have successfully hatched an egg and are now rearing a chick, but for other departments it has been a bit of a surprise," Smallbones added.

He said Curtis and Arthur were a new couple at the lagoon and were raising the chick together.

"Same sex-coupling is a behaviour that is still relatively little understood, but it has been documented in species ranging from adélie penguins to zebra finches," he said. "We are pleased at the success of this year's breeding programme so far. It's a testament to the skill and hard work put in by the bird team."

The other flamingo couples, who were named by the public earlier this year, include Florence and Flame, Frenchie and Del and Flossie and Lando.

The flamingos form part of the zoo's Love Lagoon initiative, a tribute to ITV's reality series Love Island.

BBFC defends reclassified 15 certificate for A Nightmare on Elm Street

Andrew Pulver

The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) has defended its decision to change the certificate of the film A Nightmare on Elm Street from 18 to 15, citing audience research that showed "strong support for older content to be reclassified in line with modern standards".

The classic 1980s horror, featuring the razor-gloved Freddy Krueger, who stalks and murders teenagers in their dreams, was given an 18 certificate on its UK release in 1985, on a rerelease in 2013 and on a series of home entertainment releases. After an application from the Warner Bros film studio it was changed to a 15 on 1 August before a home entertainment reissue in September.

A spokesperson told the Guardian: "At the BBFC, we review the classification of older films when they are submitted to us by the distributor, typically ahead of an upcoming re-release. When doing so, we apply our current standards as set out in our published classification guidelines."

They added: "These guidelines evolve over time, informed by large-scale research to ensure they continue to reflect the expectations of UK audiences. As a result, films may require a higher or lower age rating than they received in the past."

The most recent set of guidelines was issued in March in which the BBFC said: "People are more concerned about violence across all the age rating categories ... around distressing and disturbing forms of intense or realistic violence." However, a BBFC spokesperson said that audiences' primary concern was related to portrayals of "real-world violence" and that "modern audiences tend to be more accepting of violent scenes which are more fantastical in nature".

They added: "In the case of A Nightmare on Elm Street, although the film features various bloody moments, it is relatively discreet in terms of gore and stronger injury detail. The kills often leave more to the imagination than visceral detail, and largely occur within a fantasy context. Compared with more recent precedents for violence and horror [classified] at 18 the film is now containable at 15 and we reclassified it accordingly."

Two-year-old dies after being found in canal

Jessica Murray
Midlands correspondent

A two-year-old boy has died after being pulled from a canal in Wolverhampton.

West Midlands police said they received a 999 call at about 5.30pm on Sunday and sent officers to the canal in Ettingshall.

The boy was found in water and pulled out by officers, who performed CPR until paramedics arrived.

"He was taken to hospital, but despite the best efforts of the emergency services he sadly died," the force said in a statement.

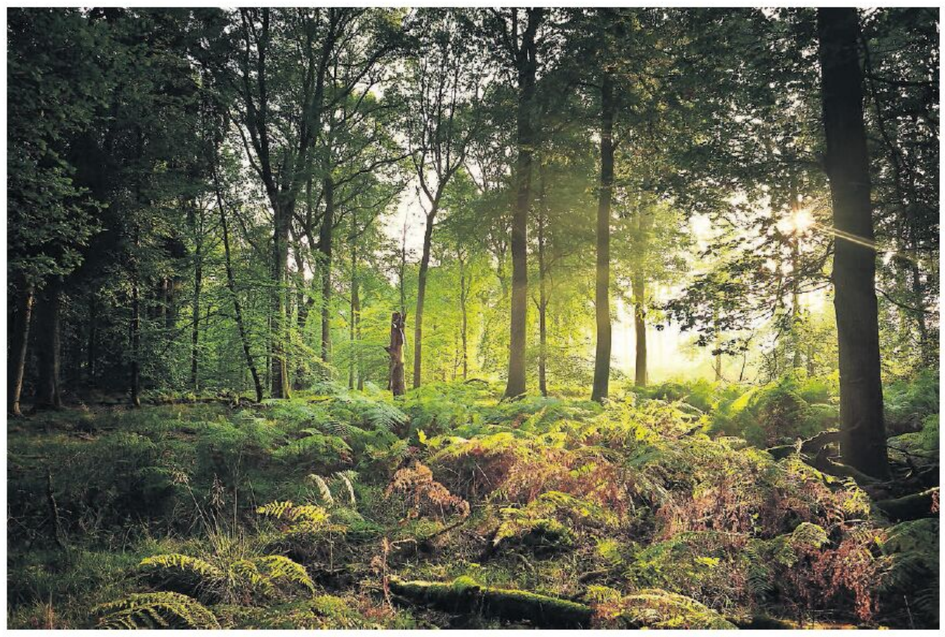
There were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death, which had been referred to the coroner, police said.

The canal runs alongside a housing estate, largely separated from it by a metal fence, with a path leading down to the canal towpath.

One man who lived in the area told the BBC that police had been called to the area when a child was reported missing, and that this information had been reported in a group chat for people living on the estate.

"It's absolutely devastating. I've got two young ones myself. This canal is not even 100 metres from my house. It's awful," he said.





▲ *The Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Preserving such sites is crucial to tackling climate breakdown*
PHOTOGRAPH: A GONCALVES/GETTY

Joined-up thinking on forests 'essential for planet'

Helena Horton
Environment reporter

Restoring and protecting forests is crucial if humanity is to stop the worst effects of climate breakdown and halt the extinction of rare species.

Researchers have been concerned, however, that actions to capture carbon, restore biodiversity and find ways to support the livelihoods of the people who live near the forests can be at odds with each other.

This is a problem in many regions which have important forests, as the people living nearby often have precarious livelihoods that can be made much worse if the land they use to survive is encroached on.

Now work led by Dr Trisha Gopalakrishna, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, has found that with careful thought, all three important outcomes can be delivered - by setting up "integrated" plans, where all three goals are combined.

The plans could deliver over 80% of the benefits in all three areas at once, with socioeconomically disadvantaged groups benefiting disproportionately from this approach.

The researchers used a framework called Nature's Contribution to People (NCP) to show how restoring nature and biodiversity can help local communities to thrive if it is done thoughtfully.

Researchers generated maps of 3.88m (9.6m acres) hectares of possible forest restoration area, and found that integrated plans aimed at multiple goals rather than just one would deliver on average 83.3% of climate change mitigation NCP, 89.9% of biodiversity value NCP and 93.9% of societal NCP compared with single-objective plans.

It is vital to keep humanity in mind when designing conservation projects, said Gopalakrishna. "In my opinion, environment/biodiversity and the requirements of local communities are compatible and there are many examples of both thriving in many different regions of the world (including India) and through time. However, environmental projects that disregard or undermine the needs of local communities can be harmful and are often unsuccessful in meeting their environmental objectives.

"Restoration projects sometimes have a narrow focus, which can lead to trade-offs. For example, if you focus on carbon storage, you might plant particular tree species and fence the forests off to protect them.

"If you focus on biodiversity, you might manage forests for particular species ... if you focus on human livelihoods, you might plant species that provide housing materials and fuelwood for cooking.

"Unsurprisingly, our study shows that plans with one NCP in mind tend not to deliver the others. However, we were surprised and pleased to find that an 'integrated' plan can deliver all three remarkably efficiently."

We need, she said, to create "multifunctional landscapes" with trees which can store carbon, plants which can help human survival, and space for wildlife.

The method has been adopted by the UN Development Programme, which produced a report on integrated spatial planning. The European conservationists INSPIRE are also using the method.

Gopalakrishna said equality needed to be taken more into account when planning conservation projects and that the next frontier should be considering gender outcomes.

"Generally, I do think societal needs and especially equity needs to be accounted for in all conservation and development projects, which is the biggest leap that this study makes," she said.

"We actually show that integrated spatial plans provide societal benefits to a greater number of Indians who are socioeconomically challenged than the plans focused only on biodiversity or carbon.

"Also, all plans including the integrated spatial plan we examined provided almost the same benefits to Indian men and women. Understanding who gains and loses (ie equity and gender) should be the next frontier of policy and decision-making and project development."

Londoners raise thousands for road sweeper's holiday – in vain

Harriet Sherwood

An uplifting story of a community rallying to show its gratitude to the man who keeps their streets clean has soured after his bosses said he could not accept their donations.

More than 200 people in Beckenham, Greater London, made contributions to send Paul Spiers on a summer break in Portugal. By yesterday, £3,000 was in the kitty – mostly from small sums of £5 or £10.

But Spiers, who turned 63 this month, will not be making the trip. His employer, the waste management company Veolia, decreed that its staff were prohibited from accepting "gifts or incentives".

The money was raised as a gesture of appreciation to Spiers, who has worked as a road sweeper in Beckenham in the south-east London borough of Bromley for the past seven years. In that time he has lifted "everyone's spirits with his positive presence" and kept the streets immaculate, according to the resident who launched a fundraiser to send Spiers on holiday.

Lisa Knight, who works at a local estate agent, John D Wood & Co, said Spiers was "adored by all".

The pair bonded over a mutual love of Elvis Presley, whose music often accompanies the road sweeper from a portable speaker as he carries out his duties.

Knight, who was named Lisa Marie after Presley's daughter, said: "You can hear him coming down the street and the music always perks you up."

Spiers worked hard in all weather, and had become a "beloved member of the community", she said.

She had discovered that, despite his hard work and dedication, he had only travelled abroad once, on holiday to Portugal with his brother and sister to celebrate his 60th



▲ *Paul Spiers has been abroad once*

birthday. He told her he dreamed of a second visit, but needed to save up.

"That's when I had the thought of setting up a fundraising page, but I didn't expect so many people to give money," Knight said. "We've both been blown away and had tears in our eyes over people's generosity."

Knight contacted Veolia to inform the company of the community's campaign. "I didn't want Paul to get into trouble," she said. "I was so shocked when they said he couldn't accept the money. They said it could be considered a bribe."

Spiers had taken the news "on the chin", she said. "He doesn't want to lose his job, he enjoys it. I'm just hoping Veolia will change their minds."

A spokesperson for Veolia said the company was "truly grateful for the support and recognition shown by the community to Paul".

However, they added, Veolia's contract with the council did "not permit our staff to accept any monies or incentives outside of agreed pay structures".

Last night Liam Conlon, the Labour MP for Beckenham and Penge, called on Bromley council to take a "common sense approach".

Veolia said it would match the amount of money raised and donate it to a charity nominated by Spiers.

"Paul will be the recipient of Bromley's employee of the quarter – an internal financial reward to recognise his hard work and dedication," the spokesperson said.



◀ *The latest artwork unveiled as part of Banksy's animals series in Charlton, south-east London*

PHOTOGRAPH: BANKSY/PA

Rhino revealed as eighth Banksy artwork in animal-themed series

PA Media

Banksy has unveiled the eighth artwork in his animal-themed collection in London: a rhinoceros that looks as though it is trying to mount a car.

The street artist has been revealing new artwork on Instagram at about 1pm every day since 5 August.

His first piece depicted a goat and was followed by silhouettes of a pair of elephants, a wolf, pelicans and a cat, as well as artworks featuring monkeys and piranhas.

His rhinoceros graffiti design is situated on a brick wall in Charlton, south-east London.

On Sunday Banksy confirmed he was behind an artwork depicting a school of piranhas, which appeared on a police box in the City of London. Barriers were put around the box, with City police officers turning up to examine the piranhas. The local authority later said the artwork had been removed to a safe location.

A spokesman for the City of London Corporation said yesterday: "We have moved the artwork to Guildhall Yard to ensure it is properly protected and open for the public to view safely. A permanent home for the piece will be decided in due course."

Earlier yesterday a crowd had gathered at the artwork near the Old Bailey as workers in hi-vis jackets cordoned off the area.

The artist's sixth piece – a silhouette of a stretching cat on a disused billboard – was removed from its location in north-west London hours after it was revealed on Saturday. Onlookers at the site in Cricklewood booed as the piece was dismantled by men who said they had been "hired" by a "contracting company" to take down the billboard for safety reasons.

The cat design was the second Banksy piece to be removed last week: a painting of a howling wolf on a satellite dish was taken from a rooftop in Peckham, south-east London, by an unidentified man less than an hour after it was unveiled.

Support for net zero target increases at fastest rate in two years

PA Media

Support for the UK's climate policy has increased since before the general election, with nearly three-quarters of people backing the shift to net zero, polling suggests.

A survey by YouGov for Climate Barometer, which tracks public opinion on climate change, found that support for net zero had risen from 69% in April to 74% in July, after the election.

Climate Barometer said it was the biggest uptick in support for net zero – the legal target to cut the UK's greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050, with any remaining pollution balanced by carbon-reducing measures – over the past two years, during which time support has consistently been between 69% and 71%.

The polling also suggests that despite the previous government watering down climate measures such as bringing in electric cars and banning gas boilers, support for net zero also increased among Conservative voters.

Support for net zero from 2019 Tory voters was at 59% in April, while 76% of those who backed the Conservative party in the July election supported the policy.

Some of the increase could be down to former Tory voters who opposed net zero switching their vote to Reform UK, which said it would scrap the targets.

But the July polling, which asked more than 1,100 people about net zero, also shows that support for net zero was up among those who voted Conservative in 2019, from the 59% figure in April to 65% last month.

Among Reform voters, 44% backed net zero, but Climate Barometer said its polling showed voters did not shift from the Tories to Reform because of its climate policies.

Labour and LibDem voters had high levels of support for net zero, with 85% and 89% respectively backing the policy.

Dr Susie Wang, the co-director at Climate Barometer, said: "Our polling shows a clear uptick in support for net zero after two years where previously it had remained at roughly the same level.

"The data also shows that many Labour voters, and those who left Labour for the Lib Dems or Greens, named climate change in the top five issues affecting their vote. But only 5% of voters who switched from the Conservatives to Reform said climate change and the environment played a role in how they voted."

The polling was part of a climate survey of more than 2,300 people. It found renewable energy and clean technology were widely regarded as providing the biggest growth opportunities in the next five years.

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'Veering from eerily concealed identities to oversharing': performers from Seed Dance Company in Lost Connection
PHOTOGRAPH: CHIH PENG LUCAS KAO

Dance review Taiwan company takes on smartphone servitude

Lost Connection
Summerhall, Edinburgh
★★★☆☆

Chris Wiegand

You may not recognise the word but you will know the behaviour. Phubbing, currently under consideration for the Collins dictionary, is "to interact with a mobile phone in preference to people in a social setting". Part of Taiwan Season at the fringe, Seed Dance Company's arresting production begins with the familiar image of a figure, barely seeming to breathe, lost in the glow of a smartphone.

Other dancers circulate, drawn to the screen like moths to a flame or performers seeking the spotlight, and there is a sequence seemingly evoking the desperate search for a signal. One of the four lies on the ground, their body sporadically jolting upwards with each hit of dopamine – or is it something more sinister? – from social media. The prop phones they wield, almost like extensions of their arms, are tricked out with dazzling lights, which accentuate a greyscale costume design for what at times resembles a quartet of zombies.

After focusing on solo behaviour, Wen-Jen Huang's choreography, which she performs with Pin-Ho Wang, Tzu-Yin Chen and Kapitjuan Kadrangian, pans out to explores group dynamics. Acts of competition and collaboration add a sweep and flow absent from those hunched doomscrollers.

Wearing, and sometimes sharing, the same superelasticated shirts, the performers increasingly cover their faces with the material. Veering from eerily concealed identities to oversharing, they become zany wink emojis and heart reactions, yet spiral or slump to the ground as if low on battery. One disappears into themselves, withdrawing from the stage almost without being noticed.

Studies have suggested excessive smartphone use increases loneliness, but the piece does not convey how people across the generations are better connected than ever before. There are four strong performances and some cool effects, played out against Enoch Chen's often clubby beats, yet even at 40 minutes Lost Connection feels overstretched by the time we reach the end. These horrors are all too familiar. Lighting up our phones, we trundle out of the theatre.

Until 25 August

Comedy review To boldly go where few mothers have gone before

Josephine Lacey: Autism Mama
Pleasance Courtyard, Edinburgh
★★★★☆

Brian Logan

At a festival with 3,600 shows, some will feel samey. But no other performance is likely to resemble Josephine Lacey's.

Autism Mama may not sound that distinctive on paper: it is about Lacey's experience of parenting her autistic son, who has a sensory processing disorder – slotting neatly, you might think, into the category marked "comedy shows about neurodiversity and challenging personal experiences".

But it never feels like that in Lacey's handling – and you'd better believe handling is the right term. The 56-year-old's debut hour is rude, precise, wickedly humorous and – a lovely quality, this – glowing with maternal love. Not that she is showy or sentimental: she is a straight-talking Londoner ("That can fuck right off!") with not the slightest soppiness about her.

The biggest-hitting set piece advertises gleeful schadenfreude at the death of her son's biological dad. But usually love, not loathing, is the top note, as Lacey talks us through her life as "both mum and dad" to a son with dysregulation and his experience of puberty.

On one level, that leads to embarrassing predicaments in public places, such as the supermarket trip interrupted by Callum saying: "Ooh, I like your breasts" to a passing shopper.



Lacey is a caring, straight-talking Londoner with no trace of soppiness

On another, it finds Callum experiencing pain and uncertainty in his changing body.

Step forward Autism Mama, boldly going – armed with a long, thin balloon and a tube of lube – where few mamas have gone before. We get the full demo here.

There's also a central section recreating sex ed for those with special educational needs. There is an extraordinary moment when her balloon penis gives Lacey an insight into life as her beloved boy lives it.

Was parental love ever distilled in such an unlikely image? This is a tender, crystal clear and cheerfully indecent show about a mother going, if not the extra yard, then at least the extra six inches.

Until 25 August

Scottish refuse and recycling workers call off planned strike action

Severin Carrell
Scotland editor

The strikes by refuse and recycling workers due to disrupt the Edinburgh festival were called off yesterday after a new pay offer was made.

Edinburgh faced a repeat of the strikes during the festival in 2022, with mounds of uncollected bin bags, overflowing recycling bins and unsightly food-covered pavements.

The industrial action was due to begin tomorrow across Edinburgh and 25 other councils, but the Unite, Unison and GMB unions said they had suspended the strikes to consult members on the offer.

After facing pressure from council leaders and businesses, Scottish ministers offered the Convention of Scottish Authorities, which represents the country's 32 councils, extra funding late on Friday.

The revised offer involves a minimum increase of 3.6% for all grades backdated to April, with a rise for lower paid staff of £1,292, an increase equivalent to 5.63%.

Unite and GMB have recommended their members accept the pay deal, while Unison is recommending its members reject it because they would receive a proportionately lower pay rise.

David O'Connor, Unison Scotland's local government lead, said: "Council staff have seen the value of their pay reduced by 25% over the past 14 years and any pay deal needs to do more to reverse this."

Keir Greenaway, GMB Scotland's senior organiser in public services, said the offer was "a significant improvement" on the previous one. "It should never have got to this stage, however, and Scotland's council leaders have again shown an absolute lack of urgency or sense of realism," he said.

The Scottish government had a better track record of rewarding public sector workers compared with the previous UK government, but union leaders believe the Labour victory in July has changed the mood.

Ministers are now far more likely to agree to higher pay deals in England, which makes it politically harder for Scottish ministers to reject union demands. Union officials also said they had been told the Treasury was being more transparent with Scottish ministers about the money available.

Cammy Day, the leader of Edinburgh council, urged the unions to accept the offer but said the Scottish government had to properly fund council services to avoid these high-stakes industrial disputes.

"If we do manage to reach a resolution, it will come as a huge relief to residents and businesses across Edinburgh, alongside the visitors who are here experiencing our fantastic festivals," he said.


মিত্র
NEELAM
NEELAM



Justice for the missing

People gather in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to demand the return of family members allegedly 'disappeared' by government agencies. Hundreds of people, including journalists and opposition politicians, are thought to have been disappeared during the rule of Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League party. Hasina resigned and fled the country last week after at least 300 people were killed in a crackdown on long-running protests.

PHOTOGRAPH: LUIS TATO/AFP/ GETTY IMAGES

World

'I felt euphoria' Ukraine's borderland refugees cheer surprise attack on Russia

Continued from page 1

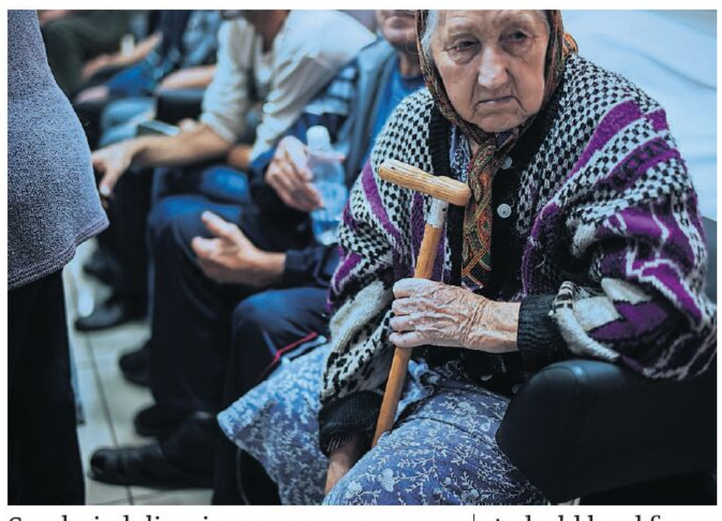
register as internally displaced people told similar stories: while there had been periodic cross-border shelling before, this time was different. "What happened last week was times 100," said Mykola, 69, who was evacuated with his wife from Yunakivka, 5 miles from the border, on Sunday.

Ukraine's civilian authorities had little formal warning of the attack, though some people in the area suspected something was coming. Once it had begun, they announced the mandatory evacuation of 6,000 people from villages between 3 miles and 6 miles from the border - and it is unclear when they may be able to return.

Fighting is now taking place on the Russian side of the border, though there are occasional strikes into the Ukrainian rear. A small multistorey building beside a residential area in southern Sumy was destroyed by a single missile on Sunday afternoon, injuring eight civilians who lived nearby and throwing up a smoke trail visible across the countryside.

After nearly a week, Ukraine has captured 28 villages inside Kursk oblast, next door to Ukraine's depopulated Sumy region, according to Alexey Smirnov, the Russian acting regional governor. Yesterday, he said Ukraine's incursion was up to 8 miles deep along a 25-mile front, Russian state media reported.

A few hours later, Ukraine suggested the territory it controlled was much larger. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy released a video clip showing the leader of the armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, delivering a progress report. "Currently, we control about 1,000 sq km [380 sq miles] of the territory of the Russian Federation," he said.



Ukrainians waiting to register as internally displaced people at a refugee centre in Sumy

The distances are modest compared with the vast size of Russia and Ukraine overall. But the attack is the first time part of Russia has been occupied since the second world war - and its president, Vladimir Putin, yesterday promised "a worthy response" to an incursion whose motivation he presented as largely political.

"The main task, of course, is for the defence ministry to squeeze out, to knock out the enemy from our territories," Putin said, though there has been no sign Russian forces have been able to halt the Ukrainian invaders, who appeared to be gaining ground around Sudzha, 5 miles inside the border.

The Russian president, in his most detailed remarks yet about the incursion, also said that Ukraine "with the help of its western masters" was trying to improve its position before any possible peace negotiations - suggesting he believed that Ukraine was trying to hold land for a possible swap of territory whenever the war ends.

There is little sign of serious peace talks, though the Kremlin has previously indicated it is willing to end the war along the current lines of control, which would leave Russia holding about 18% of Ukraine. Ukraine has said it wants to restore its internationally recognised borders and seeks membership of Nato, which Russia has rejected as unacceptable.

In Sumy, the 150 or so refugees waiting for help appeared to show little interest in such an immediate peace, even though the danger close to the border meant many had little immediate expectation of returning to their homes.

Nobody, however, blamed their displacement on Ukraine's attack - arguing instead that it was a necessary form of defence. Liudmyla, 54, from the village of Khotin, was at times tearful as she said she worried for her husband, who was still trying to harvest soya beans from their border farm.

But asked whether it was right to attack from the area where she lived, causing such danger to her family, she brightened. "I felt euphoria, euphoria," Liudmyla said. "Absolutely, 100% - they should have done it earlier. I wish I could have done it myself."

Mykola, who lost his right hand before the war, was of a similar mind. "We should have done something. We need to liberate our territory somehow. Last year, we failed in the offensive, but this year we seem to be in a better state with western aid," he said, even praising the support of the former British prime minister Boris Johnson.

"We hope that they will succeed and keep on succeeding, because as far as we know, when they succeed we'll get even more help from Europe and America," he added.

Russian authorities order the evacuation of two districts



Source: the Institute for the Study of War with AEI's Critical Threats Project



Israel says it is preparing for Iran to retaliate as tensions rise

Peter Beaumont

Iran insisted on its right to an "appropriate and deterrent response" against Israel yesterday as the White House said it had prepared for what could be significant attacks by Iran or its proxies as soon as this week.

The US also announced yesterday that it had ordered the deployment of the USS Georgia, a nuclear-powered guided-missile submarine, to the Middle East, amid mounting concern over the determination by Iran to retaliate for Israel's assassination of Hamas's political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran.

With fears that an attack may be imminent, the Israel air force commander, Maj Gen Tomer Bar, issued an order forbidding career officers from travelling abroad for holidays, a day after it was reported that soldiers travelling in Georgia and Azerbaijan had been told to return home immediately.

John Kirby, the White House national security spokesman, said Iran's response to the killings "could be this week" but it was "difficult to ascertain at this particular time if there's an attack by Iran or its proxies what it could look like".

He added that the US and its allies were preparing for a "significant set of attacks."

Earlier, the leaders of France, Germany and the UK called on Tehran to refrain from any retaliatory attacks that would escalate regional tensions after the killing of Haniyeh, and of a Hezbollah leader in Beirut last month.

The joint statement endorsed calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, the return of scores of hostages held by Hamas and the "unfettered" delivery of humanitarian aid.

Keir Starmer and Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, both made phone calls to Iran's new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, appealing to

Rohingya deaths
Dozens killed trying to flee Myanmar
Page 25

This one's just right
Bear pinches granola from California school
Page 28





◀ *Palestinians attend the funeral of those killed in an Israeli strike on Khan Younis. The Israeli military has ordered more evacuations in southern Gaza*

PHOTOGRAPH: BASHAR TALEB/AFP/GETTY

him to do everything possible to prevent further escalation, with the prime minister warning that there was a "serious risk of miscalculation and now was the time for calm and consideration".

The demands for the return of hostages was underscored last night when the armed wing of Hamas announced its militants had shot dead an Israeli hostage and wounded two women in "separate incidents" in Gaza.

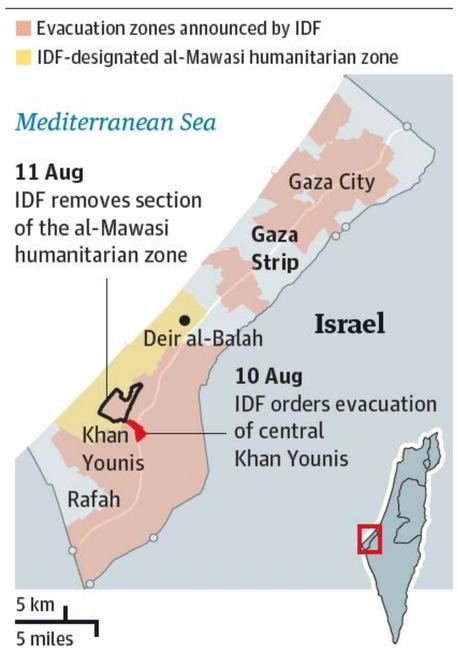
Palestinian militants seized 251 hostages during their 7 October attack on Israel that triggered the ongoing war, 111 of whom are still being held in Gaza, although the Israeli military says 39 are dead.

The rapidly rising tensions have been driven by remarks by Iranian and Israeli officials that Tehran was on the brink of a large-scale retaliatory attack. On Friday, an Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps deputy commander told local news agencies the country was preparing to carry out an order by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to "harshly punish" Israel.

The news website Axios reported that the Israeli defence minister, Yoav Gallant, had told the US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin, on Sunday that Iran was preparing for a large-scale military attack on Israel within days.

In a statement, Gallant's ministry said he and Austin had discussed operational and strategic coordination and Israel's readiness in the face of Iranian threats.

The US military had already said it would deploy additional fighter jets and navy warships to the Middle East as Washington seeks to bolster Israeli defences.



Source: the Institute for the Study of War with AEI's Critical Threats Project

It comes amid Israel's continuing assault on Gaza, where officials from the Hamas-run health ministry have said almost 40,000 Palestinians have been killed since the war began.

On Sunday, the Israeli military ordered more evacuations in southern Gaza, a day after a deadly missile strike on a school-turned-shelter in the north killed at least 80 Palestinians, according to local health authorities.

Israel has repeatedly ordered mass evacuations as its troops return to heavily destroyed areas where they previously battled Palestinian militants. The vast majority of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people has been displaced, often multiple times, in the besieged territory.

The latest evacuation orders apply to areas of Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city, including part of an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone from which the military said rockets had been fired.

The humanitarian zone has steadily shrunk during the war with the various evacuation orders.

Hundreds of thousands of people have crammed into squalid tent camps with few public services, or sought shelter in schools, though the UN says hundreds of those have been directly hit or damaged.

'Relentless pain' The loss of miracle babies and IVF couples' hopes

Aseel Mousa
Emma Graham-Harrison

It took surgery and five years of IVF treatment for Amal to fall pregnant for the first and only time. That struggle with infertility lasted almost as long as her son's short life.

Khaled was just seven years old on 17 October when he was killed in an Israeli airstrike on Rafah, one of the first of the war, which hit the family home. Sometimes Amal struggles to keep going. "Death, in all its finality, seems less daunting than the relentless pain of living without Khaled," she said. "He was the most precious thing in my life."

The war has created a grim inventory of different forms of loss. Among them is the particular pain of current and former IVF patients.

Some are now mourning the children who had arrived like personal miracles. Other women lost their only hope of becoming mothers when the war halted treatment, the siege on Gaza halted medical supplies, and then airstrikes and fighting destroyed thousands of frozen embryos.

Nearly 50 women were midway through cycles of hormone injections, preparing for egg collection at the al-Basma Center on 7 October. Another 10 were preparing for embryo transfers within days, said Bahaa al-Ghalayini, the founder of the centre and an IVF pioneer in Gaza. There were about 4,000 frozen embryos stored at the clinic, at least half of them belonging to couples who will not be able to undergo treatment to make new ones.

Al-Ghalayini said his first major concerns came at the start of the war, when violence and shortages of liquid nitrogen prevented the clinic from topping up the coolant needed to keep storage containers at a steady 180 degrees below zero.

Then in November 2023, an Israeli shell hit the lab. The force of the explosion broke open the containers that for so many couples contained their first, last or only chance of having a child, thawing and destroying the contents.



▲ *Khaled, seven, was killed at his family's home in a strike on Rafah*

"Embryo freezing represents a profound emotional and financial investment for couples trying to realise their dream of parenthood," Al-Ghalayini said. "The attack shattered all their dreams."

Khaled, born nearly two months premature in July 2016, had a twin brother, Adam, who died at three days old, but was transferred to a Jerusalem hospital for specialist treatment. A compromised immune system meant Khaled was in and out of hospital until he was about four, but his health improved and Amal could settle into a normal rhythm of life.

After Israel launched airstrikes on Gaza, in response to the Hamas cross-border attack on 7 October, the family fled south to join Amal's parents in Rafah, which Israel had declared a safe zone for civilians. Ten days later, Khaled was killed with his grandfather, uncle, aunt, cousins and 11 other relatives.

Amal carries a scar by her eye from searching through debris to find Khaled, a reminder of the night she lost the son she fought so hard to bring into the world.

"Conceiving a child through IVF is torturous and demanding," she said. "The scar is a mark I will carry for the rest of my days, a testament to the injustice I endured."



◀ *An Israeli strike on the al-Basma IVF clinic broke open nitrogen containers that held frozen embryos*

PHOTOGRAPH: DAWOUD ABU ALKAS/ REUTERS



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[1]The Food Foundation Food Insecurity Tracking 2024.

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Establishment 'exterminating us', says banned Thai reformist

Rebecca Ratcliffe
South-east Asia correspondent

Thailand's conservative establishment is seeking to exterminate politicians who promised reform, according to the former leader of a party banned by the courts last week.

Pita Limjaroenrat, whose Move Forward party won the most votes and most seats in last year's election, said Thailand was trapped in a "double-lock democracy" in which the legal system and military coups were repeatedly being used to undermine election results.

His party was dissolved on Wednesday over its promise to reform the strict lese-majesty law, under which criticism of the monarchy can mean up to 15 years in prison.

The UN human rights chief, Volker Türk, the EU and the US state department all expressed concern over the constitutional court judgment, warning it set back the country's democratic progress.



◀ *Pita Limjaroenrat, centre, whose Move Forward party was dissolved by a court last week. He has been banned from politics for 10 years*

The party's remaining MPs have since regrouped as the People's party, but Pita and the executive committee of Move Forward are banned from politics for 10 years. He has said legal threats against the new party could escalate.

"They're coming after us. They're exterminating us," said Pita, who spoke to the Guardian from his home in Bangkok. "They're not going to compromise. They're not here to find consensus."

Move Forward had promised to shake up Thailand by stopping the military from intervening in politics, breaking up monopolies that dominate the economy and reforming the lese majesty law.

Its pledges resonated with a wide cross-section of Thai voters, but also attracted fierce opposition from the powerful military royalist establishment, which blocked it from taking power, accusing it of trying to overthrow the monarchy.

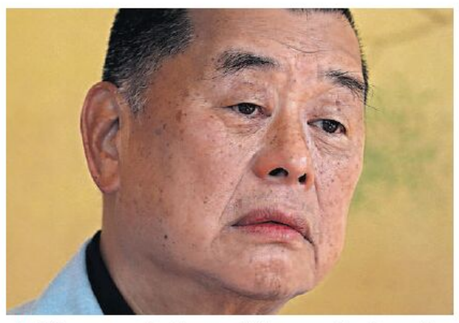
Pita said his opponents were using the monarchy as a pretext to protect their own interests.

"I believe the king is revered above politics as we are a constitutional monarchy," he said, adding that he hoped "the people in power, whether it's military or monopolies, stop dragging down the monarch as an excuse to protect their concentration of wealth and power".

In 2020, mass youth-led protests called for reform of the monarchy, criticising an institution long considered untouchable. In the run-up to the election there was unprecedented discussion of lese-majesty, with parties forced to announce their stance on the law. Move Forward was the only party to promise reform.

The space for such debates is now shrinking, Pita said, adding that the conditions for free speech were worse today than before the mass protests began. Since 2020, at least 272 people have since been charged with lese-majesty.

Further legal threats loom against former Move Forward MPs, including those who have moved to the People's party. The National Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating the ethical conduct of 44 politicians who belonged to Move Forward and supported the bill to reform lese-majesty. They could face a lifetime ban from politics.



▲ *The conviction of Jimmy Lai and other activists was upheld yesterday*

Patten decries 'unjust' verdict for protesters in Hong Kong

Amy Hawkins
Senior China correspondent

Chris Patten, the former governor of Hong Kong, has decried as "unjust" a decision by the Chinese city's top court to uphold the conviction of Jimmy Lai and other prominent pro-democracy activists for participating in a peaceful protest in 2019.

Yesterday, Hong Kong's court of final appeal unanimously agreed to uphold the convictions of seven activists who participated in an unauthorised 2019 protest in which 1.7 million people – roughly a quarter of Hong Kong's population – took to the streets to oppose Beijing's tightening grip on the city.

On the panel upholding the conviction was David Neuberger, one of the three remaining British justices to serve as non-permanent judges in the former British colony.

Lord Patten, who was the last British governor of Hong Kong until the territory was returned to Chinese rule in 1997, and is now a patron of Hong Kong Watch, said that the verdict "reveals the rapidly deteriorating state of the rule of law in Hong Kong".

He said: "This unjust verdict is made worse by the fact that Lord Neuberger, a former head of Britain's supreme court, was a party to this decision. This is particularly surprising, since when he was a member of the judiciary in Britain, Lord Neuberger was keen to establish that the English common law could accommodate fundamental aspects of human rights protection …

"In this case, perhaps some of his views on the law changed between the first-class waiting room at Heathrow and the arrival terminal of Hong Kong international airport."

The ruling centred on whether the conviction was proportionate to the defendants' fundamental human rights, which are enshrined in the city's bill of rights. In the written judgment, Neuberger said the chief justices had "fully and impressively" considered those questions.

One of the defendants was the former media mogul Lai, a 76-year-old British citizen who is separately on trial for national security offences. Margaret Ng, Albert Ho, Martin Lee, Leung "Long Hair" Kwok-hung, Lee Cheuk Yan and Cyd Ho also had their convictions upheld yesterday.

Neuberger did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

As many as 200 Rohingya die in drone attack as they try to flee Myanmar

Rebecca Ratcliffe
Bangkok

Dozens of Rohingya, including children, were killed in an artillery and drone attack that targeted civilians as they tried to flee Myanmar last week.

Civilians were trying to escape violence in Maungdaw town, Rakhine state, by crossing the Naf River into Bangladesh when they were targeted last Monday. Videos shared on social media, which appeared to have been taken after the attack, showed bodies strewn across the ground.

Nay San Lwin, the co-founder of the Free Rohingya Coalition, who spoke to survivors, said the victims had travelled from villages including Maung Ni, Myoma Taung and Myoma Kayin Dan to try to cross the border. The drone attacks began at about 5pm the same day, he said.

"They told me … at least three to four dozen drone bombs were dropped there. They are saying at least 200 were killed and around 300 injured. There is nobody to collect the dead bodies. Everyone is running to save their lives. Some are already in Bangladesh," he said.

Survivors who spoke to Reuters also said they believed more than 200 people had been killed. A survivor who spoke to Associated Press said 150 people had been killed, and many others wounded.



▲ *Relatives mourn next to the bodies of Rohingya refugees who drowned in the Naf River on 6 August*
PHOTOGRAPH: AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Arakan Army, one of the armed groups seeking to overthrow the junta, has seized large areas of Rakhine over recent months.

The militia and Myanmar's military blamed each other for the attack. The Arakan Army denied claims by activists that it was behind the attack. The activists said the group has been targeting Rohingya with killings, torching villages and forcibly recruiting young men.

The military has also been accused of atrocities against civilians. It already faces a genocide case in The Hague over its brutal crackdowns against Rohingya in 2016 and 2017.

Rahim, who witnessed the attack and asked not to give his real name, told the Guardian drones had flown from a village under Arakan Army control, and repeatedly hit civilians.

His family had been staying at a nearby village while he tried to arrange a boat to take them to Bangladesh. The family managed to cross the border at 4am last Tuesday.

"The dead bodies were here and there, everywhere at that place," he said. "When we are coming through that place, some people are still alive, but there was no help. I am still hearing a voice. One person is telling [us]: 'I am still not dead, please help me.' But no one goes to help because everyone is rushing to save their own lives and their own families."

Survivors waited for boats to try to flee to safety. One of Rahim's friends boarded a small boat to try to escape but it became overloaded with people, he said. His friend's five children were killed when it sank.

An Arakan Army spokesperson told Reuters: "According to our investigation, family members of terrorists tried to go to Bangladesh from Maungdaw and the junta dropped the bomb because they left without permission," referring to Muslims who have joined Rohingya armed groups fighting against the Arakan Army.

Project 2025 videos reveal plan to fill civil service with loyal Republicans

Anna Betts

Leaked training videos confirm how those behind Project 2025, a controversial rightwing plan for the next Republican presidency, are gearing up for a major effort to replace non-partisan civil servants with conservative loyalists.

The leaks also confirm that the project is being led by many former Trump administration officials.

The videos, created for Project 2025's "presidential administration academy" and published by ProPublica and Documented, expose part of the Heritage Foundation thinktank's plan to recruit and train political appointees on behalf of a future conservative administration.

A major aim of Project 2025 – along with its controversial policy proposals – is to replace thousands of government employees, most of whom work in career positions for administrations of both colours, with partisan Republican loyalists.

Of the videos' 36 featured speakers, 29 previously worked for former US president Donald Trump.

The videos appear to have been recorded before the resignation of the group's director two weeks ago, reportedly due to "pressure from Trump campaign leadership". Trump has recently tried to distance himself from Project 2025 amid intense criticism and backlash regarding the group's extreme policy proposals. The plans include eliminating the education department, cutting environmental protections and reducing LGBTQ+ and reproductive rights.

In the 23 videos, totalling 14 hours, former Trump administration officials advise future appointees how to best advance conservative policies.

In one video, Rick Dearborn, who was a part of Trump's 2016 transition team and served in the White House as deputy chief of staff, says it was "tough" to fill all the positions at first during the Trump administration.

The recruiting and training that Project 2025 is doing now, Dearborn said, is a "luxury" not known in 2016.

In another video, Bethany Kozma, the former deputy chief of staff at the US Agency for International Development (USAid) during Trump's term, said the climate change movement is part of a government goal to "control people".

"If the American people elect a conservative president, his administration will have to eradicate climate change references from absolutely everywhere," Kozma said. The training video was titled Left-Wing Code Words and Language.

In the same video, Katie Sullivan, an acting assistant attorney general at the justice department under Trump, criticised the Joe Biden administration's creation of gender adviser positions in the federal government.

Elsewhere, several speakers suggested future conservative political appointees should be prepared to expect hostility from the mainstream media, from within the federal government, and also from people in Washington DC.

The capital city is a place that "does not share your conservative values", Max Primorac, a Trump-era former deputy administrator at USAid, told future appointees. He advised viewers not to let "career bureaucrats hinder you from advancing the president's agenda", adding that "they're hostile to it because you're here to do something that's not in their interest. You're here to cut government, you're here to cut spending, you're here to cut regulations."

Other speakers advised new hires to avoid creating a paper trail of sensitive communications that could be obtained through freedom of information laws or by Congress.

Speaking to ProPublica after the videos were released, a Trump campaign spokesperson said Trump's only official policy agenda is Agenda 47, his manifesto.

Last month, after Project 2025 director Paul Dans stepped down, the Heritage Foundation said that while the organisation would end Project 2025's policy-related work, its "collective efforts to build a personnel apparatus for policymakers of all levels – federal, state and local – will continue".

As Trump has tried to distance himself from the controversial plan – claiming last month to "know nothing about Project 2025" and to have "no idea who is behind it" – the Washington Post reported last week that Kevin Roberts, the head of the Heritage Foundation, told the paper he had personally talked to Trump about it.

Photographs were also published of Trump with Roberts on a private plane in 2022, and Trump also gave a keynote speech to the foundation's annual conference in 2017.



▲ *An anti-Trump protester outside Trump Tower in New York yesterday*



'Swifties are so powerful' Megastar's fans mobilise in support of Harris

Carter Sherman

When Emerald Medrano learned that Joe Biden was dropping out of the 2024 presidential election and endorsing Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee, he knew he had to speak now – as his favourite artist, Taylor Swift, would say.

"I feel like us US Swifties should mass organize and help campaign for Kamala Harris and spread how horrendous Project 2025 would be to help get people's butts down to the polls in November," the 22-year-old posted to his 70,000 followers. "Like if we don't want democracy to end we really need to move and push blue votes."

Fourteen thousand likes later, the coalition Swifties4Kamala was born. Dozens of people signed up to help and run accounts on X, Instagram and TikTok, as well as strategise activities and communications. Within three weeks, Swifties4Kamala amassed more than 180,000 followers across its social media platforms.

Twenty-four hours after Swifties4Kamala announced its kick-off Zoom call, scheduled for 27 August, more than 5,000 people had signed up to join, according to April Glick Pulito, the coalition's political director.

With organising collectives built around identities such as Win With Black Women and White Dudes for Harris drawing record-breaking numbers to Zoom calls, Swifties4Kamala is built around a different kind of identity: fandom. Long dismissed as unserious, in part because it has been thought of as the domain of women and young people, fandom is a potent political force in the 2024 election.

On its social media accounts, Swifties4Kamala posts Swift-themed video edits and memes involving Harris and her running mate, Tim Walz.

"We're talking about throwing bracelet-making parties and talking to people there about making sure they're registered to vote, making sure they know how to vote," said Glick Pulito, 36, who was involved in Biden's 2020 campaign. "Everyone feels so excited to connect with their own communities, and the Swiftie community is so big and so powerful."

Swifties4Kamala's explosive growth is not only a reflection of the sheer scope of Swift's fanbase – even before her planet-conquering Eras tour, 16% of Americans identified as "avid fans" of the singer – but also of the burgeoning



▼ *About 70,000 Swifties attended each of Taylor Swift's six Eras tour shows in Los Angeles last autumn*

PHOTOGRAPH: ALLEN J SCHABEN/LA TIMES/GETTY

political power of fandom itself. Memorably, the first fandom to seize on Harris's candidacy was not the Swifties but the Angels, fans of the singer Charli xcx. Hours after Biden dropped out and endorsed Harris, the British singer-songwriter tweeted: "kamala IS brat" – a reference to her album Brat and its brash party girl aesthetic.

The internet was immediately awash with green-tinted supercuts of Harris – the Brat album's signature colour – while CNN reporters tried to decode the meaning of brat for audiences at home. ("So is the idea that we're all kind of brat and Vice-President Harris is brat?" the anchor Jake Tapper asked.) Harris's official campaign account even changed its banner on X to "brat green".

Swift's political cachet, though, far outstrips that of Charli xcx. After Swift urged her 272 million Instagram followers to register to vote last September, the website Vote.org recorded more than 35,000 registrations.

Swift's endorsement is one of the coveted prizes in the 2024 election; although she has not said anything about this year, the odds are not looking good for Donald Trump and JD Vance. Swift endorsed Democrats in 2018 and 2020.

Experts told the Guardian earlier this year that Swift's endorsement could compel people who might otherwise sit out the election to vote. Most Swifties identify as Democrats, a Morning Consult poll found last year.

Irene Kim, the co-founder of Swifties4Kamala, expects Swift to ultimately endorse Harris. But Kim isn't waiting on the singer.

"I also personally resent this idea that Taylor needs to issue an order to activate the Swifties. We are a diverse group of very intelligent people. We're not mindless drones," said Kim, 29.

"These are our friends, so of course, I'm going to care if their rights are being taken away. They're going to care if my rights are being taken away."

> ***'Everyone feels so excited to connect with their own communities'***
>
> **April Glick Pulito**
> *Swifties4Kamala*

Heated row over 'illegal' AC units in sweltering Portofino

Angela Giuffrida
Rome

It is baking hot in Portofino but the atmosphere has turned decidedly chilly among residents of the exclusive Italian coastal village amid a crackdown on air conditioning units.

With a year-round population of just 379, Portofino has emerged as Italy's wealthiest municipality and is well known for being a magnet for the rich and famous.

Madonna arrived on Sunday, reportedly for a party hosted by the fashion designers Dolce & Gabbana, but the talk of the village has been the hunt by local police for air conditioners illegally installed by residents seeking respite from the stifling heat.

Portofino has been part of a regional national park since 1935, and until a few years ago the installation of AC units on its pastel-coloured buildings was entirely banned. As summers became hotter, rules were loosened, so long as the homeowner asked permission and ensured the units were discreetly placed and did not sully Portofino's natural beauty.

Police have been scouring the narrow streets for unauthorised units. There were reports of 22 illegally installed appliances spotted on rooftops and terraces between January and May, and a further 15 since June.



▲ *Portofino is in a national park and 'there are rules that need to be respected', said the village's mayor*

PHOTOGRAPH: IMAGEBROKER/ALAMY

Matteo Viacava, the mayor of Portofino, denied reports in the Italian press that police had deployed drones in their investigation.

"It all began last winter when someone put in an air conditioning unit that covered a big part of a very narrow street," he said. "The summers have been getting much hotter and July and August have been sweltering and very humid. It's not that we want people to suffer and have their sleep disrupted by the heat … we all depend on AC now. But Portofino is located in a regional park and there are rules that need to be respected."

As the intrigue heated up along with the temperature, Corriere della Sera reported a "vendetta" among residents, with tit-for-tat denunciations between neighbours. Some culprits have attempted to hide their AC unit or painted it to blend in with the local surroundings.

In some cases, people have reportedly accepted an invitation into the home of a neighbour, only to secretly take a photo of a unit that they have then passed on to police.

Those who flout the rules risk fines of as much as €43,000 (£36,800) if prosecuted in court, although Viacava said most cases to date had been resolved, and that the goal was not to fine people.

"We just want to ensure that the constraints are respected and beauty of Portofino is maintained," he said. "They need to be put in places that are not visible. Slowly, slowly, we are getting it all in order."

A Portofino police officer declined to reveal details of the checks.

Earlier this summer, Portofino was sealed off to host 800 guests at a pre-wedding party for the Indian billionaires Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant, which cost a reported €139m.

Italy has been engulfed in consecutive heatwaves since the middle of June. Some central and southern areas are expected to record temperatures above 40C in the coming days. Yesterday the health ministry placed 17 cities on red alert.

The demand for AC in Italy has shot up in recent years. A report by Istat, the national statistics agency, in 2022 found that half of all Italian households had an AC unit.

Investigation into disqualified Dutch Eurovision entry closed

Philip Oltermann
European culture editor

Sweden has closed an investigation into the Dutch Eurovision contestant Joost Klein, who was disqualified from the 2024 final in Malmö after a camera operator accused him of "threatening" behaviour, the country's prosecution authority has announced.

The singer was barred from performing his song Europapa hours before the Eurovision final on 11 May, after a female member of the production crew claimed he had made a threatening movement towards her after his semi-final performance two days earlier.

The Dutch broadcaster responsible for Klein's entry, Avrotros, said at the time that he had been filmed directly after coming off stage, "against clearly made agreements" and against his repeated indications that he did not want to be filmed, and that his disqualification was therefore not proportional.



▲ *Joost Klein was barred from the final over 'threatening' behaviour*

The Swedish prosecution authority said yesterday it had come to the conclusion that Klein had made "a movement that hit the woman's film camera" but that the course of events "was fast and was perceived differently by the witness of the incident".

The senior prosecutor, Fredrik Jönsson, said: "Today I have closed the investigation because I cannot prove that the act was capable of causing serious fear or that the man had any such intention."

Avrotros told the Dutch press agency ANP that it was still "deeply disappointed" about Klein's disqualification and planned to have a meeting with the European Broadcasting Union, the contest's organiser, to discuss the matter.

Klein's manager told ANP: "We, as a team, are incredibly happy and relieved that this period of uncertainty has now come to an end. Finally, we can say it out loud: there was never a reason for this case."

The EBU, however, said it stood by its decision to disqualify Klein. "This was an investigation into whether a criminal act was committed and not whether Mr Klein behaved inappropriately and breached ESC rules and procedures," it said. "This new development therefore does not have any impact on our decision, which we stand by completely."

The contest was marked by large pro-Palestine protests around the Malmö Arena, with some criticising the organisers for allowing Israel to take part while engaged in a military conflict with Gaza.

At a tense press conference after the semi-final, several artists, including Klein, appeared to voice their frustration with the row overshadowing the competition.

Switzerland's Nemo won the contest with the song The Code, becoming the first artist identifying as non-binary to claim victory.

Pilot killed in hotel helicopter crash 'not authorised' for flight



▲ *Hundreds of people were evacuated from the DoubleTree hotel in Cairns*

Emily Wind
Ben Smee

The owner of a helicopter that crashed into the roof of a large hotel in the city of Cairns in Australia, killing its pilot, says the flight was "unauthorised".

Queensland ambulance service said emergency crews were called to the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel on the Esplanade, by the city's main waterfront, about 1.50am yesterday. Hundreds of people were evacuated.

A spokesperson confirmed that two of the twin-engine helicopter's propellers came off and landed on the street and in the hotel pool.

Queensland police said the pilot died at the scene and forensic investigations were under way to formally identify him. The pilot was the only occupant of the aircraft.

The North Queensland charter company Nautilus Aviation, which runs scenic tours from nearby, said in a statement: "Nautilus Aviation are working closely with the Queensland police, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and other authorities as they investigate the unauthorised use of one of our helicopters in the early hours of this morning."

At a press conference yesterday, acting Ch Supt Shane Holmes of the Queensland police said the helicopter had been flown from Cairns airport and was "not in the air for a great deal of time" before the crash. He added that the investigation would focus on the movements of the pilot before takeoff. "We are working with a local aviation operator to understand the circumstances that led to the [helicopter] becoming airborne," he said. "I think it's just by pure luck that … more people weren't injured."

The ATSB chief commissioner, Angus Mitchell, said the investigation would need to establish if the crash was "a transport safety event" or a regulatory or police matter.

Mitchell said the pilot had not been identified but it would be "very difficult to fly a helicopter if you're not a pilot or if you're not experienced".

The ambulance service said 300-400 people were evacuated from the hotel and there were no injuries on the ground. Two people from inside the hotel – a man in his 80s and a woman in her 70s – were taken to Cairns hospital in a stable condition.

Police said the crash had caused a fire on the roof of the hotel, and that a report would be prepared for the coroner by the forensic crash unit and ATSB, police said.

Jill Ball and her husband, Robert, who had been staying at the hotel for a couple of nights, said the noise of the crash was so loud it woke them.

Their room was diagonally opposite where it occurred, and they could see flames. Jill said they were initially told to wait in their room, before a second message was given to evacuate.

"It was just such a mess, in as much as there was no communication, it was so disorganised," she said.

Caitlin Denning, the Queensland ambulance service senior operations supervisor in Cairns, said the impact noise had frightened those nearby.

"There were reports of it sounding like a bomb, and seeing the fire and smoke, a lot of the occupants of the hotel were unsure of the situation," she said. "There is a lot of unease here."

Queensland police declared an exclusion zone around the crash site and members of the public were advised to avoid the area. Police were on the scene investigating the cause of the incident.

Street beats
The 42nd National Dominican Day Parade made its way up Sixth Avenue in New York on Sunday to the sounds of merengue, a Dominican musical style.



PHOTOGRAPH: MILO HESS/ZUMA/ REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Bear with attack of the munchies breaks into Californian classroom

Guardian staff

A California schoolteacher got a shock when she discovered a bear had broken into her classroom to eat the granola bars that come with the class's emergency earthquake kits.

The local TV station KGET reported that Elaine Salmon of Peak to Peak Mountain charter school in Pine Mountain Club, about 90 miles north-west of Los Angeles, was in the primary school's main office printing out homework for her pupils when the bear launched its daring raid.



▲ *The bear raided a stash of granola bars in emergency earthquake kits*

"When I came back to the classroom to open the door, the bear came charging toward the door because, I guess, it was able to come in but couldn't get out," she told KGET.

The American black bear was safely removed by Salmon's husband, Ian Sawrey, who speacialises in cases dealing with bears in the rural area.

In an interview with the TV station, Sawrey said human-bear interactions were becoming a serious problem. "I've had residents come home to their house with a bear in the fridge and they've yelled and screamed at the bear and the bear just looked at them and kept on eating," he said.

Sawrey described a community that had taken numerous precautions to deal with bears in recent years, including setting up bear patrols and installing deterrents such as nail-filled mats and electrified windows to discourage the animals from entering homes.

Indian doctors strike after trainee is raped and murdered in hospital

Amrit Dhillon
Delhi

Doctors at government hospitals in several Indian states have gone on strike in a protest after the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata on Friday.

The 31-year-old woman was attacked at the state-run RG Kar medical college, where she was a resident doctor, after she went to rest in a seminar room after dinner with colleagues. Her brutalised body was found with injuries and an autopsy confirmed sexual assault and murder.

On Saturday, police arrested Sanjay Roy, a "civic volunteer" at the hospital, in connection with the attack. Roy's duties were unclear but local media reports said he operated in part as a tout, speeding up admissions for patients in return for money.

Protests by doctors demanding justice and better workplace security that began in Kolkata, in West Bengal, have now spread to other parts of the country.

"This decision is not made lightly but is necessary to ensure that our voices are heard," the doctors' federation said in a statement. It demanded a speedy trial , an inquiry into what made the crime possible, and urgent measures to improve the safety of doctors, especially women.

Nisha Alum, a nurse at Holy Family hospital in Delhi, said: "We have learnt nothing from the 2012 gang-rape and murder. Forget being safe on the roads at night. Women are not even safe at their place of work."

The victim's father had bought her a car six months ago, worried about the late hours she worked. "I wanted her to be safe on the roads at night but she wasn't even safe at the hospital as a doctor on duty," he told reporters.

Dr Rajan Sharma, a former president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), said urgent changes were needed to the operation of government hospitals, particularly with regards to access.

"Why can't we post security guards?" Sharma said. "Why can't we have proper screening, along with just one entrance and one exit? And strictly enforced visiting hours? These crimes don't happen in private hospitals for a reason – they have systems in place. It's as simple as that."

Doctors in India say that as well as sexual violence they face the threat of attacks from the angry family members of patients, especially after delivering bad news. A survey by the IMA found 75% of doctors in India had faced some form of violence.

75%

Proportion of doctors in India who have faced violence, according to the Indian Medical Association

FTSE 100	All share	Dow Indl	Nikkei 225	£/€	£/$
+42.15	+21.43	-154.54	closed	1.1697	1.2787
8210.25	4486.47	39343.00	35025.00	+0.0013	+0.0024

Business

Indian group Bharti to buy BT stake from beleaguered Altice

Jasper Jolly

The Indian conglomerate Bharti Enterprises will become the largest shareholder in BT Group after agreeing to buy the stake of the billionaire Patrick Drahi's struggling Altice.

BT was the biggest riser on the FTSE 100 yesterday after the announcement, with its shares closing up 8.5% at 141.50p.

Bharti has agreed to buy 24.5% of BT's shares, but said it had no intention of making an offer to buy the whole company, in a statement to the London Stock Exchange yesterday.

The Indian group flattered the new Labour government, saying that its move was "a vote of confidence in the UK as an attractive global destination for investment, with a stable business and policy environment attractive for long-term investors".

Yet the sale – at an undisclosed price – also reflects the difficulties facing Drahi's empire. It bought the first part of the BT stake in 2021, but is now struggling under a $60bn (£47bn) debt load, after apparently being taken off guard by rapidly rising interest rates, and is also dealing with corruption allegations that prompted a Portuguese criminal investigation.

Bharti said it would buy the first part of Altice's BT stake, equivalent to 9.99% of the UK company, and the remaining 14.51% would be bought when the company received regulators' permission.

Analysts at New Street Research said the initial stake was worth about £980m, the Daily Telegraph reported.

Bharti also said it was applying voluntarily for clearance under the UK's National Security and Investment Act, which gives the government oversight of takeovers involving critical infrastructure. The threshold for mandatory notification of government is a 25% stake.

The investment means Bharti's relationship with BT has come full circle. The British company previously owned a 21% stake along with two board seats in Bharti Airtel Ltd from 1997 to 2001.

Bharti entered the telecoms industry in 1995. Sunil Bharti Mittal founded the company in 1976 as a bicycle components manufacturer, then building one of the conglomerates that dominate India's economy. Bharti reaches from hotels and property – including the Scottish resort Gleneagles and the upmarket hotel chain The Hoxton – to telecoms and into space with a satellites arm.

Bharti Airtel, the telecoms arm, is the world's third biggest mobile service provider by subscriber numbers, and Mittal's wealth is estimated at $23bn, making him the world's 84th-richest person, according to Bloomberg.

Mittal said: "This investment demonstrates the confidence we have in BT and in the UK. BT has a strong portfolio of market leading brands, high-quality assets and an experienced management team with a compelling strategy mandated by the BT board to deliver value over the long term, which we fully support.

24.5%

Stake in BT that Bharti has agreed to buy from Altice, part of the billionaire Patrick Drahi's empire

"BT is playing a vital role to expand access to full-fibre broadband infrastructure for millions of people across the UK. Its focus on strengthening its networks, driving consumer growth, and optimising every aspect of its business makes it well placed to consolidate its position as a leading global telecoms company."

Allison Kirkby, the BT chief executive, said: "We welcome investors who recognise the long-term value of our business, and this scale of investment from Bharti Global is a great vote of confidence in the future of BT Group and our strategy.

"BT has enjoyed a long association with Bharti Enterprises, and I'm pleased that they share our ambition and vision for the future of our business. They have a strong track record of success in the sector, and I look forward to ongoing and positive engagement with them in the months and years to come."

In June, the Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim invested £400m in a 3% stake in BT.

Tory £10 transit scheme led to 90,000 drop in passengers, Heathrow says

Jane Croft

Heathrow airport has said it experienced a 90,000 decline in passenger numbers on routes included in a £10-a-person government scheme.

It described the electronic travel authorisation (ETA) system as "devastating for our hub competitiveness".

The Conservative government introduced ETAs in November 2023 for people entering or transiting through the UK without legal residence or a visa.

ETAs, which cost £10, are required for nationals of Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The programme is scheduled to be extended to the rest of the world this autumn, although for travellers from the EU, the European Economic Area and Swiss nationals it will be introduced early next year.

The airport said: "While Heathrow continues to attract new routes and record passenger numbers, the latest data following the introduction of the ETA shows that Heathrow has lost 90,000 transfer passengers on routes operating to and from the seven countries included in the scheme, since its introduction in 2023 … we urge the government to review the inclusion of airside transit passengers. Every little bit of extra competitiveness that the government can deliver for aviation will help deliver vital growth for the whole of the UK economy."

The ETA is largely based on the US electronic system for travel authorisation (Esta) system, and requires travellers to apply to enter the UK before departing. This applies not only to direct flights from the country but also for those who are using UK airports for more than two hours to connect to other flights.

Heathrow has previously voiced concerns about the charge. It said that, while it supported the overall rationale, those transiting through the airport needed to be exempt as it was hitting passenger numbers.

The government first introduced the ETA for Qatari nationals in November 2023 before rolling it out. In April, Heathrow said that, in the first four months of ETA applying, there had been 19,000 fewer transit passengers from Qatar coming through the airport as more travellers opted to use other hubs.

Heathrow has said the fall represents a "huge blow to UK competitiveness" because many lengthy routes rely on long-haul transit passengers.

Brexit impact causing delays to seed imports, growers warn

Jack Simpson



▲ *The issues are a result of rules brought in on 30 April requiring import checks on plant products*

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHNNY GREIG/GETTY

British growers have warned that crops could be hit this year after post-Brexit border changes resulted in significant delays to seed imports.

Trade bodies representing UK tomato and pepper growers said new rules for seed imports from the EU are causing delays of up to six weeks for deliveries, disrupting their growing schedules and finances.

The British Tomato Growers Association (BTGA) said that the delays were threatening yields and reducing the profitability of growers, while the Cucumber and Pepper Growers' Association (CPA) said that the significant holdups were causing "costly crop delays" for some members.

The issues are a result of post-Brexit rules brought in on 30 April requiring import checks on a number of plant and animal products. These take place at border control posts (BCPs) at ports.

The new rules mean that for some high-risk seeds, including tomato, pepper and oilseed rape, testing in Britain is now required in addition to checks in the country of origin.

Phil Morley, BTGA technical executive, said UK testing can take up to 15 working days, while he had also heard of cases where seeds were being held at BCPs for long periods before being sent for testing.

He said: "Some growers report a six-week delay in seeds arriving at British propagators from when they are being ordered. This has a knock-on effect for propagators who have programmed their propagation for other crops as well, so they have to rejig their programmes."

Morley added that this threatened food security because delays in British production meant more imports.

Earlier this year, the National Farmers' Union said the new Brexit border checks could pose an "existential threat" to growers, as it would lead to long delays and young plants being damaged or destroyed. The Guardian has spoken to several importers that have seen consignments damaged during inspections.

A government spokesperson said: "Protecting UK biosecurity remains one of our key priorities and we are working with BCPs to ensure they operate effectively and with traders to ensure checks are completed efficiently, swiftly, and without significant delays.

"We continue to work with industry on the importation of seeds, taking a pragmatic approach to supporting businesses and food security, while looking to improve the UK's trade and investment relationship with the EU."

Business view
Nils Pratley



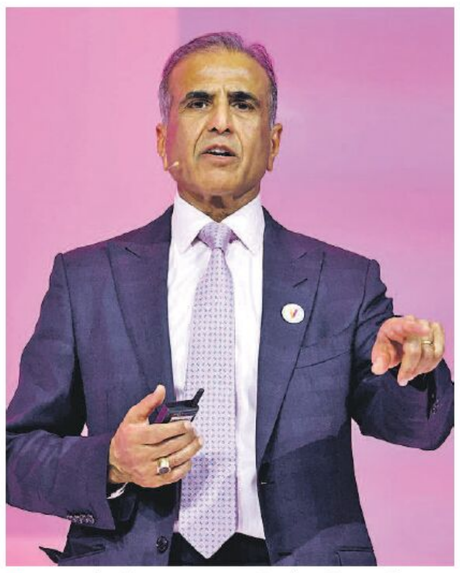
India's Bharti is welcome to take Drahi's slice of BT – as long as he doesn't get greedy

Get ready, then, for a newcomer in the great international sport of owning chunks of BT. The Indian conglomerate Bharti Enterprises, led by the billionaire Sunil Bharti Mittal, is buying the 24.5% stake held by the French billionaire Patrick Drahi's Altice Group. Bharti will be rubbing shoulders with Germany's Deutsche Telekom (12%) and the Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim (3%).

Bharti looks to be a vast improvement on Drahi. The Frenchman distracted the market for a couple of years by being mysterious about his long-term intentions at BT, but it has been obvious for a while that he had become a natural seller rather than buyer. He is now retreating, at a presumed heavy loss, to attend to the tower of debt within his wider Altice empire. With the overhang cleared via a clean-ish exit plan, BT's shares perked up 8%.

It may still take Bharti a couple of years to unwind the derivative contracts used by Altice for a portion of its BT stake, but the preferred eventual structure, we're assured, is a plain vanilla one. If so, good: BT, still only two-thirds of the way through building a fibre broadband network in the UK, doesn't need short-term distractions created by a major shareholder's financial contortions in the background.

An open question, though, is Bharti's long-term intentions at BT.



▲ *Sunil Bharti Mittal, the founder and chair of Bharti Enterprises*

The day-one purring about BT's "market-leading brands, high-quality assets" and long-term stability was encouraging as far it went. But the bottom line is that its commitment not to make a full takeover bid is binding only for six months, as is normal.

That being so, the government could use the review of the transaction under the UK National Security and Investment Act (NSIA) to make a wider point about ownership of BT. In short: no overseas buyer should be allowed to own BT outright; a 25% stake ought to be the maximum allowed.

With a market value of only £14bn these days, BT may be only the 34th largest company in the FTSE 100, but it would be near the top of a ranking of companies whose infrastructure is crucial to the functioning of the UK economy. A reliable fast broadband network is vital and BT will probably remain the biggest provider for decades given the lifespan of the kit. The NSIA could almost have been drafted with the company in mind.

The best ownership model is the current one of a stock market listing. It offers more transparency and boardroom accountability than private ownership ever will. And, from a regulatory point of view, a publicly traded share price can serve as a signal of trouble ahead or as an indication of excess returns at the expense of customers. The example of the water industry in the past 20 years ought to be a neon-lit reminder of the perils of allowing critical UK assets to slip out of view and into faraway conglomerates or worse.

Bharti and Mittal should be thanked for their "vote of confidence in the UK", the semi-mandatory utterance on these occasions. Their technical expertise in telecoms may even be useful. But Mittal should be told not to entertain any thoughts about ever going to 100%.

Inflation battle not over, Bank of England rate setter argues

Phillip Inman
Graeme Wearden

The UK should not be "seduced" into thinking the battle to calm inflation is over, according to an interest rate setter at the Bank of England.

Catherine Mann, a member of the Bank's monetary policy committee, said the underlying price pressures in the economy remain strong and the central bank needed to take a tough stance when it sets interest rates.

Mann, who opposed this month's cut in interest rates from 5.25% to 5%, said services inflation remained too high, and UK wages were rising faster than the Bank's forecasts.

Headline inflation held at the Bank's target of 2% in May and June but is expected to rise to 2.3% for July.

Mann said that, while goods inflation had fallen, the cost of services was rising at more than 5% a year – which she said was not compatible with keeping headline inflation sustainably at 2%.

The Guardian Live

The latest in-person and livestreamed events from the Guardian



Online

Kate Atkinson: Death at the Sign of the Rook

The stage is set. The players are ready. By night's end, a murderer will be revealed …

Join the award-winning author as she introduces the latest addition to her bestselling crime novels featuring Jackson Brodie. Death at the Sign of the Rook is Atkinson's brilliantly plotted and supremely entertaining tour de force that pays homage to the masters of the murder mystery genre.

21 August
7pm–8pm

Online

Tim Minchin: You Don't Have to Have a Dream

To mark the release of his first non-fiction book, Tim Minchin will reflect on how it's never too late to put something beautiful out into the world.

5 September
7.30pm–9pm

In person and online

Bernardine Evaristo: Mr Loverman

Ahead of a BBC adaptation of Mr Loverman, join the Booker-winning novelist, live in London and online, to revisit her novel.

26 September
7.30pm–9pm

Book now at theguardian.com/live-events or scan the QR code

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Raking it in How did CEO pay get so high and can we do anything about it?

Kalyeena Makortoff

The bosses of Britain's blue-chip companies are raking it in, with their pay rising to the highest level on record last year, according to figures released by the High Pay Centre.

The data shows that median pay for a FTSE 100 chief executive increased from £4.1m in 2022 to £4.2m in 2023.

AstraZeneca's Pascal Soriot, consistently the best-paid chief executive among FTSE 100 bosses, received a £16.9m package, while Emma Walmsley, the head of the rival drugmaker GSK, got £12.7m. Others in the top-earners' table include Rolls-Royce's Tufan Erginbilgiç, who was awarded £13.6m, and HSBC's outgoing boss Noel Quinn, who received £10.6m.

The median pay for a FTSE 100 chief executive was 120 times that of a UK full-time worker last year. So how did we get here and can anything be done about it?

How has pay got so high?

The High Pay Centre blames the gap on a number of factors, including the decline of trade union membership, low levels of worker participation in decision-making and a business culture that puts the interests of investors before workers, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Those in the corporate world point to growing anxiety, particularly post-Brexit, about the UK's ability to compete on the world stage, arguing that talented executives need to be well remunerated to stop them defecting to the US.

The payouts for FTSE 100 bosses pale in comparison with those of top US executives, including the $226m (£177m) package for Sundar Pichai, the boss of Google's parent company, Alphabet. In 2022 average pay for UK executives was a fifth of what their US counterparts were getting.

How is pay decided?

Executive pay can be complicated, with base salaries only making up part of the package. The biggest portion is usually bonuses, which are a mix of cash and shares and are broken up into annual rewards based on internal targets and so-called long-term incentives that measure performance over a longer period.

Executives also receive pensions - or cash in lieu of retirement schemes - and extra benefits such as a company car or chauffeur, medical insurance, and life assurance. New executives often negotiate an extra payout if they end up having to forgo a pot of shares and bonuses built up during their previous roles - known as a "golden hello". There are also golden handcuffs - incentives to discourage someone leaving - and golden goodbyes to thank an exiting executive.

All of these payouts are set by a company's remuneration committee, made up of members of a board of directors, who often use pay consultants to define the formulas, which are made public in an annual report.

What's so bad about it?

Unions have long argued that huge packages for bosses distort the market and deny those lower down the ladder their fair share. The TUC general secretary, Paul Nowak, said the latest High Pay Centre data was "disappointing" and called on the government to "redesign pay-setting structures to reflect the contribution that all staff make to company success".

Millions of households have suffered the biggest hit to disposable incomes since records began in the 1950s, as average wages struggled to keep pace with soaring inflation.

There is also the argument that the money spent on paying executives could instead be used to upskill or fund a more competitive workforce, boosting productivity and overall corporate performance.

Can anything be done?

Most of the power lies with each company's shareholders. In the UK, they are given a say on executive compensation policies, which outline how bosses will be paid. Those are put to a binding vote every three years. In the interim, shareholders can vote against annual pay reports, which reflect payouts already made. But these are only advisory - meaning a company does not have to change its pay decisions if the resolution fails to pass at the AGM.

Last year 60% of investors at Unilever voted against the incoming chief executive Hein Schumacher's pay package, which included a €1.9m (£1.6m) base salary that was a fifth higher than his predecessor's.

Executives who find themselves at the centre of controversies and scandals can also have pay clawed back or future payouts cancelled.

The TUC wants the government to bring in measures that could help rein in executive pay as part of the "new deal for working people" it promised in its election manifesto. "These could include workforce representatives on remuneration committees and new rules to make sure that bonus and incentive schemes are open to all staff on the same terms, instead of just executives," said Nowak.

Treasury seeks to appease oil and gas industry with pledge on low-carbon relief

Richard Partington
Economics correspondent

The Treasury has sought to defuse a row with the North Sea oil and gas industry by promising to keep investment reliefs on low-carbon projects, aiming to protect jobs and soften the expansion of the energy windfall tax.

Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, said last month she would expand the levy on energy industry profits as part of her plan to plug a £22bn "hole" in the public finances.

However, energy bosses and unions warned the changes could hit jobs and investment, especially in Scotland, where much of the industry is located. In talks yesterday in Aberdeen, the Treasury minister James Murray said the government was committed to protecting jobs and investment in Scotland.

He told the Guardian the Treasury would retain an 80% decarbonisation investment allowance for the industry. He added: "We want to make sure the energy transition, which is vitally important to make UK energy secure, and to bring down the cost of energy bills, is done in a way that protects jobs and investment."

The Treasury last month said the energy profits levy, introduced in 2022, would run for a year longer than planned, to 31 March 2030. It will rise from a rate of 35% on energy industry profits to 38%, on top of a 40% headline tax rate. An investment allowance of 29% will also be cut.

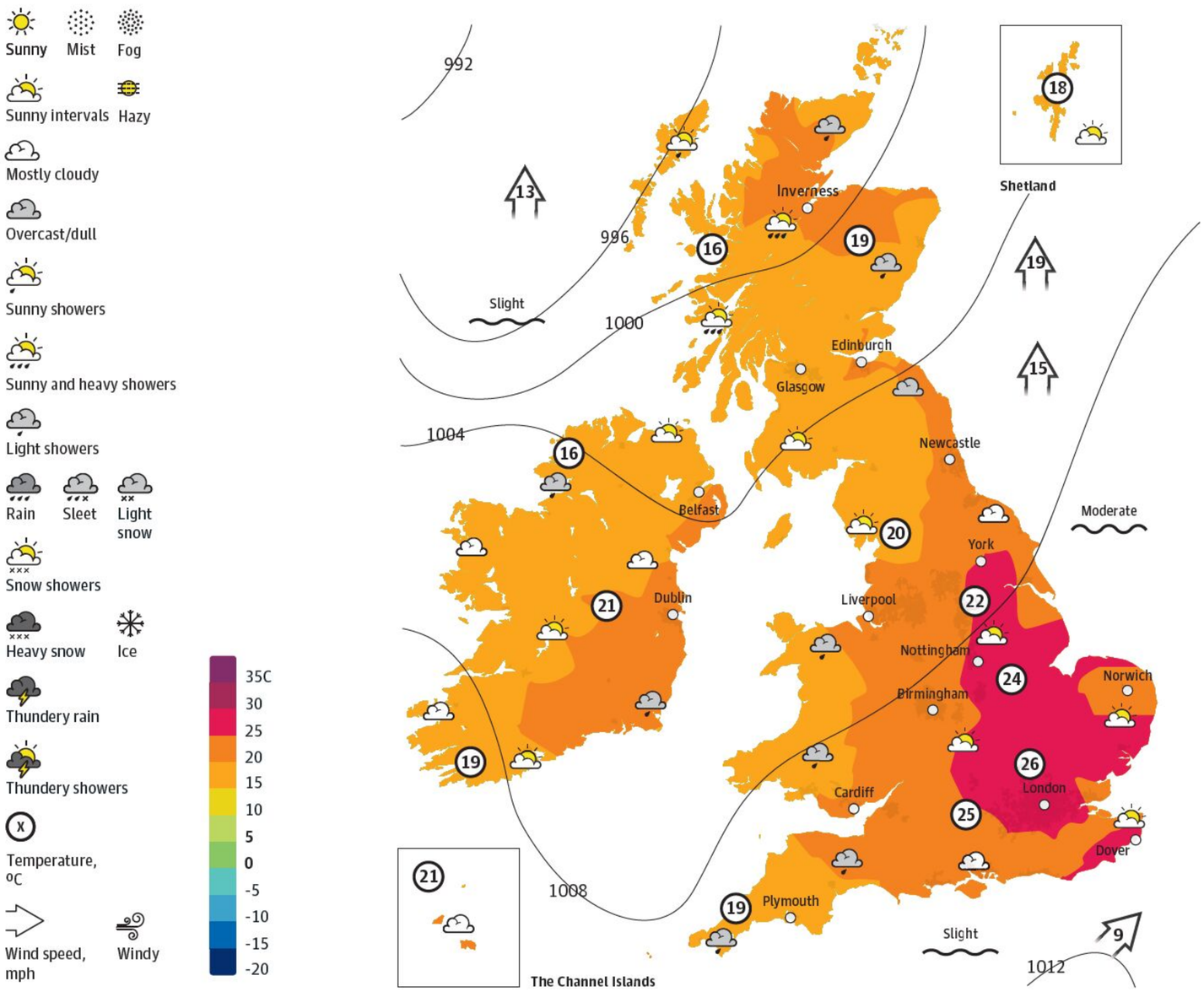
After meeting Murray alongside bosses from firms including BP and Shell, David Whitehouse, the chief executive of Offshore Energies UK, the industry lobby group, said thousands of jobs and billions of pounds in economic value were at risk.

"The minister again heard in no uncertain terms direct from senior business leaders about the impact these proposals are already having for businesses of all sizes and their skilled people across the UK," he said.

Peter Welsh, of the GMB trade union, said: "The minister says he's up to listen. We hope the government will, because change should be done with workers and their industries and not to them."

Weather
Tuesday 13 August 2024

UK and Ireland Noon today



Forecast

Low 13 High 22
Tomorrow



Low 12 High 21
Thursday



Carbon count

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

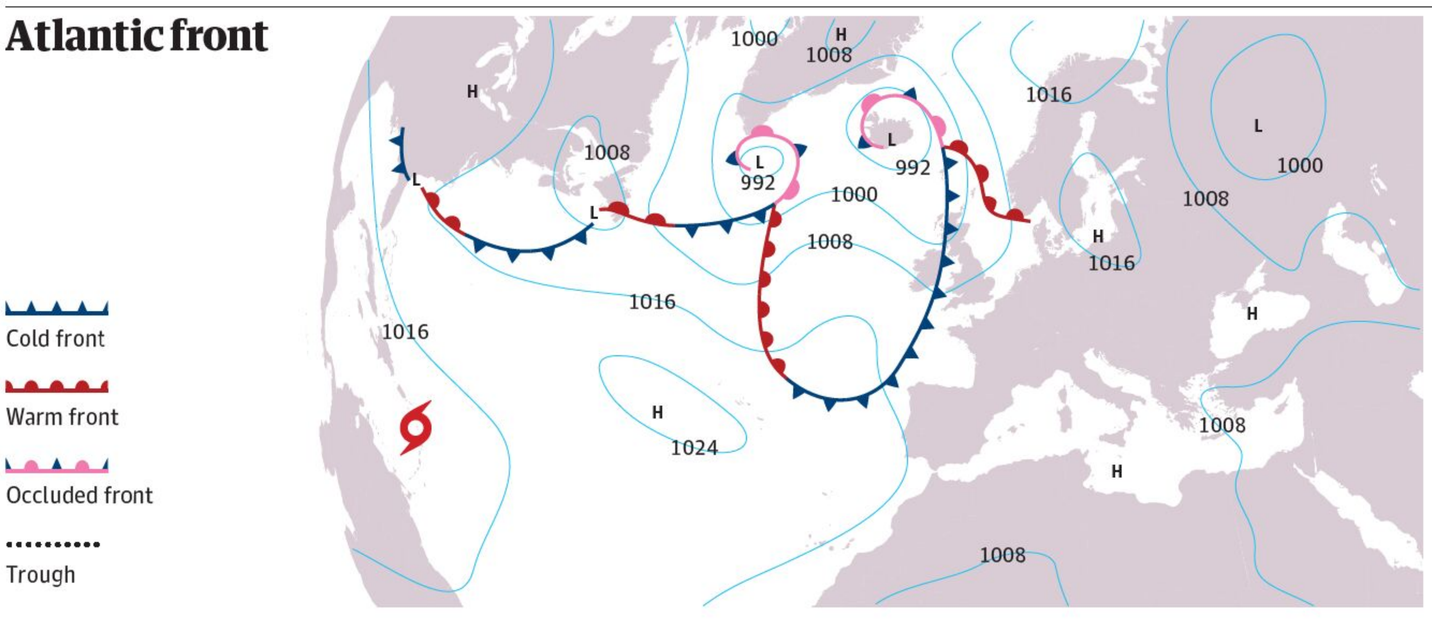
Latest	
09 Aug 2024	422.26
Weekly average	
04 Aug 2024	424.18
12 Aug 2023	420.16
12 Aug 2014	397.93
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Lows and highs	Precipitation	Air pollution
London	17 – 26	0%	Low
Manchester	13 – 21	60%	Low
Edinburgh	9 – 20	85%	Low
Belfast	9 – 19	55%	Low
Glasgow	9 – 18	75%	Low
Inverness	10 – 21	25%	Low
Leeds	13 – 22	25%	Low
Liverpool	13 – 22	85%	Low
Newcastle	9 – 20	20%	Low
Sheffield	13 – 22	25%	Low

Atlantic front



Weather tracker

Storm Debby, which initially struck Florida as a hurricane, caused widespread destruction as it moved up the US east coast, leaving many people without power and causing severe flooding.

It brought significant damage across Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont, with power outages affecting large areas. In Pennsylvania, numerous water rescues were necessary as flood waters rose rapidly.

Meanwhile, a tropical disturbance in the Atlantic is likely to develop into a named storm within days. This system has been showing significant signs of organisation, with the US National Hurricane Center highlighting environmental conditions conducive to its strengthening. If it intensifies into a tropical storm it will be named Ernesto, making it the fifth of this season.

The system's projected path suggests a possible northward turn later in the week, which could affect areas from Puerto Rico to the southern Bahamas. While the exact trajectory remains uncertain, there is a possibility the system could reach hurricane strength as it continues to develop over the warm Atlantic waters.

Theo Gkousarov *MetDesk*

Around the world

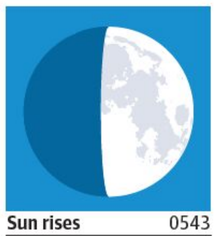
Algiers	33	Lisbon	26
Ams'dam	27	Madrid	33
Athens	36	Malaga	37
Auckland	14	Melb'rne	21
B Aires	16	Mexico C	23
Bangkok	35	Miami	34
Barcelona	30	Milan	36
Basra	48	Mombasa	30
Beijing	27	Moscow	18
Berlin	31	Mumbai	31
Bermuda	30	N Orleans	36
Brussels	28	Nairobi	25
Budapest	35	New Delhi	32
C'hagen	23	New York	27
Cairo	35	Oslo	21
Cape Town	16	Paris	29
Chicago	28	Perth	18
Corfu	36	Prague	31
Dakar	31	Reykjavik	11
Dhaka	32	Rio de J	20
Dublin	21	Rome	33
Florence	39	Shanghai	35
Gibraltar	30	Singapore	31
H Kong	31	Stockh'm	23
Harare	27	Strasb'g	33
Helsinki	23	Sydney	19
Istanbul	34	Tel Aviv	33
Jo'burg	22	Tenerife	25
K Lumpur	33	Tokyo	35
K'mandu	28	Toronto	26
Kabul	33	Vancouv'r	21
Kingston	33	Vienna	32
Kolkata	33	Warsaw	25
L Angeles	30	Wash'ton	28
Lagos	28	Well'ton	11
Lima	19	Zurich	31

High tides

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

Aberdeen	0745	3.4m	2028	3.3m	**London Bridge**	0743	5.8m	2006	5.8m
Avonmouth	0040	10.4m	1308	10.1m	**Lossiemouth**	0556	3.2m	1835	3.1m
Barrow	0524	7.3m	1758	7.1m	**Milford Haven**	--	--	1223	5.2m
Belfast	0526	3.0m	1810	2.9m	**Newquay**	1120	5.3m	2348	5.2m
Cobh	--	--	1148	3.3m	**North Shields**	0945	4.1m	2228	3.9m
Cromer	0035	3.9m	1230	4.0m	**Oban**	1152	2.9m	2356	2.9m
Dover	0444	5.4m	1718	5.4m	**Penzance**	1050	4.3m	2315	4.2m
Dublin	0600	3.3m	1834	3.2m	**Plymouth**	--	--	1149	4.3m
Galway	--	--	1157	3.9m	**Portsmouth**	0533	3.8m	1805	3.9m
Greenock	0622	3.0m	1910	2.8m	**Southport**	0409	7.1m	1643	6.9m
Harwich	0601	3.4m	1820	3.3m	**Stornoway**	0041	3.6m	1404	3.5m
Holyhead	0421	4.5m	1704	4.3m	**Weymouth**	--	--	1210	0.6m
Hull	0009	6.0m	1222	6.1m	**Whitby**	1013	4.5m	2258	4.3m
Leith	0901	4.4m	2138	4.3m	**Wick**	0524	2.7m	1805	2.7m
Liverpool	0456	7.4m	1737	7.2m	**Workington**	0527	6.6m	1806	6.3m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0543
Sun sets	2025
Moon rises	1550
Moon sets	2313
Full Moon	19 Aug

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

Lighting up

Belfast	2101 to 0600
Birm'ham	2035 to 0549
Brighton	2024 to 0547
Bristol	2036 to 0556
Carlisle	2048 to 0545
Cork	2101 to 0618
Dublin	2057 to 0604
Glasgow	2058 to 0548
Harlech	2046 to 0557
Inverness	2103 to 0540
London	2025 to 0544
M'chester	2040 to 0548
Newcastle	2044 to 0540
Norwich	2024 to 0536
Penzance	2044 to 0611

Sport

Football

Preston win the season sack race by axing Lowe

Page 34 →

Cycling

Kool claims first stage of Tour de France Femmes

Page 35 →





▲ *There will be even more new faces at Stamford Bridge this season, when the team really needs stability*
DARREN WALSH/CHELSEA FC/ GETTY IMAGES

Brat summer

Chelsea's spending splurge not slowing down as usual chaos reigns at the Bridge



Jonathan Wilson

Pre-season is always about the performance and never about the result. Even then there has to be an awareness of what managers are looking for from each game: teams can be at different stages of their physical development, or managers may be working on a specific ploy. They are means to an end. They are not in themselves the point. Nobody should ever read too much into pre-season. And yet, all that said, it's impossible not to look at Chelsea's pre-season games without a twinge of concern.

Enzo Maresca's record as Chelsea manager at this stage reads: played six, won one. That one win came against the Mexican champions Club América who, four games into the new season, lie ninth. Chelsea have also played the champions of England, Spain, Scotland and Italy, plus Wrexham, promoted from League Two last season. That's a challenging run. Against Manchester City they were 2-0 down inside five minutes, the result of a soft penalty and a wayward backpass. The 4-2 defeat perhaps wasn't reflective of the pattern of the game. Mitigation can be found.

But it's not just results. There's also a pervading sense of chaos. After the initial splurge following the Clearlake takeover, the £1bn spent on 28 senior players, this was supposed to be when the consolidation began. They had signed young, we were told, so that there would be less need for upheaval as the project progressed. Players would grow in stature at the club. And then this summer a further nine players have arrived at a cost of £160m, with two more already in the pipeline for the new season.

An attempt to land the highly rated forward Samu Omorodion from Atlético Madrid looks like it is falling through, leading to talks over João Félix. This feels like the behaviour of an addict, chasing the endorphin high of purchase after purchase: if one Atlético forward won't come, why not go for another, even if he has an entirely different profile? Even if, in a six-month loan spell at the club just after the takeover, he didn't fit in and demonstrated his immense talent only intermittently. Maybe that's the problem when you sign so many players; eventually you run out and have to start signing them again.

Chelsea apparently would prefer a loan deal with an option to buy for Victor Osimhen, which Napoli are resisting. Any deal would probably mean Romelu Lukaku moving in the other direction. Lukaku has now spent six seasons on Chelsea's books in two stints, during which time he has played 159 league games, only 36 of them for Chelsea as he has been loaned out to West Brom, Everton, Inter and Roma.

The big signing of this summer has been Pedro Neto, bought from Wolves for £54m. He's 24 and clearly gifted, a relentless worrier of full-backs, even if there must be some concern about his goal return. He's the sort of signing that would have felt natural for the pre-Clearlake Chelsea. But what does his arrival mean for the fleet of wide forwards at the club? Is it an admission that Raheem Sterling, Mykhailo Mudryk and Noni Madueke aren't where Chelsea would like them to be?

Filip Jørgensen has become the seventh goalkeeper on their books. Omari Kellyman adds to the legions of players who can play off a front man. Like a bride fretting about the wedding venue, they've swapped Lewis Hall for Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall, at a cost of about £2m. If there is a pattern at Stamford Bridge, it is only investment in youth, presumably with a view to trading further down the line. Football has never been sentimental, but in the ruthless selling of academy projects, Chelsea have taken the commodification of players to new extremes. Such trading will be essential to comply with profit and sustainability (PSR) regulations. Amortisation with long contracts is a neat accountancy trick to allow spending in the short term, but bills must be paid at some point.

A further nine players have arrived at a cost of £160m, with two more already in the pipeline

That's why Hall, Omari Hutchinson and Ian Maatsen have been sold for £86m, with Conor Gallagher, who is close to a switch to Atlético, and Trevoh Chalobah, linked with Crystal Palace and Aston Villa, likely to take that figure to around £150m. All five are academy products and therefore represent pure profit; there is no amortised fee to be taken into account. Still, selling two hotels between different arms of the business suggests PSR remains a concern; soon there will be no academy products left to sell.

It's easy to forget that Chelsea were pretty good after Christmas last season, surging to Europa League qualification and reaching the League Cup final. But then Mauricio Pochettino left by mutual consent. That's usually a euphemism, but he didn't seem too disappointed to be leaving the chaos, which now includes a £100m+ midfielder, Enzo Fernández, engaging in racist and homophobic chanting as he celebrated winning the Copa América. It's not Chelsea's fault but it is their mess to sort out and their insistence the matter is over, having been dealt with internally, may be optimistic.

There are positives for Maresca: Cole Palmer excelled last season; Malo Gusto looked promising; Marc Cucurella, after a poor start, blossomed and had a golden Euros. Reece James, Christopher Nkunku and Ben Chilwell are seemingly fit after injury problems last season. There are good players at Chelsea; the question is whether, amid the constant noise, any manager will be able to find a pattern for them to play in.

The great disruptors have disrupted, but at some point the disruption has to stop.



Manchester City face dozens of counts of alleged rule breaches

City hearing to begin in weeks, report says

Manchester City's hearing into 115 alleged breaches of Premier League financial regulations has reportedly been brought forward to next month.

According to a report in the Times, the planned November start of an independent commission has been moved to mid-to-late September. It is scheduled to last 10 weeks, with a verdict therefore likely to be delivered early next year. Neither the Premier League nor Manchester City have commented.

The Times' report says the outcome of a separate legal case which City brought against the league's associated party transactions rules – in which clubs strike sponsorship or revenue deals with businesses linked to their owners – is due in the next fortnight.

That, it is claimed, has allowed the hearing into the 115 charges – which City deny – to be brought forward, barring any further legal delays. It is still unknown how heavily City could be punished if found guilty, but points deductions and even relegation are thought to be possibilities. **PA Media**

Sky Bet Championship

Vitinho rounds off easy victory to give Parker a dream start

Luton	**1**
Chong 55	
Burnley	**4**
Brownhill 6, Odobert 37, O'Shea 72, Vitinho 80	

Ed Aarons
Kenilworth Road



▲ *Dara O'Shea climbs above the Luton defence to head Burnley's third goal*
ZAC GOODWIN/PA

It has been almost 18 months since Scott Parker last took charge of a competitive match but, on this evidence, the former England midfielder has certainly picked up a few managerial tips. A clinical display from his Burnley team against a Luton side that is also trying to bounce back from relegation sealed a deserved victory.

Parker's previous managerial appointment ended up with him being sacked by Club Brugge after just 12 games in charge and has admitted that a chat with Thomas Tuchel during Bayern Munich's mid-season training camp in Portugal last year helped to reinvigorate him. Stepping into Vincent Kompany's shoes after he joined the German giants in May is certainly within his capabilities having led Fulham and Bournemouth to promotion from the Championship and Parker was delighted that Burnley's players appear to have bought into his philosophy immediately.

"The most important thing is us all getting on the same train," he said. "This is a team that has been relegated, I have been in that situation and there is a psychological element to go from that to try and become a winning machine. There's going to be lots of bumps in the road but the most important thing is that we stick together." With chief executive Gary Sweet having revealed in his programme notes that the capacity of the club's planned new stadium – due to open in 2027 – has been extended from 17,000 to 25,000, Luton's fortunes appeared to be on the up on a balmy evening in Bedfordshire.

Aside from Ross Barkley, most of those who fought so valiantly for Premier League survival last season remain at the club, while – perhaps most importantly – they also managed to retain the services of their inspirational manager, Rob Edwards. He had described the selection of teenagers Joe Johnson and Zack Nelson in his first team of the season as "a celebration of our academy" in the absence of several first-team regulars but admitted that his side were second best against Burnley's lightning-quick attackers.

"It's a difficult first night – I've got to put emotions aside and look at the bigger picture," he said. "But we showed some vulnerabilities and they punished us."

Edwards also handed a first start to another teenager – Reuell Walters, who has joined on a free transfer from Arsenal. But the 19-year-old was left exposed by a perfectly weighted pass from new Burnley signing Lucas Pires in the sixth minute as Josh Brownhill raced through and beat Thomas Kaminski. Parker has acknowledged that the bloated squad of 37 players he inherited from Kompany following their relegation last season will be "challenging".

But his side were well organised in defence thanks to the calm presence of Maxime Estève and looked dangerous on the break through the energetic Luca Koleosho and Wilson Odobert as Luton struggled to mount a riposte. The home supporters' mood was not improved when Odobert was allowed the freedom of Kenilworth Road to latch on to a long ball from Connor Roberts and make it 2-0. "Easy, easy, easy," taunted the Burnley fans.

The hosts at least showed more intent at the start of the second half as a move started by a lovely pirouette at the back from Johnson ended with Elijah Adebayo's header bouncing back off the crossbar and into the grateful James Trafford's arms. But it needed a timely intervention from Johnson to block Vitinho's shot after a brilliant run from Koleosho that earned Nelson a booking for pulling back the Italy Under-21 forward. Kaminski then came to Luton's rescue with a brilliant one-handed save from Dara O'Shea's piledriver.

Two minutes later, Luton seemed to have found a way back into the game. Alfie Doughty's clever cushioned header from Shandon Baptiste's deep cross picked out Tahith Chong and he could not miss from close range. But they continued to look vulnerable on the break and Pires managed to wriggle free at the other end following a corner and force Kaminski into a save.

The Brazilian was to provide the game's crucial moment minutes later, however, when his corner was met by O'Shea at the near post and the Republic of Ireland defender made no mistake. A surging run through Luton's midfield from Lyle Foster ended up with Vitinho curling home the fourth to round off the perfect start for Parker.

Luton	Burnley
5-3-2	**4-2-3-1**
Kaminski; Ogbene, Walters, Mengi, Johnson (Townsend 80), Doughty; Baptiste (Mpanzu 87), Nelson🟡, Chong🟡; Morris, Adebayo	Trafford🟡; Roberts, O'Shea, Estève, Pires🟡 (Massengo 83); Cullen🟡, Brownhill; Vitinho, Odobert (McNally 90), Koleosho (Zaroury 66); Foster (Weghorst 82)
Subs not used	*Subs not used*
Shea, Bell, Woodrow, Taylor, Holmes, Francis-Clarke, Chigozie	Hladky, Rodriguez, Benson, Twine, Hountondji

Referee Matthew Donohue **Attendance** 11,777

United close in on Mazraoui and De Ligt signings

Ed Aarons

Manchester United are expected to complete the signings of the defenders Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui from Bayern Munich for a combined fee of more than £50m, with Aaron Wan-Bissaka set to join West Ham. The deals for De Ligt and Mazraoui – who played under Erik ten Hag when he was at Ajax – were agreed over the weekend.

Both players were pictured on their way to United's Carrington training ground yesterday. They are expected to complete medicals before signing five-year deals, with United hoping to have them available for the opening game of the season against Fulham on Friday after a foot injury ruled out the new arrival Leny Yoro for three months. That would require both to be registered by midday on Thursday.

The price for De Ligt – who fell out of favour at Bayern under Thomas Tuchel last season, having joined from Juventus in 2022 for £60m – is understood to be €45m (£38.6m) plus €5m in add-ons, while United will pay £13m for Mazraoui in a deal that could be worth up to £17m.

The Morocco international can play in both full-back positions and his arrival will allow Aaron Wan-Bissaka to complete his move to West Ham for about £15m. The 26-year-old joined United from Crystal Palace in 2019 for an initial £45m and has one year left on his contract.

The signings would mean United have spent more than £230m on five of Ten Hag's former Ajax players, having already brought in Antony, Lisandro Martínez and André Onana.



▲ *Matthijs de Ligt is set to join from Bayern Munich for an initial £38.6m*



▲ *Ryan Lowe's side were beaten 2-0 at home by Sheffield United on Friday*

Lowe departs Preston one game into season

The first managerial casualty of the football season has come at Preston, with Ryan Lowe leaving by mutual consent yesterday morning. The surprise announcement after only one game of the campaign followed the team's abject display on Friday night, when North End were beaten 2-0 at home by Sheffield United. Assistant Mike Marsh will take temporary charge.

Peter Ridsdale, the Preston director, told Sky Sports the decision was taken after a four-and-a-half-hour meeting on Sunday after which Lowe was still determined to leave. **Tony Paley**

Football
In brief

Atlético Madrid

Álvarez exits 'amazing' City in £81.5m move

Manchester City have sold Julián Álvarez to Atlético Madrid in a deal worth €95m (£81.5m), the Argentinian World Cup winner becoming the Premier League champions' record sale. The La Liga club will pay an initial £64.4m for the striker, with a further £17.1m in potential add-ons. Álvarez, who scored 36 goals in 103 appearances, said "amazing" City – where he won six major trophies during his two-year stay – will always "have a special place" in his heart. Chelsea are in talks over a surprise potential permanent transfer for Atlético's João Félix, who spent six months on loan at Stamford Bridge in 2023, after their move for the Spanish club's striker Samu Omorodion fell through. **Ben Fisher and Ed Aarons**

Liverpool

Zubimendi rejects Reds as Carvalho joins Bees

Liverpool have suffered a blow in their attempts to strengthen the midfield after Martín Zubimendi opted to stay at Real Sociedad. The Spain international was Liverpool's preferred target for the defensive midfield role that Arne Slot wants to improve this summer. Zubimendi, however, informed the club he has decided to stay at Sociedad. Fábio Carvalho has completed his move from Liverpool to Brentford for a fee that could rise to £27.5m. The deal is worth an initial £22.5m plus £5m in add-ons. **Andy Hunter**

NWSL

Former United captain Zelem taken by Angels

The former Manchester United captain Katie Zelem has signed with LA-based Angel City. The 28-year-old England midfielder, whose United contract expired in June, signed with the NWSL club on a deal to 2026. **Reuters**

Cycling *Tour de France Femmes*

Kool breezes to sprint success in blazing start

Dutch rider delights home crowd and powers to line in incident-packed opener

Jeremy Whittle

Twenty-four hours after Harrie Lavreysen confirmed himself as the fastest sprinter in the Olympic velodrome, his compatriot Charlotte Kool continued the winning streak for the Netherlands, sprinting to victory in stage one of the Tour de France Femmes in The Hague.

In what was expected to be a three-way battle between the Dutch trio of Kool, Marianne Vos and Lorena Wiebes, Kool easily proved the fastest, taking both Vos, of Visma-Lease a bike, and SD Worx Protime's Wiebes by surprise to claim the first yellow jersey of this year's race. In a disorganised sprint, in which a mechanical issue put Wiebes on the back foot, Kool came across the line ahead of Uno-X Mobility's Anniina Ahtosalo and Elisa Balsamo of Lidl-Trek.

"It's the best day of my life," Kool, riding for dsm-firmenich PostNL, said after the stage. But while the 25-year-old rider was enjoying the first day of racing in the week-long Tour, others, despite the flat nature of the course, were not.

On what seemed a relatively benign course, there were incidents almost immediately when a crash in the neutral zone led to the British rider Natalie Grinczer falling and then abandoning, after fighting for survival for much of the stage.

A worse fate befell the Tashkent City Women's team, who had a torrid first day and lost four of their seven riders. But there were other big names missing from the start line.



▼ *Charlotte Kool storms to victory in stage one of the Tour de France Femmes*
DARIO BELINGHERI/GETTY IMAGES

Lotte Kopecky, who raced in the final day of competition on Sunday in the Olympic velodrome and was second overall to her SD Worx Protime teammate Demi Vollering in last year's Tour de France Femmes, was one of those who prioritised the Olympics over travelling to the start in Rotterdam. After winning bronze in the last world championship the Belgian rider, second overall in the women's Giro this year, could finish only fourth in the Olympic omnium, a disappointing result that may make her reflect on that decision.

Vollering's chances for overall success here – she is the favourite – were also enhanced when Elisa Longo Borghini, winner of the women's Giro d'Italia, pulled out because of the painful aftermath of a recent crash while out training.

Borghini's absence vaulted her Lidl-Trek teammate Gaia Realini into the status of team leader. The 23-year-old Italian is an outstanding climber and, given the demands of the final Alpine stages of this year's Tour, may prove a thorn in Vollering's side. Realini has finished third in the women's Giro and challenged Vollering in the mountain stages of the 2023 Vuelta Femenina. The hairpins of the final climb of the race, Alpe d'Huez, may lead to another showdown between them.

However, Realini's campaign did not get off to an ideal start. She was another of those, alongside her British teammate Lizzie Deignan, to take a tumble during the stage, although both made it back to the main peloton.

Before the final mountainous weekend, however, today features more racing in the flatlands around Rotterdam, with a day split into two stages. In the morning, the peloton will tackle a swift 67.9km pan-flat road stage and, in the afternoon, race in a 6.3km individual time trial, again on roads lacking anything steeper than a speed bump.

Such demanding days have not been imposed on riders in the Tour de France for many years, due to their unpopularity. Famously, in 1978, the feisty five-time Tour winner Bernard Hinault led a riders' go-slow in protest at a split stage to Valence d'Agen, but there is little likelihood of a repetition in Rotterdam.

Cricket

Thorpe family hopes to raise awareness of mental illness

Taha Hashim

Graham Thorpe's family have said the former England batter took his own life after suffering with depression and anxiety.

Thorpe's death at the age of 55 was announced last week. One of 17 men to play 100 Tests for England, the left-hander represented his country from 1993 to 2005 and hit 16 hundreds. As a coach with the England and Wales Cricket Board in his post-playing career he was part of the backroom staff when the men's side won the 2019 World Cup.

Thorpe was named head coach of Afghanistan in March 2022 but in May that year it was announced that he was "seriously ill" in hospital. In an interview with his former teammate Michael Atherton in the Times, Amanda, Thorpe's wife, revealed he had attempted to take his own life, prompting "a prolonged stay in an intensive care unit".

She said: "Despite glimpses of hope and of the old Graham, he continued to suffer from depression and anxiety, which at times got very severe. We supported him as a family and he tried many, many treatments but unfortunately none of them really seemed to work. He was so unwell in recent times and he really did believe that we would be better off without him and we are devastated that he acted on that and took his own life."

Thorpe's daughter Kitty said: "We are not ashamed of talking about it. There is nothing to hide and it is not a stigma. We were trying to help him get better before and trying to protect him, which is why we said nothing. This is the time now to share the news, however horrible it is. We've wanted to be able to talk and share and we'd now like to raise awareness, too. He had loved life and he loved us but he just couldn't see a way out. It was heartbreaking to see how withdrawn he had become. He was not the same person. It was strange to see this person trapped in the body of Dad."



▲ *Graham Thorpe's last job with England was as a batting coach*

A minute's silence was held last week in Thorpe's honour at the Oval – where the former Surrey batter began and ended his 17-year first-class career – before a men's Hundred match between Oval Invincibles and Southern Brave.

Ben Stokes, the England Test captain, wore a shirt with Thorpe's name and Test cap number, 564, at the toss for the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's two years ago after Thorpe's illness was announced.

"Great man, great loss to the cricket world, his friends, his family," Stokes told Sky Sports last week. "He was my first batting coach ... with the England Lions. Spent a lot of time with him in the Test team as a batting coach. I learned a lot from Thorpey, got to know him as a person and just a great, great man. Had some unbelievable memories with him, incredible amount of laughs, and he's going to be very sadly missed."

In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on freephone 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org or jo@samaritans.ie

No bad blood over retirement, says Anderson

Continued *from back page*

early 2025. His last T20 outing came for Lancashire on Blast Finals Day in 2014, but Anderson believes his skills have been kept up to scratch bowling at England's Test batters in the nets.

"I still feel [playing domestically] is not off the table. The way my body feels, the way I have been bowling in recent years, I still feel I could potentially have something to offer on that front. My body has at no stage started to feel like it's 42. I will dive around the tennis court and I will still dive around the field when I'm playing for Burnley CC in five years' time, until I literally can't move. That's why I want to keep going. I feel I was made to bowl quickly, to be a bowler, so while it's still functioning, use it.

"Bowling at the England lads in the nets, you have to have change-ups and slower balls. We constantly work it, so I don't think [the skills and variations] will be an issue. But I don't know how much people will want a 42-year-old bowler in their team."

While Anderson considers options that also include commentary, he harbours no resentment towards England over his enforced retirement. It led to Brendon McCullum, the head coach, flying over from New Zealand in April to deliver the news in person, in contrast to the way Anderson was dropped for a tour of the Caribbean in early 2022.

Explaining the option presented to him by McCullum and the team director, Rob Key, Anderson said: "It was 'Lord's or never again' and I decided I wanted to have one more go in England; I wanted my family and friends to see me play one more time.

"England felt it was a good time to look at other players and wanted to go in a different direction. It happened to me a couple of years ago [before the Caribbean tour] and I felt a bit aggrieved with how it was done, a quick phone call.

"This time it felt like more thought went into it; it felt like it was the right time. I wouldn't say I was happy but I didn't kick off, I didn't feel upset."

'My body has at no stage started to feel like it's 42'

Jimmy Anderson
Former England bowler

Results

Football

SKY BET CHAMPIONSHIP

Luton	(0) **1**	**Burnley**	(2) **4**
Chong 55		Brownhill 6, Odobert 37 O'Shea 72 Vitinho 80	

Cricket

THE HUNDRED MEN
Edgbaston Trent Rockets 118 (TP Alsop 51; TG Southee 5-12). Birmingham Phoenix 120-4. Birmingham Phoenix beat Trent Rockets by six wickets.

THE HUNDRED WOMEN
Edgbaston Birmingham Phoenix 112-6. Trent Rockets 114-7. Trent Rockets beat Birmingham Phoenix by three wickets.

Tennis

ATP NATIONAL BANK OPEN (Montreal, Canada)
Semi-finals: A Rublev (Rus) bt M Arnaldi (It) 6-4 6-2; **A Popyrin** (Aus) bt S Korda (US) 7-6(0) 6-3

WTA NATIONAL BANK OPEN (Toronto, Canada)
Semi-finals: J Pegula (US) bt D Shnaider (Rus) 6-4 6-3

Cycling

TOUR DE FRANCE FEMMES
Stage one (Rotterdam-The Hague, 124km): **1** C Kool (Neth) dsm-firmenich PostNL 2hr 47min 40sec; **2** A Ahtosalo (Fin) Uno-X Mobility; **3** E Balsamo (It) Lidl-Trek; **4** L Henttala (Fin) EF-Oatly-Cannondale all at same time.

TOUR DE POLOGNE (Poland)
Stage one (Wroclaw-Karpacz, 156km): **1** T Nys (Bel) Lidl-Trek 3hr 37min 7sec; **2** W Kelderman (Neth) Visma | Lease a Bike +3sec; **3** L Nerurkar (GB) EF Education-EasyPost at same time.

Fixtures

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
Champions League
Third qualifying round: Second leg APOEL (0) v Sl Bratislava (2) (6pm); Bodø/Glimt (1) v Jagiellonia (0) (6pm); FCSB (1) v Sparta Praha (1) (7.30pm); Fenerbahçe (1) v Lille (2) (6pm); Ferencváros (0) v Midtjylland (2) (7pm); Ludogorets (2) v Qarabag (1) (7pm); PAOK (2) v Malmö (2) (6.30pm); Rangers (1) v Dynamo Kyiv (1); Twente (1) v Salzburg (2) (6pm); Union Saint-Gilloise (1) v Slavia Praha (3) (7.30pm)
Europa League
Third qualifying round: Second leg The New Saints (0) v Petrocub (1) (6.30pm)
Europa Conference League
Third qualifying round: Second leg Mornar (0) v Paks (3); Paide (1) v Häcken (6) (5.30pm)
Carabao Cup
First round Barrow v Port Vale; Bolton v Mansfield; Bristol City v Coventry; Bromley v Wimbledon; Burton v Blackpool; Cambridge Utd v QPR; Cardiff v Bristol Rovers; Carlisle v Stoke (7.30pm); Charlton v Birmingham; Colchester v Reading; Crawley v Swindon; Derby v Chesterfield; Fleetwood v West Brom; Grimsby v Bradford; Huddersfield v Morecambe; Leyton Orient v Newport (7.30pm); Lincoln v Harrogate; Northampton v Wycombe; Norwich v Stevenage; Oxford Utd v Peterborough; Portsmouth v Millwall; Preston v Sunderland; Rotherham v Crewe; Salford v Doncaster; Sheff Utd v Wrexham (8pm); Shrewsbury v Notts County; Stockport v Blackburn (7.30pm); Swansea v Gillingham; Tranmere v Accrington; Walsall v Exeter; Watford v MK Dons; Wigan v Barnsley
SPFL Trust Trophy
Second round Albion v Cowdenbeath; Dumbarton v Berwick; Dundee Utd U21 v Dundee U21 (6.30pm); East Fife v St Johnstone U21; Elgin v Banks O'Dee; Fraserburgh v Forfar (8pm); Stranraer v Bonnyrigg Rose
Cricket
Second Women's T20 International
Ireland v Sri Lanka, Dublin (4pm)
The Hundred Women
Northern Superchargers v London Spirit, Headingley (3pm)
The Hundred Men
Northern Superchargers v London Spirit, Headingley (6.30pm)
Tennis
ATP & WTA Cincinnati Open
Ohio, US (to 19 Aug)
Cycling
Tour de France Femmes
Stage two Dordrecht-Rotterdam, Netherlands (11am)
UCI Tour de Pologne
Stage two Myslakowice-Karpacz, Poland (2.30pm)

Greg Wood's racing tips

Lingfield **2.15** Rinnovati **2.45** King Of Charm **3.15** Miss Nightfall **3.45** Circe **4.15** Fullforward **4.45** Thursday

Nottingham **2.30** Star Of St James **3.00** Almasi **3.30** Pasha **4.00** Robusto (nap) **4.30** Valentine Catcher **5.05** Three Beauz

Hamilton **5.30** Refuge **6.00** Rogue Endeavour **6.30** Historic City **7.00** Classy Boy **7.30** Iris Dancer **8.00** Sycamore Gap

Less is more

LA doesn't need every sport – let's cut your favourite

With 48 disciplines across 32 sports, the modern Olympics needs a diet – so let's bump the 2028 menu into shape

Jonathan Liew
Paris

Behold the giant feast. Courses upon courses. Over the past 17 days this has been a city engorged, its every nook and crevice stuffed with sport, to the point where they had to parcel some of it off to the outskirts and even wrap some of it up in a doggy bag and send it to Tahiti.

Are we not sated? As we stagger down the boulevards with a toothpick and a smug burp, trying not to think of the indigestion of Monday morning, the memory of Paris 2024 remains fresh and pristine. This remains the greatest sporting event, having weathered terrorism, plague, Nazis and the 1904 marathon, when several competitors were chased off the route by dogs and the man who finished first turned out to have had a ride in a car.

As with any lavish meal, the body neatly separates it into the nourishment it needs and the excess matter it does not. The Olympics, to put it a little indelicately, needs to undergo a similar process. There are 48 disciplines across 32 sports at the modern Olympics, if you include all the isotopic variants such as BMX freestyle and rhythmic gymnastics. This is a rise of 41% since the Barcelona Games of 1992, 20% since London 2012. How much is too much?

The Los Angeles Games of 2028 will feature five new sports: baseball/softball, cricket, flag football, lacrosse and squash. In the other direction, breaking and perhaps boxing are poised to make way. But we can do better than this. This patient needs to go on a diet before it does itself some serious harm.

There are tough decisions to be made. Perhaps your favourite sport does not make the cut. Fortunately, your correspondent does not get a seat on the IOC executive board. But consider, too, that thinning out the programme will provide more room to the sports that remain, giving their athletes a brighter spotlight, rather than a fleeting nine minutes of fame before everyone's attention turns to the next thing. Less really can be more.

Before we begin, a few ground rules. Sports that appeal to the widest possible global base should be prioritised. Plus points for sports that can be staged in cities. And plus points for what I am – with a high degree of subjectivity – describing as the "wow factor", sports that work on social media as well as they do in the stadium, sports that push the boundaries of the body over sports that consist largely of a bunch of guys slowly becoming sweatier.

So athletics stays. Gymnastics, cycling, basketball, BMX, skateboarding and climbing make the cut on all the above criteria. Wrestling and weightlifting are simple, primal tests of the body. Judo, boxing and taekwondo are the purest of the combat sports. Handball, table tennis and badminton are classic hand-eye coordination sports with low bars to entry. Diving, canoeing and beach volleyball all score high on the "wow factor". Shooting, fencing and hockey are hanging on by a thread. But among the rest there is plenty of low-hanging fruit.

Sailing

How many of you own a boat? How many of you could get access to a boat and – checks notes – a sea to sail it in? Of all the many anachronisms at the modern Olympics, sailing is perhaps the most conspicuous of all: a continuing sop to super-rich men who founded the Games and still just really love yachts, basically inaccessible to most of the countries in the world, even the ones with a viable coastline.

Archery

No disrespect to the immense levels of skill, concentration and physical discipline involved here. But this is a sport with no discernible identity. It's a homage to medieval military combat reduced to the level of holiday-camp activity, an endlessly repeatable skill taking place at a frankly pre-digital pace. There is perhaps a case for moving targets, which was essentially the point of archery in the first place. But if we're going to have an arrows sport in the Olympics, there's frankly only one choice. Luke Littler for LA 2028.



▲ *Archery needs immense skill, but could it be replaced by darts?*

Surfing

Surfing is great. Surfing is spectacular. Surfing is hard and dangerous. But it runs into the same problem as sailing: what is the point of an Olympic sport you have to stage away from the Olympics? This was a sport that was popular and thriving before it achieved Olympic status, albeit only in the few places in the world where you can do it properly. It was a nice idea, but you would struggle to argue it was worth the trouble and compromises it entailed. A brilliant sport. Just not an Olympic sport.

Anything with a horse

From the Olympic charter: "Sports, disciplines or events in which performance depends essentially on mechanical propulsion are not acceptable." This is the basis upon which motorsports continue to be banned from the Games. So, a question: what does it really matter if the form of mechanical propulsion has ears, a tail and a silly name?

You don't even have to be into animal welfare or appalled by the Charlotte Dujardin affair to object to the existence of equestrian sports (in the Olympics).

You know Valegro, the horse Dujardin rode to double Olympic gold in 2012 and 2016? He was Dutch. Horses at the Olympics do not have to be from the country they are representing. You can just buy a well-bred gelding from some international breeder, ship him over and teach him to dance. If you're a fan of equestrian sports, you have one argument in your favour here and it's: "I really like horses." It's not great. But it's all you've got.

3x3 basketball

Look, we've all had to play in a game where not quite enough people turned up. You play half-pitch football because you couldn't get the numbers. A couple of your guys have to field for the opposition because they brought nine. Only in basketball is this makeshift exigency somehow elevated to the level of Olympic medals. Three is not enough for a game of basketball, by a factor of about 60%. An entirely unnecessary discipline, existing entirely for people somehow convinced proper basketball isn't accessible enough.

Rowing

See: sailing. But also add a veneer of varsity superciliousness, the same eight countries winning everything and the visceral thrill of largely similar boats racing each other over the same distance in a straight line. I'm sure there are rowing people out there who can explain why we need separate fours and quad sculls events and why they need to host the whole thing on a lake miles away when the most famous boat race in the world takes place on a river in the middle of a city. One of those Olympic sports that exists largely because people in 1900 thought it was pretty neat.

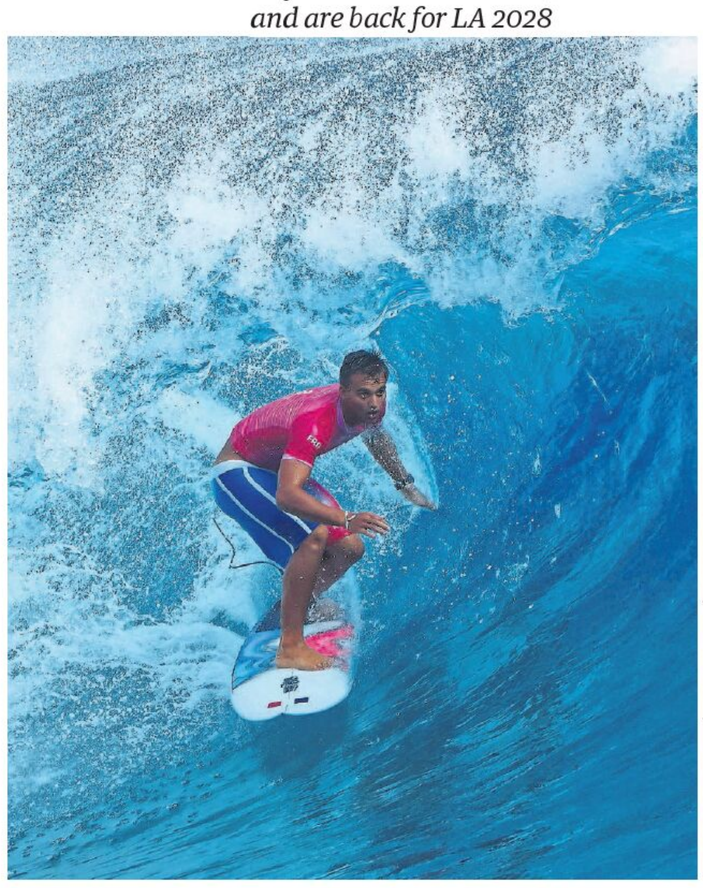
Golf

Let's be honest: this hasn't really worked, has it? As heartwarming as it has been seeing Xander Schauffele and Scottie Scheffler fattening their trophy cabinets in front of politely applauding crowds, nothing about this sport screams "Olympics". Of course

▼ *Equestrianism, surfing, 3x3 basketball and sailing all featured at Paris 2024 and are back for LA 2028*



HOLLANDSE HOOGTE/SHUTTERSTOCK



SYLVAIN LEFEVRE/PANORAMIC/DPPI MEDIA



LISI NIESNER/REUTERS



XINHUA/SHUTTERSTOCK

the players love it, they love playing golf. But it's a poor-value event for the land it takes up and its distance from the main show. Quite apart from the fact that its founding values - avarice, solitude, peace and quiet - are essentially anathema to everything the Olympics is. Can you imagine a golfer lighting the Olympic torch? And properly, not just with their cigarette lighter. Exactly.

Volleyball

This may be the most contentious one of all. Volleyball ticks many of the boxes of a classic Olympic sport: tradition, low bars to entry, city-based. But in a contracting Games, it is increasingly difficult to make the case there should be two separate disciplines, and - sorry - beach won. It's picturesque, it's outdoors, it's hedonistic, it takes the skills of traditional volleyball and projects them in a more digestible format. There are probably one too many Olympic sports that give off the vibe of "provincial leisure centre at 6pm". With regrets, volleyball gets the short straw.

Men's football

With a caveat. You get the best players in the world to turn up, like they do in tennis, and you can stay. This is never going to happen and what we get is an unsatisfactory compromise - teams of under-23 unknowns with a meagre sprinkling of stardust - that ultimately satisfies nobody.

It fails for the same reasons all these start-up leagues founded by abundant petro-dollars fail - this is a sport that runs not just on star names but on star teams, collectives with a discernible identity, either through heritage or as the recognisable products of a national system. This is why women's football remains a vital and valued part of the programme. But when one of your major talking points is whether Mohamed Elneny can show glimpses of his old Arsenal form, it's fair to say you've missed an opportunity there.

Swimming

OK, not all the swimming. But pretty much all the bits that are just weird forms of swimming. No other sport allows participants to simply do it backwards and call it a separate event with separate medals. As impressive as Michael Phelps and Léon Marchand are, with their multiple medals in multiple disciplines, you do have to ask whether, if they can win multiple medals in multiple disciplines, those disciplines are all that different.

Swimming occupies far too much Games real estate, leading to the ludicrous scenario when Paris built two aquatics venues, one for swimming and one for all the rest of the pool sports. Keep the freestyle at its various distances. Keep one medley race to give Adam Peaty something to do at weekends. The rest, unfortunately, goes into the great Games intestine for ejection: an ugly and regrettable process, but one from which the body as a whole will emerge far healthier as a result.

28 Hours Later: life as an Olympic zombie as the Games wind down

As the crowds slip away and the noise abates in Paris, it is hard to come to terms with the dissipating spectacle

Stephen McMillan
Paris

"Handball à droite, volleyball à gauche." For 16 days the volunteer directing crowds outside the South Paris Arena was the soundtrack to my waking hours, his megaphoned voice echoing round the Place de la Porte de Versailles and into my seventh-floor hotel room 150 metres away across the square.

He would start at 8am. An hour earlier the convoy of gendarme trucks would have arrived, each van feeling the need to alert the entire 15th arrondissement to its arrival with a blast of its siren. They would set up their roadblocks, buy their croissants and spend the day flexing their muscles to passing Parisiens.

La Police Nationale would show up around the same time and before long the tooled-up squaddies would be pacing up and down outside the venue entrances, too. Cafes did a roaring trade all day long catering to a constant stream of arriving and departing handball and volleyball fans, clad in national colours, draped in flags, singing songs. By mid-afternoon Monsieur le Megaphone was usually leading the crowds in a rendition of Joe Dassin's Les Champs-Élysées and after 9pm everybody seemed pissed. It was all utterly wonderful.

Today, however, is different. This is Monday, Day +1 of the Games, the morning after the closing ceremony. The megaphone has fallen silent. The 7am gendarme convoy has been replaced by a 7am contractors' lorry. A gaggle of workers clad in bright orange hi-viz vests emerge and start tidying away barriers. The roadblocks are gone. The tram stop has reopened.

Is this what normal life in this corner of south-west Paris *almost* resembles? The Games livery is still draped over every public space, but the Olympic visitors have vanished. Never mind the horror movie 28 Days Later - this is 28 Hours Later, and I am an Olympic zombie.

This isn't the reality, of course. Paris never emptied itself of its inhabitants. The French capital has a population of 2.1 million. Life goes on. It's just they haven't spent the past two weeks dancing and singing their way down the street clad head to toe in orange after watching the Netherlands dish out a spanking in the volleyball.

Corinne Menegaux, director of the tourist office, chicly renamed *Paris je t'aime*, gave Le Monde the facts and figures to back this up. She said that, for the first week of the Olympics, the Paris region recorded the same number of inhabitants as during the equivalent period in 2023. Interestingly, there was a modest but unexpected 3% *increase* within the capital itself.

Then there were the visitors, and lots of them - 2.4 million in fact from outside the Paris region from 25 July to 2 August, of which 73% were French, half of them coming just for the day. The remaining 27% of visitors were international, up 14% on last year. So Paris stayed populated, and it was just as much day-trippers from *la France profonde* as noisy foreign fans who made the place so vibrant and colourful.

But now here we are, hangover day for those of us who stayed the night, left to rub along politely with the party hosts and help clear up the plates and glasses, wondering how to get the wine stain out of the carpet and when it would be OK to leave.

I go for a walk before I pack my bags for my Tuesday Eurostar home and drop into a regular local haunt. Two days before the opening ceremony, I had asked the chef-owner of the restaurant 750g la Table what he thought about the Games. His answers have stuck in my mind the whole time. "*Les Jeux Olympiques?!*" he had exclaimed. "They're a sack of shit. It's a disaster. My takings are down 35%. Businesses are closing. Tourists don't visit."

So today I ask him what he thinks now the show is over. "*Ah, je me suis trompé!*" he says, smiling. "I was wrong." The Guardian's Paris correspondent, Angelique Chrisafis, says this is quite a common thing to hear from people in the city right now.

"It was *incroyable*, for the city and for my business. I was wrong about it all. As you can see, today we are not busy. Sit wherever you like. All we do now is rest and clean."

We shake hands and I ask him what happens now for him and Paris. "*Maintenant? Je vais faire une sieste,*" he says. He mimes falling asleep, laughs, and heads off to the back room for a nap.



◀ *As the streets of Paris have begun to empty, a strange hush has descended on the French capital along with a sense of satisfaction at a job well done*
ANDRE PAIN/EPA

'It's hard to say goodbye': French media in dreamland

While the national press has declared Paris 2024 a major success, the closing ceremony got mixed reviews

Kim Willsher
Paris

Le Parisien summed up the Olympic Games with one word: "Merci" across a picture of the Eiffel Tower's revolving beacon alighting on the cauldron. "The incredible 15 days of Paris Games closed last night in beauty at the Stade de France. It owes its success to the tireless work of the organisers, to their crazy vision and the mobilisation of thousands of volunteers," it wrote, adding: "It's hard to say goodbye."

The paper was less enthusiastic about the closing ceremony. "In the end, the athletes paraded during the closing ceremony but were overshadowed in favour of the decor. We spent a good part of the evening not really understanding what was happening. And we weren't the only ones. The athletes who had stood quietly after their traditional parade were firmly asked to leave ..." It said the evening was finally boosted by Tom Cruise.

Not everyone agreed and in response to criticism about Cruise's presence the French sports minister, Amélie Oudéa-Castera, said: "Stop always looking for controversies."

Ouest-France, the country's bestselling regional newspaper, published a list of "tops and flops" of the closing ceremony. "Tops" included Cruise, the handover of the Olympic flame by France's quadruple gold-medallist swimmer Léon Marchand, the music performances by Phoenix, Air, the DJ Kavinsky and the Belgian singer Angèle, and the "golden dancer" performance.

"Flops", it said, were the performance of the Red Hot Chilli Peppers from Los Angeles, the women's marathon medal ceremony, which is traditionally included in the closing ceremony but, the paper declared, "spoiled the ambience", and the film of the people's marathon, when ordinary runners followed the Olympic marathon route after the race.

A number of observers tried to make sense of the sci-fi scenes at the start of the closing spectacle with a pre-recorded interview with the man in the golden outfit, Arthur Cadre, a dancer from Brittany.

L'Equipe reported that 17.1 million people watched the closing ceremony on France 2 public television, the second-highest viewing figure after the 23.2 million who watched the opening ceremony.

Le Figaro said of the closing ceremony: "If the show was not as grandiose as the opening ceremony, a number of spectacular visual scenes will be remembered."

The left-leaning Libération wrote: "The closing show ended on a more conventional note [than the opening], with a showcase of the French Touch, glittering acrobatics and an attempt to kill Tom Cruise by throwing him off the roof of a stadium, before heading off to LA to see what the Yanks have up their sleeves. Are we done? Well, we're packed up and ready to go."

After the closing ceremony Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris, said: "For the last two weeks, Paris has lit up the world. I want to tell you of our immense pride: pride to have shown the world our exceptional cultural heritage, proud to have shared our sense of hospitality with tourists from around the world, proud to have been the place of harmony and peace which we have dreamed of for so many years."

There was plenty of commentary on France finishing fifth in the medal table. "The closing ceremony was marked by the emotion of the victories and defeats of the athletes, notably the French who were playing at home," said Europe 1. "A small black note, however: the low number of gold medals [for France]. With 16 of them, it's a record, but Les Bleus lost lots of finals and that has some way to improve." Le Monde struck a more positive note, saying it was "Mission Accomplished" for the French team.



▲ *A salvo of fireworks lights up the night sky above the Stade de France*



▼ *Léon Marchand, Antoine Dupont and Simone Biles produced memorable displays in Paris*
GUARDIAN PICTURE DESK

From Marchand to Snoop

Highs and lows of the most memorable Games

Guardian writers on how a French swimmer set new standards, but the host city was the real star of the show

Barney Ronay

Best moment Julien Alfred winning the women's 100m, St Lucia's first medal in any Olympic Games. Followed instantly by panic at how to write 900 coherent words on this in the next 20 minutes.
Biggest disappointment The reflexive, sometimes heavy-handed position-taking over sensitive and complex issues in the women's boxing.
Star of the Games Paris. Feast on me. For I am the most beautiful person here.
Crowd-pleaser The triathlon. Yes, the Seine, like the rest of us here, is still full of shit. But even trying to clean it up is one of the best things Paris 2024 has done.
One to watch for LA 2028 Skateboarding in LA will be most excellent.
Paris Olympics in three words Ride. A. Bike.

Angelique Chrisafis

Best moment The cheering in the streets as Teddy Riner and the French mixed judo team won their dramatic final against Japan.
Biggest disappointment The valiant French men's handball team bowing out in the quarter-finals.
Star of the Games Boxer Cindy Ngamba won the Refugee Olympic team's first medal.
Crowd-pleaser Pop superstar Aya Nakamura singing with France's *Garde Républicaine* military band at the opening ceremony.
Ones to watch for LA 2028 Félix and Alexis Lebrun: French brothers and table tennis prodigies.
Paris Olympics in three words Boost for France.

Jonathan Liew

Best moment Antoine Dupont inspiring France to gold in the rugby sevens.
Biggest disappointment The shameful circus following the boxers Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting, whipped up by some of the worst people on Earth.
Star of the Games Léon Marchand.
Crowd-pleaser The road race cycling on the hills of Montmartre. Incredible race; incredible setting.
One to watch for LA 2028 "Jofra Archer, Team GB" has a nice ring to it.
Paris Olympics in three words Sport is amazing.

Sean Ingle

Best moment The men's 1500m, Sifan Hassan's marathon gold after two track medals, and Alex Yee's miracle along the Seine.
Biggest disappointment In an Olympics of many highs, the IOC's reaction to the furore surrounding the women's boxing and the Dutch beach volleyball player.
Star of the Games Paris. Never has an Olympic city looked more beautiful. And Léon Marchand.
Crowd-pleaser France's sevens team. The crowds were also 15-deep along the Seine when Camille Beaugrand won a thrilling women's triathlon gold.
One to watch for LA 2028 GB's Phoebe Gill. She can already run an 800m in 1min 57sec at 17 and reached the semi-finals here.
Paris Olympics in three words *Spectaculaire, magnifique,* cool.

Daniel Boffey

Best moment Antoine Dupont lighting up the Stade de France in the sevens final: France's first gold.
Biggest disappointment The boxing gender eligibility row.
Star of the Games Léon Marchand.
Crowd-pleaser La Seine (but she kept us guessing).
One to watch for LA 2028 British runner Emile Cairess, 26, who came fourth in his third marathon. The winner, Tamirat Tola, is 31.
Paris Olympics in three words *Oh. Là. Là!*

Andy Bull

Best moment Mondo Duplantis's pole vault world record, Léon Marchand's last turn in the 200m breaststroke, Antoine Dupont's final sprint down the wing.
Biggest disappointment Price-gouging in the stadiums. It's one thing when the local businesses take advantage of all the visitors, another when it's Coca-Cola doing it.
Star of the Games "*Marchand! Marchand! / Qu'un sang impur / Abreuve nos sillons!*" I think that's how it goes.

Antoine Dupont inspiring France to gold was arguably the springboard for all the euphoria

Crowd-pleaser Céline Dion belting out *L'Hymne a l'Amour* from a perch halfway up the Eiffel Tower.
One to watch for LA 2028 Cricket. After 128 years it will be back in the Olympics. It's going to be fascinating to see how it shakes out.
Paris Olympics in three words Chic, sweaty, joyful.

Alexandra Topping

Best moment Every second of the women's heavyweight weightlifting. I've always loved it; to cover it was such a privilege.
Biggest disappointment Knowing all the amazing food in Paris was right there, but only having time to eat a sandwich.
Star of the Games Léon Marchand.
Crowd-pleaser Fortuitously getting stuck watching the joyous people's marathon late on the penultimate night of the Games.
One to watch for LA 2028 Taekwondo's Caden Cunningham (if he doesn't go to MMA).
Paris Olympics in three words Crazy beautiful city.

Tumaini Carayol

Best moment Sifan Hassan's sprint finish and Olympic marathon record after winning bronze medals in the 5,000m and 10,000m.
Biggest disappointment The handling of the floor exercise bronze medal dispute involving the USA's Jordan Chiles and Ana Barbosu of Romania by gymnastics' governing body, the FIG.
Star of the Games: Simone Biles.

'It's the right time to call it a day'
Tom Daley, Britain's greatest diver, retires with five Olympic medals *News, Page 9* →

Crowd-pleaser The return of Biles after the twisties and the stunning venues at the Eiffel Tower and Grand Palais.
One to watch for LA 2028 Mondo Duplantis's pole vault world record height in four years.
Paris Olympics in three words Ambitious, uplifting, harmonious.

Nick Ames

Best moment Seeing the fencer Olga Kharlan win Ukraine's first medal at the Grand Palais was a real thrill. A few days later, she topped it with a team gold.
Biggest disappointment It didn't necessarily disappoint me, but the best part of 27,000 heads in hands around Stade Pierre Mauroy when France blew their handball quarter-final against Germany – denying Nikola Karabatic a shiny send-off – told their own story.
Star of the Games Paris. Athlete-wise, Mondo Duplantis and Yaroslava Mahuchikh were magnetic faces of the fortnight.
Crowd-pleaser Seeing crowds sway along to Joe Dassin's classic song Les Champs-Élysées every day and never finding it twee or boring. France's problems in the buildup were well documented but every day was joyful.
One to watch for LA 2028 Is it ridiculous to say Keely Hodgkinson? At just 22, she will only get better and better.
Paris Olympics in three words Lemonade. No, champagne.

Ewan Murray

Best moment The waft of ultra-cool hotel-room air conditioning, night after night. Paris was hot. Too hot.
Biggest disappointment Media toilet facilities at every venue. An utter disgrace.
Star of the Games Jonathan Liew.
Crowd-pleaser Bozhidar Andreev. I watched him with bronze medal around his neck as he sank pints and smoked cigarettes in the company of Bulgarian weightlifting fans. What a man.
One to watch for LA 2028 Keely Hodgkinson looks to have a rather promising future.
Paris Olympics in three words Freed from Desire.

Stephen McMillan

Best moment Antoine Dupont's glorious sprint down the wing in the sevens final set the tone for everything that followed.
Biggest disappointment Ignorance abounded in the boxer gender eligibility row.
Star of the Games Oh Paris, *je t'aime!* France has set a gold standard in Olympic hosting.
Crowd-pleaser Léon Marchand, whose success reverberated across the city with cheers and horns.
One to watch for LA 2028 A car-free Olympics. That's the bold claim of LA's mayor, Karen Bass. Has she been to her city? Good luck with that.
Paris Olympics in three words *Ça va,* Snoop?

Jeremy Whittle

Best moment Tom Pidcock's scintillating last-gasp dart through the woods to successfully defend his mountain biking title in Élancourt.
Biggest disappointment Josh Tarling's time-trial medal hopes thwarted by an inopportune puncture in the rainswept men's individual time trial.
Star of the Games Triple medallist Emma Finucane: bright, breezy, up for it and as enthused on day seven in the velodrome as she had been on day one.
Crowd-pleaser The exuberant French 1-2-3 in the BMX racing, led home by Joris Daudet under the admiring gaze of President Macron.
One to watch for LA 2028 Finucane, only 21, will be stronger and wiser.
Paris Olympics in three words Hot, dusty, beautiful.

Bryan Armen Graham

Best moment Watching Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone break free at the top of the stretch and win the 400m hurdles going away was instant goosebumps.
Biggest disappointment The American gymnast Jordan Chiles having to give back her floor exercise bronze medal on a procedural technicality sure was something.
Star of the Games Besides Céline Dion? Surely the French judoka Teddy Riner.
Crowd-pleaser Léon Marchand won four individual gold medals in six nights, turning La Défense Arena into a Taylor Swift gig every time he swam.
One to watch for LA 2028 Wild guess: flag football's debut includes a 38-year-old Travis Kelce.
Paris Olympics in three words Freed from Desire.

Jack Snape

Best moment Antoine Dupont's France surprising Fiji in the men's rugby sevens final to give the home nation its first gold.
Biggest disappointment Snoop Dogg leaving skateboarding's park final before the end. Winner Keegan Palmer laughed it off: "He's got places to be."
Star of the Games Léon Marchand and his four gold medals.
Crowd-pleaser The decision to adapt the Grand Palais into a breathtaking venue for fencing and taekwondo.
One to watch for LA 2028 How close China will be to the USA's medal tally.
Paris Olympics in three words *Joie de* Raygun.

Kieran Pender

Best moment Nina Kennedy pole-vaulting to win Australia's 18th gold, for the nation's best Olympic performance.
Biggest disappointment Surfing more than justified its spot on the Olympic schedule in Tahiti, but running the final in subpar conditions was a letdown.
Star of the Games The French-born Australian Jess Fox: flag-bearer and two-time gold medallist. Clutch.
Crowd-pleaser Léon Marchand was blockbuster at the swimming, with four gold medals and a bronze. He elevated the atmosphere to fever pitch.
One to watch for LA 2028 The skateboarder Arisa Trew: gold in Paris, at 14. Big things ahead.
Paris Olympics in three words *Liberté. Égalité. Fête?!*

'Work to do' on GB's gold count, says UK Sport chair

Taha Hashim

The chair of UK Sport, Katherine Grainger, has hailed Britain's medal tally at the Paris Olympics but admitted "there's a bit of work to do" to improve on their gold count.

Team GB met the Olympic funding agency's target of 50 to 70 medals, winning 65, one more than their final tally in Tokyo three years ago. But 14 gold medals, their worst return in 20 years, meant the team finished seventh in the table, dropping three spots from the previous Games.

"We've got a strategic ambition to be in the top five," Grainger told the BBC Radio 4 programme Today. "We were just below that this time but we always knew that between three and eight is very congested. One or two gold medals either way will shift you quite a few places up or down.

"The main thing we've seen is we normally have around a 30% conversion rate [to medals that are gold]. We were a bit below that this time so that just means there's a bit of work to do for all of us who are involved in these various sports and supporting roles. There's a bit of work in the review now to see are there places where we could have done more or less, or differently."


▲ *Team GB's Imogen Grant and Emily Craig show off their medals*

In Tokyo, gold accounted for 34% of Team GB's medals. At Rio 2016, that percentage stood at 40%. At London 2012 it was 45%. Despite highlighting room for improvement Grainger, who won a rowing gold medal 12 years ago, said she was "happy and content that the medal range [of 50-70 medals] was accurate", adding: "To be at the very top quarter of that is very pleasing and shows our athletes have put on a brilliant show."

Team GB's rowers won eight medals, including three gold. It marked a stark improvement from the two – a silver and a bronze – won in Tokyo, despite being Britain's best-funded sport in that Olympic cycle. Grainger said: "A lot of people assume [investment] is about reward or punishment for immediate results, [but] it's the opposite. It's looking forward for the potential of a sport.

"Rowing is probably the most obvious example. A lot of people talked about, was it a disappointing return in Tokyo with only two medals out of a sport where you see multiple medals from? And if at that point the decision had been made to say two medals isn't enough, therefore no funding, then we wouldn't be seeing the success we have seen this time.

"A lot of conversations happened, [British] Rowing was brilliant about assessing their performances, what they thought their athlete potential was, what they thought their ambitions could be for Paris and they've delivered eight medals so a brilliant turnaround with Louise Kingsley as their performance director."

When asked whether budgets will be scrutinised in sailing and boxing – the former returning two medals, the latter just bronze for Lewis Richardson in the men's 71kg – Grainger said: "It's not the budgets so much that get scrutinised, all parts of the programme will get scrutinised. The national governing bodies who run the sport want to do that as much as any investment body."

Analysis
Jeremy Whittle *Paris*

British cyclists made fast start but never really caught fire

When Anna Henderson took silver in the women's time trial, and Tom Pidcock a spectacular gold in the men's mountain biking, there was good reason to be optimistic about Team GB's prospects in the Paris 2024 cycling programme.

But although it was bookended by medal success, this was an Olympic campaign that, unlike others, never really caught fire. Bad luck, illness, injury and losses of form or confidence combined too often to thwart the best laid plans.

It was a perspective with which the performance director, Stephen Park, didn't disagree. "I think personally that's a fair assessment," Park said. "We won't ever know what might have been but had some of our lineups been a little bit different, or crashes not happened, then we could have easily won one or two more gold medals."

Key to the reduced medal hopes on the track was the freak injury that befell Katie Archibald, just weeks before the Games. That injury forced a crisis that was resolved only after a week of uncertainty. "Our women's team endurance programme coming into the Games would have looked very different had she been here," Park said. "Katie is a fantastic rider and was actually in the form of her life at the time. So that could well have made it look different."

But there were other shortcomings. Too many medal opportunities that had been taken in past Olympics slipped away, from Josh Tarling's puncture in the men's time trial to Beth Shriever's shock collapse in the BMX finals, having won every preceding race leading to the final. Creditable silver and bronze medals were deservedly celebrated, but in truth other nations – the Netherlands, France and USA – have been higher achievers during these Olympics.

There was a degree of papering over the cracks in advance of the Games, but the reality was that absent or injured Olympians – Jason and Laura Kenny and particularly Archibald – were sorely missed.

That context, combined with the number of past medallists who came into the Games recovering from injury or illness – Lizzie Deignan, Jack Carlin, Neah Evans, Kye Whyte, Evie Richards – all influenced the outcome. Others, such as Ethan Hayter, who competed in the men's omnium despite having been injured in the final lap of the men's team pursuit, raced on. Asked if allowing Hayter to continue was a mistake, Park said: "With hindsight, would it have been better to have brought somebody else in for the omnium? Yes."


▲ *Tom Pidcock with the gold medal he won in the men's mountain biking*

Layered on top of that has been British Cycling's post "medal factory" narrative. An adjustment in culture has also led to new objectives that are not all connected with having a bigger sack of gold medals than anybody else. While Dave Brailsford railed against the "plucky loser" mentality before his first Olympics in 2004, Park said, in mid-June this year, that "winning itself is not enough, it's about the impact of winning and what impact it has on society".

Yet this was the lowest Olympic gold medal tally for Team GB since the Brailsford-led campaign in 2004. However, Park dismissed the suggestion it was the end of an era. "It could easily have been quite different. If you look across all the British sports, it's tougher to win gold medals now than it has ever been. The difference between first and fourth is smaller than it's ever been.

"Performing in one discipline or another, your riders have more time to recover. Trying to be competitive in them all makes it incredibly difficult to do that. We've got riders capable of doing that, we'll go back and analyse what we've done, and we'll rebuild as we go to LA [in 2028]."

The Guardian
Tuesday
13 August
2024

33

9 770261 307323

Sport

Clarets thrill

Stylish Burnley thump Luton in early clash of relegated sides



Page 34 →

Early warning

Pre-season woes and transfer chaos at Chelsea



Jonathan Wilson Page 33 →



Paris 2024

Team GB athletes proudly show off their medals after disembarking the Eurostar in London on their return to the UK

LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

Anderson sizes up shock return to T20 cricket at 42

Ali Martin

Jimmy Anderson is considering a late foray into the world of franchise T20 cricket - potentially starting overseas this winter - after watching the Hundred and believing he can deliver as a new-ball bowler at that level.

Speaking to The Final Word cricket podcast, Anderson confirmed he is still keen to "give something back" to Lancashire in a playing capacity next summer - and possibly beyond - despite slipping into a role as England's bowling mentor after the 42-year-old's emotional retirement from Test cricket at Lord's last month.

While the assumption has been that Anderson's focus would be on first-class cricket were he to continue bowling domestically, England's record wicket-taker in Tests and one-day internationals has revealed that the T20 circuit has now entered his thoughts 10 years since his last appearance in the shortest format.

"I feel there is something there, that I still want to play a little bit more," said Anderson, whose role with England runs to the end of the three-Test series against Sri Lanka that gets under way at Old Trafford next week. "Things will become clearer as the rest of the year progresses. There's two Test tours in the winter and I'm not sure I'll be on them in this [mentor] role.

"I watch the Hundred and see the ball swinging around in the first 20 balls and I think: 'I can still do that.' I don't know if that is a viable option, to maybe see if I could do a job in white-ball cricket. Franchise cricket is something I've never done."

Even if Anderson's England role is extended and takes him to the tours of Pakistan and New Zealand, both sit this side of Christmas and thus make either the Big Bash League or the SA20 options in 35 →



Jimmy Anderson may opt for a surprise switch to T20 franchise cricket

Back in the game?

Team GB men's football on the agenda for LA Olympics

Sean Ingle

The British Olympic Association (BOA) wants a Great Britain men's football team competing at the Los Angeles Games in 2028. Andy Anson, the BOA chief executive, said he "dearly wanted it to happen" and it is understood that the Football Association is keen.

It will, though, take supreme diplomatic skills to convince the football associations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, given their previous hostility to a men's team coming together under one umbrella to play at the Games. They have long argued that their independence in Fifa and Uefa tournaments could be risked if they competed as a single team in the Olympics.

However, there have been no repercussions since Team GB men's and women's teams played at London 2012 or since a women's team with 19 English, one Welsh and two Scottish players competed at Tokyo 2020.

"It's something I would dearly love to happen," Anson said. "I would like to work with the FA, with the Scottish FA, with the Welsh and the Northern Irish FA, if we can make it happen. Because it would be brilliant for football, for youth football and football in general. Seeing the women's team compete is brilliant and I would love to see the men's team compete in the same way."

Anson predicted that Team GB would receive a boost from the new sports at the LA Games. "Our women's team is in the top two in the world in lacrosse," he said. "In flag football, we're in the top few in the world in the women's section. In squash, we've got men and women in the top 10 in the world. And cricket, we've got to be in the top five to qualify in T20 men's and women's and we're currently in that position."

Anson said the BOA was working closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board to satisfy the International Olympic Committee. "We've got good experience in golf, in rugby and in women's football, of how the four nations can come together and nominate one country to be the main governing body and work with the other countries," he said.

Inside

Highs, lows and Snoop
Guardian writers' favourite Paris 2024 moments
Page 38 →

Jonathan Liew
Time for a cull: sports the Olympics can do without
Page 36 →

Rejoice: workers soon won't fear joining a trade union *Polly Toynbee, page 3*

Great work, Team GB. Now let's invest in sports for all *David Goldblatt, page 4*

My deeply unsettling return to Israel *The long read, page 5*

G2 Daily pullout life & arts section *Inside*

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Journal

Opinion and ideas

Elon Musk isn't above the law – seek his arrest for incitement

Bruce Daisley





The way social media is making headlines currently is not without precedent: a fragile narcissist posting relentlessly on a social network he's made his own. We know well how this has ended in the past; Donald Trump's furious posts after his election defeat led to the assault on the Capitol on 6 January 2021. In the aftermath of that episode, the then president was suspended from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and even, to the dismay of those hoping to mood-board the Mar-a-Lago aesthetic, Pinterest.

This time is likely to be different, not least because the person agitating the social media furore, Elon Musk, owns the platform he is using. And on Monday the two men meet. Musk is having a live conversation with the former president, promising "entertainment guaranteed".

I worked at Twitter for most of Trump's presidential term, serving as the most senior executive outside the US. It was clear from my eight years at the platform that there is something lost in translation between British interpretations of free speech and the arguments parroted by those who adopt a US libertarian interpretation of the concept.

Being the British office of a US operation gave us a daily insight into the rat-a-tat repetition defence of free speech. In the US, there's often a myopic sense that its freedoms don't exist in the rest of the world, but in the UK 1998 Human Rights Act, article 10 enshrines freedom of speech. Critically, there is a recognition that free expression carries with it a duty of responsibility. UK law requires that such free speech is not used to incite criminality or spread hatred.

> **"I worked in the British office of Twitter and it was clear there was a dark side to the notion of 'free speech' in the tech world**

For US-based tech firms, the concept of "free speech" is perceived somewhat differently. In my time working under a significantly more enlightened regime at Twitter, it quickly became clear to the team in London that the notion of "free speech" espoused in San Francisco wasn't always focused on creating the kind of utopian world you might casually imagine. We'd regularly see that there was a dark side to the idea that anyone could say anything; time and time again, it led to a minority group (a subset of straight white males) being able to aggressively target large portions of the rest of society, including women, the LBGTQ+ community and ethnic minorities.

The worst part was that, left unchecked, this group ruined the experience of the platform for everyone else. As much as X/Twitter loves framing itself as the "global town square", such common spaces only thrive when everyone knows antisocial behaviour isn't going to be tolerated. Working in the UK office was a little like working in a parliamentary system without a written constitution. There was a vague sense that, rather than rules and regulations holding the organisation to account, the platform would be constrained by outside expectations.

For example, during flare-ups in 2013 when prominent female users were being aggressively subjected to rape threats and threats of violence, the only thing that helped the UK office get the attention of our San Francisco HQ was the mention that advertisers were contemplating boycotting the platform. Democracies shouldn't be left looking at leveraging the soft power of boycotts, not least because in the case of X, most advertisers have long gone.

As someone who worked not only at Twitter but also at YouTube as it came to terms with dealing with its horrible abuse problems, I remain convinced that a social media platform can create behavioural norms that enable polite discussion. Instagram is certainly significantly more civil, and TikTok creators regularly tell their audience that they've just served a timeout because the content they posted crossed a line. But to operate a nicer place requires resources – you need to create systems and you need to staff that infrastructure.

Whether it was politicians receiving personal threats, footballers having racism spat at them, or users saying they'd been called "a Jewish cunt", at Twitter the resources were never given to prove the promise of something better. The government can hold platforms accountable for this – for instance, asking them to confirm the number of UK-based employees in areas like user safety and enforcement.

Despite the attempts to position "free speech" as a philosophical conviction, the reason for its popularity among tech firms is pure and simple – it is cheap. The approach taken by tech firms is less about deeply held principles and more about money – as evidenced by the growing support for Trump in the San Francisco venture capital community. We've hesitated from labelling tech billionaires as oligarchs because the likes of Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey wielded their political power gently. Asking oligarchs to be accountable for what their platforms permit is straightforward and entirely possible.

As for Musk's tweeting, there's often a tell about his personal posting. The

ILLUSTRATION: GUARDIAN DESIGN/ REUTERS/GETTY

* **Bruce Daisley** *is a former Twitter vice-president for Europe, Middle East and Africa*

2

Elon Must isn't above the law – seek his arrest for incitement

Bruce Daisley

← Continued from front

@elonmusksjet Instagram account, which uses public flight logs to track the movements of Musk's private jets, gives a simple opportunity to match the billionaire's social media posts with the time zone they were posted from. It was just after 4am in Texas when Musk reshared a fake post suggesting that Keir Starmer was planning to set up "detainment camps" in the Falkland Islands. Glancing at Musk's X feed shows him regularly staying up long into the night posting and replying. He's been open about his use of ketamine, apparently a medical prescription. While 4am tweets can be deleted (as the one about detainment camps was), real-world consequences hang around long after the buzz has gone.

What can the UK do right now? Fortunately, it appears the immediate threat of civil disturbance has abated. Musk himself has taken on the aura of a teenager on the bus with no headphones, creating lots of noise but not exactly winning people over. Last week, Emily Bell, director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, observed that X had become infuriating to use because the billionaire "has somehow ordered his moronic observations to be inserted at the top of every feed", something that was confirmed last year by one of X's engineers when Musk asked them to talk through the construction of the platform's algorithm. Yes, Musk's own tweets are prioritised by the app. In addition to freedom of speech, he also demands freedom of reach.

The question we are presented with is whether we're willing to allow a billionaire oligarch to camp off the UK coastline and take potshots at our society. The idea that a boycott – whether by high-profile users or advertisers – should be our only sanction is clearly not meaningful. Other countries have banned the app at some point, but we probably don't want to find ourselves in a WhatsApp group with Russia, Turkey and Venezuela, the other countries on that side of the argument.

In the short term, Musk and his fellow executives should be reminded of their criminal liability for their actions under existing laws. Britain's Online Safety Act 2023 should be beefed up with immediate effect. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his team should reflect on whether Ofcom – the media regulator that seems to be continuously challenged by the output and behaviour of outfits such as GB News – is fit to deal with the blurringly fast actions of the likes of Musk.

What else should change? Social media should have norms and standards that are publicly accountable. Users should have the right to have their grievances reviewed and acted on by a real person within a week, and escalated to an ombudsman if they don't like the resolution. Ofcom should have the right to demand certain voices, like Tommy Robinson's, are deplatformed. Anyone who doubts the practicality of this should take a look at social media in Germany, where platforms are significantly more accountable.

In my experience, that threat of personal sanction is much more effective on executives than the risk of corporate fines. Were Musk to continue stirring up unrest, an arrest warrant for him might produce fireworks from his fingertips, but as an international jet-setter it would have the effect of focusing his mind. It's also worth remembering that the rules of what is permitted on X are created by one of Musk's lesser known advisers, a Yorkshire man called Nick Pickles, who leads X's global affairs team.

Musk's actions should be a wake-up call for Starmer's government to quietly legislate to take back control of what we collectively agree is permissible on social media. Musk might force his angry tweets to the top of your timeline, but the will of a democratically elected government should mean more than the fury of a tech oligarch – even him.

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'Comment is free... but facts are sacred' CP Scott

Executive pay

Record payouts for CEOs confirm a persistent sense of entitlement at the top

When The Spirit Level was published 15 years ago in the latter days of Gordon Brown's premiership, its analysis of the corrosive social impact of inequality turned it into an instant bestseller. Since then, as they noted in the Guardian last month, the authors Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson have been invited to give more than 1,000 presentations of their groundbreaking research, which has now been updated in a new report.

The book's core observation remains the same: by reinforcing "the idea that some people are worth much more than others", extreme inequality damages the social fabric and gives the lie to political rhetoric about "all being in this together". But as the latest analysis of CEO pay by the High Pay Centre confirms, such considerations continue to be treated with blithe indifference at the very top of business. According to the thinktank's report, pay for the leaders of the UK's 100 biggest listed companies now stands at the highest level on record. The average chief executive in 2023 benefited from more than 100 times the pay of the average full-time worker in Britain. AstraZeneca's CEO, Pascal Soriot, was the highest-paid, receiving £16.85m, compared with £15.3m in 2022. This year, Mr Soriot, who has undoubtedly done a good job, is on course to receive £18.7m – 1,000 times the minimum wage.

"For whomsoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance," as Matthew 13:12 has it. But this gospel observation was in relation to knowledge of the kingdom of heaven, rather than salaries and long-term share bonuses. In the City of London, insecurity about the post-Brexit future is being leveraged to promote a more material focus on mammon.

The soaring wealth of Mr Soriot and others has been justified by reference to the going rate for bosses in the United States, although academics in the field have failed to locate evidence that such stratospheric pay is necessary to retain executive talent. Banks are meanwhile removing post-crash obstacles to greater self-enrichment among employees. Following the scrapping of an EU-imposed bonus cap by Kwasi Kwarteng during his 38 days as chancellor, Barclays announced last week that staff would be allowed to receive up to 10 times their salaries in payouts. Rivals are preparing to follow suit.

Disappointingly, the new Labour government has chosen not to reverse Mr Kwarteng's act of largesse. But as Mr Wilkinson and Ms Pickett suggest, the bigger picture of a country in which the gap between the rich and the poor has gone back to 1930s levels needs urgently to be addressed. The same market logic that is deployed to justify absurd remuneration at the top has been used to impose austerity on lower earners. People notice such things and the unfairness fuels alienation, destroys political trust and undermines the sense of a common good in which all are invested.

The chancellor, Rachel Reeves, has refused to rule out raising inheritance tax or capital gains tax in her autumn budget, presenting the need to raise revenues as an economic necessity following years of Tory misrule. But achieving a more equitable distribution of rewards is also an ethical imperative. The High Pay Centre recommends giving workforce representatives a say in the setting of top executive pay. Anything that helped rein in the current excesses would be a move in the right direction.

Nature-friendly farming

England's green subsidies are working. Butterflies are among the winners

Creating the right habitats with public money is helping to stop nature's decline or even reverse it. That's the good news from Natural England, which reports more butterflies, bees, bats and birds whizzing around the countryside after the promotion of nature-friendly farming schemes. The body, which advises the government on biodiversity, published research earlier this month showing that the environmental land management scheme (Elms), set up after the UK left the EU, has had beneficial effects.

Unlike the common agricultural policy, which mainly subsidises landowners on the basis of acreage farmed, Elms payments were designed to promote nature. Wildlife has been massively depleted in recent decades due to intensified agriculture and the use of chemicals. Measures that qualify for this new form of support include hedgerow and peat conservation, the creation of landscapes for skylarks and organic fruit-growing.

The research, which included arable, grassland and hill farmers, showed that moths, butterflies and bats have all grown more numerous in the places where farmers had adopted new methods. In total, 1,358 species were recorded. In lowland areas, the study pointed to the importance for butterflies of habitat diversity, with features including woodland and hedgerows.

Among birds, those that feed mostly on invertebrates had the strongest boost in numbers. Bees appeared to have benefited less – which is disappointing given their importance as pollinators. But the findings of this and the other six studies included in the review are not only a report card. They are evidence that will help scientists and officials to understand what works – and inform future policymaking.

Payments linked to the conservation of old farm buildings – which can also be important for wildlife – and geological features in landscapes were examined. So were schemes to promote access to nature for the public. Unsurprisingly, resources were found to be insufficient to enable schools to take advantage of new possibilities for nature-based learning. Farmers complained about the behaviour of some dog walkers.

By far the most challenging section of the report, politically speaking, is the one dealing with research into the trade-offs between food production and nature protection. Nine land-use scenarios were explored. The conclusion was that none could deliver "strong reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (or large increases in potential bird populations) without also seeing a large reduction in food supply".

On the other hand, evidence shows that measures including food waste reduction and the use of arable land to grow crops for people to eat, rather than livestock, could mitigate reduced food production and help the UK to achieve its climate goals. Sooner or later, politicians are going to have to be honest with the public about changes that lie ahead, including an overall cut in dairy and meat consumption, if these crucial targets are to be met.

The environment secretary, Steve Reed, has yet to set out Labour's plans for green farming subsidies, which currently cost £2.4bn a year. With the publication of this evidence, the case for the continuation of the existing scheme, or something close to it, has been strengthened. Brexit has been harmful in many ways. But this proof that altered financial incentives for farmers have delivered environmental benefits, in the form of bats and butterflies, is a heady gust of fresh air.



GMB members on the picket line outside the Amazon fulfilment centre in Coventry, November 2023
PHOTOGRAPH: JACOB KING/PA

Say it loud and rejoice: workers soon won't fear joining a union

Polly Toynbee



This is what a fundamental power shift looks like. Angela Rayner, the deputy prime minister, has swept away the worst of the Tories' strike-banning laws. The 2023 law, known as the Strikes (Minimum Services Levels) Act, denied the right to strike for 20% of workers, contravening human rights law. Within Labour's first 100 days in power the government will introduce a new working rights law. This could radically redress the balance of power between employees and employers.

The assault on unions by Tory governments showed how easily undefended rights of all kinds are lost. Practices such as fire and rehire, zero-hours contracts and extreme barriers to union recognition have infringed on workers' rights that were won eons ago. Thanks to anti-union laws, membership has halved, from 13 million in 1979 to 6.7 million in 2021. As a result, pay as a share of GDP has fallen. Those anti-union laws work like this. For 12 years, GMB union organisers sought access to Amazon "fulfilment" warehouses. In Coventry, they stood outside the gates in all weathers, talking to workers. Workplaces where people most need union protection are hardest to organise. Staff turnover is high and many workers, often not English speakers, fear reprisals. The law favours union-busters.

Amanda Gearing, a senior GMB organiser, recruited many workers in the area, and often encountered management misinformation and fear. "On this pay, anyone with a family is on universal credit, lots [are] using food banks, so fear is easy to stir. They were told union recognition meant delaying pay rises for two years," she told me. The Central Arbitration Committee - the official, independent overseer of workplace ballots - can only agree to one on union recognition when it reckons 40% of workers would vote yes.

When the GMB eventually won enough members, some workers were pressed into attending six hours of anti-union seminars, according to the GMB. Foreign workers feared for their visas and promotions, Gearing said. Workers were easily intimidated, which is unsurprising: they're used to spending every moment of a 10-hour shift being monitored, disciplined and dismissed for missing targets.

"Every employer will have to allow unions inside to address the workforce, from care homes to fast-food outlets. Membership will soar

Last month the union lost the ballot by a handful of votes (the law requires a high turnout and bans electronic voting). Only fear of reprisal and gross untruths can explain why this happened. The benefits of union membership are clear: once a union is recognised, its members tend to get better pay, stronger health and safety standards, and the right to representation if they're unfairly dismissed.

Union organisers say Labour's reforms will make all the difference. Every employer will have to allow unions inside to address their workforce, from care homes to fast-food outlets, so membership will soar. The threshold for holding recognition ballots will fall, and workers will be able to vote electronically. Rights are worthless without strong enforcement, so Labour's Fair Work Agency will inspect workplaces and levy fines. The Tories warn this will mean more strikes. The irony is their union-bashing led to more strikes in 2023 than in any year since the 1980s.

Expect low pay to rise under Labour's promise of a "genuine" minimum wage. The new instruction to the Low Pay Commission by Rayner and the business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, is likely to make the rate rise faster: beyond considering the median wage and economic conditions, it must now take account of the real cost of living.

Not everyone struggles with declining wages. A report yesterday from the High Pay Centre showed that the mean average pay of FTSE 100 CEOs rose 12.2% last year to £4.98m, or 120 times the typical £33,000 wage. Last week, Barclays was the first UK bank to abandon the EU cap on bonuses, introduced after the banker's crash but abolished by Kwarsi Kwarteng, the disaster chancellor (so far, Rachel Reeves has not reinstated the cap). We shall see if this sends top pay sky-rocketing again, as in Thatcher's big bang era. The European Banking Authority reports that the UK is home to 73% of Europe's millionaire bankers.

Some sense of proportion and propriety may be restored as union membership grows. Back in the 1970s, strong unions shamed boardrooms over excessive greed. In the 1980s and 90s, the share of income held by the top 1% rose astronomically, which correlated with the declining influence of the unions. Fat cats earning squillions perhaps have trouble sitting down to negotiations looking their unionised workforce in the eye.

Labour's new rights arrive as wages for the great majority of people are lower than they were in 2008. As Keir Starmer promised before the election, Labour will "level up workers' rights in a way that has not been attempted for decades". Half of workplaces have no union presence and no knowledge of unions. A rise in union membership will bring not just financial improvement (union membership carries an average 4.2% pay premium), but also a political awareness that has faded as unions have waned.

Polling shows overwhelming support for Labour's working rights, including among Tory voters. The return of unions could herald a seismic cultural change in attitudes to fair pay and grotesque greed.



Great work, GB. Now let's invest in sports for all

David Goldblatt



Back in the early 20th century, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) refused to publish medals tables, considering them vulgar and antithetical to the cooperative internationalism that the Games were meant to nurture. It heartily disapproved of the US press which invented them as part of its coverage of the 1908 London Games, as a way of selling papers and tracking the US's sporting ascent. The IOC has since made its peace with the medals table, and at each Games it is offered – especially for those at the top – as a measure of national prowess and power.

How, then, to read Team GB's performance at Paris 2024, seventh in the table with 14 golds and 65 medals in total? By the first two criteria, this marks a decline from the highs of London 2012 (29 golds and third in the table) and Rio 2016 (27 golds and second in the table), though the nadir was Atlanta 1996, where the UK won just one gold medal and finished 36th in the rankings. That said, the total number of medals won is about the same as recent Olympics.

In this light, Paris 2024 is confirmation that the UK has performed at least as well as it should; not overperforming like Australia, but better than Italy, Germany or Canada. Given where the UK ends up in most international tables, this is no mean feat. The key reason is that for more than 25 years the Treasury and the national lottery have been directing about £100m a year to elite sport, with a ruthless allocation process focusing funds on potential medallists.

Of course, UK Sport has been well managed, and innovative cultures of coaching and development have been pioneered in key sports such as cycling, but the money is the most important thing. Since the Olympics abandoned amateurism in 1992, success is simply all but impossible without access to high-level facilities, coaching and funding. Very few sports have a commercial form that can sustain a serious pool of elite athletes in full-time training (and the US model of college sport is not replicable here), so state sinecures are the bedrock of British success.

Has it been a good investment? Certainly, there has been a lot of excitement, entertainment, joy and pride; all of which is good. While anti-migrant riots raged alongside the Games, Team GB has been a celebration of our diversity. However, other longer-term public benefits are harder to discern. Levels of participation in sport and everyday physical activity – a central rationale for investing in elite sport – have not significantly risen alongside our Olympic success.

This was always a quixotic hope. Olympians are exceptional rather than the norm. No amount of gold medal ceremonies have been able to arrest the long-term decline in young people's activity rates, the obesity crisis, or the sedentary nature of most of our lives.

If we want to take a positive message away from Paris 2024, it is that targeted public investment works, and there is absolutely no chance of transforming the activity rate, and the mental and physical health of the nation, without spending a lot more money, especially in poorer areas.

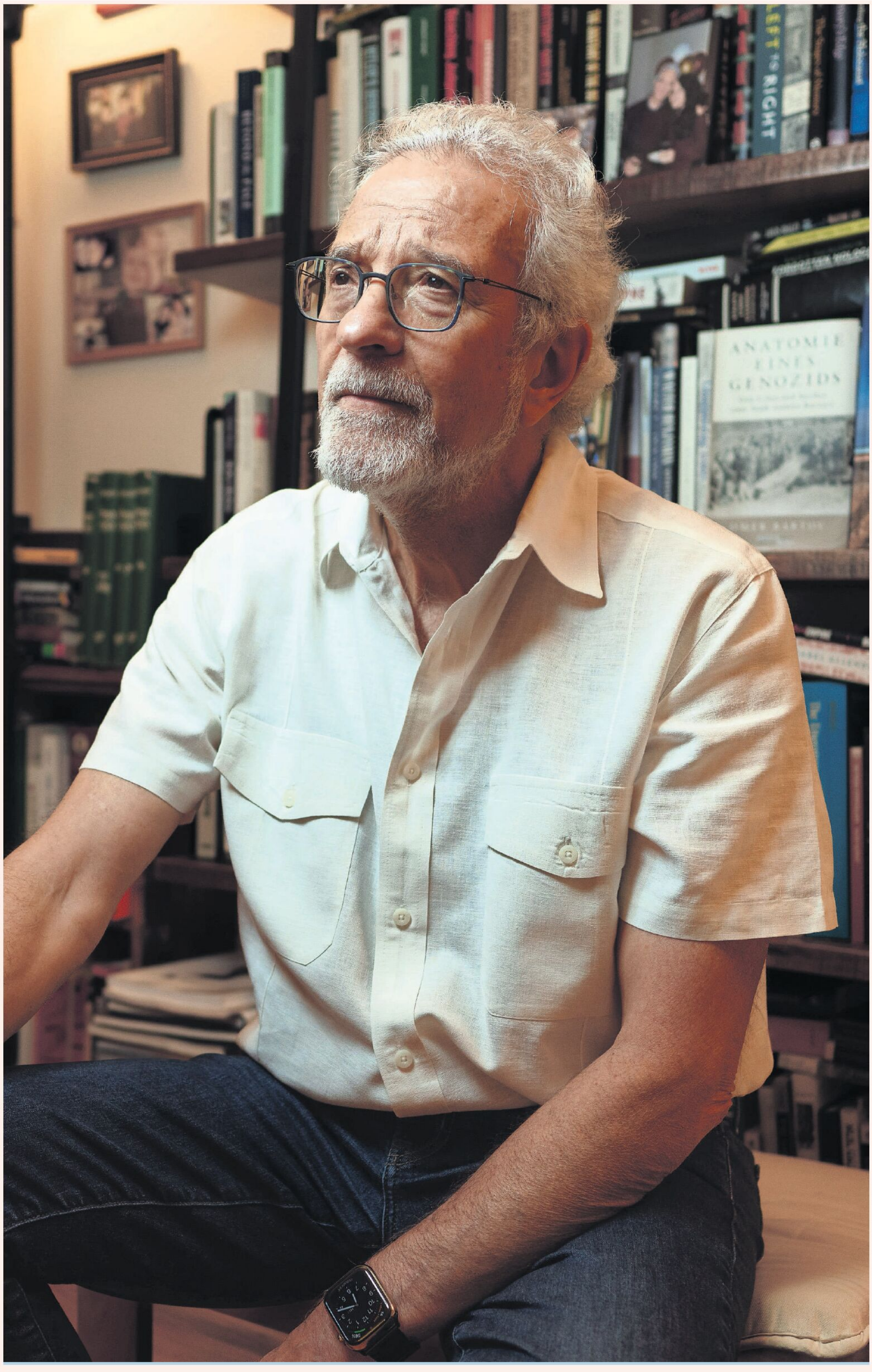
Sport England, and its equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, are working with a budget of about £250m for the whole country; a figure so small, in terms of public expenditure, that it would otherwise only buy a handful of fighter jets or a single large hospital. Local authorities responsible for leisure centres and community sport have been devastated by 14 years of austerity and are closing swimming pools, selling off green spaces and spending less than half of what they did on recreation 15 years ago.

In any reasonable model of public accounting, a sustained investment in the nation's playing fields, sporting facilities, school sports, community programmes and, above all, staffing – in the billions rather than millions – and a similar level of investment in making walking and cycling the norm, would be an immediate priority. At a fraction of the cost, it would deliver better and more egalitarian outcomes than the £11bn we spend on roads every year, and given the scale of sickness at work, deliver a greater boost to the nation's productivity.

The UK's Olympic athletic model may not get us off the sofa, but if we were to adopt its ambition and focus and scale up the funding, it might: and that would be an Olympic legacy without parallel.

* **David Goldblatt** *is the author of The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football and The Game of Our Lives*

The historian Omer Bartov DAVID DEGNER/THE GUARDIAN



‘The reality on the ground is devastating, and the future is so bleak’

As a former IDF soldier and historian of genocide, I was deeply disturbed by my recent visit to Israel

Omer Bartov

On 19 June 2024, I was scheduled to give a lecture at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) in Be’er Sheva, Israel. My lecture was part of an event about the worldwide campus protests against Israel, and I planned to address the war in Gaza and more broadly the question of whether the protests were sincere expressions of outrage or motivated by antisemitism, as some had claimed. But things did not work out as planned.

When I arrived at the lecture hall, I saw a group of students. It soon transpired that they were not there to attend the event but to protest against it. The students had been summoned, it appeared, by a WhatsApp message that went out the day before, which flagged the lecture and called for action: “We will not allow it! How long will we commit treason against ourselves?!?!?!??!!”

The message went on to allege that I had signed a petition that described Israel as a “regime of apartheid” (in fact, the petition referred to a regime of apartheid in the West Bank). I was also “accused” of having written an article for the New York Times, in November 2023, in which I stated that although the statements of Israeli leaders suggested genocidal intent, there was still time to stop Israel from perpetrating genocide. On this, I was guilty as charged. The organiser of the event, the distinguished geographer Oren Yiftachel, was similarly criticised. His offences included having served as the director of the “anti-Zionist” B’Tselem, a globally respected human rights NGO.

As the panel participants and a handful of mostly elderly faculty members filed into the hall, security guards prevented

the protesting students from entering. But they did not stop them from keeping the lecture hall door open, calling out slogans on a bullhorn and banging with all their might on the walls.

After over an hour of disruption, we agreed that perhaps the best step forward would be to ask the student protesters to join us for a conversation. A fair number of those activists walked in and for the next two hours we talked. Most of these young men and women had recently returned from reserve service in the Gaza Strip.

This was not a friendly or "positive" exchange of views, but it was revealing. These students were not necessarily representative of the student body in Israel as a whole. They were activists in extreme rightwing organisations. But in many ways, what they were saying reflected a much more widespread sentiment in the country.

I had not been to Israel since June 2023, and during this recent visit I found a different country from the one I had known. Although I have worked abroad for many years, Israel is where I was born and raised. It is the place where my parents lived and are buried; it is where my son has established his own family and most of my oldest and best friends live. Knowing the country from the inside and having followed events even more closely than usual since 7 October, I was not entirely surprised by what I encountered on my return, but it was still profoundly disturbing.

In deliberating these issues, I cannot but draw on my personal and professional background. I served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for four years, a term that included the 1973 Yom Kippur War and postings in the West Bank, northern Sinai and Gaza, ending my service as an infantry company commander. During my time in Gaza, I saw first-hand the poverty and hopelessness of Palestinian refugees eking out a living in decrepit neighbourhoods. Most vividly, I remember patrolling the shadeless, silent streets of the Egyptian town of El Arish – which was then occupied by Israel – pierced by the gazes of the fearful, resentful population observing us from their shuttered windows. For the first time, I understood what it meant to occupy another people.

Military service is mandatory for Jewish Israelis when they turn 18 – though there are a few exceptions – but afterwards, you can still be called upon to serve again in the IDF, for training or operational duties, or in case of emergencies such as a war. When I was called up in 1976, I was an undergraduate studying at Tel Aviv University. During that first deployment as a reserve officer, I was severely wounded in a training accident, along with a score of my soldiers. The IDF covered up the circumstances of this event, which was caused by the negligence of the training base commander. I spent most of that first semester in hospital, but returned to my studies, graduating in 1979 with a speciality in history.

These personal experiences made me all the more interested in a question that had long preoccupied me: what motivates soldiers to fight? In the decades after the second world war, many American sociologists argued that soldiers fight first and foremost for each other, rather than for some bigger ideological goal. But that didn't quite fit with what I'd experienced as a soldier: we believed that we were in it for a larger cause. By the time I had completed my undergraduate degree, I had also begun to ask whether, in the name of that cause, soldiers could be made to act in ways they would otherwise find reprehensible.

Taking the extreme case, I wrote my Oxford PhD thesis, later published as a book, on the Nazi indoctrination of the German army and the crimes it perpetrated on the eastern front in the second world war. What I found ran counter to how Germans in the 1980s understood their past. They preferred to think that the army had fought a "decent" war, even as the Gestapo and the SS perpetrated genocide "behind its back". It took Germans many more years to realise just how complicit their own fathers and grandfathers had been in the Holocaust and the mass murder of many other groups in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

When the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, broke out in late 1987 I was teaching at Tel Aviv University. I was appalled by the instruction of Yitzhak Rabin, then minister of defence, to the IDF to "break the arms and legs" of Palestinian youths who were throwing rocks at heavily armed troops. I wrote a letter to him warning that, based on my research into the indoctrination of the armed forces of Nazi Germany, I feared that under his leadership the IDF was heading down a similarly slippery path.

As my research had shown, even before their conscription, young German men had internalised core elements of Nazi ideology, especially the view that the subhuman Slav masses, led by insidious Bolshevik Jews, were threatening Germany and the rest of the civilised world with destruction, and that therefore Germany had the right and duty to create for itself a "living space" in the east and to decimate or enslave that region's population. This worldview was then further inculcated into the troops, so that by the time they marched into the Soviet Union they perceived their enemies through that prism. The fierce resistance put up by the Red Army only confirmed the need to utterly destroy Soviet soldiers and civilians alike, and most especially the Jews, who were seen as the main instigators of Bolshevism. The more destruction they wrought, the more fearful German troops became of the revenge they could expect if their enemies prevailed. The result was the killing of up to 30 million Soviet soldiers and citizens.

To my astonishment, a few days after writing to him, I received a one-line response from Rabin, chiding me for daring to compare the IDF to the German military. This gave me the opportunity to write him a more detailed letter, explaining my research and my anxiety about using the IDF as a tool of oppression against unarmed occupied civilians. Rabin responded again, with the same statement: "How dare you compare the IDF to the Wehrmacht." But in retrospect, I believe this exchange revealed something about his subsequent intellectual journey. For as we know from his later engagement in the Oslo peace process, however flawed, he did eventually recognise that in the long run Israel could not sustain the military, political and moral price of the occupation.

Since 1989, I have been teaching in the United States. I have written profusely on war, genocide, nazism, antisemitism and the Holocaust, seeking to understand the links between the industrial killing of soldiers in the first world war and the extermination of civilian populations by Hitler's regime.

In the months since 7 October, what I have learned over the course of my life and my career has become more painfully relevant than ever before. Like many others, I have found these last months emotionally and intellectually challenging. Like many others, members of my own and of my friends' families have also been directly affected by the violence. There is no dearth of grief wherever you turn.

The Hamas attack on 7 October came as a tremendous shock to Israeli society, one from which it has not begun to recover. It was the first time Israel has lost control of part of its territory for an extended period of time, with the IDF unable to prevent the massacre of more than 1,200 people – many killed in the cruellest ways imaginable – and the taking of well over 200 hostages, including scores of children. The sense of abandonment by the state and of ongoing insecurity is profound.

Will Israel ever be able to reimagine itself as its founders had envisioned it – as a nation based on freedom and peace?

Today, across vast swaths of the Israeli public, including those who oppose the government, two sentiments reign supreme.

The first is a combination of rage and fear, a desire to re-establish security at any cost and a complete distrust of political solutions, negotiations and reconciliation. The military theorist Carl von Clausewitz noted that war was the extension of politics by other means, and warned that without a defined political objective it would lead to limitless destruction. The sentiment that now prevails in Israel similarly threatens to make war into its own end. In this view, politics is an obstacle to achieving goals rather than a means to limit destruction. This is a view that can only ultimately lead to self-annihilation.

The second reigning sentiment – or rather lack of sentiment – is the flipside of the first. It is the utter inability of Israeli society today to feel any empathy for the population of Gaza. The majority, it seems, do not even want to know what is happening in Gaza, and this desire is reflected in TV coverage. Israeli television news these days usually begins with reports on the funerals of soldiers, invariably described as heroes, followed by estimates of how many Hamas fighters were "liquidated". References to Palestinian civilian deaths are rare and normally presented as part of enemy propaganda or as a cause for unwelcome international pressure. In the face of so much death, this deafening silence now seems like its own form of vengefulness.

Meeting my friends in Israel this time, I frequently felt that they were afraid that I might disrupt their grief, and that living out of the country I could not grasp their pain, anxiety, bewilderment and helplessness. Any suggestion that living in the country had numbed them to the pain of others – the pain that, after all, was being inflicted in their name – only produced a wall of silence, a retreat into themselves, or a quick change of subject. The impression that I got was consistent: we have no room in our hearts, we have no room in our thoughts, we do not want to speak about or to be shown what our own soldiers are doing right now in Gaza. We must focus on ourselves, on our trauma, fear and anger.

This was a pervasive sentiment among many left-leaning, liberal friends and acquaintances I spoke with in Israel. It was quite different from what rightwing politicians and media figures have been saying since 7 October. Many of my friends recognise the injustice of the occupation. But at this moment, under these circumstances, this is not what they are focused on. Instead, they feel that in the struggle between justice and existence, existence must win out, and in the struggle between one just cause and another – that of the Israelis and that of the Palestinians – it is our own cause that must be triumphant, no matter the price. To those who doubt this stark choice, the Holocaust is presented as the alternative, however irrelevant it is to the current moment.

This feeling did not appear suddenly on 7 October. Its roots are much deeper.

On 30 April 1956, Moshe Dayan, then IDF chief of staff, gave a short speech that would become one of the most famous in Israel's history. He was addressing mourners at the funeral of Ro'i Rothberg, a young security officer of the newly founded Nahal Oz kibbutz, which was established by the IDF in 1951 and became a civilian community two years later. The kibbutz was located just a few hundred metres from the border with the Gaza Strip, facing the Palestinian neighbourhood of Shuja'iyya.

Rothberg had been killed the day before, and his body was dragged across the border and mutilated, before being returned to Israeli hands with the help of the United Nations. Dayan's speech has become an iconic statement, used both by the political right and left to this day:

"Yesterday morning Ro'i was murdered. Dazzled by the calm of the morning, he did not see those waiting in ambush for him at the edge of the furrow. Let us not



cast accusations at the murderers today. Why should we blame them for their burning hatred for us? For eight years they have been dwelling in Gaza's refugee camps, as before their eyes we have transformed the land and the villages in which they and their forefathers had dwelled into our own property.

We should not seek Roi's blood from the Arabs in Gaza but from ourselves. How have we shut our eyes and not faced up forthrightly to our fate, not faced up to our generation's mission in all its cruelty? Have we forgotten that this group of lads, who dwell in Nahal Oz, is carrying on its shoulders the heavy gates of Gaza, on whose other side crowd hundreds of thousands of eyes and hands praying for our moment of weakness, so that they can tear us apart - have we forgotten that?...

We are the generation of settlement; without a steel helmet and the muzzle of the cannon we will not be able to plant a tree and build a home. Our children will not have a life if we do not dig shelters, and without barbed wire and machine guns we will not be able to pave roads and dig water wells. Millions of Jews who were exterminated because they had no land are looking at us from the ashes of Israeli history and ordering us to settle and resurrect a land for our people. But beyond the border's furrow an ocean of hatred and an urge for vengeance rises, waiting for the moment that calm will blunt our readiness, for the day that we heed the ambassadors of conspiring hypocrisy, who call upon us to put down our arms ...

Let us not flinch from seeing the loathing that accompanies and fills the lives of hundreds of thousands of Arabs who dwell around us and await the moment they can reach for our blood. Let us not avert our eyes lest our hands grow weak. This is the destiny of our generation. This is the choice of our lives - to be ready and armed and strong and tough. For if the sword falls from our fist, our lives will be cut down."

The following day, Dayan recorded his speech for Israeli radio. But something was missing. Gone was the

They had developed a way of thinking that I observed many years ago when studying German soldiers in the second world war

Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip in January

IDF

reference to the refugees watching the Jews cultivate the lands from which they had been evicted, who should not be blamed for hating their dispossessors. Although he had uttered these lines at the funeral and written them subsequently, Dayan chose to omit them from the recorded version. He, too, had known this land before 1948. He recalled the Palestinian villages and towns that were destroyed to make room for Jewish settlers. He clearly understood the rage of the refugees across the fence. But he also firmly believed in both the right and the urgent need for Jewish settlement and statehood. In the struggle between addressing injustice and taking over the land, he chose his side, knowing that it doomed his people to forever rely on the gun. Dayan also knew well what the Israeli public could accept. It was because of his ambivalence about where guilt and responsibility for injustice and violence lay, and his deterministic, tragic view of history, that the two versions of his speech ended up appealing to vastly different political orientations.

Decades later, after many more wars and rivers of blood, Dayan titled his last book Shall the Sword Devour Forever? Published in 1981, the book detailed his role in reaching a peace agreement with Egypt two years earlier. He had finally learned the truth of the second part of the biblical verse from which he took the book's title: "Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?"

On 8 October 2023, President Isaac Herzog addressed the Israeli public, citing the last line of Dayan's speech: "This is the destiny of our generation. This is the choice of our lives - to be ready and armed and strong and tough. For if the sword falls from our fist, our lives will be cut down." The previous day, 67 years after Ro'i's death, Hamas militants had murdered 15 residents of the Nahal Oz kibbutz and taken eight hostages. Since Israel's retaliatory invasion of Gaza, the Palestinian neighbourhood of Shuja'iyya facing the kibbutz, where 100,000 people had been living, has been emptied of its population and turned into one vast pile of rubble.

On my visit to Israel this summer, I hoped to make sense of what had happened in the country since the war began. The aborted lecture in BGU was not on the top of my agenda. But once I arrived at the lecture hall on that mid-June day, I quickly understood that this explosive situation could also provide some clues to understanding the mentality of a younger generation of students and soldiers.

After we sat down and began to talk, it became clear to me that the students wanted to be heard, and that no one, perhaps even their own professors and university administrators, was interested in listening. My presence, and their vague knowledge of my criticism of the war, triggered in them a need to explain to me, but perhaps also to themselves, what they had been engaged in as soldiers and as citizens.

One young woman, recently returned from long military service in Gaza, leapt on the stage and spoke forcefully about the friends she had lost, the evil nature of Hamas, and the fact that she and her comrades were sacrificing themselves to ensure the country's future safety. Deeply distraught, she began crying halfway through her speech and stepped down. A young man, collected and articulate, rejected my suggestion that criticism of Israeli policies was not necessarily motivated by antisemitism. He then launched on a brief survey of the history of Zionism as a response to antisemitism and as a political path that no gentiles had a right to deny. While they were upset by my views and agitated by their own recent experiences in Gaza, the opinions expressed by the students were in no way exceptional. They reflected much greater swaths of public opinion in Israel.

Knowing that I had previously warned of genocide, the students were especially keen to show me that they were humane, that they were not murderers. They had no doubt that the IDF was, in fact, the most moral army in the world. But they were also convinced that any damage done to the people and buildings in Gaza was totally justified, that it was all the fault of Hamas using them as human shields.

They showed me photos on their phones to prove that they had behaved admirably toward children, denied that there was any hunger in Gaza, insisted that the systematic destruction of schools, universities, hospitals, public buildings, residences and infrastructure was necessary and justifiable. They viewed any criticism of Israeli policies by other countries and the United Nations as simply antisemitic.

Unlike the majority of Israelis, these young people had seen the destruction of Gaza with their own eyes. It seemed to me that they had not only internalised a particular view that has become commonplace in Israel - namely, that the destruction of Gaza as such was a legitimate response to 7 October - but had also developed a way of thinking that I had observed many years ago when studying the conduct, worldview and self-perception of German army soldiers in the second world war. Having internalised certain views of the enemy - the Bolsheviks as *Untermenschen*; Hamas as human animals - and of the wider population as less than human and undeserving of rights, soldiers observing or perpetrating atrocities tend to ascribe them not to their own military, or to themselves, but to the enemy.



Thousands of children were killed? It's the enemy's fault. Our own children were killed? That is certainly the enemy's fault. If Hamas carry out a massacre in a kibbutz, they are Nazis. If we drop 2,000-pound bombs on refugee shelters and kill hundreds of civilians, it's Hamas's fault for hiding close to these shelters. After what they did to us, we have no choice but to root them out. After what we did to them, we can only imagine what they would do to us if we don't destroy them. We simply have no choice.

Two days after the Hamas attack, defence minister Yoav Gallant declared, "We are fighting human animals, and we must act accordingly," later adding that Israel would "break apart one neighbourhood after another in Gaza". Former prime minister Naftali Bennett confirmed: "We are fighting Nazis." Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu exhorted Israelis to "remember what Amalek has done to you", alluding to the biblical call to exterminate Amalek's "men and women, children and infants". In a radio interview, he said about Hamas: "I don't call them human animals because that would be insulting to animals." Deputy Knesset speaker Nissim Vaturi wrote on X that Israel's goal should be "erasing the Gaza Strip from the face of the Earth". On Israeli TV he stated, "There are no uninvolved people ... we must go in there and kill, kill, kill. We must kill them before they kill us." Finance minister Bezalel Smotrich stressed in a speech, "The work must be completed ... Total destruction. 'Blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.'" Avi Dichter, agriculture minister and former head of the Shin Bet intelligence service, spoke about "rolling out the Gaza Nakba". One Israeli 95-year-old military veteran, whose motivational speech to IDF troops preparing for the invasion of Gaza exhorted them to "wipe out their memory, their families, mothers and children", was given a certificate of honour by Israeli president Herzog for "providing a wonderful example to generations of soldiers". No wonder that there have been innumerable social media posts by IDF troops in Gaza calling to "kill the Arabs", "burn their mothers" and "flatten" Gaza. There has been no known disciplinary action by their commanders.

This is the logic of endless violence, a logic that allows one to destroy entire populations and to feel totally justified in doing so. It is a logic of victimhood – we must kill them before they kill us, as they did before – and nothing empowers violence more than a righteous sense of victimhood. *Look at what happened to us in 1918*, German soldiers said in 1942, recalling the propagandistic "stab-in-the-back" myth, which attributed Germany's catastrophic defeat in the first world war to Jewish and communist treason. *Look at what happened to us in the Holocaust, when we trusted that others would come to our rescue,* IDF troops say in 2024, thereby giving themselves licence for indiscriminate destruction based on a false analogy between Hamas and the Nazis. The young men and women I spoke with that day were filled with rage, not so much against me – they calmed down a bit when I mentioned my own military service – but because, I think, they felt betrayed by everyone around them.

In an interview, Netanyahu said about Hamas: 'I don't call them human animals because that would be insulting to animals'

The students were frightening and frightened at the same time, and their fear made them all the more aggressive. This level of menace, as well as a degree of overlap in opinion, seemed to have generated fear and obsequiousness in their superiors, professors and administrators, who demonstrated great reluctance to discipline them in any way. At the same time, a host of media pundits and politicians have been cheering on these angels of destruction, calling them heroes just a moment before putting them in the ground and turning their backs on their grief-stricken families. The fallen soldiers died for a good cause, the families are told. But no one takes the time to articulate what that cause actually is beyond sheer survival through ever more violence. And so, I also felt sorry for these students, who were so unaware of how they had been manipulated. But I left that meeting filled with trepidation and foreboding.

As I headed back to the United States at the end of June, I contemplated my experiences over those two messy and troubling weeks. This time, for the first time, I had been apprehensive about going to Israel, and why part of me was glad to leave. The country had changed in ways visible and subtle, ways that might have raised a barrier between me, as an observer from the outside, and those who have remained an organic part of it.

But another part of my apprehension had to do with the fact that my view of what was happening in Gaza had shifted. On 10 November 2023, I wrote in the New York Times: "As a historian of genocide, I believe that there is no proof that genocide is now taking place in Gaza, although it is very likely that war crimes, and even crimes against humanity, are happening. [...] We know from history that it is crucial to warn of the potential for genocide before it occurs, rather than belatedly condemn it after it has taken place. I think we still have that time."

I no longer believe that. By the time I travelled to Israel, I had become convinced that at least since the attack by the IDF on Rafah on 6 May 2024, it was no longer possible to deny that Israel was engaged in systematic war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocidal actions. It was not just that this attack against the last concentration of Gazans – most of them displaced already several times by the IDF, which now once again pushed them to a so-called safe zone – demonstrated a total disregard of any humanitarian standards. It also clearly indicated that the ultimate goal of this entire undertaking from the very beginning had been to make the entire Gaza Strip uninhabitable, and to debilitate its population to such a degree that it would either die out or seek all possible options to flee the territory. In other words, the rhetoric spouted by Israeli leaders since 7 October was now being translated into reality – namely, as the 1948 UN Genocide Convention puts it, that Israel was acting "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part", the Palestinian population in Gaza, "as such, by killing, causing serious harm, or inflicting conditions of life meant to bring about the group's destruction".

Since I returned from Israel, I have been trying to place my experiences there into a larger context. The reality on the ground is so devastating, and the future appears so bleak, that I have allowed myself to indulge in some counter-factual history and to entertain some hopeful speculations about a different future. I ask myself, what would have happened had the newly created state of Israel fulfilled its commitment to enact a constitution based on its Declaration of Independence? That same declaration which stated that Israel "will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

What effect would such a constitution have had on the nature of the state? How would it have tempered the transformation of Zionism from an ideology that sought to liberate the Jews from the degradation of exile and discrimination and to put them on equal standing with the other nations of the world, to a state ideology of ethnonationalism, oppression of others, expansionism and apartheid? During the few hopeful years of the Oslo peace process, people in Israel began speaking of making it into a "state of all its citizens", Jews and Palestinians alike. The assassination of prime minister Rabin in 1995 put an end to that dream. Will it ever be possible for Israel to discard the violent, exclusionary, militant and increasingly racist aspects of its vision as it is embraced there now by so many of its Jewish citizens? Will it ever be able to reimagine itself as its founders had so eloquently envisioned it – as a nation based on freedom, justice and peace?

It is difficult to indulge in such fantasies at the moment. But perhaps precisely because of the nadir in which Israelis, and much more so Palestinians, now find themselves, and the trajectory of regional destruction their leaders have set them on, I pray that alternative voices will finally be raised. ●

Benjamin Netanyahu visits IDF troops in the Gaza Strip in July

SHUTTERSTOCK

✱ **Omer Bartov** *is the Samuel Pisar professor of holocaust and genocide studies at Brown University*

Established 1906

Country diary

Abbeydale, Sheffield

The shift in perspective had something to do with it. I'd been crouched low, scratching weeds from some paving, when what appeared to be a small Chinese dragon rippled into view. Startled, I rocked back on my heels. The dragon seemed covered with hairs, which felt alarming. Then I got my bearings and recognised it as the caterpillar of a tussock moth, the vapourer to be precise, a creature that if it weren't so common would be one more example of how nature can outperform the human imagination.

A little less than an inch and a half long, the vapourer's black body was fringed with hairs the colour of ripe wheat. These emerged from raised scarlet pads called tubercules, one either side and two on top of each segment, except for the four middle segments, which were crowned with dramatic tussocks more yellow in tone. Aware of my presence, the caterpillar flexed itself. Vapourers have defence glands on the tail and, when threatened, flex like this to empty noxious fluid on to their body – a defence against predators, but no threat to a human.

Vapourer moths are unusual in several ways. The males fly during the day, especially in the late afternoon, on the hunt for the female's pheromones drifting up from her hiding place, whereby this moth acquires its name. Female adults are flightless, remaining close to the remains of their pupae, where they spend the rest of their short lives incubating huge numbers of eggs. They are bigger than the males, and that extends to the caterpillar. Judging by the size of mine, it was female. Neither female nor male will eat after pupation; they last only as long as the energy they managed to consume as caterpillars.

Another quirk is their habit of dispersing after emerging from the egg – unusual behaviour for moth caterpillars. That doesn't mean they won't congregate. London was once famous for its vapourer infestations. As Yorkshire's climate warms, northern vapourers, formerly restricted by cooler temperatures, may in the future behave more like their nesh cousins in the south.
Ed Douglas

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Class snobbery, accents and impostor syndrome

I found Wendy Pratt's article insightful, but I fear it risks sending the wrong message (A moment that changed me: I quit my PhD – and left impostor syndrome behind, 7 August). I am a PhD student (albeit in a science subject) at a prestigious university with a large international community. I grew up just 13 miles away from my university, yet I know very few other PhD students and academics who speak like me. It can be really jarring to be the only person in a room with my accent and to hear my own accent in a different way as I speak. However, I feel that university communities benefit from more diversity, not less, and I refuse to let my voice bother me.

Impostor syndrome is very common in academia. Having it is not a sign that there is something wrong with you. An effective way to live with it is to realise that it affects a large percentage of your colleagues and peers too. I strongly disagree with the idea that PhD study isn't for people from working-class backgrounds.

That said, it is clear that Pratt's decision to drop out was a personal one, and partially motivated by financial circumstances. If it was more common for arts and humanities PhD students to receive a big enough stipend to support themselves financially (as those in science and engineering do), fewer people would need to drop out.
Gillian Smith
Edinburgh

● I am from a different generation, but I can sympathise with Wendy Pratt's university quandaries. I was brought up in a Yorkshire working-class home, though one where education was valued. We were taught at junior school that nothing was beyond us if we worked hard, and also that the best in all forms of culture – in music, art, and literature – was all there for us to grasp, whatever our social class.

I was one of the fortunate ones who got to grammar school, though I was shocked to find that only about 5% of my fellow pupils were from a similar background to mine. Then, 52 years ago, I went "up" to Oxford, and fitted in pretty well, despite hanging on to my northern vowels.

I suppose I was glad to be somehow validated by my degrees, and have been fortunate to serve in a profession and calling that arguably puts one beyond class. Also, for most of my life I've been married to a person who shares many of my ideas about Christianity and socialism.

I'm not sure whether there is an authentic working-class culture, as most of it has been subsumed by a confected, meretricious popular culture that fills people's lives without nourishing them. But beyond the ignorant haters and racists, manipulated by the rightwing press and even darker forces, most working people have an innate decency, which should be respected. I hope that the election of a sane government will herald a reversal in the widening gap between rich and poor, and lead to a more cohesive society, in which everyone's life can be enriched.
Rev Geoffrey White
Sheffield

● One of the perceived symptoms of Wendy Pratt's impostor syndrome – the recoil from changing her accent – is, in my view, unwarranted, since it's actually a normal occurrence. Parents use it all the time with their babies and young children.

Among adults, "style-shifting" may be conscious or subconscious, and is simply one way some of us try to use to communicate and blend more harmoniously with whatever majority tribe we're in at the moment. Once rationalised and reframed along these lines (as opposed to considering it false or unauthentic), it may help to ameliorate those negative thoughts.
Dr Chris Haughton
Preesall, Lancashire

Eating insects is not going to save the planet

Re your article on eating crickets to save the world ('It tastes like beef or lamb', 7 August), it is true that crickets have a lower environmental impact than conventional meat. However, nearly all foods have a lower environmental impact than conventional meat. The trick is not finding something more environmentally friendly than meat, but rather finding something consumers will eat instead of meat.

Most consumers do not want to eat farmed insects, and when they are sold as food, they often come in the form of products like baked goods, pasta or flour, which compete not with meat but with foods possessing comparatively low environmental impacts. A Rabobank report described the share of farmed insects consumed by humans as "negligible".

Most farmed insects are instead fed to other animals. Recent peer-reviewed research, which I co-authored and which is published in the journal Sustainable Production and Consumption, shows that companies rearing insects at scale generally rely on materials that could be fed directly to other animals or used by other sectors, and, due to practical challenges, this is not likely to change in the future. Instead of saving the world, insect farming mostly adds an inefficient and expensive layer to the food system we already have.

Rather than forcing insects on a wary public, resources would be better devoted to alternative proteins such as plant-based or cultivated meats that have the potential to transform our food system while avoiding the consumer acceptance and animal welfare concerns mentioned in the article.
Dustin Crummett
Executive director, the Insect Institute

How we learned to embrace our curly frizz

I too hated my wavy/frizzy hair for decades like Diana Spechler (I spent decades straightening my 'Jewish hair' – until I realised I was hiding my true self, theguardian.com, 5 August). Long, straight hair was fashionable in my youth in the 1960s, so, like Spechler, I pulled, pushed, ironed and generally tortured my hair into straightness.

Unlike hers, straightness was when mine was shiny. But a drop of rain or a damp atmosphere would ruin it – the fringe frizzed up, waves and squiggles appeared, and so I hated rain. Then came Covid and hairdresser-lessness. And I thought, sod it, I've fought my curls for 60 years, now let them do their own thing. And everybody told me they loved my curly hair!

Now, another, more expensive decision is here: grey is encroaching. Not beautifully, but a flat, boring grey. I don't think I can face the faff.
Kate Macve
East Budleigh, Devon

● I used to straighten my hair all the time. I would go to the beauty shop, which was filled with Jewish women and women of colour, and also iron it myself and use many other horrible ways to get the frizz out. As I got older, I changed my hairstyle every few years – going from letting it grow (still straightening it) to letting it frizz naturally to shaving it off and back again in a circle of styles.

The funny thing is that since I have turned grey, people, including young people, will stop me and tell me how great my hair is. So frizzy, long, grey hair seems to be what's in these days – which is funny to me, because I never followed trends.
Jill Enfield
Newburgh, New York, US

Corrections and clarifications

● The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments advises only former ministers and senior civil servants on roles they wish to take up after leaving government, not all former MPs (Tory MPs set up companies as defeat loomed, 30 July, p33).

● An article about Tommy Robinson (What can authorities do about activist's alleged online incitement?, 6 August, p10) said he relied on an international network of wealthy "bankers" for funding; this should have said backers.

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com or The readers' editor, **Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU.** You can also leave a voicemail on **020 3353 4736**

Will Labour end all taxpayer bailouts?

You report (10 August) that Bridget Phillipson has stated that "universities in England should not expect a government bailout, arguing they are autonomous institutions that should rely on their own resources". Will this hardline attitude be applied to the water, rail and banking industries?
Pete Lavender
Woodthorpe, Nottinghamshire

● Speaking of the union flag, John Mathews describes the lyrics of a song as longing "for a day when all English people … can stand under their flag proudly" (7 August). But the union flag is the flag of the UK, not England. If we are going to talk about flags, wouldn't it be advisable to agree on what they stand for? Or let's perhaps just get rid of them all?
Jim Grozier
Brighton, East Sussex

● Of the 30 mugshots with your report on rioters (10 August), only one was of a woman. Do I need to say more about who is responsible for aggression at all levels? Let's hope Kamala Harris, as a woman, can dial it down internationally – with Keir Starmer's support.
Catherine Cross
Lindfield, West Sussex

● My mother used to regard pylons (Letters, 12 August) as "friendly giants striding across the 1960s landscape taking electricity to everyone" – until a new family car had a radio and her favourite listening was "interfered with".
Mike Calvert
Chorley, Lancashire

● An article on the group Death Cab for Cutie (Saturday magazine, 10 August), but no thank-yous to the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band?
Peter Brooker
West Wickham, London



Sir Ernest Hall

Entrepreneur admired for transforming Dean Clough mills in Halifax into a cultural 'utopia'

Sir Ernest Hall, who has died aged 94, led a remarkable renaissance in a struggling northern town, transforming the world's largest carpet factory into a beacon of art and enterprise working together, with striking benefits to both. He gradually converted half a mile of derelict Victorian buildings in Halifax into what he called a practical utopia, where makers of polythene bags rubbed shoulders with staff from the Henry Moore Foundation.

Dean Clough mills was vast enough, but the "Hall effect" rippled out to other once glorious behemoths including Salts Mill in Saltaire near Bradford, where his former business partner, Jonathan Silver, worked similar magic. Each example showed the mix of commercial nous and artistic sensitivity that marked Hall's own personality; he played as a concert pianist while pulling off lucrative textile and property deals.

His start in life could hardly have been less promising. He was born in central Bolton to two cotton mill workers, Mary (nee Mann) and Ernest Hall, at the start of the 1930s recession that brought his parents bouts of unemployment and faltering attempts to make a go of a bakery. His defining moment came at the age of eight when a visitor brought a gramophone to his school, St George's Infant and Junior, and played Sibelius's Valse Triste while telling the music's spellbinding story of ghostly guests at a grand ball. Nine years later, Hall was accepted by the Royal Manchester College of Music (RMCM), where he studied alongside the future leader of the Hallé Orchestra Martin Milner and, significantly, the outstanding young pianist and composer John Ogdon. Hall's later advice to his five children - never to compare themselves to apparently more successful contemporaries - owed something to his discouragement at the time. Unable to match Ogdon, he abandoned hope of becoming a professional musician.

Hall at Dean Clough mills in Halifax, 1994. He managed to mix commercial nous with artistic sensitivity
DENIS THORPE/ THE GUARDIAN

He left the college in 1951 for national service and then office work across the Pennines, where he took with unexpected verve to life in Mountain mills at Queensbury above Bradford, makers of high-quality worsted woollen suiting, a product with important links to the international world of fashion. When his rise within the firm culminated in his leading a management buyout in 1961, youth was besieging the clothing market and Hall loved it. He had a lifelong collection of natty Savile Row suits and in his 80s shopped at Pollyanna in Barnsley for brands such as Comme des Garçons.

The mill's success brought him his first fortune, which was followed by a larger one from property development, especially after he recruited Tony Clegg and formed Mountleigh. Their canny deals included buying 800 houses at a bargain price in 1981 on a redundant part of the US Air Force base at Lakenheath in Suffolk. Two years later Hall left Mountleigh and invested £20m in Dean Clough, where the business world expected a conventional demolish-and-redevelop to follow.

> **His choice of book on Desert Island Discs was the complete works of William Blake**

Instead, in a gradual process lasting more than 30 years, the "practical utopia" took root, and still flourishes under the direction of Hall's eldest son, Jeremy, with more than 150 tenant companies employing 4,000 people. Its success gave a fillip to the classy restoration of the nearby 18th-century clothiers' Piece Hall market in Halifax and helped to bring Vivien Duffield and her national children's museum, Eureka!, to the town.

Hall was conscious of the vast philanthropy of his wealthy predecessors, the Crossley family who built Dean Clough, and the way that the Mackintoshes (toffee makers of Quality Street and Rolo) had encouraged their Halifax workers to be inventive and suggest improvements. His choice of book on Desert Island Discs was the complete works of William Blake, who coined the concept of a new Jerusalem rising amid the mills.

He was knighted for services to the arts in 1983 and won the Albert Medal of the Royal Society of Arts the following year, serving as chair of Yorkshire Arts and Northern Ballet, and on the Arts Council. He was awarded 12 honorary doctorates and from 1996 to 2004 was chancellor of the University of Huddersfield, the home of superfine worsted cloth. But his energies and trademark enthusiasm now turned back to music and his unrealised plan to make it his principal work.

He recorded all Béla Bartók's works at the age of 65, and all Frédéric Chopin's piano pieces five years later, and played Ferruccio Busoni's Piano Concerto with the Sheffield Symphony Orchestra in 2003. He composed two piano sonatas and encouraged artistic and musical interests in his children, who were sent to school at Dartington in Devon.

Hall met his first wife, June Annable, at the RMCM and they married in 1951 and had two sons, Jeremy and Tom, and two daughters, Virginia and Vivian. After the couple divorced, he married Sarah Welby in 1975 and they had a son, Leopold. On full retirement from Dean Clough in 2007, Hall moved to Lanzarote and built a small concert hall next to his home, before returning to the UK in 2021.

He is survived by Sarah, his children and 14 grandchildren.
Martin Wainwright

Ernest Hall, musician and entrepreneur, born 19 March 1930; died 3 August 2024

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Peter Charlesworth

Streetwise entertainment agent who worked with stars such as Joan Collins and Barbara Windsor

The leading entertainment agent and producer Peter Charlesworth, who has died aged 93, was both an aide to, and confidant of, some of the biggest names in British show business since the second world war: Shirley Bassey, Barbara Windsor, Joan Collins, Benny Hill and Frankie Howerd, to name but a few.

With an innate twinkle about him and a pronounced south London accent that he tried to disguise (but never managed to), Charlesworth belonged to that lost breed of gentlemen agents who all seemed somehow related to David Niven, full of charm and savoir faire, always steadying rocks for their clients.

But unlike, say, others in the same line such as Laurie Evans, James Sharkey or Julian Belfrage, whose backgrounds were "posh" theatrical, Charlesworth was a streetwise operator from a lowly background who benefited from developing a lively, creative rapport with such Londoners as Max Bygraves and Anthony Newley.

His passport to their world was through his skill at what used to be known in the music business as a "record plugger" and his love of jazz, which led to an early association with the drummer, producer and agent Jock Jacobsen at the start of the 1960s.

By the end of that decade, he was shepherding Judy Garland through her final, chaotic appearances in London at the Talk of the Town. In Rupert Goold's fine 2019 film Judy, starring Renée Zellweger, his role was incorporated into the character of Garland's friend and amanuensis, Rosalyn Wilder, played by Jessie Buckley.

Garland loved to eat fish and chips when in London and Charlesworth often accompanied her, and her two children, Liza Minnelli and Lorna Luft, to a chippie in Holland Park, where they ate from the newspaper wrapping.

Two years earlier he had been more directly portrayed by the actor Alex Macqueen in the BBC TV film Babs, based on Windsor's autobiography; Macqueen got Charlesworth's suavity, voice and baldness down to a T, while Babs appeared as herself, backed up by Samantha Spiro, and Zoë Wanamaker as Joan Littlewood.

Windsor was fond of Charlesworth and asked him to accompany her to Broadway for a premiere there in the late 1960s. She was then married to the nightclub owner Ronnie Knight, who promised to break Charlesworth's legs if Babs went off the rails in the US. She did in fact have a short fling with Warren Beatty, but kept schtum – nobody ever knew, and Charlesworth avoided the punishment.

He was born in south-west London, the only child of Margaret (nee Jupp) and Thomas Charlesworth, an architectural blacksmith at T Crowther & Sons, an architectural antiques business on the Fulham Road. Peter attended St Mark's secondary school, just a few blocks away from the family home in Inglethorpe Street, near Fulham FC's ground.

He left school aged 15 and was employed first as a page boy at Claridge's and then as a waiter in one of the theatrical haunts of the day – Verrey's in Regent Street, or Isow's in Berwick market, it is not clear which. He made contacts there that led to his employment as a record plugger and junior partner with Jacobsen. When Jacobsen died, Charlesworth launched his own company, Peter Charlesworth Ltd, in 1979 in South Kensington, and bought a house in Notting Hill. Many of the big names followed him, but not Bygraves, who said that he "looked too much like a second-hand car salesman".

Charlesworth had many girlfriends, only one of whom, Lynne Frederick, was a client; they dated at the peak of her early stardom and before her brief marriages to first Peter Sellers and then David Frost.

Early on, Charlesworth and Jacobsen had a spectacular West End flop when they brought over an all-American cast, including an unknown Elliott Gould, in Leonard Bernstein, Betty Comden and Adolph Green's On the Town in 1963. It closed at the Prince of Wales after just 63 performances. Charlesworth disliked Gould's performance, bemoaning his bad luck and big financial loss.

At the first night dinner, Gould asked Charlesworth if he would take on the London representation of his girlfriend, soon-to-be wife; Charlesworth grumpily turned him down flat. The name Barbra Streisand, then embarking on her breakthrough year in New York, meant nothing to him. But she was back on the same Prince of Wales stage in 1966, pregnant with her son Jason with Gould, in Funny Girl.

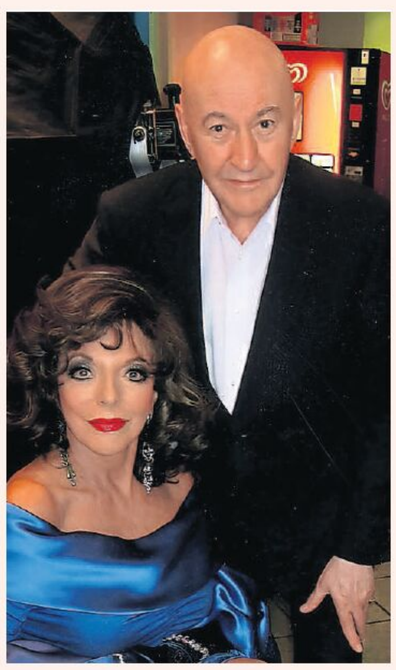
Charlesworth and Jacobsen had more success with an ebullient production of Lady Be Good by Guy Bolton and the Gershwin brothers at the old Saville theatre in 1968, starring Lionel Blair, Aimi MacDonald and Joe Baker.

His monumental list of clients included the entertainers Anita Harris and Avril Angers, singers Denis Lotis and Jess Conrad, the comedian Jimmy James, and the genteel drag act Hinge and Bracket.

Although no one he knew, according to his friend and publicity agent Peter Benda, ever met his parents, Charlesworth remained true to his father's vocation by occasionally taking a stall at the Battersea decorative antiques fair, where he was often to be seen comparing notes on antique guns of the Napoleonic era with the actor Michael Gambon, a fellow expert.

Michael Coveney

Peter Thomas Charlesworth, theatrical agent and producer, born 3 April 1931; died 8 July 2024





Charlesworth, below, with Collins, left, and Windsor. He started out as a 'record plugger', which gave him a passport into the world of show business

> **With an innate twinkle, he was full of savoir faire and charm, always steadying rocks for his clients**

Birthdays

Shoaib Akhtar, cricketer, 49; **Sheila Armstrong**, soprano, 82; **Martyn Brabbins**, former music director, English National Opera, 65; **Nick Dempsey**, Olympic windsurfer, 44; **David Feherty**, golfer, 66; **Kristalina Georgieva**, managing director, IMF, 71; **Paul Greengrass**, film director, 69; **Marie Helvin**, model and campaigner, 72; **Madhur Jaffrey**, cookery writer, actor and broadcaster, 91; **Susan Jameson**, actor, 83; **Stuart Maconie**, writer and broadcaster, 63; **James Morrison**, singer and songwriter, 40; **Joe Perry**, snooker player, 50; **Lady (Minouche) Shafik**, economist and former deputy governor, Bank of England, 62; **Feargal Sharkey**, singer and environmental campaigner, 66; **Alan Shearer**, footballer and commentator, 54; **Joe Simpson**, mountaineer and writer, 64; **Tomasz Starzewski**, fashion and interior designer, 63; **Phil Taylor**, darts player, 64; **Heidi Thomas**, playwright and screenwriter, 62; **Janet Yellen**, economist and US treasury secretary, 78.



Madhur Jaffrey, the cookery writer, actor and broadcaster, is 91 today. Her trailblazing An Invitation to Indian Cooking was published 51 years ago

Letter

Derek Birdsall

When the BBC launched the groundbreaking consumer programme Choice in 1962 it put its toe in the water carefully by highlighting the reports published in the magazines Which? and Shoppers' Guide, and cast Richard Dimbleby as the presenter.

In order to lighten the look, the producer Paul Bonner commissioned the independent young designers Derek Birdsall (obituary, 3 July) and George Daulby to create a sparklingly sharp and up-to-date style for the many necessary graphics. They did, with acclaimed success, but the brilliant Birdsall soon moved back to his true love, print design.

Edward Mirzoeff

Reread our obituaries of the snooker player Ray Reardon, the novelist Edna O'Brien, the folk singer Joe Egan and the artist Bill Viola
theguardian.com/obituaries

Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku
Easy

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

Medium

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

Codeword

F	L	E	C	K	■	F	O	R	E	L	E	G								
A	■	M	■	I	■	U	■	A	■	A	■	L								
S	Q	U	I	N	T	S	■	M	O	C	H	A								
T	■	■	■	G	■	S	■	M	■	■	■	Z								
E	X	C	E	P	T	■	S	E	N	S	E	I								
R	■	U	■	I	■	E	■	D	■	Q	■	E								
■	G	R	A	N	D	P	A	■	P	U	R	R								
T	■	I	■	■	■	O	■	■	■	I	■	S								
U	P	O	N	■	E	X	P	L	O	R	E	■								
R	■	U	■	A	■	Y	■	U	■	T	■	A								
N	O	S	I	L	Y	■	A	M	U	S	E	D								
O	■	■	■	K	■	J	■	B	■	■	■	A								
V	O	D	K	A	■	E	V	A	D	I	N	G								
E	■	E	■	L	■	E	■	G	■	T	■	E								
R	O	W	D	I	E	R	■	O	U	S	T	S								

Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 29,459

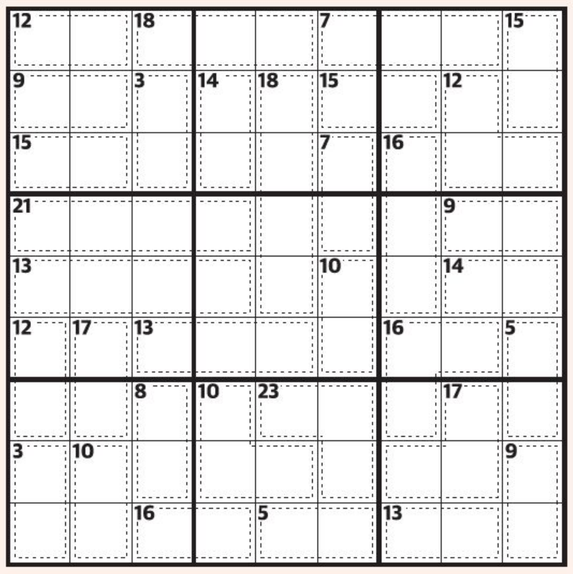
■	C	L	U	T	C	H	■	A	B	U	S	E	S	■						
■	A	■	M	■	O	■	F	■	L	■	T	■	T	■						
C	R	A	B	■	P	R	O	M	E	N	A	D	E	R						
■	P	■	E	■	I	■	R	■	W	■	T	■	W	■						
C	O	R	R	A	L	■	C	A	U	S	E	W	A	Y						
■	O	■	■	■	O	■	E	■	P	■	M	■	R	■						
P	L	A	T	I	T	U	D	E	■	W	E	N	D	■						
■	■	■	E	■	■	■	L	■	■	■	N	■	■	■						
■	M	I	L	L	■	T	A	X	R	E	T	U	R	N						
■	A	■	E	■	M	■	N	■	E	■	■	■	O	■						
D	R	O	P	D	E	A	D	■	S	C	R	U	B	S						
■	B	■	H	■	D	■	I	■	E	■	O	■	B	■						
B	L	O	O	D	D	O	N	O	R	■	L	E	E	K						
■	E	■	T	■	L	■	G	■	V	■	L	■	R	■						
■	S	H	O	V	E	L	■	J	E	R	S	E	Y	■						

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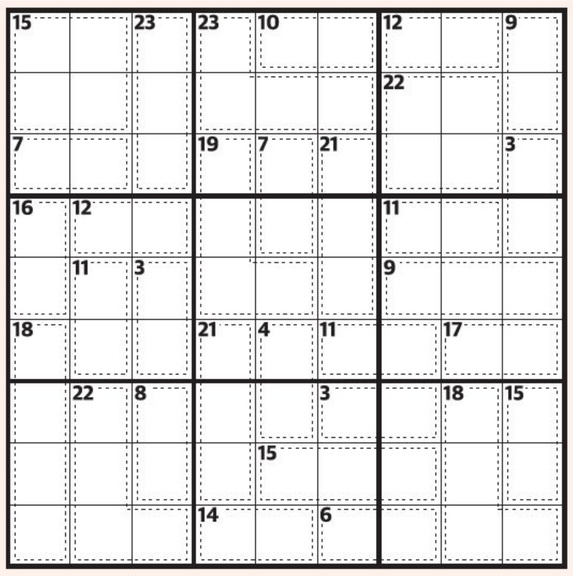
Killer sudoku

Easy

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.



Medium



Codeword

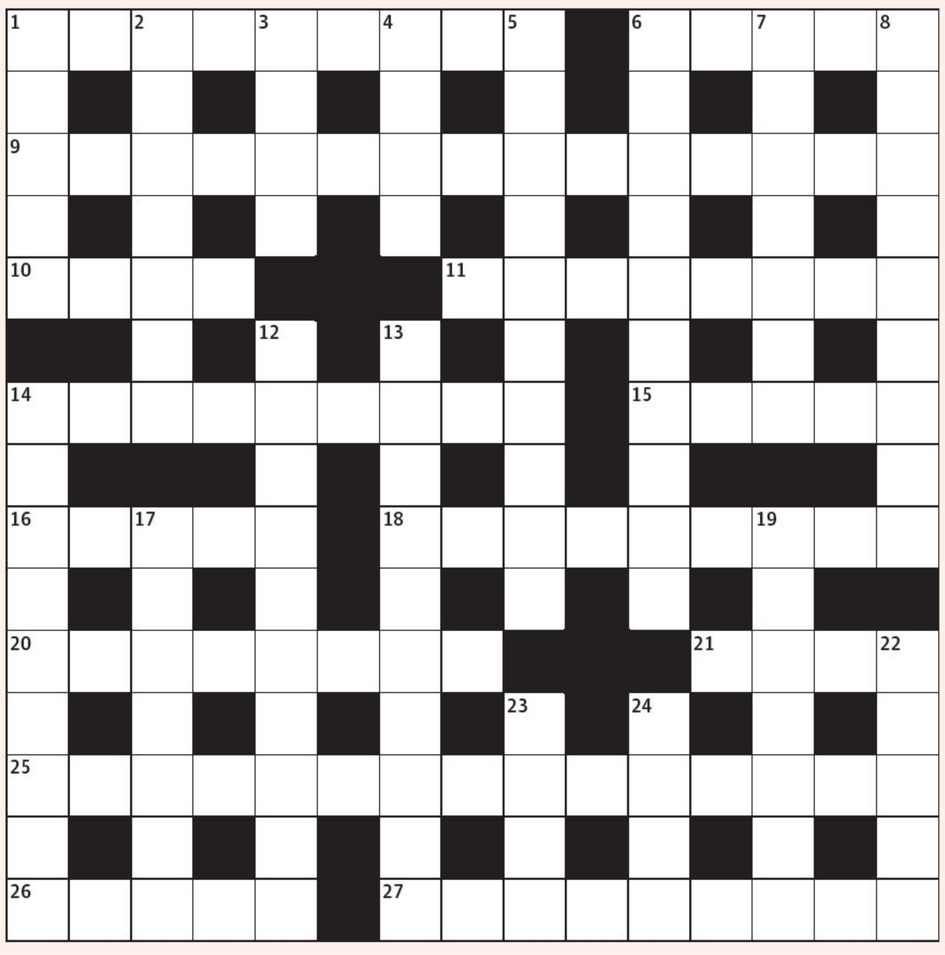
Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.

11	■	1	■	9	■	6	■	20	■	5	■	10
5	14	10	5	8	■	26	17	26	9	16	26	22
2	■	5	■	26	■	15	■	5	■	16	■	10
25	26	13	16	1	3	8 L	■	2	7	10	19	15 O
10	■	9	■	■	■	15	■	■	■	16	■	9
18	2	15	4	10	19	6	■	16	2	3	8	12
5	■	■	■	16	■	12	■	15	■	22	■	■
19	15	4	10	9	26	■	10	16	13	26	8	1
■	■	5	■	7	■	18	■	26	■	■	■	5
6	3	19	6	12	■	10	11	11	15	2	5	8
2	■	24	■	■	■	9	■	■	■	15	■	13
3	13	3	5	8	■	21	26	12	7	15	8	26
11	■	10	■	15	■	5	■	5	■	13	■	16
18	15	13	16	23	15	14	■	11	15	16	26	16
12	■	7	■	13	■	26	■	13	■	13	■	15

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N Ø P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 L	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 O	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Guardian cryptic crossword No 29,460 set by Paul



Across

1 First of garments confined to waste, put something with a jumper on top (4,5)
6 Shrink lowerer? (5)
9 See 26
10/3 Topping items in fare for broadcast (4,4)
11 Tirade I gathered filled with bitterness, primarily? (8)
14 'e called after blast, returning weapon (9)
15 Easy clue (5)
16 Suggest viewing Cervantes' vampire in the mirror? (5)
18 Lovely bearing a newspaper in mind (4,5)
20 Warwickshire town where plate left untouched by auditor? (8)
21 See 5 Down
25 Criminal evidence of no cooking! (11,4)
26/9 Move mountains, Everest one, undulant on moving (5,2,5,8)
27 Record of extra time after taking circuitous route? (9)

Down

1 Carthaginian related to wordplay? (5)
2 Try holding head up having embraced Satanism initially – force of evil? (7)
3 See 10 Across
4 Yours truly, Labour leader voiced concern for home buyers? (4)
5/21 Twitter in county referring to US politician – bloody cheat? (10,4)
6 Le Pen, a leader in France after source of French wine – and baguette? (6,4)
7/24 I went in with opener for Gloucestershire, man playing for the first XI? (7,4)
8 Marking joyous day, landlord on the left? (3-6)
12 African winds from the north-east coming into view (10)
13 Flier, bird is in cold sea shaking off one cold tail! (10)
14 Obtain bum cream and lotions originally for nursery (9)
17 Good antipodean soldier misses the last mine (7)
19 Reasonable Oscar discovered in market, removed (4,3)
22 Sage plant? (5)
23 Stone deepest of all, also in empty box (4)
24 See 7

Tuesday 13/08/24

G2



The Edinburgh fringe special!

10 of the funniest jokes

How Baby Reindeer changed standup

The awe and anxiety of one-to-one shows

Olga Koch on being funny and wealthy

Plus, Wet Mess gets wild!

The Guardian

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Zoe Williams



Can menopause be fun and sexy? Yes, says Miranda July

We went 1,000 years, or maybe 10,000, without anyone ever mentioning menopause, and then we started mentioning it all the time – which wasn't ideal, either. There was a little bit of overcorrection, a little bit of generalisation. There was the Davina McCall type of menopause, where your car keys were in the fridge while your awesome body transformed, ungovernably, into something even more awesome. Then there was the Jenny Eclair alternative-comedy menopause, where your rage could lift a wardrobe clean off the floor. There was the radical loss-of-confidence event, or – for my money, the most poetic – the locked-in syndrome, where you lost interest in the world at exactly the same time as it lost interest in you, an alignment as perfect and painful as the needle going directly into the nerve. But for a long time there didn't seem to be much room for the "no big deal, didn't really notice" menopause, which is now inauthentic and unfashionable.

The flaws in the new narrative are obvious. First, it hands down a template of feelings, which you either meet and are a proper woman, or you don't meet and have to pipe down until it passes (65?). Second, it creates a template for the social response to menopausal women: yes, treat them with infinite compassion, because of their hormones; but don't worry too much about what they are actually saying, because of their hormones.

Into this picture, painted in neon, with all the regular colours airbrushed out, has stepped Miranda July, with All Fours, a novel that has been called "the first great perimenopause novel". (Sidebar on the "perimenopause": it's very convenient; just using the word makes you sound like an instant expert. And it hugely elongates the number of years during which women don't need to be taken seriously. A right-thinking, compassionate person could reasonably assume any woman was either peri- or full-on menopausal for 20 years and therefore take anything she said with a pinch of salt. Whichever way you pinch it, that's *a lot of salt*.)

> The protagonist of her novel has a radical sexual awakening

Plainly, if you were in the "no big deal" camp, no part of you was waiting for the first great perimenopause novel, any more than you were waiting for the spectacle of chatshow hosts with sympathetic eyebrows to ask middle-aged women about their hot flushes – and yet, of course you're going to read it, because it's by Miranda July.

(Sidebar on July: I interviewed her for her last book, The First Bad Man, 10 years ago, at the Bristol literary festival. Just before we went on, she told me she was such a private person; she didn't even have a photo of her child on her phone, just their toy. I thought: "Well, this will be dry," and kicked off with a lowball question about her writing process. "When I started to write this book," she began, "I just masturbated all day. I couldn't concentrate, I couldn't get anything done. It was just orgasm, orgasm, orgasm. In the end, a friend said I had to sublimate, like athletes do." Anyway, not only for that reason, also because of that last book, I will never not read anything by July. If she wrote an Instagram post about her gut biome, I would read it.)

I don't want to spoil All Fours, as you should also read it, but, in a nutshell, the story of its protagonist's perimenopause is a radical sexual awakening; radical not just in its intensity, but in the fact that she goes from objectified to objectifier – falls in love with a guy, for the first time in her life, purely for the contours of his body. Some other time we can discuss what it says about sex, the sexes and the human condition, but pause now to mark a new template: the incredibly fun menopause. A new template, too, of social response to the fun menopause. Society, if it's paying attention, should be afraid, very afraid.

How plane rage provoked my fight-on-flight response

I was getting off a plane from Iceland the other week when I had an altercation. The woman in front of me was getting her stuff together and I reckoned I could get past her. Trust me, you could have got an ambulance through that space. I only did an "excuse me" whisper as a reflex. "No!" she said, at roughly the volume and same level of harshness that you would use for a dog that has just leapt into a pram and is about to maul a baby. "You. Can. Wait."

My rational brain could register that she was American and still had her sleeping pillow on and Reykjavík had probably been a stopover on a long-haul flight. So, maybe she hadn't slept very well. That rational brain would have said nothing. All my irrational brain could see, though, was a very small space in which I was trapped with a mortal foe, so I did what anyone in fear for their life would do. I muttered: "Well, that was a bit aggressive," and waited, my heart beating a tattoo, as if I were the last coward left in the trench.

Anyway, I was telling Mr Z about it, on a different plane, when he got into an altercation of his own. The guy on his other side, at roughly the volume you would use on a criminal who had escaped from prison and, still in his stripy pyjamas, was shoplifting, interrupted: "Stop leaning on me. Lean on your wife!" Then he said it again, a few more times. There probably was a space issue between those two seats and Mr Z definitely was not the cause of it. What I wanted to say was: "You can't interrupt a story about a plane fight with a new plane fight. Where do you think you are, in an episode of Seinfeld?" Instead, I said nothing, being in existential peril, what with the very small space and the mortal foe. They talk about the fight-or-flight cortisol response; fight-*on*-flight is a whole new level.



Pass notes



№ 4,732

Sex surrender

Age: Gen Z and millennials, mainly. Older generations, interestingly, are less likely to say they would.

OK, but can we go back to the beginning, so you can explain what this is all about? Sure. You know it's really hard to get on the property ladder these days …

Tell me about it. The average UK property price is £291,268. If you are unlucky enough to be in London, that will get you shared ownership of a park bench. Well, maybe that's an exaggeration, but some research suggests it can take someone living in London more than 37 years to save for a 10% deposit on a house in their area.

Some lenders are offering mortgages with just a 5% down payment, aren't they? True, but with the average property price in London at £536,052, that works out at more than £26,800. So, for many, getting on the property ladder remains a distant dream.

Desperate times … Call for desperate measures! Which is why more than a quarter of Britons say that, to get a deposit, they would give up …

Their phones? Netflix? No, it's not quite that serious. But they would give up sex.

Oh, and who is offering this no-sex-for-money deal? Well, in reality, no one. It is a hypothetical scenario from a survey by Bloom Stories.

Not a mortgage broker, then? No, it does audio erotica. And its survey of more than 2,000 adults found that gen Z was the age group most willing to forgo sex for a down payment. Older generations, it turned out, were more likely to value sex over financial incentives.

That's because they have already got their massive mansions, bought for £3,000 in the 1980s or whenever. They can have sex in whichever room they please. Have you tried doing it on half a park bench? Well, as it happens … but that's another story.

Hang on. If no one is having sex, there will be no future generations – the housing crisis would be over. Although it would also mean a crash in the property market. First of all, it is hypothetical, remember. Second, there are other ways of making babies these days. But also – and I should probably have mentioned this earlier – in the survey, you only had to give up sex for a year.

Only a year! In that case [does quick calculation], that's not many times at all. I'll take the deposit. Deal! Except there isn't one.

Do say: "Oi, boomers, a bit less grunting and moaning in there, please, some of us are trying to save."

Don't say: "It was a year ago! I can't remember where the key to the chastity belt is …"

COVER: MURDO MACLEOD/THE GUARDIAN

‘Once it goes public, it’s not yours any more’



‘It used to send me into a PTSD episode’ … Anna Akana

Has the fallout from Baby Reindeer affected how comedians are tackling trauma at the fringe? **Rachael Healy** meets three comics to find out

“If you’re not in an OK place, you’re just re-traumatising yourself,” says Anna Akana, who is performing her show, It Gets Darker, at the Edinburgh festival fringe this year. In it, she talks about her sister Kristina’s suicide, and how a stalker’s threats of violence drove Akana herself out of standup comedy.

Trauma-focused shows have always been a fixture at the festival. Countless plays and comedies have been moulded from it. Countless artists have felt the catharsis of channelling their darkest moments and the weight of reliving them every day.

Akana’s story has naturally been compared to Baby Reindeer, which began life at the fringe. Richard Gadd’s play, now a Netflix hit, dramatised his own experience of being stalked. But there has been serious fallout, with the woman at the centre of the story suing Netflix, prompting questions about the ethics of her exposure v Gadd’s right to tell his story.

Are writers and performers thinking more carefully about adapting their traumatic experiences into stage shows this year? James Barr is telling his story of an abusive ex-boyfriend in his new show Sorry I Hurt Your Son (Said My Ex to My Mum), which takes audiences on a journey that mirrors the tension and uncertainty of a toxic relationship. The Edinburgh-based comedian Eleanor Morton, meanwhile, subtly weaves experiences of sexual assault through her show, Haunted House, which draws on the city’s spooky reputation while looking at the darker side of the fringe. “Sex predators are a lot like ghosts,” she jokes. “If a woman encounters one, no one believes her.”

Here, but also beyond the arts, there are “perverse incentives” to share your trauma, says Darren McGarvey, the author of Poverty Safari and The Social Distance Between Us. He speaks from experience, having drawn on his own childhood trauma in his first book. But he didn’t anticipate the personal cost: “Once something goes public, it’s not yours any more and a portrayal of you then exists in everyone’s mind.”

This fringe, McGarvey has put on a couple of shows, Trauma Industrial Complex, exploring these incentives, as well as the rights and wellbeing of the storyteller and those entwined with their story, through conversations with academics, campaigners and performers, including Janey Godley. It’s part of a wider project, which includes a podcast and will culminate with a book. “One of the problems with lived experience discourse and culture is we’re dealing with people who could be vulnerable, yet there are not tremendous safeguarding processes in place,” he says. “If your trauma is unhealed, you will experience negative consequences directly relative to the positives.”

When Akana first attempted to talk about her sister’s death, “it used to send me into a PTSD episode”, she says. It also led to difficult audience interactions. “People would come up to me and say: ‘My father killed himself.’ It would be so abrasive and triggering, even though I myself was on stage talking about this.”

Years on, Akana has processed everything in therapy and discussed these experiences on her YouTube channel. There, she works towards suicide prevention – going over and over the memory has smoothed its edges and the idea of keeping her sister’s memory alive now feels joyful. “Sometimes I cry,” Akana says. “Every so often, however many times you perform it, you really feel it. But the idea that if I go out there and help one person, that’s really worth it.”

That desire drives Barr and Morton too. “Women who have been through similar things like to see women talking about it on stage, because they might not get to talk about it in their own life,” Morton says.

Barr feels we rarely see discussion of abuse within same-sex relationships. “As well as it being for people that are survivors, and giving me space to figure it out, it was also to force people to take accountability,” he says. Initially, he wasn’t sure comedy was the right medium for his story, which includes harrowing moments of physical abuse. But he noticed the classic rhythms of standup mirrored elements of abusive relationships – good times punctuated by suspense and deceit. By creating this experience for the audience, he hopes that: “If you can see what abuse feels like, you won’t stand for it.”

Morton discusses an award-

> **If I didn’t speak, I’d be the same as I was in that relationship: weak, silenced, hiding**

winning comedian who tried to force his hands where they weren't wanted. Her experience took place around a decade ago, so she has distance from it. But recently a friend revealed that an influential fringe promoter had attacked her while she slept. Not just her: multiple women. He was at the fringe last year, and Morton remembers "not being able to believe he had the audacity to turn up". She realised many industry friends had similar experiences with different people.

"The fringe is haunted by these men who keep coming back here every year," Morton says. She's using the show to haunt them back. "Almost as if to say: I know. If you're going to come to my home town and do things like that, I'm going to call you out."



'You need to have that layer of distance' ... Eleanor Morton

Baby Reindeer raised questions about the wider responsibilities of storytellers. "There was a point, during the fallout, when I started to think: what's it going to take for the public to realise these are real people?" says McGarvey. "It was this rapacious appetite for the lurid details of some really dark situations."

When McGarvey shared his own childhood experiences, family members entwined with his story felt the impact. "I'm not responsible for how other people interpret things. But I feel responsible to people close to me, to make sure they're in the loop," he says. "How do they feel about being exposed like this?"

Morton has chosen not to name the men who assaulted her and her friends, partly because she wants to discuss it as a systemic issue, one that's still part of the fringe, and partly with an eye on legal repercussions. Barr doesn't name names either and he sought legal advice. "It's safer here because you're not on Netflix [showing] millions of people," he says.

Both discussed their shows with loved ones, so none of the contents would be a shock. Barr invited his to a scratch performance and asked if they thought the show was a wise idea: "I bolstered my confidence in doing it by having the support of my friends and family."

Akana felt comfortable naming her stalker and sharing details of what he put her through - turning up at her home, sending unsettling gifts, death threats - because she had secured a restraining order, so it's all a matter of public record. But ethically? "In earlier versions there was more resentment and anger towards him. But I was like: he's someone who's mentally ill and that's also not his fault."

When talking about Kristina, her responsibility was towards her family. "My parents had never talked about my sister's suicide with me until I told them I was doing a special," she says. They opened up and checked facts together.



'It's where our most powerful art comes from' ... James Barr

Everyone should be aware of the limitations of their own story, and their power as a narrator. "We fill in a lot of gaps; we allocate intent and culpability to other people," says McGarvey. "Sometimes it's justifiable, sometimes it's speculation. With human beings, there are a lot of grey areas."

All feel strongly that artists should be able to tell their own stories. Thinking about Baby Reindeer, Akana says: "That was a true story and [Gadd] was a victim. To a certain extent, if we're silencing him, are we silencing victims?"

Barr agrees. "If I didn't speak about it, I felt as if I would be the same person I was in that relationship: weak, silenced, hiding," he says.

"What is art apart from people telling their own story?" says Morton.

It's crucial to find the right time and place to share your traumatic experiences, says McGarvey - what's appropriate in therapy wouldn't necessarily be appropriate on stage. "It's important to share an experience, but it's important to share it to an appropriate depth, given the context," he says.

Barr prepared with the help of therapy, the support of friends, and by teaming up with Madeleine Parry, the director of Hannah Gadsby's Netflix special, Nanette. Morton says she has witnessed people treating performance like therapy in the past, bringing raw experiences to stage when they clearly weren't ready. "You want to present an image of vulnerability and realness, but it is theatre and you do need to have that layer of distance," she says. "Don't look at anything that's going to make you have a panic attack in the middle of the show."

Is there pressure for artists to excavate their trauma? "I don't think there is a pressure, but I think it's where our most powerful art comes from," says Barr. "You connect with people when you're telling the truth."

And truth can be cathartic. "I hope everyone is able to take their trauma and make something constructive out of it," says Akana. "Because otherwise you just have trauma."

Anna Akana: It Gets Darker is at Pleasance Courtyard until 24 August.
James Barr: Sorry I Hurt Your Son (Said My Ex to My Mum) is at Underbelly Bristo Square until 25 August.
Eleanor Morton: Haunted House is at Monkey Barrel Comedy until 25 August.
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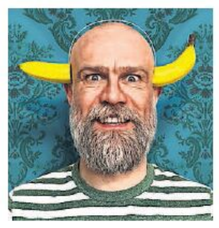
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Ten of the funniest jokes from the fringe

Enjoy a good one-liner? Here are some of the best rib-ticklers from the annual comedy extravaganza

Olaf Falafel



My desire to spontaneously sing The Lion Sleeps Tonight is always just a whim away.

Jack Skipper

I failed RE. Couldn't believe it when I found out. I was like: "Oh Jason Christ!"

Zoë Coombs Marr



My girlfriend told me she's never seen the film Gaslight. I told her: "Yeah you have ... we watched it together."

Eleanor Morton

How do you know that Edinburgh is the most haunted city in the UK? You measure it with a spirit level.

Amy Mason



I recently read 10% of sheep are gay - turns out there's nowt so queer as flock.

Raul Kohli



My aunty is Indian, German and a terrible human being. She's the curry wurst.

Louise Atkinson

I call myself the Yorkshire Shakira; her hips don't lie, and mine don't faff about.

Abby Wambaugh



Cabinets: what are they hiding? Tables: are they really furniture - or just more floor on stilts?

Demi Adejuyigbe



I don't like when a casino says: "House rules." It got a little boring for me in the last season.

Chris Turner

The Romans invented Vaseline. Or was it Ancient Grease?



In the bathroom with Laoise Murray in You're Needy (Sounds Frustrating)

> I'm so aware of being the only other person in the room that I'm on high alert



With dancer Clementine Benson in Lien

A party of one

What's it like to be the sole spectactor at a fringe performance? As **Anya Ryan** discovers at three one-to-one shows, it can be intense, unsettling – and revelatory

I'm standing on an Edinburgh street corner waiting for my next show but things feel a little different: I'm in a queue of just one. However, this has not been a terrible day for ticket sales – it is entirely deliberate. The play I'm about to see, You're Needy (Sounds Frustrating), sells a single seat for each performance and the production is built specifically for one audience member. The team behind it, tasteinyourmouth, are not alone in their endeavours at the fringe, which has long presented shows designed for solitary viewers.

A young woman approaches, introducing herself as "Carrie's sister", and leads me up many flights of stairs to a flat. "She's for you," she tells me, and opens the door of the bathroom, encouraging me to take the lone seat next to the tub to meet the wellness-obsessed Carrie (played by the show's co-founder, Laoise Murray).

You're Needy (Sounds Frustrating) is about the pull of the health industry and the effect it can have on women's minds and bodies. Carrie lies in the bath, brimful of hot water, wrapped up like a mummy in clingfilm and seaweed. She has cucumber circles to cover her eyes and a cleansing mask glued to her skin. She's on a "journey to purification" and I'm there to help her re-engage with the outside world. It's an intense experience. The bathroom is small and Carrie needs me to pass her various props, including cameras to take pictures of her body, a meal of diet noodles and vitamins to snort.

Why decide to create this piece for just one person? "When you're in such a small space in such an intimate setting, pretty much every aspect is under a microscope," says the director and co-founder of tasteinyourmouth, Grace Morgan. "The audience can't sit back too much and just receive everything passively." It's true – I'm so aware of being the only other person in the room that I'm on high alert.

"Different audience members can change the piece, in terms of how willing they are, or how comfortable they feel," Morgan says. During the show, I'm asked a series of personal questions about my own relationship with my body. But, while I'm encouraged to give honest answers, my responses won't change what has been systematically curated by the creative team. There is still a script, with key lighting changes and a distinct narrative structure. The ticket holder, for the most part, takes the role of observer.

Elsewhere, Lien – a dance piece by the Australian choreographer Lewis Major – relies totally on the responses of the single audience member in the moment. Watching Lien will be a different experience for everyone. Created as an "antidote to the distancing of Covid times" and first performed during the era of social distancing, it begins as a conversation between a dancer and the audience member.

The dancer, Clementine Benson, and I sit on stage, six metres apart but facing each other, and I'm asked to describe, among other things, a place I feel safe, a memory I would like to repeat and when I felt listened to. It is an exposing and slightly unsettling exchange to have with a stranger, but my answers inspire an improvised dance routine that is beautiful to watch.

"People were really touched by it," says Major about the show's first run in Australia. But, with the success of Lien totally reliant on the audience member being willing to open themselves up, how does he ensure that happens? "We try to create an environment where it doesn't really matter that the person you're talking to is a stranger … and it's not necessarily about spilling your deepest, darkest secrets, but about creating connection in the moment," he says.

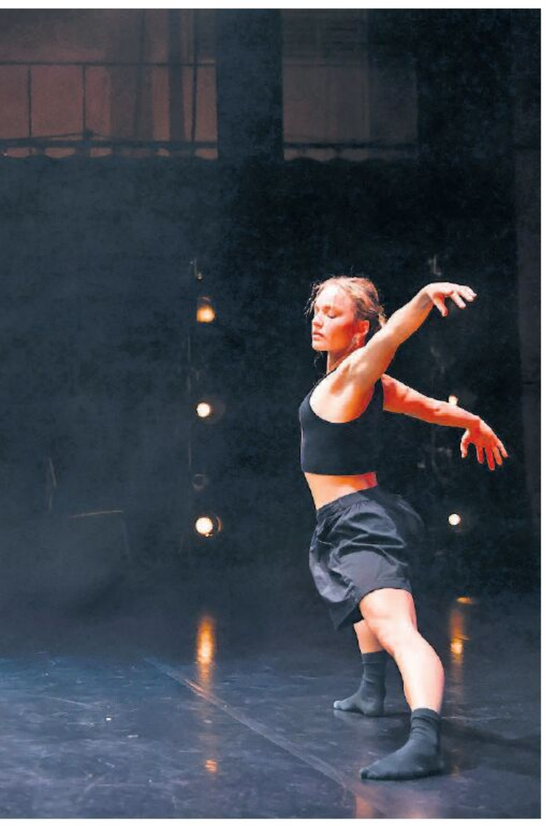
As I ease into the dialogue with Benson, I feel myself more inclined to divulge. There's a distinct spontaneity to Lien: unless the audience member has already seen the show, they will not know what to expect and will not have answers prepared. How do they rehearse? "Well, yeah, you don't really!" says Major, who makes sure each dancer gets the opportunity to do at least one run with someone outside their immediate team before performing to the public. "But it is not about making it perfect, it is about building authenticity."

Being the solo audience member is one thing, but being the only person in the whole room is something else. That's the scenario for Temping, created by the New York-based theatre companies Wolf 359 and Dutch Kills Theater. Finding myself in a startlingly realistic office set, I'm here to work as a temp at an insurance company, covering for an actuary. She has left me instructions to follow, a phone that rings and an inbox full of emails waiting for replies. Depending on how efficient you are, the performance can range from 30 minutes to more than an hour.

Asa Wember, the show's



Ryan tries her hand at Temping



designer, believes that giving an audience member "a hand in guiding the show" is key to the success of a one-person performance. "You have to sort of walk a tightrope between delivering a scripted show and being flexible to an audience member." As I await instructions to fill in Excel spreadsheets and check statistics, I feel a rising anxiety, similar to actually starting a new job: I really don't want to mess up. "The show comes to you via the means of communication that are present in an office. So, emails, faxes, phone messages," says Wember.

The original idea for Temping came to Wember and the team 10 years ago: "We were thinking about the core mechanism of theatre, that you're in the room with another live person or people ... we wanted to see what theatre would look like if we removed that component."

What is left is a play that challenges the definition of audience and performer. In theory, I have as much agency to affect the show's trajectory as the creators - I later find out that there is a team, backstage, churning out personal responses to the emails I write. Wember wants audiences to feel in control of their own destiny, but the freedom he has given them has been somewhat troublesome too. "Some people have come in and not wanted to cooperate," he says. Others refuse to respond to emails or download unrelated material from the internet. "Maybe, it's because they think they're by themselves," he thinks.

Temping, You're Needy and Lien are running more than four shows a day. But, even if they sell out all performances, they can't be financially lucrative - and the Edinburgh fringe is hardly a place to make money. So, how do the finances work? "We were never in it for the money, but yeah, obviously it's not exactly a big box-office spinner," says William Dunleavy, the third co-founder of tasteinyourmouth. This show has been supported by Culture Ireland. "We couldn't do it without their support ... no one's buying a house out of this one. No one's even buying a Mars bar!"

Some save money on the venue. "All we need is a bathroom," says Morgan, and so in Edinburgh, they just use the one in the house their company is renting. "We're doing the full Andy Warhol: we live there, we perform there, we party there," she adds. "It just made financial sense." Major tends to view Lien as a companion piece to his other shows. His production Triptych is also being performed at Edinburgh's Dance Base venue, where Lien is staged. "It works really well with other work we're touring because we can use the same theatre ... we can use it in the day or in the time before a show," he says.

It is rare that you feel so essential as an audience member, but in all the performances I attend, I have a sense that I could actually sway the show's path. If I stop complying, the narrative shifts. Passive viewing is not an option. A one-person show seems in part an experiment that digs into the heart of connection and human responses. And these are rare fringe performances that are practically guaranteed a full house - after all, they only have to sell one ticket.

You're Needy (Sounds Frustrating) is at Buccleuch Terrace until 26 August. Lewis Major: Lien is at Assembly @ Dance Base until 25 August. Temping is at Assembly George Square Studios until 26 August

PHOTOGRAPHS: MURDO MACLEOD/THE GUARDIAN



Koch: 'The class system in the UK is so ingrained'

The truth about comedy and privilege

Comedian Olga Koch tells **Brian Logan** why she jokes about her wealth

No Edinburgh fringe is complete without a strident conversation about how much it costs artists to perform: who is excluded and who is bankrupting themselves to be there. But "it felt like the only people talking about that were the people who the system wasn't benefiting", says Olga Koch. "And the people who *were* benefiting, privileged comics like myself, stayed quiet because the system was working for us. And if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

In an act of unabashed class treachery, then, the comedian breaks ranks at this year's fringe with the gloriously titled Olga Koch Comes from Money - glorious because it announces the show as taboo before the 31-year-old even steps on to the stage. "It could sound like, 'Oh my God, she's bragging'," says the comic. "But I don't intend it to be morally coloured either way. I'm not saying it's amazing I came from money; I don't think it's embarrassing. It's just a fact." But, particularly in this context, it can never be a neutral one. "Exactly."

Koch was born and raised in Russia, and admits, in fluent, American-inflected English: "The very fact that I speak a language articulately that my parents don't speak or understand feels like the most glaring privilege I have." When she took up comedy, she could do "all the free work you need to do in the first couple of years, because I had security elsewhere - I knew, if it all went to shit, I could call my parents".

But Comes from Money does not focus on the financial dimensions of a career in comedy. "That's not a show," says Koch, her eye (aptly) on the bottom line, "that the broader audience wants to see." Instead, it traces her autobiography through a money lens: what wealth has meant at different times of her life, "who deserves to be rich, and does that mean other people deserve to be poor? That moral mythology created around money is very interesting to me." As it would be to you, too, if you had come of age as the Soviet Union surrendered to the oligarchs - a process (recounted in her 2018 debut, Fight) that her father, Alfred, briefly Boris Yeltsin's deputy PM, partly facilitated.

Koch then moved to the US, "where they have the American dream, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps and this idea that anyone can be anything". She then moved to the UK, where, she says: "The class system is so ingrained that it contradicted everything I'd believed about money [before]."

It is a life story that promises a more nuanced take on privilege than standup's usual stabs in that direction - broadly, Jack Whitehall braying about how posh he is. And it is important for Koch that the topic be grounded in her own experiences. "My shows are impactful only if they're personal," she says. The emotional cost of that was laid bare in last year's Prawn Cocktail, a career-best offering that told the tale of a jet-setting fling gone wrong, but which also probed the downsides of airing your private life for public amusement.

Koch has toured the show to Melbourne, New Zealand and Mumbai - an experience that, much as she is grateful for it, wasn't always comfortable. "In that show, I played recorded voice notes from the lowest, most vulnerable moments of my life. Performing it felt like showing audiences my naked body, night in and night out. And sometimes people would heckle or be drunk and the show wouldn't connect, and you'd think: 'I don't want *you* to see me naked.' So, it's a lot."

So much, indeed, that Koch sounds like her commitment to comedy is wavering. Having worked in tech before becoming a full-time comic, she is now embarking on a PhD in human-computer relations - with a view to becoming "a pop-science person who makes tech digestible". That may or may not combine with a standup career. "Comedy demands a very specific lifestyle that was super into in my 20s," she says. "There was valour in it. It was rock'n'roll. We're on tour! But then if you want to have a family, or just hang out for dinner with people who aren't in comedy ..." There are some problems even calling your parents can't easily solve.

In the meantime, Koch has this year's hot-button show to deliver, and she says, "The paranoia is alive and well." That is partly borne of her feeling that, on this topic, actions might speak louder than words. "It should be more about giving platforms to working-class people, rather than me, a privileged person, coming up and saying: there should be a platform for working-class people." Fair enough - but, in this conversation (and this one alone), it is the privileged who are underrepresented. "If it's uncouth and crass to talk about money," says Koch, "well, the only people who benefit from that are the people who are making the most."

Olga Koch Comes from Money is at Monkey Barrel Comedy until 25 August

Masc hysteria!

Having rocked queer clubs to their foundations, Wet Mess is electrifying Edinburgh with a stunning new take on drag. **Alex Needham** meets them



There are drag queens, drag kings – and then there's Wet Mess. In May on Instagram, they revealed what is for them a typical look: a head painted green and gold, bald up top apart from two kiss curls; stickers of cars on each temple; a picture of two bikini-clad women wrestlers stuck to the forehead; black lipstick with enormous false eyelashes; an acid green Elizabethan ruff with boots to match; a pink shirt with padded shoulders; a tie emblazoned with the word "wank" and a purple lace dress that left their bum uncovered. The coup de grace came when Wet Mess flashed a million-dollar smile – and revealed teeth decorated with a black dots.

All this effort was for a performance at Dalston Superstore, one of the London queer clubs in which Wet Mess cut those teeth, and where they are now revered as one of the most extraordinary performers on the circuit, combining costume, dance, lip-syncing and avant-garde theatre skills in one discombobulating package. And that's the intended effect – Wet Mess likes to declare that they are "horny for your confusion". They elaborate: "I'm sort of a drag thingy-king. I'm more on the masc side but I feel very fluid. I play with everything and exist in between and outside of gender."

Edinburgh is about to get the full Wet Mess experience in the form of their first hour-length show. Called Testo, it's a one-person extravaganza based on interviews with people who have taken testosterone in the course of their gender transitions. "I've got a huge range of interviewees from people my age to 60-plus," Wet Mess (who uses that name both on stage and off) divulges. The result was hours of audio testimony "that I found really hard to edit down". This gets artistically distorted and then Wet Mess lip-syncs to the results. "Lip-sync is a really big part of my drag," the artist says. "Drag acts take audio from all over the internet, but what does it mean when we take our friends'? Through having someone's voice in your mouth, you feel you can connect to them in another way and really feel what it means to say those words."

So are they taking testosterone themself? "I kind of want to leave that open because it's in the show," says Wet Mess, who often performs topless, save for a breastplate that gives them pecs and a six-pack, a look augmented in Testo by red-and-white chequerboard makeup that covers their entire head. Today, sitting outside Cafe Oto, an experimental music space in London, they are more conservatively attired in a giant suit jacket, rugby shirt and tie – although that monk-style tonsure ensures they still stand out a mile. "I was really excited about distorting my hairline and then being able to paint on my head as well," they say. "My partner shaves my head every few weeks so I've got this canvas to play with."

They may look extraterrestrial, but Wet Mess is actually from Cottenham, a village in the Fens. They did a lot of dance as a child, and loved dressing up, encouraged by their mum. "She would spend ages sewing sheets together," Wet Mess remembers. "There's a picture of me in a huge pumpkin outfit and I remember dressing as Arrietty from The Borrowers on World Book Day. I said to my mum recently that she should get more involved in my performances, because she was such a big part of my journey."

So how do Wet Mess's parents feel when they see their child leering in an oversized pinstripe suit with a pinstripe face to match? "I think they're proud and overwhelmed – slightly confused, but proud. They've been supportive all the way." Another formative influence was Mrs Doubtfire, in which Robin Williams plays a divorced father who drags up as a female housekeeper in order to keep seeing his kids. "I love Mrs Doubtfire!" Wet Mess declares.

They studied history of art at Edinburgh College of Art, although they were never there at festival time since the college rented students' rooms out for this most lucrative of months. After graduating, they

"I feel very fluid. I play with everything. I exist outside of gender

formed the four-piece dance troupe Stasis, which went on to win the Fringe First award in 2018 with a show called Dressed.

Wet Mess moved to London in 2015, and at first made friends playing basketball, but then started go-go dancing. The drag scene soon hove into view. "For a long time," they say, "I was juggling visual art and performance. I knew I wanted to do both. When I found drag, and when I was on my queer journey, everything clicked into place. I was like, 'I just paint my face and that feels so freeing. I can transform and create these spectacles on stage.'"

Wet Mess entered a six-week contest called Not Another Drag Competition at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, the legendary venue where Paul O'Grady got his start performing as Lily Savage (and where during one turn, in the midst of the Aids crisis, the club was raided by rubber glove-wearing cops). "Each week you're set a different task," recalls Wet Mess, "and you have to create a five-minute act, so it's incredibly intense. But that's where I gained a bit of a following and eventually won the competition." They first performed as Wet Mess in 2019. "A lot of friends didn't like the name, but I want to make work about things that make me emotional and horny, so that's where it came from."

Performing in noisy bars means making an immediate impact. "Coming from a live art and dance background," Wet Mess says, "means I've performed in a lot of random places: in a swimming pool, in a garage, on a construction site, in parks - but nightlife presents a very specific challenge. You have to really bring it in in five minutes because people don't have a long attention span: they're drunk, they want to chat to their friends. So it's an exciting journey."

Nightlife has other temptations, of course, which Wet Mess does their best to avoid. "The whole scene is surrounded by that, so you have to look after yourself. I've tried to do a lot of calming down after shows, because adrenaline really takes you on a journey. For me, the performance is the priority."

Wet Mess honed their act in lockdown, doing dance training online ("very repetitive isolated movements that are quite intense - but a good thing at a time that we were all at home"). They also watched RuPaul's Drag Race, about which they have mixed feelings. "There are some amazing artists on there and important conversations about non-binary identity and transness. But it very much excludes all cis women, and anyone that isn't a man dressing as a woman."

This ambivalence about the show and its commodification of drag was a major theme in the play Sound of the Underground at London's Royal Court, in which Wet Mess participated alongside more seasoned performers. Wet Mess brought the house down with a spectacular lip-sync to Dorian Electra's trans anthem Flamboyant, proving their act is every bit as exciting in a theatre as it is in a grimy pub.

Wet Mess's shows are not only thrilling and wild but somehow sweet and life-enhancing, thanks to their pin-sharp performance chops, high-voltage charisma and the sheer pleasure they are clearly taking in putting their vision out there. "When you are non-binary or trans," they say, "you are able to change and redefine yourself. It feels really liberating and the stage has been a big part of that for me."

They're excited about how Testo will be received by an audience who may know little about the conversations around gender over the past few years. "The common stories around transness are very medicalised, binary and trauma-heavy," Wet Mess says. "I'm interested in trying to show the messy, confusing, joyful humanness."

Testo is at Zoo Southside, Edinburgh, until 25 August

PHOTOGRAPHS: MURDO MACLEOD/THE GUARDIAN



Mess is more ... the artist in Testo



Get on the good foot

Standup Stephanie Laing was terrified of dancing in public. Now it's a major part of her act. She tells **Lyndsey Winship** how she faced her fear of frugging

Stephanie Laing admits she hasn't been very kind to her body over the years. "I've been an alcoholic, I've self-harmed, and just been really horrible to myself," says the comedian. But Laing has found an unexpected way to mend her relationship with her body, at the age of 39, by becoming a dancer. The Lincolnshire-based comic has been doing standup for 17 years. She previously dipped her toe into comedy-dance in the double act Flip Flop with Louisa Robey, but her new show Rudder is more of a full-body immersion; a crash course in different styles of movement from ballet to belly dancing.

"I feel like dancing has really helped me to take care of my body, and to see it as a tool for making cool stuff," says Laing. But there is more to it than that. "At the obligatory 45-minute 'sad point' in the show, I talk about being sexually assaulted a couple of years ago," says Laing. "I felt like I had betrayed my body. You kind of think it's your fault." Dance has been part of her healing, part of learning to connect with her body again. And she is sharing that newfound confidence on stage.

> Martha Graham is so earnest, it can't not be funny

It's an exposing thing to do. "I loved dancing when I was drunk," says Laing. "And then I quit drinking and found I couldn't dance in front of people any more." Dancing in her bedroom with Beyoncé on her headphones became "one of my main hobbies", but it was a private thing. She found herself scared of sexualising her body, as if dancing were asking for attention. "Because of my experiences in the world, I had decided that my sexual self should be very private, because I'm safer that way," she says. So dancing also became "my deepest, darkest, most private thing that I do alone".

But now she's doing it every night at the Edinburgh fringe in a show that mixes her brand of candid, sweetly silly and surprisingly rude standup with live dance. And it's a reclamation. "This is me being like, 'I can move my body how I want and it's not an invitation. It's not for you to make an assessment of whether or not I'm attractive. It's just because it's fun to express that part of myself.'"

The dancing in public part may be terrifying, but in many ways Laing feels most comfortable on stage. She has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). As a result, she likes the setup of performance: "It's a very clear dynamic. I'm not wondering if it's my turn to talk." She also talks about how, as a neurodivergent person, dance has helped her connect her body and her emotions. "I think I have the ADHD thing of emotional dysregulation, where you have huge emotions that can feel very unmanageable." That didn't suit an upbringing of stereotypically English reserve where "emotions were bad behaviour".

"I have a lot of very strong emotions kept in a tiny little egg in my soul. And I think dancing is a healthy way to start expressing them in a very visceral way," she says.

In Rudder there are comic dances and serious ones too. She gets the audience to join her in some Merce Cunningham-style "chance" choreography, rolling dice to decide the next move, and possibly skewer a sacred cow or two. Laing loves modern dance pioneer Martha Graham, for example, but says "she's so earnest, it can't not be funny".

Rudder is a show equally for those who love dance, those who are baffled by it and those who have never thought about it. "I feel like dance isn't always accessible, especially contemporary dance," says Laing, who has seen plenty of shows she's been stumped by. "Sometimes I don't know if I'm watching it right. I don't know what I'm supposed to feel." When she watched the film Pina, about legendary choreographer Pina Bausch, she was left wondering if she only found it interesting because she wanted to feel clever. "So I wanted to show an audience that dance can be funny and it can be a celebration, dance can be sexy and also dance can be moving." She wants the movement itself to be good, too. "I want any dancer in the audience to say, 'She's doing that right, that's correct.'"

What Laing finds most unnerving about dancing on stage is the absence of the instant feedback of standup - you can't read the audience's silence. But at least there will be a big burlesque finale where everyone can get vocal. Burlesque may appear the most sexualised of dance styles but for Laing: "It feels like the ultimate reclaiming of my body because it is so fun. And with burlesque it's the dancer who has the power: you're dictating how much the audience sees and how they should react." Has she got a glamorous costume, I ask. "Well, I've got these weird stripy socks from a clown costume," she says, like a woman who is definitely doing this on her own terms.

Rudder is at Underbelly George Square, Edinburgh, until 26 August

PHOTOGRAPHS: GRAEME ROBERTSON / THE GUARDIAN



A tiger with two cubs in Ranthambore national park

Review My Tiger Family, BBC Two

A tribute to India's tigers – and one man's resolution to save them

★★★☆☆



Lucy Mangan

Valmik Thapar saw his first wild tiger 50 years ago. "You lose yourself within yourself," he says. He had travelled on a whim to Ranthambore nature reserve in northern India – one of nine parks created by the Project Tiger conservation initiative launched by the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi, in 1973 – and basically never left.

The hour-long documentary My Tiger Family is a photo album of the time he spent with these unendingly magnificent beasts, concentrating on the five matriarchs he has watched claim the prey-stuffed territory around Ranthambore's lakes.

Padmini – the subject of that life-changing first sighting – lived through the era of mass hunting. In the 18th century, Europeans arrived with their guns and killing tigers became the sport of anyone rich enough to join them. One maharajah boasted of killing 1,300. We see black and white photos of groups – one including a young Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip – standing proudly over the corpses. It never ceases to amaze. The original wild tiger population of about 100,000 was down to just 1,800 when Project Tiger was launched. A dozen of them were living in Ranthambore when Thapar arrived.

Padmini gave birth to Noon in the 1980s, which Thapar says marked the beginning of the reserve's golden age. The dozen survivors had lived in fear, only gradually learning that it was safe to come out during the day. The new generation roamed freely; numbers crept up from 12 to 45. "They were the best days of my life," says Thapar, his expressive voice suffused with love. "I thought they would never end." We watch footage of Noon and her mate, Genghis. It doesn't matter how often a tiger appears on screen – you are always struck anew by their power and beauty, as if you have never seen one before.

The best days ended in the early 90s. Poachers arrived, eager to supply tiger bones to China for use in medicines. Two-thirds of the tigers were killed, most shot at point-blank range because they had never learned to fear men, let alone men with guns. "Sometimes I feel guilty that I taught them to have faith in human beings," says Thapar. For the first time, you wish that his voice wasn't quite so expressive. The reserve's director and Thapar's mentor, Fateh Singh Rathore, was nearly beaten to death by poachers. His driver flung his body over him and saved his life.

Thapar turned his attention to activism, sitting on government committees, setting up a charity and beginning to write the books and make the TV programmes – including 1997's The Land of the Tiger – that he has since become widely known for.

But all this is given as an aside. We get no real detail about Thapar's decades of conservation work, or much sense of the enormous knowledge he has accumulated over the course of his career. Even the most cursory reading of his Wikipedia entry alone suggests that he should be the subject of at least one documentary himself, but My Tiger Family remains firmly focused on those he loves.

Machli was born during the poaching crisis and prevailed. Her DNA survives in 75% of Ranthambore's 70 tigers, including her granddaughter Arrowhead, via Krishna – whose litter of four cubs, instead of the usual one or two, "shook my being", says Thapar.

Another poaching crisis struck in the mid-2000s, in which entire tiger populations in two other reserves were lost and Ranthambore's own was reduced by half. As a result, Project Tiger was folded into the more powerful National Tiger Conservation Authority and armed guards began patrolling the parks. Again, the politics – and Thapar's part in this – are not mentioned.

My Tiger Family is not the place to come if you want to learn much about tigers. Thapar notes a handful of the new discoveries made on the reserve – that tigers are capable of killing in deep water, for example, or that a mother will suckle full-grown cubs when she has no milk left, possibly as a way of gently marking the beginning of their adulthood and saying goodbye – but this is not a usual natural history documentary. It is a tribute to a handful of individual tigers and the astonishing beauty of their surroundings. It also stands as a tribute to what people can do to protect precious things when they want to – and a reminder of why we *should* want to.

Freddie Flintoff's Field of Dreams on Tour 9pm, BBC One



"I wanted the boys to learn to be outside their comfort zone." Andrew "Freddie" Flintoff was planning this follow-up to his 2022 show about a cricket club for teenage boys in Preston when he was dragged outside his own comfort zone. This series was shot before and after Flintoff was involved in a car accident on the set of Top Gear, which left him with serious injuries. In this first episode, his team are off to India. It will be an intense and life-changing experience for everyone involved, Flintoff included.
Phil Harrison

Celebrity MasterChef
8pm, BBC One
The celebrity iteration of the BBC's biggest cook-off is always good fun and usually produces the odd surprising burst of competence. The first five celebrities to brave the MasterChef kitchen are Craig Doyle, Charlotte Crosby, Edith Bowman, Ian "H" Watkins and Snoochie Shy. But who will be the first sacrificial lamb when the eliminations begin? **PH**

Cooking With the Stars
8pm, ITV1
It's a date-night challenge: contestants must whip up a romantic meal for their partners. Katherine "I'm too famous to peel potatoes!" Ryan attempts a bearnaise sauce, Abbey Clancy tackles southern-fried chicken and Strictly's Pasha Kovalev rustles up a wild mushroom risotto. **Ali Catterall**

Warship: Life in the Royal Navy
9pm, Channel 5
Julia Bradbury and the former Royal Marine JJ Chalmers get access to the heart of the Royal Navy. Bradbury explores the fleet's biggest and most powerful ship, HMS Prince of Wales, while Chalmers heads back to the marine commando centre in Devon to remember, none too fondly, the agonies of basic training. **PH**

Elsbeth
9pm, Sky Witness
More from the New-York-set Good Wife spin-off, which has a whiff of Columbo. A stressed high-society matchmaker (guest star Retta, best known for Parks and Recreation) bumps off a hunk in the first five minutes. It's up to sunny sleuth Elsbeth (Carrie Preston) to work out what really went down. **Graeme Virtue**

Untold: The Rise and Rise of Taylor Swift
11.05pm, Channel 4
What happens when you put a Swiftie in an MRI scanner? Is the world's biggest star a relatable everywoman or a calculating moneymaker? This documentary asks those questions and more, speaking to Swift's most fervent UK fans, as well as those who have dared to criticise her. **Hannah Verdier**

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BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.30** Animal Park (T) **10.15** Countryfile Treasures (T) (R) **11.0** Homes Under the Hammer (T) **12.0** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **1.0** News and Weather (T) **1.35** Regional News (T) **1.45** News and Weather (T) **2.0** Money for Nothing (T) (R) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **4.30** The Finish Line (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News and Weather (T) **6.30** Regional News (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **Celebrity MasterChef** (T) New series. Craig Doyle, Charlotte Crosby, Edith Bowman, Ian "H" Watkins and Snoochie Shy compete.
9.0 **Freddie Flintoff: Field of Dreams on Tour** (T) New series. After transforming a cricket club in Preston, the former England captain takes his team on tour in India.

10.0 **News** (T) Weather
10.30 **Regional News** (T)
10.40 **Pretty Little Liars: Summer School** (T) New series. The group are tormented by an unknown assailant.
11.30 **Pretty Little Liars: Summer School** (T) The group try to make the most of summer.
12.20 **Weather for the Week Ahead** (T) **12.25** News (T)

BBC Two

6.30 **Animal Park** (T) (R) **7.15** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Dom Does America (T) (R) **8.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) (R) **9.0** News (T) **1.0** Head Hunters (T) (R) **1.45** Catchpoint (T) (R) **2.15** A Countryside Summer (T) (R) **2.45** The Hundred (T) Northern Superchargers Women v London Spirit Women (start time 3pm). **6.0** The Hundred (T) Northern Superchargers Men v London Spirit Men (start time 6.30pm).

9.30 **Mock the Week** (T) (R) Dara Ó Briain and Hugh Dennis poke fun at the news in the company of Catherine Bohart, Ed Byrne, Darren Harriott, Rhys James and Felicity Ward.

10.0 **The Mighty Boosh** (T) (R) Howard and Vince are marooned on a desert island.
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) Weather
11.05 FILM **The Keeper** (Marcus H Rosenmüller, 2018) (T) Biopic, starring David Kross.
12.55 **Sign Zone** The Travelling Auctioneers (T) (R) **1.40** Bridge of Lies (T) (R) **2.25** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Dickinson's Real Deal (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **3.59** Local News and Weather (T) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) (R) **5.0** The Chase (T) (R) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.0 **Cooking With the Stars** (T) Emma Willis and Tom Allen host as Abbey Clancy, Pasha Kovalev and Katherine Ryan cook their best dishes.
9.0 **Vera** (T) (R) DCI Stanhope investigates a betting shop tycoon who was murdered in front of his family during a home invasion. Last in the series.

10.50 **News** (T) Weather
11.20 **Local News** (T) Weather
11.35 **Champions: Full Gallop** (T) (R) Paul Nicholls and Dan Skelton go head to head.
12.25 **Shop on TV 3.0** Mel Giedroyc and Martin Clunes Explore Britain By the Book (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Cooking With the Stars (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.20 **Cheers** (T) (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **9.0** Frasier (T) (R) **11.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **11.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **12.0** News Summary (T) **12.05** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (T) (R) **12.10** A New Life in the Sun (T) (R) **1.10** Car SOS (T) (R) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **4.0** The Great House Giveaway (T) (R) **5.0** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? (T) **6.0** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

8.0 **Worst House on the Street** (T) In Norbury, south London, Jamie and Adam set out to maximise their dated terrace's full potential on a minimal budget.
9.0 **Emergency** (T) A mum of three is rushed to St Mary's in west London with a femur fracture and broken knee after a car crash.

10.0 **First Dates** (T)
11.05 **Untold: The Rise and Rise of Taylor Swift** (T)
11.40 **Gogglebox** (T) (R)
12.35 **Women on Death Row** (T) **1.25** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (T) (R) **1.30** The Rise and Fall of Boris Johnson (T) (R) **3.30** Trump Vs Harris: The Battle for America (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.30** Storm Huntley (T) **12.45** Friends (T) (R) **1.10** Friends (T) (R) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM The Baby Swindler (Ann Marie Fleming, 2023) (T) **4.0** The Cruise: Fun-Loving Brits at Sea (T) (R) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Scotland's Most Scenic Railway Journeys (T) (R) **6.55** News (T) **7.0** Our Great Yorkshire Life (T) **7.55** News (T)

8.0 **The Yorkshire Vet** (T) New series. Peter Wright attempts to deliver a stuck lamb with building work going on.
9.0 **Warship: Life in the Royal Navy** (T) New series. Julia Bradbury and JJ Chalmers present a look at the Royal Navy, featuring a visit to the biggest and most powerful ship in the fleet.

10.0 **A Killer Makes a Call** (T) Last in the series.
11.05 **Killer at the Crime Scene** (T) (R) Crime documentary.
12.05 **Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders** (T) (R) **1.0** Live Casino Show (T) **3.0** Tyrant: Rise of Evil (T) **4.40** House Busters (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.30** Entertainment News (T)

BBC Four

7.0 **Great British Railway Journeys** (T) (R) Michael Portillo visits Cornwall's county town, Truro. **7.30** Gareth Edwards' Great Welsh Adventure (T) (R) Gareth and Maureen get a castle to themselves for a night.

8.0 **Keeping Up Appearances** (T) (R) Hyacinth feels harassed.
8.30 **Butterflies** (T) (R) Ria joins an exercise class.
9.0 **The Ruth Ellis Files: A Very British Crime Story** (T) (R) In July 1955, Ellis was the last woman to be hanged in Britain for the murder of her lover. Gillian Pachter re-examines her case.

10.0 **Corridors of Power: Should America Police the World?** (T) The story of US politics.
11.0 **Watergate** (T) (R)
11.50 **Watergate** (T) (R)
12.40 **Inside America's Treasure House: The Met** (T) (R) **1.40** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **2.10** Gareth Edwards' Great Welsh Adventure (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm Top Gear **8.0** Shark Tank: Dragons' Den US **8.0** The Catch Up **8.45** Press X to Continue **9.0** Stacey Dooley Sleeps Over **9.45** Zara McDermott: Revenge Porn **10.40** This Country **11.40** Drugs Map of Britain **12.10** Top Gear **1.10** This Country **2.10** Drugs Map of Britain **2.40** My Mate's a Bad Date **3.0** Zara McDermott: Revenge Porn

U&Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **10.0** Rick Stein's Secret France **11.0** Rick Stein's Cornwall **12.0** Storage Hunters UK **2.0** Robson's Extreme Fishing Challenge **3.0** Top Gear **5.0** Rick Stein's Secret France **6.0** Rick Stein's Cornwall **7.0** Would I Lie to You? The Unseen Bits **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **9.0** QI XL **10.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **11.0** Taskmaster **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? The Unseen Bits **1.20** Room 101 **2.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **2.50** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Goldbergs **10.0** Young Sheldon **11.0** Modern Family **12.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Goldbergs **3.0** Modern Family **4.0** Young Sheldon **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Modern Family **8.0** Below Deck Adventure **9.0** Gogglebox **10.05** Naked Attraction **11.05** First Dates **12.10** The Big Bang Theory **12.40** The Big Bang Theory **1.10** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.40** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.10** Modern Family **2.35** Modern Family **3.0** Below Deck Adventure **3.50** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.45** The Neighborhood **5.10** The Neighborhood

Film4

11.0am FILM Playing With Fire (2019) **12.55** FILM Jingle All the Way (1996) **2.40** FILM Turner & Hooch (1989) **4.40** FILM Hue and Cry (1947) **6.20** FILM Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets (2017) **9.0** FILM Old (2021) **11.10** FILM Glass (2019) **1.45** FILM #Horror (2015)

ITV2

6.0am CITV: Craig of the Creek **6.15** Teen Titans Go! **6.40** Batwheels **6.50** Mr Bean: The Animated Series **7.25** Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated **7.50** Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! **8.10** What's New Scooby-Doo? **8.35** Scooby-Doo and Guess Who? **9.0** World's Funniest Videos **9.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **10.0** Love Bites **11.0** Love Bites **12.0** Dress to Impress **1.0** In for a Penny **2.0** Supermarket Sweep **3.0** Charmed **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Dress to Impress **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Ant & Dec's Limitless Win **8.0** Bob's Burgers **9.0** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** Bob's Burgers **1.30** Deal Or No Deal **2.30** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

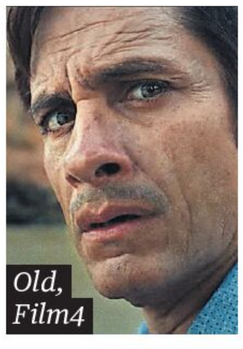
6.0am DC's Legends of Tomorrow **7.0** SEAL Team **8.0** Supergirl **9.0** Stargate SG-1 **11.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **12.0** Supergirl **1.0** MacGyver **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** SWAT **5.0** SEAL Team **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **7.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** A League of Their Own Road Trip: Southeast Asia **9.0** Rob & Romesh vs K-Pop **10.0** The Walking Dead: Daryl Dixon **11.10** An Idiot Abroad 2 **12.10** The Walking Dead **1.10** Road Wars **2.05** Brit Cops: Frontline Crime UK **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** SWAT **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am Anyone Can Sing **7.0** Reinventing the Orchestra With Charles Hazlewood **8.0** The Joy of Painting **8.30** The Joy of Painting **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Octavia Spencer **12.0** The Joy of Painting **12.30** The Joy of Painting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** The Art of the Garden **3.0** Classic Literature & Cinema **4.0** Discovering: Fredric March **5.0** Watercolour Challenge **5.30** Watercolour Challenge **6.0** Tales of the Unexpected **6.30** Tales of the Unexpected **7.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.0** Arcimboldo, Portrait of An Audacious Man **9.15** Backstage With the London Philharmonic Orchestra **10.15** JRR Tolkien: Designer of Worlds **11.30** Classic Movies: The Story of Brief Encounter **12.30** Discovering Romance on Film **2.0** Mary Cassatt: Painting the Modern Woman **3.10** Sky Arts Book Club **4.05** Cheltenham Literature Festival **5.05** The Art of Architecture

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Fish Town **7.05** Fish Town **8.10** Riviera **9.15** Riviera **10.20** Britannia **11.25** Britannia **12.30** Game of Thrones **1.45** The Sopranos **2.55** The Sopranos **3.55** Riviera **4.55** Riviera **5.55** Britannia **6.55** Britannia **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** The Staircase **10.15** The Sopranos **11.20** The Sopranos **12.25** Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty **1.30** The Leftovers **2.45** Game of Thrones **4.0** Fish Town


Old, Film4

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.0** Classical Live. Guitarist Raphaël Feuillâtre makes his Edinburgh international festival debut with an exploration of baroque music. Plus, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo perform Strauss's Alpine Symphony at the Proms. **4.0** Composer of the Week: Chopin (R) **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** BBC Proms 2024. Prom 33. Martyn Brabbins conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra and baritone Christopher Maltman in Elgar's Overture "Cockaigne (In London Town)", Holst's Hammersmith, Stanford's Songs of Faith Op 97: To the Soul; Tears; Joy, shipmate, joy!, and The Fairy Lough, and Vaughan Williams's A London Symphony: Symphony No 2. **10.0** Night Tracks. Presented by Hannah Peel. **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** The Long View **9.30** Inside Health (4/6) **10.0** Woman's Hour. Presented by Nuala McGovern. **11.0** Screenshot. The movie audience's desire to be shocked. (R) **11.45** New Storytellers. Exploring the community of volunteers who painted the Covid Memorial Wall in Westminster, central London. (2/5) **12.0** News **12.04** Call You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Cafe Hope. Finding positivity through charity after a family tragedy. (R) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Life Lines. Drama, by Al Smith. A lost boy desperately tries to keep his father alive while he waits for help to arrive. (1/2) **3.0** The Psychology of a Second Life. With Jaz Singh. (R) **3.30** Beyond Belief (7/8) **4.0** This Land. Charlie Shackleton explores the rocky ground of the public domain through the contested history of Woody Guthrie's song This Land Is Your Land. **4.30** You're Dead to Me (R) **5.0** PM **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Do Gooders. Harriett sets a new set of workplace bullying guidelines. (3/6) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** File on 4 (1/3) **8.40** In Touch **9.0** Crossing Continents (4/8) **9.30** Great Lives. Zing Tsjeng on Swedish painter Hilma af Klint. (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Enlightenment. By Sarah Perry. (7/10) **11.0** Jon Holmes Says the C-Word. The comedian and his guests discuss follow-up scans and treatment. (6/8) **11.30** What's Funny About. The inside story of Sharon Horgan and Rob Delaney's sitcom Catastrophe. (R) **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** New Storytellers (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Dixon of Dock Green (2/6) **6.30** Towards Zero (2/4) **7.0** Greywing (4/6) **7.30** The Goon Show **8.0** Lobby Land **8.30** On Her Majesty's Secret Service (2/10) **8.45** Where Angels Fear to Tread (7/10) **9.0** Do Gooders (2/6) **9.30** Horse Story (2/5) **9.45** Daily Service **10.0** A Good Read (4/8) **10.30** China, Britain and the Nunzilla Conundrum **11.0** Dixon of Dock Green (2/6) **11.30** Towards Zero (2/4) **12.0** Greywing (4/6) **12.30** The Goon Show **1.0** Lobby Land **1.30** On Her Majesty's Secret Service (2/10) **1.45** Where Angels Fear to Tread (7/10) **2.0** The Personality Test (3/6) **2.30** Tickets Please (3/4) **3.0** Esther Waters (1/2) **4.0** A Good Read (4/8) **4.30** China, Britain and the Nunzilla Conundrum **5.0** Dixon of Dock Green (2/6) **5.30** Towards Zero (2/4) **6.0** Greywing (4/6) **6.30** The Goon Show **7.0** Lobby Land **7.30** On Her Majesty's Secret Service (2/10) **7.45** Where Angels Fear to Tread (7/10) **8.0** The Personality Test (3/6) **8.30** Tickets Please (3/4) **9.0** Esther Waters (1/2) **10.0** Do Gooders (2/6) **10.30** The Consultants (4/4) **10.45** Warhorses of Letters (4/4) **11.0** Clare in the Community (4/6) **11.30** Dave Podmore's World of Cricket (4/4) **12.0** A Good Read (4/8) **12.30** China, Britain and the Nunzilla Conundrum **1.0** Dixon of Dock Green (2/6) **1.30** Towards Zero (2/4) **2.0** Greywing (4/6) **2.30** The Goon Show **3.0** Lobby Land **3.30** On Her Majesty's Secret Service (2/10) **3.45** Where Angels Fear to Tread (7/10) **4.0** The Personality Test (3/6) **4.30** Tickets Please (3/4) **5.0** Esther Waters (1/2)

Yesterday's solutions

Wordsearch



Solution no 16,932

			P	O	L	I	C	E	D	O	G
M		R		I		A		A		I		R
A	V	E	R	T			R	I	P	O	S	T	E
D		S		I		D		E		I		E
A	N	T	E	A	T	E	R		A	N	O	N
M		A		B		R		D		G		W
E	Q	U	A	L	S		P	E	S	E	T	A
B		R		E		B		A		N		S
O	R	A	L		G	O	L	D	R	U	S	H
V		T		J		N		D		O		I
A	G	E	L	E	S	S		U	T	U	R	N
R		U		T		A		C		S		G
Y	A	R	D	S	T	I	C	K				

Sudoku no 6,582

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

Word wheel

DIPHTHONG

Suguru

1	4	1	3	1	3
2	3	2	5	2	5
4	1	4	1	4	1
2	3	2	3	5	3
4	5	1	4	1	2
1	2	3	2	5	4

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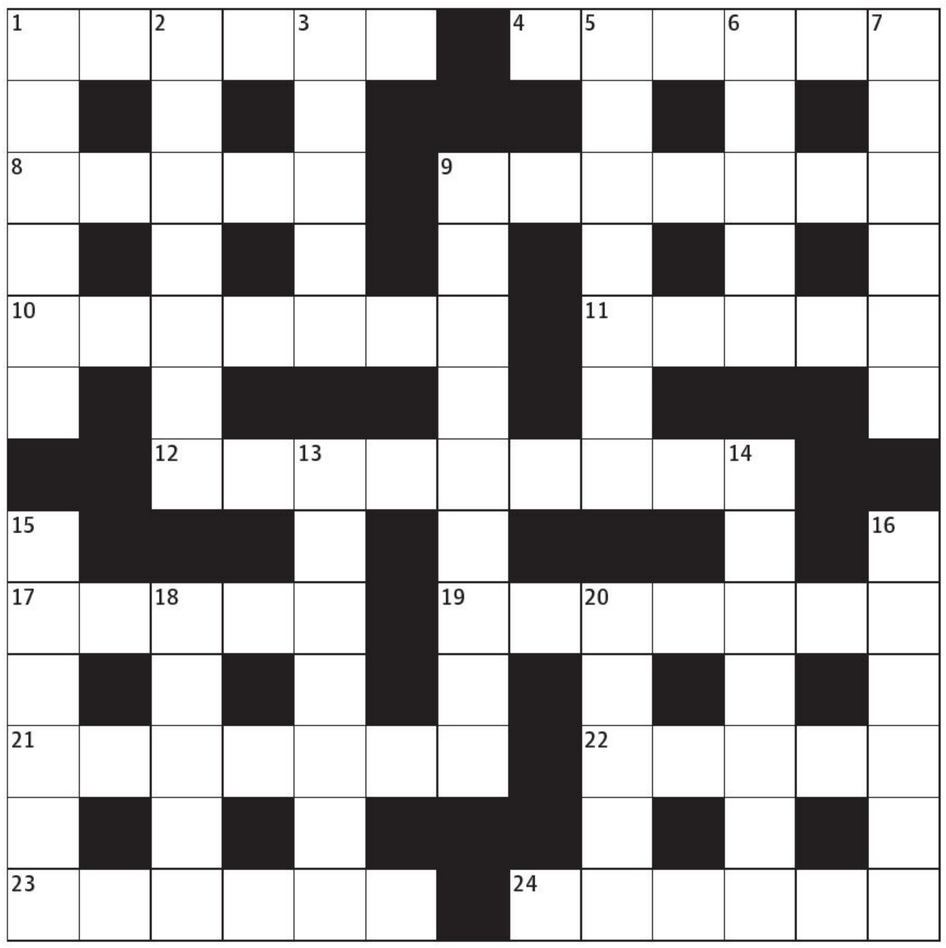
Quick crossword no 16,933

Across

1 Few and far between (6)
4 Beginning (6)
8 Small pancake (5)
9 Spoof (7)
10 It provokes an immune response - gentian (anag) (7)
11 Member of the clergy (5)
12 Person to emulate (4,5)
17 Peer Gynt writer (5)
19 Combination of diet and exercise (7)
21 Military gestures (7)
22 Page on the left side (5)
23 Eg Thomas More or Thomas Becket (6)
24 Chemical reaction catalyst (6)

Down

1 Underground passage (6)
2 Earhart or Lindbergh, say (7)
3 Benny Goodman's jazz style (5)
5 Emotionally unaffected (7)
6 Zeno of Citium, eg (5)
7 Arctic plain (6)
9 Very recognisable buildings, perhaps (9)
13 Extensive (7)
14 Fish which reportedly did for Henry I (7)
15 Chinese dumplings (3,3)
16 Catnap (6)
18 Kind of green energy (5)
20 Awarded (5)



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Sudoku no 6,583

Medium. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

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

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

				3	
	1		5		
	3				
		2			

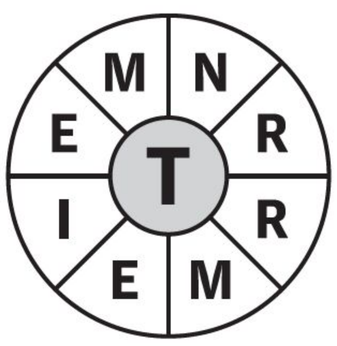
Wordsearch

Can you find 15 words about sugar in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

B	A	R	A	R	E	M	E	D
N	E	D	H	Y	F	I	T	B
D	O	E	I	T	H	U	O	R
C	I	O	T	E	E	W	S	G
E	A	E	P	A	L	S	B	N
T	G	S	N	S	N	N	A	I
I	L	N	T	A	W	M	R	C
H	O	T	P	O	C	D	L	I
W	A	S	R	R	R	A	E	I
N	F	B	L	U	M	P	Y	S
E	G	L	U	C	O	S	E	O

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-39. Good-32. Average-24.



Trivia corner

Isabelle Huppert has won best actress at Cannes twice - as has:
a. Juliette Binoche
b. Meryl Streep
c. Helen Mirren
d. Penélope Cruz
Answer top right



TODAY'S TRIVIA CORNER ANSWER **HELEN MIRREN**