



THE



TIMES

Tuesday February 4 2025 | thetimes.com | No 74635

£2.80 £2.00 to subscribers

(based on a 7 Day Print and Digital Subscription)

Prostate cancer What men need to know

INSIDE
TIMES2

**Kate, your
image is your
superpower**
Daisy Goodwin

NHS withholds Nottingham report to protect killer's privacy

Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter

The NHS has refused to publish in full a report exposing failings in the treatment of a paranoid schizophrenic who killed three people in Nottingham, because of patient confidentiality and data protection issues, The Times has learnt.

The decision has dismayed the

families of Barnaby Webber and Grace O'Malley-Kumar, both 19, and Ian Coates, 65, who were fatally stabbed by Valdo Calocane in June 2023. The families are seeking full transparency to prevent future tragedies.

Calocane is serving an indefinite hospital order after admitting manslaughter with diminished responsibility after the violent rampage.

NHS England is set to publish an independent review of Calocane's care in the years before the attacks. He was discharged from treatment despite repeatedly failing to take medication and his risk was not properly assessed even though he showed signs of aggression.

Although the full report runs to more than 200 pages, NHS England intends to publish only an executive summary

that is a few dozen pages long. Officials told the victims' families this was because the report contained Calocane's confidential medical details. The families were initially blocked from seeing the full report, a decision that was overturned after lobbying by their legal team.

The families are calling for the full report to be published, pointing out that much of Calocane's medical his-

tory was made public during the legal process in which he was allowed to admit diminished responsibility due to mental illness rather than face a murder trial. Calocane's family also disclosed his records in a documentary for the BBC's *Panorama* last year.

The families of Calocane's victims told The Times in a joint statement: Continued on page 2

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE/PA WIRE



Barnaby Webber and Grace O'Malley-Kumar, both 19, and Ian Coates, 65, were fatally stabbed by Valdo Calocane, a paranoid schizophrenic, who went on a violent rampage in Nottingham in June 2023

PM won't back EU in trade war

● Starmer refuses to criticise Trump plan for 10% tariffs on bloc ● US tensions overshadow bid for Brussels 'reset'

Bruno Waterfield Brussels
Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Steven Swinford Political Editor
Josie Ensor Washington

Sir Keir Starmer has warned Europe's leaders that he will not take sides in a trade war with Donald Trump, saying it was in Britain's "vital interests" to avoid a conflict with its most important allies.

Starmer became the first British prime minister since Brexit to address a meeting of European Union leaders as he attended a summit dinner in Brussels last night. However, his attempt to "reset" Britain's relationship was overshadowed by threats from the Trump administration to impose tariffs of up to 10 per cent on European exports,

triggering a transatlantic trade war. Trump accused the EU of committing an "atrocious" on trade and warned the bloc that tariffs "will definitely happen" and could come "pretty soon".

President Macron of France warned that Europe would react forcibly to any attempt to attack its commercial interests, while Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, said that a trade war would divide the West and leave China "laughing".

Starmer refused to criticise Trump's move, saying it was "early days" and that the UK must avoid being dragged into the dispute. "If you look at our vital interests, it's really important that we work with both and that we don't see it as either-or," he said. "Both of these

relations are very important to us. We are not choosing between them.

"When it comes to trade, we have a huge amount of trade between the US and UK, and that's why it's important that I act in the national interest as we stay resolute in saying it's important we work with both sets of partners."

Trump threatened the EU with tariffs on Sunday but took a softer line with Britain, promising that something "can be worked out". The president has attacked the EU for having the largest trade deficit with the United States.

He has also announced a 10 per cent tariff on goods from China from tomorrow. Trump said yesterday he would call President Xi, warning the proposed tariffs were only "an opening salvo".

However Canada and Mexico won at least a temporary reprieve from similar measures by reaching eleventh-hour deals with Trump.

The Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, said that 25 per cent tariffs that were due to be imposed on Canadian goods would be paused "for at least 30 days" in return for new measures to fight drug trafficking and organised crime on the US border.

Trump also said he would pause 25 per cent tariffs on Mexico after the nation's leader agreed to deploy thousands of soldiers to stop the flow of drugs and migrants into the US.

A global trade war could fuel inflation in the UK as import costs rise. Even if Britain directly avoids Trump's

tariffs, the levies still risk delivering a shock to the economy by erecting trade barriers, economists warned. Analysts at the consultancy Pantheon Macroeconomics said that Britain was "highly exposed to global trade disruption". Weaker growth in countries hit by tariffs "would cut UK growth" by reducing demand for British exports, it added.

While British officials have drawn up contingency plans for retaliatory tariffs, ministers have privately ruled out resorting to them. They believe they would have little impact and would risk further reprisals from Trump.

The dispute threatens to complicate Starmer's attempt to reset the post-Brexit trading relationship with the EU. Continued on page 6

News

Today's highlights

7am The secondary care minister, **Karin Smyth**
7.45am **Richard Fuller**, shadow chief secretary to the Treasury
9.45am The Conservative peer **Toby Young**
10.15am **Danny Finkelstein** and **Polly Mackenzie** are joined by **Theo Bertram**, a former adviser to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown
3.35pm **Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen**, right, the interior designer and TV personality, discusses *Celebrity Bear Hunt*

TIMES RADIO
 DAB RADIO • ONLINE • SMART SPEAKER • APP



TODAY'S EDITION

NEWS



RECORD YEAR
 Beyoncé finally bags best album at the Grammys
 PAGE 9

WORLD



A LITTLE KISS?
 The head in hands moment that has Spain gripped
 PAGE 25

TIMES2



IT NEVER ENDS
 Inside the A-list feud that keeps on giving
 PAGES 8-9

COMMENT

'Bridget Phillipson claims not to be a Marxist, but she is nevertheless an obvious class warrior'

MELANIE PHILLIPS, PAGE 18

THUNDERER 18

LETTERS 20

LEADING ARTICLES 21

WORLD 22

BUSINESS 27

REGISTER 41

SPORT 46

CROSSWORD 56

TV & RADIO TIMES2



New name. New hosts.
 More in-depth stories

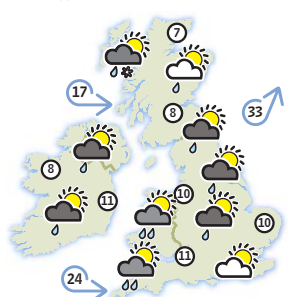
The Story is the new name for our daily news podcast. Hosts Manveen Rana and Luke Jones take you to the heart of the stories you need to know, plus monthly agenda-setting interviews from William Hague
 Available on the Times Radio app or wherever you get your podcasts

OFFER

Save up to 30% with a subscription to
 The Times and The Sunday Times

THETIMES.COM/SUBSCRIBE

THE WEATHER



Breezy with showers, some heavy, heading east. The southeast will stay largely dry. Full forecast, page 45

© TIMES MEDIA LIMITED, 2025.
 Published in print and all other derivative formats by Times Media Ltd, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF, telephone 020 7782 5000. Printed by: Newsprinters Holdings Ltd, Great Cambridge Rd, Waltham Cross, EN8 8DY, Kitting Rd, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 9HN and Byramsmuir Road, Holytown, Motherwell, ML1 1NP; Associated Printing (Carn) Ltd, Morton 2 Eskey Drive, Carn Industrial Estate, Portadown, BT63 5YU; KP Services, La Rue Martel, La Rue des Pres Trading Estate, St Saviour, Jersey, JE2 7QR. For permission to copy articles or headlines for internal information purposes contact NLA media access at copy@nla.co.uk, telephone 01892 525273. For all other reproduction and licensing enquiries contact Licensing Department, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF, telephone 020 7711 7888, e-mail enquiries@newslicensing.co.uk

Starmer dropped plan to ban foreign donors after Alli plea

Patrick Maguire, Gabriel Pogrud

Sir Keir Starmer abandoned plans to ban foreign political donations after the intervention of a peer and friend who led Labour's election fundraising efforts, according to a new book.

Lord Alli, a personal friend of Starmer, is said to have intervened to stop Labour from announcing an outright ban on foreign donations when it was in opposition.

Get In, a new book charting Starmer's rise to power, discloses that Angela Rayner, now the deputy prime minister, was due to announce plans for an outright ban on foreign donations with the aim of stopping "dodgy money" from entering British politics. She was due to make the announcement alongside Gordon Brown, the former Labour prime minister.

A leaked policy paper states that the plans were signed off after a "high-level meeting in March [2023] in which Keir and Angela agreed to a series of recommendations relating to elections and democracy policy".

Under the plans, donors would have to be registered to vote in the UK. Com-

panies that donated would need to be owned by people who were based in Britain. Both moves would have made Elon Musk's threatened donation of £100 million to Reform UK legally impossible.

An announcement was pencilled in for December 14, 2023 at Chatham House in London. Initially Starmer's office raised no objections. The plans were so advanced that Brown had booked travel and accommodation from Scotland to the capital.

The emails show that Morgan McSweeney, now Starmer's chief of staff, gave the policy his backing. An adviser in Rayner's team said he wanted to present the planned legislation as an attempt to stop people who don't have "skin in the game" from "funnelling money in British democracy".

However, a Labour official involved in discussions on the policy said the plans were abandoned after an intervention from Alli. "With a week to go Morgan pulled it ... It turned out Wahed told Morgan to pull it, and so he did." They said it was not clear why Alli intervened, and the peer did not respond to requests for comment.

During the general election campaign Labour received £4 million from Quadrature Capital, a hedge fund whose parent company is registered in the Cayman Islands. The company said that while its funds are established in the Cayman Islands, it pays corporation tax in the UK on profits.

Alli, who has given more than £500,000 to Labour, was the party's fundraising chief when it was in opposition. He donated more than £32,000 to cover the cost of Starmer's suits and spectacles in the run-up to the election and another £36,400 for office costs and accommodation. He also donated to Starmer's wife and a number of other cabinet ministers to cover the cost of clothing.

His role came under scrutiny after Starmer won the election when it emerged that he had been given a pass to No 10 and that he had organised a post-election reception for those who helped bankroll his campaign. Despite the controversy Alli has retained his role leading fundraising for the Labour Party.

The trouble with Lord Alli, exclusive book extract, Times2

Poll puts Reform ahead of Labour for first time

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
 Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

Reform UK has overtaken Labour for the first time in a national opinion poll and has the backing of almost a quarter of those who voted Conservative at the last election.

The YouGov survey puts Nigel Farage's party on 25 per cent, one point ahead of Labour and four points ahead of the Conservatives, who are at their lowest level since losing power in July.

The poll shows that only 60 per cent of people who backed Labour in July would do so now, while 18 per cent said they would either definitely or probably not support the party. In contrast, 86 per cent of Reform supporters said they would still back the party.

While Reform's lead is within the margin of error, the finding is likely to generate further alarm among Labour and Tory strategists in the run-up to May's local elections.

About one in four (24 per cent) of those who voted Tory at the last election would vote for Reform, while 43 per cent of Conservative supporters would be in favour of the parties merging. Thirty-one per cent were opposed.

Reform has the support of almost

half of those who voted to leave the EU, solidifying its position as the first choice of Brexit supporters. The Tories slipped to 30 per cent among Leave voters, ahead of Labour on 11 per cent but well behind Reform with 46 per cent.

While support for Reform rises with age, the Conservatives remain the most popular party among pensioners, with support of 31 per cent in the demographic. Reform leads among those aged 50 to 64 and Labour is still ahead among those under 50.

YouGov's Anthony Wells said the poll showed that the three parties were effectively level pegging. "We've had Labour and Reform extremely close over all our polls so far this year and this survey shows a narrow Reform lead," he said. "While it remains within the margins of error, it reinforces the fact that Reform is roughly equal in support with Labour, with [the Conservatives] slipping back again."

In the same poll, the Tory leader Kemi Badenoch's net favourability rating slipped to minus 29, below Farage on minus 27. Sir Keir Starmer was less popular than either, with a rating of minus 36. The Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey was much more popular, at minus nine.

Go-ahead for bigger tax rise at six councils

Max Kendix Political Reporter

Council tax is set to be raised by up to 10 per cent in some areas, in an effort by ministers to prevent a fresh wave of bankruptcies in local government.

Angela Rayner gave approval for six councils to raise taxes beyond the legal cap of 4.99 per cent.

The local government secretary said "difficult" decisions had been made "to prevent these councils falling further into financial distress".

Eight councils asked the government for permission to increase local taxes by higher than the cap next year, including by up to 25 per cent in Windsor and Maidenhead. It was granted a 9 per cent increase, as Rayner agreed to a smaller rise than requested in six of the areas and rejected two others.

The highest increase granted was in Bradford, at 10 per cent. Birmingham, Somerset and Trafford were permitted increases of 7.5 per cent. The Labour-run Birmingham council, which in 2023 declared itself effectively bankrupt, has the biggest debt of any local authority at £3.4 billion, equivalent to about £8,000 for each household in the city.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 Families want full report released

"Through our legal teams we have reached out and repeatedly petitioned NHS England for the full report to be published. We believe it is in the public interest and their duty to do so.

"But NHS England has refused. We have grave concerns about the conduct of the NHS and hope that more can be discussed and revealed."

NHS England originally intended to release the report last Friday but the families lobbied for the date to be changed out of concern that it would have less impact going into the weekend.

Wes Streeting, the health secretary, has previously said that Calocane's victims might still be alive had the

NHS "been there when it should have been".

A review by the Care Quality Commission, examining Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust,



Valdo Calocane was refusing to take medication

has already found that risk assessments played down the fact that Calocane was refusing to take his medication, had continuing and persistent symptoms of psychosis and was increasingly violent towards others.

This week's report, which is expected

to be damning, will fully examine his interactions with mental health services, detail missed opportunities and investigate the approach to risk.

Separately, Nottinghamshire police is being investigated for a string of failings in the case. The force has been accused of failing to do enough to stop Calocane, who had been arrested previously.

Officers in Leicestershire received an assault report but did not arrest Calocane even though there was a warrant for his arrest.

An NHS England spokesman said: "Independent mental health homicide reports are commissioned by NHS England and published in line with the requirements of confidentiality and data protection legislation relating to patient information."

A picture of mother in the woods by Louis, 6

With her arms out wide, the Princess of Wales stands in the sunshine on a walk in Windsor (Kate Mansey writes).

This is a royal portrait like no other. It is the first taken by her youngest child, Prince Louis, six.

Kate, 43, is surrounded by trees on a woodland walk and dressed warmly, wearing a hat, scarf and gloves. She beams at Louis as he takes the photograph from further down the hill.

Shared to mark World Cancer Day, the picture was accompanied with a personal message from the princess, which read: "Don't forget to nurture all that which lies beyond the disease."

The photo was released on the official social media accounts for Kensington Palace and shared alongside another image of the frosted foliage at Windsor, which was taken by the princess.

It gives the public a rare glimpse into her recovery from cancer.



The Princess of Wales shared the portrait — taken by her six-year-old son, Prince Louis — to mark World Cancer Day. She is now in remission and adjusting to a "new normal"

Last month the princess said that she was "in remission".

She is continuing her gradual return to public duties after undergoing chemotherapy last year. She was diagnosed with cancer after abdominal surgery in January 2024.

In March the princess announced that she had started a course of "preventative chemotherapy".

She returned to the Royal Marsden Hospital in Chelsea, London, to thank the doctors who treated her. Speaking to

patients, the princess said that she had longed to feel the sun during her treatment and had been advised to wrap up.

Kate said: "I really felt like I needed to get the sun. You need loads of water and loads of sunlight." She added

that she had been advised to "make sure you have all your warm things on" when she had chemotherapy because of the side effects.

To mark her official visit, Kensington Palace announced that both she and Prince William had

become joint patrons of the hospital. In a message shared online, she said: "It is a relief to now be in remission and I remain focused on recovery. As everyone who has experienced a cancer diagnosis will know, it takes time to

adjust to a new normal. I am, however, looking forward to a fulfilling year ahead."

The princess is known for her photographic skills and has a master's degree in art history from the University of St Andrews.

Mad about the Nineties food

The return of Bridget Jones to cinema screens has inspired a surge in interest in her iffy diet, writes **Andrew Ellison**

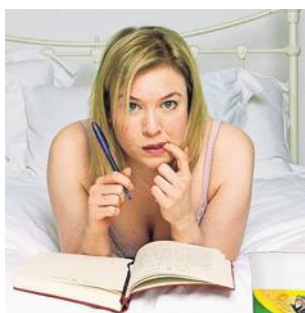
Bridget Jones is, famously, not a domestic goddess. Her culinary triumphs include making a simple leek and potato soup go blue, turning a marmalade pudding into a lumpy, wretched mess and making an omelette look more like scrambled eggs.

Despite these kitchen disasters, the return of the perennial singleton to cinema screens this month appears to be inspiring fans to try their hands at the dishes featured in her movies.

The imminent release of *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy*, the fourth instalment in the series, has resulted in a surge in demand for the ingredients and recipes, according to Waitrose.

The upmarket supermarket chain says that compared with this time last year, recipe searches for leek and potato soup are up by 233 per cent while searches for orange marmalade have increased by 553 per cent.

There has also been a 200 per cent increase in searches for turkey curry recipes. For those uninitiated in the delights of the Bridget Jones franchise, a turkey curry plays an important role in the first film. It is the dish over which Jones and Mark Darcy, the dashing love interest played by Colin Firth, have



Renée Zellweger's return as Bridget Jones appears to have boosted retro food and wine

their awkward yet fateful first meeting.

Waitrose says it is not just the recipes that have aroused interest, as sales of the finished products are also rising. Demand for Duchy Organic Seville thick cut marmalade is up by 30 per cent and for pre-prepared leek and potato soup by 9 per cent.

The latest Bridget Jones film, which will be released in cinemas on Valentine's Day, features Renée Zellweger in the star role again, this time navigating life as a widowed mother of two re-entering the dating scene in her fifties.

Waitrose says that shoppers are

Back in vogue

French onion soup **+85%**
Lime-spiked prawn cocktail **+414%**
Fish pie **+771%**
Twice-baked blue cheese soufflé **+97%**
Sticky toffee pudding **+159%**
Trifle recipes **+832%**

Source: Recipes searches on Waitrose.com (past three months v three months before)

being inspired by Jones's notorious penchant for chardonnay: sales of the white wine have also risen in recent weeks.

Oxford Landing's chardonnay is the biggest beneficiary with sales up 21 per cent but Yellow Tail chardonnay and Dark Horse chardonnay have seen increases of 13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Waitrose said that "Bridget Jones fever" was part of a wider trend of "nostalgia shopping".

Emilie Wolfman, of the supermarket group, said: "We're seeing our customers embrace the classic foods from the iconic Bridget Jones films as well as wider 'retro' foods from

the Nineties, as many customers go in search of foods that spark memory and joy — whether that's foods associated with nostalgic memories, like iconic moments from the Nineties, or classic and trusty comfort foods such as potato waffles and Black Forest gâteau."

The supermarket says that recipe searches for Black Forest gâteau have jumped by 190 per cent over the past three months compared with the previous three months.

There has also been a surge in searches for Arctic roll, pineapple upside-down cake and chocolate fondant, Capri Sun, Ambrosia custard and Pot Noodles.

Demand for the Nineties chocolate Club biscuits is also surging with sales of orange and mint flavours up by 26 per cent and 23 per cent respectively.

Other retailers have noted the trend. Last year, Ocado reported that sales of popular crisp flavours of the 1990s were surging. It had noticed that sales of period snacks such as Smith's crispy bacon Frazzles and Salt & Vinegar Chipsticks had jumped by nearly 50 per cent year-on-year.

The demand for all things Nineties extends to fashion, with the return of crop tops and baggy jeans to the mainstream.

Anjee Solanki, a retail analyst at Colliers, said: "Gen-Z's obsession with the decades before digital has revitalized Nineties fashion. For the nostalgia-infused younger generation, discovering the household brands of yore has the potential to revive an ageing brand straight into the 21st century."

New stars on menu at last for Michelin

Mario Ledwith

The Michelin Guide is seeking to shed its stuffy image and association with haute cuisine in an effort to stay relevant and compete with the more democratised world of online food reviews.

These days armies of epicureans are being directed to new — and often wildly cheaper — meals by social media influencers and online reviewers, rather than by the anonymous inspectors of the French tyre company awarding their coveted stars.

This shift, driven by a new-age foodie culture obsessed with eating out but less interested in fine dining, has pushed Michelin to shed its stuffy image and diversify how it operates.

Michelin has started a rapid expansion in both the food it recommends and the countries in which it operates. The guide, which was developed in the 1920s, is considering 20 new destinations to send its army of reviewers, including India, it said.

One of the venues in the Mexico guide epitomises Michelin's morphing approach. El Califa de León, a 56-year-old taqueria in Mexico City that measures 3m by 3m and serves four types of taco, was awarded a star, producing queues that baffled regulars.

The guide says of its star system: "A Michelin star is awarded for the food — nothing else. The style of a restaurant and its degree of formality or informality have no bearing whatsoever."

MEDIARUMIMAGE/BROADARROW AUCTION



Green means go A 1954 Jaguar D-Type that finished second in that year's 24 Hours of Le Mans race is expected to fetch up to £7 million for Broad Arrow Auctions

Assisted dying bill 'will damage efforts to prevent more suicides'

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

The assisted dying bill is being rushed into law and will "undermine daily efforts to prevent suicide", particularly among the elderly, leading psychiatrists have warned.

A group of 24 experts said they were alarmed by the speed with which the legislation was being pushed through parliament and that it should be "overwhelmingly rejected".

They argued that the bill could put pressure on patients who were lonely or grieving, or felt like a burden, to take their own lives instead of accessing psychological or psychiatric support.

Last week 50 expert witnesses were called to the Commons during three days of evidence to a committee of MPs scrutinising the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. The bill, proposed by the Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, would allow people with less than six months to live to legally end their lives. The law could come into force as soon as 2027. In a letter to The Times, the psychia-

trists said: "We are alarmed at the haste of the committee considering the bill for assisted dying. Three days of oral evidence seems insufficient to consider such a huge question as doctor-assisted suicide. We hope there will be much more consideration of the written evidence in the weeks to come."

"A law on doctor-assisted suicide will undermine the daily efforts of psychiatrists across the UK to prevent suicide. Those who have suicidal ideation at any time in life may be vulnerable to pressures to take their own life by the introduction of doctor-assisted suicide."

"Vulnerability can arise due to external factors such as lack of decent palliative or social care; overt coercion or undue influence; personal losses including bereavement, poor housing or financial hardship. Internal factors may include major depressive disorder, a sense of burdensomeness, loneliness and social isolation. Understanding and responding to these vulnerabilities is at the centre of suicide prevention."

Evidence from other countries showed that a high proportion of terminally ill patients choosing assisted dying cited psychological or psychiatric factors, the letter said. In Canada, 39 per cent of those who had an assisted death in 2023 reported "emotional distress, anxiety, fear or existential suffering", and 21 per cent reported "isolation or loneliness".

The letter said that legalising assisted dying in England and Wales would "allow assisted suicide as a first-line option for these types of suffering" in terminally ill patients.

The letter was signed by experts including Julian Hughes and Alan Thomas, professors of old-age psychiatry at the universities of Bristol and Newcastle, and Professor Jonathan Cavanagh, a consultant neuropsychiatrist.

The intervention follows a row over the decision by Leadbeater's bill committee not to invite the Royal College of Psychiatrists to give evidence. The college was invited after a backlash. The psychiatrists' letter said: "The initial re-

luctance of the committee to see the need to call the Royal College of Psychiatrists to give evidence is in itself shocking and betrays a lacking understanding of the job that we do in understanding suicide and its prevention. This bill should be overwhelmingly rejected."

In written evidence submitted to the committee last week, the royal college said it was "important to appreciate the mental health complexities in the population of people with terminal illness", adding: "People at the end of life deserve high-quality psychiatric treatment. A wish to hasten death is strongly associated with depression."

A survey of members of the college showed that psychiatrists were split evenly in support and opposition of the principle of assisted dying, but the majority would not be willing to participate in an assisted dying service. Sixty-five per cent of members said they were not confident that consent could "act as an adequate safeguard".

Assisted dying bill 'is being rushed', letters, page 20

Online pharmacies told to enforce weight-loss jab checks

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

People hoping to buy weight-loss injections online will face tougher checks as pharmaceutical regulators tighten their rules.

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has told online pharmacies that they can no longer prescribe the drugs after online questionnaires alone and must conduct an in-person or video consultation first.

The change is intended to ensure powerful weight-loss drugs such as

Wegovy and Mounjaro are prescribed safely and will require pharmacies to independently verify a patient's body mass index (BMI) before issuing a prescription.

It comes after reports that some people — including an undercover reporter from The Times — were able to get hold of the drugs with no checks.

The new rules say the prescriber must independently verify "weight, height and/or body mass index", and state: "By 'independently' we mean that the prescriber uses a different way to

verify the information provided to them by the person."

"This could be through a video consultation, in person, from the person's clinical records or by contacting another healthcare provider such as the person's GP. Verifying information through a phone call would not be appropriate when supplying medication for weight loss."

Duncan Rudkin, chief executive at the GPhC, said: "The message of this updated guidance is clear: online pharmacies should only supply a medicine if

the prescriber has had an appropriate consultation with the person, and has made sure they have all the necessary information to check if that medicine is safe and suitable for them."

Nick Kaye, chairman of the National Pharmacy Association which represents about 6,000 independent community pharmacies, said: "Delivering good care whilst maintaining the highest levels of patient safety is the number one priority for pharmacies and we hope this updated guidance will help to protect the safety of patients."

Quintagram® No 2169

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Celebratory event (5)

2 Type of beer (6)

3 Abrasion (6)

4 Notepad (6)

5 Star exhibit or attraction (9)

A	A	B	C	C	E	E	E
E	E	H	I	I	J	O	O
P	P	P	R	R	R	S	S
S	T	T	T	T	T	W	Y

Solutions see T2 page 15
Cryptic clues T2 page 14

Water firm record case

A water company is facing the largest nuisance claim ever brought over sewage pollution in a river. Welsh Water is included in a legal action involving 2,000 claimants by the law firm Leigh Day over pollution in the Wye, which runs along the border of England and Wales. Welsh Water said that it would "require time" to consider the legal challenge.

Students' money worry

More than four in ten medical students have considered pausing or dropping out of their course over financial pressures, a survey has found. The British Medical Association said the "finance system for medical students in England is broken" and called on the government "to deliver on a solution". The body polled more than 3,500 medical students.

'Psychic' sacking fair

A self-styled "psychic" was fired from his IT job for harassment having told a colleague he knew they would meet after seeing her in his dreams, a south London tribunal has heard. Elrich Daudet was told his faith in prophetic dreams was not a "protected religious or philosophical belief" under employment law. His claim of unfair dismissal was rejected.

111 handler 'at fault'

A 111 call handler was at fault for referring the parents of a sick baby to a GP rather than A&E. Ben Condon was two months old when he died in April 2015. Care UK, which manages the calls, apologised at an Avon coroner's court inquest into Ben's treatment at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust. The inquest continues.

TIMESRADIO

**Breakfast:
6am to 10am**

Our free radio station has all the latest headlines, interviews and debates every morning

Listen seven days a week

On DAB,
app,
website
and smart
speaker



You are a dangerous fool, says judge jailing ex-soldier

Laurence Sleator

Daniel Khalife, the convicted spy who spent three days on the run after escaping from prison in 2023, has been jailed for 14 years and three months.

The former British Army soldier was found guilty in November of passing secrets to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps while serving with the Royal Signals in an effort to become a double agent.

On September 6, 2023, while on remand at HMP Wandsworth in south-west London, he escaped under a food

delivery lorry by fashioning a makeshift sling. His escape prompted a nationwide manhunt before he was spotted cycling along the Grand Union Canal in Northolt, northwest London, by a plain-clothes police officer, and dragged off the bike.

At his sentencing hearing for spying and escaping from prison, Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb told Woolwich crown court that Khalife, 23, had betrayed his country and was a "dangerous fool" who started his contact with Iran because of "a selfish desire to show off".

Deterring others from similar behav-



Daniel Khalife had "a selfish desire to show off", the judge said

iour must be the primary aim of sentencing in this case, she said.

While awaiting sentence yesterday, Khalife chatted and joked with the police officers who had investigated him and shook one officer's hand.

On the prison escape, the judge said:

"The truth is you [did] it because you thought you could. You are an attention seeker and you enjoyed the notoriety you attracted following your escape."

He was accused of spending over two years passing secrets from the Royal Signals to Iranian agents, despite contacting MI6 and MI5 in an attempt to become a double agent.

Khalife received six years for committing an act prejudicial to the safety or interests of the state; five years for eliciting information about the armed forces; and two years and three months for the jailbreak.

Boy knifed to death at school after 'lockdown'

Constance Kampfner, Mark Lister

A 15-year-old boy was stabbed to death at a school in Sheffield which had been placed in lockdown just days earlier after "threats of violence" by a group of students.

The teenager, named locally as Harvey Willgoose, was found seriously injured at All Saints Catholic High School just after midday yesterday. He was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

Another boy, also aged 15, has been arrested on suspicion of murder.

Flowers, cards and candles had been laid outside Harvey's home, with neighbours telling The Times that they were in "total shock". One woman, who declined to give her name, said: "He went

Girl who stabbed teachers 'had got to breaking point'

Will Humphries

A teenage girl found guilty of attempting to murder two teachers and a fellow pupil with a knife had reached "her breaking point" after being bullied, her father has claimed, saying that her actions had "some merit".

The girl, who was 13 at the time and cannot be named for legal reasons, used a multi-tool in the attacks during a mid-morning break at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman (Amman Valley School) in Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, on April 24 last year. She shouted: "I will f***ing kill you."

She was disarmed by teachers and arrested. She denied attempting to murder Fiona Elias, 48, the assistant head teacher, Liz Hopkin, 53, a special needs co-ordinator, and a female year 10 pupil, but was convicted by a jury after a week-long trial.

The girl admitted to the lesser charges of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and possession of a bladed article on a school premises.

Her father told The Times that his daughter was "responsible for her actions" but added: "Unfortunately, her actions have some merit." He said: "When you have somebody of authority who is pushing down on you and they are not listening and you are getting constantly bullied, everyone is going to have a breaking point and she got to her breaking point, I believe."

"At home, prior to it all happening, I could see she was getting depressed and she was self-harming. This was a sign. She contemplated suicide for a little bit because the bullying was extreme, but instead of going that way about it, she went the other way and lashed out."

The father claimed that the girl was being kicked, punched and slapped by bullies at school and felt that she was being unfairly "pulled up" by Elias for detention.

Swansea crown court was told that a fellow pupil had witnessed the girl being slapped on the back of the head four or five times by the year 10 pupil she went on to stab.

The court was told that the girl had been excluded from school for a week at the start of the academic year after Elias found that she had a knife in her bag. A condition of her return involved her father agreeing to check her bag every morning, and permission for school staff to check her bag.

Elias told police after the attack: "We had permission to do regular bag checks [but] we didn't do a lot, really. She came back [to school] and settled back in."

The father said that when his daughter was found with a knife in



Liz Hopkin, left, and Fiona Elias both suffered stab wounds during the attack at a school in Carmarthenshire in April last year



school he had warned staff that "if you don't stop the bullying, something is going to go bad". He alleged: "They completely ignored it and brushed it off, by the looks of it."

He said that on the morning of the attack, his daughter left the house before he woke up, so he did not check her bag.

The court was told that the girl had been told by Elias the previous day to stay out of the school's lower hall during break times, and again on the day of the attack. She was also spoken to about wearing cargo trousers, which were not school uniform.

CCTV footage showed the girl approaching Elias as Elias stood talking to Hopkin.

Elias told police a few hours after the attack: "She asked me, 'Why can't I go into the lower school hall?', and she had a sinister look in her eye."

"I explained why she couldn't go there and she said 'I don't want an explanation, I just want to go in there' and she was playing with something in her pocket... She said, 'Do you want to see what is in my pocket?' and pulled something out and I saw the knife."

"Then she said, 'I am going to kill you,

I am going to f***ing kill you', and then she started to stab me and instinct kicked in and we tried to stop her."

Hopkin tried to restrain the girl and called for help. Elias managed to get free and the multi-tool fell to the floor, but the girl picked it up and stabbed Hopkin repeatedly before other teachers arrived.

Two male teachers tried to placate the girl but they did not restrain her and she was able to run off with the knife and stab the pupil before being pulled off her victim and taken to an empty room, where she was arrested.

Hopkin was the most seriously injured, suffering 2cm stab wounds to her leg, chest and shoulders. She was taken by air ambulance to University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff. Elias, who suffered stab wounds to her hand and arm, and the pupil, who was stabbed in the torso and legs, were taken to Morriston Hospital in Swansea. None suffered a life-threatening injury and all were later discharged.

When the defendant gave evidence on the fifth day of the trial, she said she felt "terrible" and that she would "do anything to go back". She said she had not intended to hurt or kill any of the

victims and that she could not remember large parts of the incident.

She said she had taken a knife to school almost every day since she had been in "year 3 or 4", saying she had felt "scared and worried" and used knives to self-harm.

Police discovered a notebook in her room after her arrest that had drawings and comments about killing herself and other people.

One page said: "Why do I want to kill others as much as I want to kill myself? Maybe it's another reason I'm simply not human. Why do I sit around all day when I want to move? Why do I feel nothing but hate? If I know what I'm doing, why do I do it?"

Another page had a drawing, possibly of the pupil she went on to attack, which said "burning a person", "to death" and "they could die", with a smiling face drawn close by.

William Hughes KC, for the prosecution, asked the girl what she had meant when she wrote: "I want to do something humans aren't supposed to do." She replied: "Initially, I was planning on killing myself."

The girl is due to be sentenced on April 28.

Harvey Willgoose, 15, was declared dead at hospital



to school this morning and he has not come home."

She said that the teenager "always seemed to have a smile on his face".

Another resident said: "Harvey and his dad were huge Sheffield United fans. It is just too awful for words." Flowers and football shirts were left outside the club's stadium, alongside a card that read: "Rest easy Goose."

Facebook users also sent their condolences to the teenager's mother, Caroline Willgoose, a TikTok influencer with 55,000 followers.

One wrote: "Deepest condolences, and I cannot tell you how saddened and sorry I am that Harvey had to end his young life in this horrendous way."

"I only saw and spoke to him just over a week ago at your mum's house, and that will [be] how I remember him."

Last week pupils at the school had been told to hide under their desks after "threats of violence" were made, according to a statement issued by Sean Pender, the head teacher.

He said that no one was harmed but that "the reason for the lockdown was due to threatening behaviour between a small number of students where threats were made of physical violence".

"In order to ensure the safety of all students while we dealt with the incident and escorted those involved off site, we felt our lockdown procedure was the safest measure," he added.

South Yorkshire police have not confirmed whether the two incidents are linked.

Assistant chief constable Lindsey Butterfield said that the police investigation was in its "very early stages" but that any relationship between the two events would be "considered".

"Right now we're focusing on the here and now, and we will review that as the investigation progresses," she said.

Louise Haigh, the Labour MP for Sheffield Heeley, said that "serious questions" must be answered.

Sir Keir Starmer, who was at a dinner with EU leaders in Brussels, said that the boy's death was "horrific and senseless news".

In a statement the prime minister said: "My heart goes out to the family and loved ones of the boy, the staff and students at the school, and the entire community of Sheffield. They are grieving the needless loss of a young life and the nation mourns with them."

WALES NEWS SERVICE

News Politics

Spend more on defence or face

Bruno Waterfield Brussels
Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Steven Swinford Political Editor

Britain and other EU countries must spend "much, much, much" more on defence to prevent a war with Russia, the head of the Nato alliance has told a summit of European leaders.

Mark Rutte told a lunch of EU leaders that Europe was in danger of falling behind because the bloc's average defence spending figure, of 1.9 per cent, is below Nato's minimum target figure of 2 per cent of GDP.

"To prevent war, we must spend more," he said. "Because in a more dangerous world, 2 per cent will not be enough to keep us safe. We need to invest considerably more. We also need to replenish our stocks, and fast, there's no time to waste reviving our defence industries. To ramp up defence production is an absolute must."

The UK is currently spending about 2.3 per cent of GDP on defence and Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to increase this to 2.5 per cent. However, this new target is not expected to be reached until after 2030.

President Trump has demanded that European allies spend significantly more on defence or he will consider tearing up American security guarantees that have secured Europe's defence since the end of the Second World War and the creation of Nato in 1949. Trump has called on Nato allies to spend 5 per cent GDP on defence to avoid a showdown.

Rutte is hosting a summit of Nato leaders in June and pushing for a new compromise target of 3.7 per cent of GDP to show Trump. "I can assure you of one thing: it will be much, much, much more than 2 per cent," he told EU leaders.

Italy, Spain and Portugal are all behind the minimum Nato spending target and both France and Germany have struggled to meet the obligation. Rutte was told that European countries struggling with economic stagnation, high welfare spending and debt levels could not go beyond a maximum commitment of 3 per cent of GDP.

France has stressed, in opposition to a focus on Nato targets, that allies should make sure that military spending is boosting preparedness or investing in armaments, such as missile defence systems. Starmer

Trump offers Ukraine aid for minerals

Hugh Tomlinson Washington

Ukraine should supply America with rare earth minerals, the crucial materials for high-tech components, in return for US military aid, President Trump has suggested.

Speaking in the Oval Office yesterday, Trump said that he wanted a "guarantee" from Kyiv as his administration weighs its support for Ukraine and is developing a proposal to end the war with Russia.

"We're telling Ukraine they have very valuable rare earth ... We want a guarantee. We're handing them money hand over fist, we're giving them equipment," he said. "We're looking to do a deal with Ukraine,

where they're going to secure what we're giving them with their rare earth and other things."

Trump also repeated his accusation that "Europe is not keeping up with us" in supporting Ukraine, demanding that "they should be paying at least equal".

"We have an ocean in between, they don't. It's more important for them than it is for us," said Trump, who has demanded a massive increase in defence spending from America's European allies.

US weapons shipments to Ukraine were briefly suspended last week but resumed at the weekend.

The demand for access to Ukraine's mineral deposits comes as the Trump administration opens talks with Kyiv and Moscow, seeking a deal to end the three-year conflict. The president vowed to end the war in one day during last year's election campaign but is yet to present his plan for peace.

Asked if he had already spoken directly with Putin, Trump demurred: "I don't want to say that."

used an EU summit dinner to back Rutte's call for higher spending, even though Britain is struggling to hit a target of 2.5 per cent of GDP.

"Let's be absolutely clear, peace will come through strength," he said after meeting Rutte at the Nato headquarters in Brussels. "We need to see all allies stepping up, particularly in Europe."

He added: "We must harden European defence." Starmer called for Britain and the

EU to co-operate on defence in the same way that they currently did on science and research as members of the Horizon Europe programme.

Some EU countries, in particular France and Italy, are reluctant to open up new European defence procurement to British companies but Starmer insisted that this would benefit both sides.

"We will be more successful in building the European defence sector and contributing more to our own defence if we work together," he said.

During the EU talks Starmer, with President Macron and Nordic countries, supported a "coalition of the willing" for a Europe-led initiative of sending tens of thousands of troops to keep the peace in Ukraine, in the event of a deal to end the war later this year.

The deployment is critical for persuading Trump that European allies are serious about guaranteeing Ukraine's security with the aim of unlocking access to American surface-to-air missile batteries and air cover.

Divided West is what Putin wants, William Hague, page 17



PM needs the US and EU for growth

Analysis

It was the moment No 10 breathed a sigh of relief. Speaking from the runway as he prepared to board Air Force One, President Trump implied that he was not minded to impose tariffs on imports from the UK (Steven Swinford writes).

"UK is out of line but I'm sure that one — I think that one — can be worked out," he said. "But the EU is an atrocity what they've done."

He went on to pay personal tribute to Sir Keir Starmer. Trump said: "Starmer's been very nice. We've had a couple of meetings, we've had numerous phone calls, we're getting along very well. We'll see whether or

not we can balance our budget."

For the prime minister, it went some way to validating his approach. During the run-up to the US election, Starmer and his top team sounded out those familiar with Trump's approach from his first administration.

The message that came back was straightforward — personal relations matter deeply. Flattery works, to an extent. If Trump feels respected it is far easier to do business.

For months Starmer has been on a charm offensive, going out of his way to praise the US leader in public and private. He was the first world leader to speak to Trump after he survived an attempt on his life. They subsequently went for dinner at Trump

Tower in New York. At the end of last month they had a 45-minute phone call during which very little politics was discussed. The conversation was almost entirely dominated by the personal as Trump asked Starmer about the death of Nick, his brother, and opened up about his own family.

No 10 believes that the approach is bearing fruit.

If the UK succeeds in avoiding tariffs on British imports to the US, it will be a significant boost to what Starmer describes as his number one mission — economic growth. But a full-fledged global trade war will still have large repercussions and there will be ripple effects for the UK. Trump's comments were an indication that he intends

to push ahead with 10 per cent tariffs on imports from the EU.

Economists have warned that tariffs ultimately risk pushing up the cost of borrowing in the US, which is closely tied to the cost of borrowing in the UK. It means that Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, could find herself with even less room for manoeuvre.

Starmer's approach — that the UK does not need to pick a side, that it can have strong relations with both the US and EU — is perhaps unsurprising. The prime minister needs to look for growth wherever he can find it.

"Both of these relations are very important to us," he said. "We are not choosing between them."



Trades United, which campaigns against thefts from skilled workers, advanced

Trade tensions overshadow charm offensive in Brussels

Continued from page 1

The government wants to negotiate an end to checks on food exports to the bloc, which are estimated to cost the UK economy £3 billion a year. It also wants to improve energy and defence co-operation. Starmer said he intended to raise his plans for the reset at the dinner in Brussels, saying there was a "very important discussion to be had" on defence and security and a "wider" set of issues around trade and the economy.

European leaders expressed dismay at Trump's trade policies and pledged a "firm" response. Macron said: "If we are attacked in terms of trade, Europe — as a true power — will have to stand up for itself to make itself respected."

Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, said that tariffs "would be bad for the US and bad for Europe" because it would lead to tit-for-tat sanctions. "One thing is clear: as a strong economic area we can shape our own affairs and also respond to tariff policies

with tariff policies," he said. "We must and will do so." Donald Tusk, the Polish prime minister, said: "Given the threat from Russia and China's expansion, we cannot afford to be divided."

Leaders also discussed Trump's demands for control of Greenland, part of Denmark's territory. A senior official said that "leaders expressed their full support and solidarity with Denmark".

Last night Trump signed an executive order for the creation of a sovereign wealth fund in the next year, saying it could potentially buy the TikTok app. Trump offered little detail and it was unclear how such a fund would work. Typically such funds rely on a country's budget surplus to make investments, but the US operates at a deficit.

"It's about time this country had a sovereign wealth fund," Trump said. Trump's threats are angering America's friends, leading article, page 21
Greenland's hopes of freedom, page 22
Markets hit by tariff turbulence, page 27

war with Russia, Starmer told

AARON CHOW/PA



through Westminster yesterday as Sir Keir Starmer met Mark Rutte, the head of Nato, left, in Brussels for defence talks

Migration and food exports at the heart of 'reset' Brexit deal

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Bruno Waterfield

When the UK formally left the European Union five years ago, wiser heads warned that while Brexit might have happened the relationship would be a source of continuing contention.

So as Sir Keir Starmer attempts to "reset" the Brexit trade deal, what exactly is it that the government wants — and what does the EU want in return?

NO CHECKS ON FOOD EXPORTS

Ending checks on food products crossing the Channel was a Labour manifesto commitment and would be a big win for the government.

Since Brexit, British agricultural exports have to have sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) checks, requiring additional paperwork and inspections at border crossings. These checks have contributed to a £3 billion annual fall in British food exports to the EU.

However, it will be a complex negotiation. Britain would like to model such a deal on one the EU already has with New Zealand, based on already close standards of food and animal health. But, as it did during the original Brexit negotiations, the EU rejects this idea and is demanding that Britain agrees to put all existing and new European laws on food into British legislation under a system known as "dynamic alignment".

This would mean revoking laws brought in under the last government that allowed gene-edited food to be developed commercially in England.

The EU has also made clear that in return for such a deal Britain must agree to at least "the maintenance of the status quo" on fishing. This would mean giving European fishing boats the same catch allowances as they have under the existing trade deal for talks to even start.

Significance rating: 4/5

DEFENCE

The EU is enthusiastic about greater defence co-operation as Nato countries come under increasing American pressure over military spending.

While under the auspices of Nato, there is scope for the EU, as well as countries such as Britain or Norway, to work together on military capabilities such as the key area of missile air defence.

A more difficult area is procurement. The EU wants to make its undersized and fragmented defence industry more efficient. The British defence sector would like to participate but other countries with large defence industries such as France are reticent.

Significance rating: 2/5

NET ZERO

There is already growing co-operation between Britain and the EU over energy and climate, especially over wind farms and undersea power cables in the North Sea. However, new barriers are expected as the EU introduces a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism that will effectively impose a tariff on carbon-intensive imports.

This could lead to new costs on British industrial goods, such as steel, that are energy-intensive. To avoid this, Britain wants to link the UK and EU emissions trading schemes via mutual

recognition of what are similar standards. However, for the moment, the EU is rejecting such a plan.

Significance rating: 2/5

FIGHTING ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Britain lost access to a range of databases after Brexit, including the European arrest warrant, the Schengen Information System and Europol's intelligence. It also lost access to Eurodac, the EU's fingerprinting system used to identify asylum seekers and illegal migrants, which the government wants to restore to give British border officers instant intelligence on asylum seekers arriving in the UK.

There is openness on the European side to sharing policing objectives, including joint patrols and intelligence to tackle cross-border money laundering and human trafficking gangs.

Much more difficult is Labour's desire for an agreement that means the EU would accept the return of migrants who have illegally crossed to the UK after beginning an asylum procedure in Europe.

European countries, who faced more than a million first-time asylum applications last year, have no appetite to help out Starmer.

Significance rating: 4/5

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

When Britain was a member of the EU a solicitor, accountant or architect who had trained in Britain could provide services anywhere in Europe because their qualifications were recognised throughout the bloc. However, despite attempts to negotiate mutual recognition in the original trade deal, this was rejected by the EU.

Ministers would like to negotiate a lifting of this ban given Britain's service-dominated economy. However, EU member states would derive only a small benefit from such a move and it would require concessions from the UK in other areas.

Significance rating: 4/5

MOBILITY

As well as making life easier for professionals, the government would like to remove barriers and cut costs for musicians, touring artists and other performers. The EU is not opposed but wants to make it easier for students and young workers to come to Britain without a visa.

These are difficult barriers for the government to remove, in terms of keeping net migration down as well as having to pick up an extra bill for European students.

Significance rating: 1/5

JOINING THE PAN-EUROPEAN-MEDITERRANEAN CONVENTION

Pem is a limited trade agreement that harmonises rules across Europe, North Africa and the Levant to make it easier for companies to source components from a larger number of different countries without incurring tariffs when they export the final product.

The EU has indicated that it would be happy for Britain to join Pem but studies suggest that its impact would be limited.

Significance rating: 1/5

Q&A

How do tariffs work?

Tariffs are a tax on imports. In the case of the US, the aim is to discourage companies importing goods from places such as China by making them pay more for the items they ship in.

The hope is to grow America's economy by incentivising the purchase of goods made in the US.

According to the Tax Foundation, a think tank, while tariffs "do place an economic burden on foreign exporters, the costs are often borne by consumers in the country that is imposing them".

Why is President Trump putting tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China?

He initially imposed tariffs

on the three countries as part of his "America First" trade policy. His rationale for these tariffs, especially on steel and aluminium, was to protect US industries and national security. He argued that the countries were engaged in unfair trade practices that hurt US manufacturers.

The president also said the 25 per cent levies were designed to pressure America's two neighbours to do more to stop the flow of undocumented immigrants and fentanyl into the country.

What led to the one-month pause with Mexico?

Hours before the tariffs against Mexico were due to go into effect, Trump confirmed that he had agreed to "immediately pause" them for one month pending negotiations with President Sheinbaum.

Is Trump right to say the US is "subsidising" Canada?

Trump said America is "losing" hundreds of billions of dollars to neighbouring nations under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). In reality, the US goods and services trade deficit with Canada was \$40.6 billion in 2023, according to the US government's Bureau of Economic Analysis. The deficit largely reflects America's imports of Canadian oil and energy.

Trade between the US and Canada is mutually beneficial and the idea that the US directly subsidises Canada is misleading.

Where might Americans see prices rise?

Many businesses will be forced to funnel extra costs on to customers, which is why tariffs generally trigger higher prices.

Why is crypto down?

Bitcoin fell to a three-week low of \$91,441 yesterday, while ethereum, another popular cryptocurrency, dropped to its lowest level since September.

The downturn was driven by fears of inflation, economic instability and potential retaliatory measures from Canada, Mexico and China.

Cryptocurrencies, which are often considered high-risk assets, are particularly vulnerable to market turbulence.

What could prompt Trump to back down?

If the country sees a significant rise in inflation, Trump may be forced to reconsider tariffs. If they led to an economic slowdown, lower GDP growth or even a recession, the policy might be politically impossible for him to maintain.

News Politics

'Stuck' schools must improve in 18 months

Georgia Lambert, Chris Smyth

Underperforming schools will be given 18 months to improve or be turned into academies, Bridget Phillipson said as she lavished praise on Michael Gove and insisted she was not breaking with years of consensus on schools policy.

The education secretary praised academies as "the key driver of rising standards" in schools as she sought to rebut accusations that Labour was cooling on one of Tony Blair's signature policies.

Insisting that "stuck schools" were the "new front in the fight against low expectations", the education secretary unveiled a set of measures designed to hold struggling schools accountable alongside Ofsted's proposal to overhaul its inspection system.

Phillipson called Gove a "great education reformer" as she sought to present her changes as a continuation

of his work, denying she was rowing back on efforts to drive up standards.

The Conservatives have accused ministers of "vandalism" for reforms that would curtail many of the freedoms of academies, schools that are outside local authority control.

In a speech in London, Phillipson praised the "focus on tackling low standards in inadequate schools, which previous governments of all parties shared". She said: "Academy schools were a part of a great age of reform, from the mid-Nineties to 2015, a wave of changes that lifted standards for schools and life chances for children, driven forward by a succession of great education reformers — from David Blunkett to Michael Gove".

Praising phonics and Gove's emphasis on a "knowledge-rich" curriculum, she also quoted one of his best-known attacks on the educational "blob", as she criticised schools that let down



Bridget Phillipson praised academies, saying they were the key driver of rising standards, at the Centre For Social Justice

How one of the new Ofsted report cards might look

Causing concern	Attention needed	Secure	Strong	Exemplary
Sixth form	Achievement	Leadership and governance	Attendance	Inclusion
	Personal development and well-being	Curriculum	Behaviour and attitudes	
		Developing teaching		

poorer children. "I saw so many of my friends from my area let down, let down by a system that lacked a restless ambition for their futures — content, too often, to deliver a mediocre education," Phillipson said.

"Michael Gove used to call this 'the soft bigotry of low expectations' and with good reason: he was right."

Gove joined the criticism of reforms that would allow ministers to issue directions to academies, require them to follow the national curriculum, give local authorities more control over admissions and remove a requirement for failing schools to become academies.

But Phillipson argued that the next

stage of education reform must focus on the 600 schools across England grappling with consecutive poor Ofsted ratings, describing them as "stuck".

While previously all schools rated as "inadequate" by Ofsted were ordered to become academies, ministers believe this has left some in limbo and other options were needed to turn them around.

The new system will replace the previous single-word judgments with a more detailed five-tier scale, ranging from "exemplary" to "causing concern" across eight to ten areas. New Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence teams will focus on schools rated

as "causing concern" or "requiring attention", in any category — broadly similar to "requires improvement" and "inadequate" in current gradings. The teams will offer tailored leadership plans, hold regular meetings and conduct five Ofsted visits over 18 months.

Despite criticism from teaching unions over the complexity of the new system, Phillipson defended the proposals. She said the report cards would replace headline grades with "rich, granular insights" into school performance.

Let schools pursue excellence, not 'equality', Melanie Phillips, page 18
Bridget Phillipson must stand up to teaching unions, leading article, page 21

Phillipson struggles to make the grade

Tom Peck
Political Sketch



I can't think of a government department that, politically speaking, is more clubbable than the Department for Education.

It is only in speeches by education secretaries that you hear such enthusiastic praise for predecessors from other parties. The current incumbent is Bridget Phillipson, who usually likes to praise Michael Gove. He, in his turn, used to like to praise their noble lordships David Blunkett and Andrew Adonis. Nobody ever praises Sir Gavin Williamson but rules must have their exceptions.

The cause of such mutual admiration is because, on the whole, British, or more specifically English education, is a success story. But education secretaries still have to go on to pretend otherwise or they'd have very little to say, and Phillipson is no exception.

On Monday morning, Phillipson gave a speech to launch a new inspection and grading system for schools, which had, unfortunately, been pre-savaged by Julia Walters, the sister of Ruth Perry, the head teacher who killed herself over her school's damning Ofsted report.

It was Phillipson's most personal speech yet. "I want to tell a story," she said. "My story." Phillipson still burns with a sense of passionate injustice that working class children like she once was did not get a fair chance in life. She spoke of having never known her own father, and of how a neighbour once pushed money through her family's letter box in an envelope marked "for Bridget's coat." But she got where she has today, via Oxford University and only really ever having had one real job, which is hardly a real job (she's been an MP since the age of 26), because she was lucky enough to go to a good school, and have a family that, "prized learning".

She's got on in life. Now the envelopes that get pushed through her door are from kind-hearted billionaires wanting to pay for her fortieth birthday party, as Lord Ali did last year. Others aren't so lucky. Others get stuck in failing schools, the victims of what Gove called, she said, "the soft bigotry of low expectations".

Phillipson wants to change that. "Hard work is what counts," she said, "no matter your background. I believe in that promise, in making that dream real."

The trouble is, there are a lot of fortysomething politicians around who like to think their triumph over

adversity is proof that, given a fair chance, anyone can do it, but it isn't. They are living proof only of a world that no longer exists. To take but one example, in 15 years time, a 41-year-old MP who's had 15 years of generous MP's pay, will almost certainly not have paid off even half their student loan. Phillipson's last big policy announcement was to make tuition fees much more expensive, and to pave the way for them to keep on rising, every year. Hard work might be what counts, but it doesn't really pay anymore, even for the children who don't get left behind, never mind the ones who do.

If Phillipson's name is to be added to the roll call of regular cross-party admiration, with Gove and Blunkett and the rest, that is the problem she'll have to try to solve, and it is harder than anything her predecessors had to contend with.

In the meantime, she has come up with more detailed "report cards" for schools, which have five categories not four: "Good," "outstanding," "requires improvement" and "inadequate" are out. "Exemplary" and "causing concern" are in.

Mercifully, there is as yet no grading system for the new grading system. If hard work is what pays, it's hard to avoid the sense that the "new" system has been copied out on the school bus.

Supply teachers rewarded with free holidays to Spain

Mark Ludlow

Companies being paid hundreds of millions of pounds to provide supply teachers to the struggling state education system are rewarding employees with all-expenses-paid holidays to party destinations in Spain.

Filling gaps caused by illnesses, holidays and other shortages has become a multibillion-pound industry. The government spent more than £1.2 billion on supply teachers in 2022-23.

Providers such as Just Teachers and Zest Education have benefited and are rewarding their staff with incentive trips to the Costa del Sol, an investigation by The Daily Mail has found.

Just Teachers and Zest took their staff to the Hard Rock Hotel where they partied by the pool. The Mail published pictures of the Zest Education co-founder, Mike Talbot, and its managing director, Scott Barker, clutching bottles of premium vodka. Instagram posts from Zest Education employees — with the caption "the only way is Zest" — showed staff by the pool.

Staff on a trip paid for by Just Teachers, which made gross profit of £8.9 million last year on turnover of almost £30 million, were seen sipping cocktails, jumping on inflatable flamingos and partying in a pool near a DJ booth.

Nearly 14,000 teachers called in sick per day in 2023-24, according to an analysis of official data by the TaxPayers' Alliance. The Mail estimated that agencies had taken more than £300 million in fees from the total £1.2 billion paid for supply teachers in 2022-23.

A research paper last year reported that schools were paying almost a 100 per cent mark-up for supply teachers, which mostly ends up with private agencies. The paper, commissioned by the Department of Education, said that the average daily cost for a supply teacher was £218 for primary schools, £291 for secondary schools and £270 for special schools. However, the average daily pay rate reported by the supply teachers surveyed was £136 for primary school, £150 for secondary school and £270 for special schools.

Zest Education told the Mail that the company "definitely doesn't exploit our schools", and sponsored events for special needs students.

Just Teachers said the company ran occasional team-building and training events to "reward staff who often work 12-hour days to support UK schools".

It added: "Our margin covers the cost of our staff, a network of premises in the UK and Australia, systems and general overheads, leaving us with a relatively small net profit."

Yeehaw! Beyoncé's country hit helps her win best album gong at long last

Keiran Southern Los Angeles
Peter Chappell

Beyoncé's foray into country music was rewarded with her first Grammy for album of the year during a ceremony that served as a love letter to Los Angeles as the city recovers from devastating wildfires.

The biggest night in music struck a sombre note, with performances from some of the world's biggest artists mixed with reminders of January's disaster. Trevor Noah, the comedian hosting the ceremony, said over \$7 million had been raised for relief efforts.

Beyoncé, the most awarded artist in Grammys history, had for years been overlooked for the biggest prize by the Recording Academy but that streak was broken on Sunday. *Cowboy Carter*, an album that provoked debate over what constitutes country music, was named album of the year, succeeding where her other acclaimed records *Renaissance* and *Lemonade* had failed. She beat Taylor Swift to the prize.

"I just feel very full and very honoured," Beyoncé said in her acceptance speech. "It's been many, many years."

She also won best country album "I think sometimes genre is a codeword to keep us in place as artists," she said.

The rapper Kendrick Lamar won two of the so-called big four awards — for best song and record of the year, both for *Not Like Us*, the disparaging track against his rival, Drake, which became a massive mainstream hit.

"We're going to dedicate this one to the city," Lamar, who grew up in Compton, south of Los Angeles, said.

The Beatles secured their 14th award, winning best rock performance for their AI-assisted track *Now and Then*, 50 years after splitting up. John

Taylor Swift presented Beyoncé with one of her awards

Roll of honour

Record of the year

Not Like Us by Kendrick Lamar

Album of the year

Cowboy Carter by Beyoncé

Song of the year

Not Like Us by Kendrick Lamar

Best new artist

Chappell Roan

Best pop vocal album

Short n' Sweet by Sabrina Carpenter

Best rock album

Hackney Diamonds by The Rolling Stones

Best country album

Cowboy Carter by Beyoncé

Best rock performance

Now and Then by The Beatles

Best alternative album

All Born Screaming by St Vincent

Best dance/electronic album

Brat by Charli XCX

Best rap album

Alligator Bites Never Heal by DoeChii

Best producer non-classical

Daniel Nigro

Best music video

Not Like Us by Kendrick Lamar

Best rap song

Not Like Us by Kendrick Lamar

Best dance/electronic recording

Neverender by Justice and Tame Impala

Best dance pop recording

Von Dutch by Charli XCX

Best Latin pop album

Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran by Shakira

The night's big winners included Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar and Charli XCX, who brought Brat to the stage, below

Lennon's son Sean collected the award on the band's behalf. The Rolling Stones beat younger rivals to win best rock album for *Hackney Diamonds*.

Charli XCX, who was raised in Essex, took home three trophies: for best dance/electronic album for *Brat*, best dance pop recording for her single *Von Dutch*, and best recording package for *Brat*. She performed *Von Dutch* and *Guess* on a stage filled with celebrities, including Julia Fox, the actress and model, and the transgender supermodel Alex Consani.

Chappell Roan, 26, was named best new artist. Reading an acceptance speech from a journal, she urged record labels and executives to better provide for musicians. "I

told myself that if I ever won a Grammy and got to stand up here in front of the most powerful people in music, I would demand that labels and the industry profiting millions of dollars off of artists would offer a liveable wage and healthcare," she said.

Earlier in the ceremony she performed her hit *Pink Pony Club*, a synth-pop tribute to the West Hollywood gay scene.

Sabrina Carpenter, another young female artist who has dominated the charts in the past year, won best pop vocal album for *Short n' Sweet*. She sang a medley of her big hits from the past year, including *Espresso*, which was No 1 in the UK for seven weeks.

However, the overall tone of the ceremony was one of sadness after the wildfires that left at least 29 people dead.

Billie Eilish, the night's first performer, who is from Los Angeles, sang *Birds*

of a Feather against a backdrop of southern California's rugged hills. "I love you LA," she said after her performance.

The adverts during the televised broadcast celebrated businesses affected by the fires and the ceremony featured footage taken on the night of the devastating fires.

Album of the year was presented by members of the Los Angeles Fire Department, to rapturous applause.

Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga performed a tribute to the city, covering the Mamas & the Papas' 1965 hit *California Dreamin'*. They also won best pop duo/group performance for *Die With a Smile*.

The surprise superstar performance of the night, heavily teased by producers, turned out to be the Weeknd, the Canadian R&B artist who had pledged a permanent boycott of the ceremony in 2021. He had alleged that corruption was rife in the academy after he was snubbed for nominations.

Issues with the academy took a back-seat to the fires, while politics also played second fiddle to the night's overriding theme. However, current affairs did inevitably play a part. Noah quipped in his opening monologue: "We're going to be honouring the best in music as voted on by the 13,000 members of the Recording Academy ... and 20 million illegal immigrants."

Shakira, the Colombian singer, also referenced the policies of President Trump. After winning best Latin pop album for *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran*, meaning "Women No Longer Cry", she dedicated the prize to "all my immigrant brothers and sisters in this country".

Lady Gaga said in her acceptance speech that "trans people are not invisible", apparently a response to Trump's executive order stating that the United States will only recognise two sexes.

Will Smith, exiled from the Oscars after slapping Chris Rock during the ceremony in 2022, was given a prominent spot at the Grammys — introducing a tribute to Quincy Jones. The music producer — who served as an executive producer on Smith's hit show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* — died in November aged 91. Cynthia Erivo, Stevie Wonder and Janelle Monáe performed during the tribute to Jones.

The rapper Kanye West arrived with his wife Bianca Censori, dressed in a large fur coat. The Australian architect and model removed the coat in front of the cameras to reveal a nude see-through mesh mini-dress but soon left with her husband before the ceremony started.

Beyoncé's foray into country shows that genres are there to be escaped, leading article, page 25
Deeply creepy clothing, Robert Crampton, Times2

Gen Z 'eco-anxious' about holidays

Ben Clatworthy Travel Correspondent

Almost half of Gen Z travellers worry about the environmental impact of their holidays compared with fewer than a third of over-60s, according to a new survey.

Research by YouGov found that 31 per cent of baby boomers — those aged between 60 and 70 — said they had worried about the impact of their travel on the environment and local communities, while that figure drops to 26 per cent among those aged over 78.

However, younger generations are far more likely to suffer from "eco-anxiety", with 47 per cent of adult Gen Zs (aged 18-27) and 42 per cent of millennials (aged 28-41) admitting they've worried about the environmental impact of their travel.

The figures, which were commis-

sioned by The Social Hub, a hotel and co-working business, highlight the generational void between holidaymakers, with Gen Z and millennials the most likely age groups to avoid flying.

The findings are consistent with those presented in The State of Student and Youth Travel in 2024, the annual report by Student Universe, the largest youth travel agency.

It found that 13 per cent of students said they would not travel by plane because of the emissions and a further 21 per cent already know someone who refuses to travel by air. Another 23 per cent said they are willing to pay an optional carbon offset fee when booking.

A growing number of travel companies are creating "no fly" itineraries in response to the growing trend. Last year Byway, a no-fly tour operator, launched an Ibiza holiday with First

Choice aimed squarely at younger travellers.

The YouGov survey also found 48 per cent of adult UK Gen Z believe a hotel's environmental credentials are important, as did 43 per cent of millennials. This drops to 32 per cent of Gen X — those in their forties and fifties — and 32 per cent of baby boomers.

Amber Westerborg, the director of sustainability and impact at The Social Hub, said the poll demonstrated the "rising significance of sustainable and responsible travel amongst younger generations".

"Younger generations have grown up surrounded by debate on the impact our actions can have on the environment and other people, so it stands to reason they are more concerned about how their travel choices may affect the world they live in."

Railways ban posters for Channel 4 refugee show

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Network Rail has banned a series of "off-kilter" billboard advertisements that promote the Channel 4 show *Go Back To Where You Came From*.

The rejected posters featured opinions about the programme taken from social media. The documentary follows six Britons with different views on immigration who go on a journey that mirrors those taken by refugees.

The posters' messages included "Six fools manipulated by left-wing media", "Six Brits learn what empathy is" and "utter woke nonsense".

Network Rail vetoed the campaign despite Channel 4 insiders saying it did not breach advertising regulations. The

railway company said: "We felt their good-taste radar was off kilter. We provided advice and will instead, be carrying a revised version."

Channel 4's resubmitted advert features a snarky message: "We may or may not have been advised to state that the name of our new show may or may not be too upsetting to put on this poster. Maybe. Or not."

"Presumably displaying real comments about our new show was too divisive for this poster. Sorry."

The trailer for the show dismayed refugee charities last month. Amnesty International said it was "deeply disappointing" Channel 4 had chosen to challenge people's views about refugees in this way.

Visa fees for scientists are an act of national self-harm, warn peers

Tom Whipple Science Editor

Britain is engaged in an “act of national self-harm” by pursuing a visa policy that deters talented scientists, a House of Lords committee has said.

The competitiveness of the country's universities and businesses is being seriously hampered through high upfront costs and a lack of flexibility on immigration, the committee argued, making it harder to attract the skills they need.

It is also adding to the costs of some of the organisations employing them. A

report by Cancer Research UK claimed that visa costs for its research institutions came to almost £700,000 a year.

Writing to Yvette Cooper, the home secretary, Baroness Brown of Cambridge, the outgoing chair of the science and technology select committee, said this threatened the success of key industries and sectors.

“We cannot be complacent about the UK's continued attractiveness as a destination for top scientists and technology experts,” she wrote. “We are deeply concerned that the current

policies, including rapidly rising visa fees and immigration policy uncertainty, are severely harming the UK's ability to compete in this race.”

In particular, she highlighted the “health surcharge”, a fee designed as a down payment on healthcare costs. For someone bringing a partner it can exceed £10,000.

The letter came before a government white paper on immigration. Alison Noble, foreign secretary for the Royal Society, said that she hoped it would be an opportunity to correct some of the

problems that were holding science back.

“We are in a competitive international marketplace for talent,” she said. “It is crucial for economic growth that the UK can attract and retain top scientists and innovators from around the world.”

“These ambitions are currently hampered by disproportionately high upfront visa costs, up to 17 times higher than other leading nations.”

The committee said that many in Europe were viewing President

Trump's election as a chance to attract researchers who might otherwise go to the United States. The fear was that universities and research institutions would suffer from a national policy of lowering migration, it said.

“It is critical, as the government seeks to reduce net migration, that the impact this has on key growth-driving sectors is recognised and mitigations are put in place,” it wrote.

The Home Office said: “It is clear that we must end reliance on overseas labour and boost economic growth.”



Tory time The King welcomed Kemi Badenoch to Buckingham Palace. It was the first time in 19 years an opposition leader held a private meeting with the monarch

Rayner plans Islamophobia advisory panel

Caolán Magee

Angela Rayner is planning to establish a government advisory council on Islamophobia and is considering a former Conservative minister to chair its board.

The 16-member panel will advise ministers on tackling Islamophobia and draw up an official government definition for anti-Muslim discrimination. The advisory council will sit within Rayner's portfolio in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Dominic Grieve, the former Conservative attorney-general, has been recommended to lead the council due to his longstanding work on the issue, according to the Daily Telegraph, citing unnamed sources. He previously chaired the Citizens UK Commission on Islam, which sought to improve dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, and wrote the foreword to a 2018 all-party parliamentary group report that proposed a definition of Islamophobia, adopted by Labour.

Tell Mama UK, a monitoring group that tracks complaints of anti-Muslim hate crimes, recorded 4,971 incidents between October 7, 2023 and September 30, 2024, the highest in 14 years.

An MHCLG spokesman said: “All forms of religious and racial hatred have absolutely no place in our society.”

Miliband fought to reopen airport

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

Ed Miliband lobbied the aviation minister to intervene in his fight to reopen his local airport despite being the most vocal critic of Heathrow expansion in cabinet.

The energy and net zero secretary has been campaigning for flights to resume from Doncaster Sheffield airport, despite the impact the flights would have on the environment.

Miliband's “pet project” was given government-backing by Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, as part of her growth speech last week, in a move that sources said was designed to “placate” him over his opposition to Heathrow.

Despite the warm words, he was absent from the audience in Oxfordshire for the speech which centred on giving Heathrow the green light to proceed with plans for a third runway.

He was outspoken about his objection to the scheme at cabinet last week and told MPs on the Commons environmental audit committee that it would not go ahead if it did not meet the

UK's emissions targets. He said: “I just want to sort of provide this element of reassurance to you, which is 100 per cent any aviation expansion must be justified within carbon budgets, and if it can't be justified, it won't go ahead.”

Yet behind the scenes he is lobbying for more flights arriving and departing the UK with the reopening of Doncaster-Sheffield.

Last year he signed a letter to Mike Kane, the aviation minister, to “strongly request” that he intervene to ensure that the former airport's controlled airspace was not dismantled by the Civil Aviation Authority, despite its closure.

In November, he also appeared at the launch of the “Doncaster Sheffield Airport Action Group”, which was also attended by Kane. Miliband said that the pair “discussed how we can be the link between Doncaster council and parliament with the drive to reopen the airport”.

The airport closed in November 2022 after its owners, Peel Group, said it was “not viable due to its lack of adequate forward revenues and high operating costs”.

One of the significant issues is the site's proximity to other airports. Within a 70-mile radius passengers can fly from Manchester, Leeds Bradford, East Midlands and Humberside, all of which are well-connected airports served by big airlines.

Miliband was particularly concerned that the CAA would remove the controlled airspace around Doncaster Sheffield and warned that doing so “would mean the future functionality of an airport would be detrimentally affected”.

The letter to Kane, signed by Miliband and three other MPs, said: “As time is of the essence in our determination to reopen the airport, we strongly request that you as aviation minister intervene in preventing a long and convoluted new process that could place

the airport, its operator and the airlines and freight companies at risk, to put this quite simply, dismantling the airspace is not an option.”

A senior aviation source said: “Miliband has been vocal about how Heathrow expansion shouldn't happen if it will harm net zero goals.”

“But he's also been lobbying ministers for his own pet-project airport, despite its location making it unattractive to airlines.”

Michael O'Leary, the chief executive of Ryanair, said that the airport was a “hard sell” and not part of the company's growth plans.

“We used to fly to Doncaster, but there isn't much of a traffic base there,” he said.

“It's close to Leeds Bradford and Leeds has grown rapidly with us and Jet2 in



Ed Miliband is critical of Heathrow expansion

the last five or six years. I think it's a very tough sell in the shadow of Leeds Bradford [airport].”

Reeves said that the government would work with the City of Doncaster Council and Oliver Coppard, the mayor of South Yorkshire, to “recreate South Yorkshire Airport City as a thriving regional airport”.

A decision from the South Yorkshire mayoral combined authority on the council's plan to use £100 million of public money on the reopening is expected by the summer. If approved, flights could resume in 2026.

Christine Gilligan Kubo, the Green Party councillor for Huddersborough on Sheffield city council, said airport expansion “cannot be part of any serious plans to address climate change”.

She told the BBC: “Reopening DSA with all its additional flights will only make achieving our carbon targets more difficult.”

“We see every day the impact of rising carbon emissions on our local and global environment. We know if these emissions aren't addressed it will only get worse.”

Labour donor's dogs must be put down after savaging hens

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

A millionaire Labour donor faces having three Turkish Kangal dogs destroyed after a rampage in which they killed his neighbour's chickens and attacked a jogger.

The dogs escaped from a compound at a farm owned by Anwar Ansari, Willesden magistrates' court in London was told.

They broke down an electric fence to enter the garden of the neighbouring Payne-James family in Croydon, south London. The parents and young children watched in terror as the dogs tore apart their three chickens.

Deone Payne-James, a psychotherapist, told the court in a statement that she had watched the "three giant dogs barking and attacking the chicken coop" in July 2023. "The traumatic events have left me feeling depressed, scared and paranoid at times," she



Anwar Ansari's Turkish Kangals also attacked a dog and its owner in a park

said. "I now live in a state of hyper-vigilance and fear. I am now anxious when I'm outside and no longer enjoy gardening."

The Kangal dogs escaped into Lloyd Park, where they tried to attack a dog named Ziggy owned by Neil O'Rourke, who was jogging. The owner threw himself over Ziggy to protect it and was repeatedly bitten on the face. O'Rourke said in a statement: "The three dogs kept chasing, it appeared they were hunting like a pack. They ran over and

jumped on top of Ziggy. They bit me several times on the hand, face and neck."

Ansari, 67, had signed an "acceptable behaviour contract" about his pets two months before the incident. The Kangals had also escaped their enclosure in March that year.

Ansari, who denied the charges, was convicted last November on three counts of owning a dog dangerously out of control causing injury, and three counts of owning a dog dangerously out of control not causing an injury.

He and his companies have donated more than £50,000 to Yvette Cooper, the home secretary, almost £20,000 to Sir Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, and greater sums to the local and national Labour parties. Ansari trained as an eye surgeon before becoming a property developer.

Azra Khan, representing Ansari, told the court: "He is very unhappy about the fact the dogs escaped and very, very uncomfortable — he is very remorseful that they escaped." She suggested that the Payne-James family "banging on the windows from inside [their home] possibly made the dogs more agitated". Khan added: "These are more or less gentle dogs and obviously something has gone wrong on that particular day."

Judge Mark Jabbitt said: "The bottom line is that Dr Ansari was ultimately responsible for these three large dogs who were not trained, not kept as guard dogs. He did not heed previous warnings — they weren't kept securely."

He was fined £1,000 for each offence of the dogs causing injury and £500 for each offence not involving injury. He was ordered to pay £10,000 compensation to O'Rourke and a total of £3,000 to the Payne-James family. He must also pay £53,000 in costs, £1,800 surcharge and is disqualified from owning a dog for ten years. The judge ordered the destruction of the dogs, saying they were "a danger to the public".

Ansari said he would appeal against his conviction, sentence and disqualification from owning dogs.



Brothers in £400k fight with father's Thai lover

A builder's £400,000 estate is at the centre of a legal row between his sons and his Thai former girlfriend, who has travelled to the UK to ask a judge to give her half of the money (Jonathan Ames writes).

Roger Burrage killed himself in 2023, aged 75, 17 months after returning to the UK, having spent many of his final years in Thailand. He had built a three-bedroom seaside villa on the Malay peninsula said to be worth up to £240,000.

The High Court was told that while he was in Thailand Burrage began a relationship with Kanokporn Nattachai, 40, a beautician. She moved into his villa, which included an outdoor pool, guest house and games room.

Burrage had arranged that, on his death, Nattachai would inherit the villa while the rest of his estate would go to his

sons, Simon and David.

Last week Nattachai flew to London to face the sons in court, where she has claimed half of the remaining estate, which has been valued at about £400,000. She said Burrage owed her almost £200,000 and had promised to provide for her after his death.

The sons dispute the claim and told the court their father's relationship with Nattachai had ended before his death. Simon, a surveyor, and David, a carpenter, told the court their father had been generous to his former partner, having given her gifts that included "financing or facilitating" the purchase of her beauty treatments shop, as well as giving her the villa. The court was told that Burrage, a widower, moved to Thailand from Surrey and became involved in the property business there, using his experien



Simon and David Burrage are locked in a legal tussle with Kanokporn Nattachai, below, over the UK estate of their late father, Roger, who lived on Thailand's Malay peninsula, above

ce of the construction trade. His sons accept that he formed a relationship with Nattachai in about 2016 and that the couple had lived together but say the relationship ended before he returned to the UK in 2021.

The court heard that Burrage had suffered from mental health difficulties and taken his own life at the start of 2023. Under the terms of a 2006 will, his sons inherited his

English estate but Nattachai has started a multi-pronged challenge. If her claim to the £200,000 fails, she will argue that Burrage's estate did not leave her "adequate financial provision".

Lydia Pemberton, a barrister representing the brothers, told the court Burrage had not been in a loving relationship with Nattachai after he left Thailand and that they had not worked in partnership together. The case reached court last week after the brothers applied for a "security for costs" order that would force Nattachai to pay in advance to cover their legal bills if she loses the case. The judge agreed and will give full details at a later date.

Boy killed by falling mirror in store

Caolán Magee

A five-year-old boy died after he appeared to touch a large mirror in a department store while looking at his own reflection and it fell on him, an inquest was told.

Freddie Farrow appeared to use "very little force" and an Essex Police detective formed the view that the mirror "must have been very near or on its balance point", the hearing in Chelmsford was told. The mirror, which was 8ft 6in high and nearly 2ft wide, toppled on to Freddie at the Fenwick store in Colchester on July 27, 2021, according to a police report.

It was estimated to weigh about 11st, Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Michael Pannell told the inquest.

Pannell said police were called to the scene and the boy was taken to Col-



Freddie Farrow was in Fenwick department store with his mother

chester Hospital then transferred to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, where he died on August 2, 2021.

Pannell said a report by a colleague, Detective Inspector Fred Tomkins, gave the dimensions of the mirror and also estimated its weight. There was a metal bracket on the wall and a metal bracket on the mirror, and a wooden part of the bracket was in pieces.

Pannell, reading from the report, said: "It was my view that this part of the bracket between the two metal brackets had effectively come apart, leaving it

freestanding and leaning against the wall." The officer said the incident was captured on CCTV, with Freddie seen to enter the lingerie section of the store with his mother and her friend.

"Freddie appears to touch the mirror, looking at his own reflection," said Pannell. "The mirror appears to shimmer before moving forwards."

Tomkins's report said that "very little force was used by Freddie, and my view is the mirror must have been very near or on its balance point".

Lincoln Brookes, senior coroner for Essex, said the "distressing" CCTV footage would not be shown. He told the jurors a "large mirror attached to a column fell over on top of him [Freddie], causing very serious head injuries". The inquest was told that he suffered a "catastrophic brain injury".

The inquest continues.

Grandmother wins £90,000 after botched dental operation

A grandmother has won almost £90,000 in damages after a Harley Street dentist told her to "put up with it" during a botched operation that was "excruciatingly" painful.

Caroline Bailey had to endure unbearable and extreme pain as Dr Monica Bijlani, who has been a dentist for 30 years, negligently drilled into the root of a tooth while fitting a dental implant.

Bailey, 60, lost part of her jaw as a result of the procedure and developed a debilitating bowel condition due to the painkillers she had to take.

The High Court found Bijlani, 59, did not bother to carry out a "full or proper assessment" of Bailey and drilled in an implant that was too big for her mouth, causing an infection. After three sit-

tings — one of which was described as "horrendous and traumatising" — Bailey went to accident and emergency and had to spend ten days in hospital.

The court was told during one visit, Bailey was in agony and did not think she was being given effective pain relief, but Bijlani told her to "put up with it". Bijlani was ordered to pay Bailey £87,663 in damages after being sued by the mother-of-five.

The court was told that Bijlani did not measure Bailey's jaw or take an x-ray — instead relying on information from a visit two years ago — or tell Bailey about the associated risks.

"Some of the equipment being used seemed to be ineffective and parts were coming off," the judgment said.



Gloom with a view Some of the books in the library at Kingston Lacy, near Wimborne, Dorset, date from the early 1300s and must be protected from direct sunlight

Cutbacks 'exposing consumers to rip-offs'

Andrew Ellison
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Consumers are being left exposed to crime, dangerous products and "blatant rip-offs" after the hollowing out of trading standards, according to Which?

The consumer group put in freedom of information requests to every council in Britain to see how denuded the consumer protection service has become following years of austerity.

The research found that some areas now have fewer than one trading standards officer for every 100,000 people and that small teams of staff are responsible for enforcing compliance by some of the world's biggest businesses.

Kensington and Chelsea council, for example, has only five trading standards staff who have to deal with all local issues but also act as the primary authority for eBay, the online marketplace with between 15 million and 20 million users in the UK.

The research found that two local authorities, Enfield and Lambeth councils, have just one full-time trading standards officer, and as a result, have virtually no enforcement of basic rules such as checking restaurant hygiene standards.

Enfield council cut its trading standards team from four officers in 2023, leaving just one full-time member of staff and one part-time employee responsible for enforcing almost 300 pieces of legislation.

As a result the borough, which has a population of 330,000, managed only one prosecution and six seizures of products over the past year and completed no routine inspections, test purchases or cautions.

The research also found that the level of protection depends on where people live, with many more officers working in some areas. Trading standards for Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay, for example, has 67 total staff and Lancashire county council has 56.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute says that spending on trading standards services has been cut by more than 50 per cent over the past decade. Over the same period, fraud has become the most commonly experienced crime in the country, accounting for more than 40 per cent of all offences.

About two thirds of trading standards services that answered the Which? questions said that low staffing levels meant that they could not investigate tip-offs at least some of the time. They also reported facing a "constant battle" in choosing where to focus resources and some said that they are having to give less priority to traditional areas of work and routine inspections.

Rocio Concha, Which? director of policy and advocacy, said: "Our research shows that trading standards is no longer fit for purpose. Millions of people face a postcode lottery, which dictates whether they get adequate protection."

"The government could be spending taxpayers' money more wisely. Without urgent reform to the current system, there could be disastrous consequences for consumers, responsible businesses and economic growth."

Heather Kidd, of the Local Government Association, which represents councils, blamed "ongoing budget constraints".

She added: "This is compounded by regulatory services' ageing workforce and a lack of new entrants."

Potholes make it too perilous to deliver mail, hamlet is told

Ali Mitib

An isolated hamlet has been cut off from postal deliveries after Royal Mail said potholes on the country road leading up to it had made driving there too dangerous.

The eight residents of Essworthy, on the outskirts of Hatherleigh in Devon, must instead make a 14-mile round trip to Okehampton to collect their post.

Val Bennallick, 62, said she found out that Royal Mail was no longer delivering to her home more than a month after deliveries were paused in December.

After sending several emails of complaint, she received a response from Royal Mail saying that "the lane approach to your property is unsafe and the safety of our employees is paramount".

However, Bennallick, a retired teacher who has multiple sclerosis, said she had no problem driving down the lane in her Ford Fiesta.

"Over the last two years, everybody who lives in a place like ours is slowly being cut off from the system and either has to have a post box put up somewhere else or collect their mail from Okehampton," she said.

"I don't want to be cut off from the mail, but I wasn't told for over a month. You think to yourself, how on earth can that happen? It's just ridiculous. After a month, they said it was too unsafe to come down here and that they're very sorry."

She added: "The attitude seems to be that 'Oh, you know, one day if we



Royal Mail told one resident that "the lane approach to your property is unsafe"

stop somebody's delivery, one day they'll wonder why they're not getting any post and they'll come in search of it."

Bennallick acknowledged that the road leading up to the hamlet "wasn't a good lane" but pointed out that Essworthy's residents go in and out every day.

"The oil deliveries come in and out. There isn't a tradesman or anything who won't come down here, apart from the Royal Mail," she said.

"To me, it's a vital service. I do a lot of things online but some things have to

be sent to me, like labels for my regular blood tests."

Bennallick complained to Royal Mail in a number of emails, including one to Emma Gilthorpe, chief executive of Royal Mail, in which she described the service's treatment of her as "unbelievable, unprofessional, uncaring and downright disgusting".

"All the upset and stress this has caused would be bad enough for any young, fit person but I have a number of health issues, including multiple sclerosis, and this has made me ill having to deal with all this," Bennallick said.

"Having to do that trip for the rest of my life to get my post just fills me with dread and despair."

In response to Bennallick's complaints, a Royal Mail employee apologised for the problems she had faced in receiving post. They said they had contacted the local delivery office manager to see how the problems could be resolved. Bennallick is now awaiting a response from the delivery office manager.

Last week it was announced that Royal Mail would be allowed to scrap deliveries for second-class letters on Saturdays and reduce the service to alternate weekdays under plans put forward by the regulator Ofcom.

The regulator said it had provisionally concluded that the changes, while keeping first-class deliveries on six days a week, would put the universal service on a more sustainable footing while protecting features of the post that matter most to people.

The Gift Card Association, which represents a £15 billion sector including retailers, publishers and printers, called for a parliamentary inquiry into the decision.

Last year Royal Mail wrote to Okehampton town council apologising for the slow postal service after residents expressed concerns.

In the letter, seen by the Okehampton Times, a Royal Mail employee said that staff shortages and sickness at the Okehampton delivery office were responsible for the delays.

Royal Mail was approached for comment.

JIM WILEMAN FOR THE TIMES

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Taking a shot at Broadway

The actor Angus Deayton has been a frustrated footballer all his life but at least he can boast that he once got one over Diego Maradona. It came during a Soccer Aid match in 2006 where Deayton was marking the Argentinian, whose cheating beat England in the 1986 World Cup. "I managed to foul him without the referee noticing," Deayton tells *My Time Capsule*. "It felt like payback for the 'Hand of God'." This was a step-up from his usual games with celebrity pals, which aren't exactly heaving with alpha males. "I used to think the Monday game was the campest I played in because two of the players were up for Olivier awards," said Deayton, above. "Then I realised, in the Tuesday game, two players had a bet to see who could get their musical on Broadway first."

My item on Saturday about in-jokes at funerals brought an email from Kevin Rushfirth about a cartoon he saw after the death of Barry Cryer, star of Radio 4's *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*, showing the coffin by the grave while the vicar announces: "We will now sing *The Lord's my Shepherd* to the tune of *Knees up Mother Brown*."



ON TO A WINNER
Restaurateur Sally Clarke has had to ban some awkward famous customers but coyly refused to reveal the worst. Clarke merely told Rachel Johnson's *Difficult Women* podcast that he was "a B-movie director and restaurant critic". Assuming our beloved Giles hasn't been making flicks on the side, that leaves a shortlist of one. What did he do to upset Clarke? Perhaps he told her to "Calm down, dear".

DRESSING DOWN
There is no harsher critic of a dad's fashion than his daughter. The actor Steve Coogan says his always ticks him off for wearing "fifty shades of beige", so he was thrilled after winning an award a few years ago to receive a text from Dame Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of *Vogue*. "Great speech. Good suit," it said. He proudly showed this to his offspring but she wasn't impressed,

remarking: "It didn't say, 'Good speech. Great suit.'"
David Hunt has returned to the Tory front bench after 15 years to shadow the business brief. The peer joined Margaret Thatcher's cabinet as Welsh secretary in 1990 but surprised the then prime minister by saying that it was an honour, having been born in Wales. "Oh, were you?" asked Thatcher, who probably thought that as an MP for the Wirral that was near enough. And nearer than his successor: John Redwood.

MISSIVE OVERSIGHT
The explorer and aesthete George Mallory disappeared near the summit of Everest in 1924. Like his friends in the Bloomsbury set, Mallory was always trying to mount things but his homosexual affairs are one subject he didn't write home about to his vicar father, Herbert, in a book of unpublished missives, *Letters From Everest*, collected by his great-nephew Tom Newton Dunn. Yet parents often know their children better than they think. The day after George announced a surprise engagement to a woman, Herbert wrote to his wife: "I am delighted about George. One always thought he was proof against feminine charms!"

PATRICK KIDD

Helping humans goes down a treat with apes

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

Nobody enjoys having their ignorance pointed out to them, but it can be helpful when someone spots a gap in your knowledge and gives you a friendly tip to help get the job done.

Apes possess this very ability, scientists have found, discovering that bonobos are able to tell when a human is ignorant of something important and needs to be brought up to speed.

It suggests that the instinct to say "here's something you might not know" or "I think you'll find..." may not be uniquely human.

In one experiment, the important information in question was the location of a treat that had been placed under one of three upturned containers on a table, like the trick where a magician hides a ball under a cup.

In the first scenario, the bonobos were sitting face-to-face across the table from a researcher. A treat in the form of a piece of cereal or a grape was placed under one of the three cups in full view of the bonobo and the human.

In this case, it was evident to the bonobo that the human must know which cup was hiding the treat, as it was clearly visible to the researcher when it was hidden. The bonobo would wait patiently for the human to retrieve the treat and hand it over.

Even when the researcher asked "Where's the grape?" the bonobo would sit still, evidently refusing to answer the

question when it knew the human needed no help in finding it.

In the second scenario, a screen would be placed between the researcher and the cups to shield them from the human's view while the treat was placed under a cup. It was evident to the bonobo, therefore, that the human could not know which cup the treat was under because they had not been able to see it being hidden.

When the researcher asked "Where's the grape?" the bonobos very quickly — and sometimes very excitedly — pointed to the correct cup.

"Their fingers would point right through the mesh, it was clear what they were trying to communicate," said Chris Krupenye, an assistant professor of psychological and brain sciences at Johns Hopkins University, a co-author of the study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. "The results also suggest apes can simultaneously hold two conflicting worldviews in their mind. They know exactly where the food is, and at the same time, they know that their partner's view of the same situation is missing that information."

The university said the study "demonstrated for the first time that apes will communicate unknown information in the name of teamwork", noting that it "also provides the clearest evidence to date that apes can intuit another's ignorance, an ability thought to be uniquely human".





O₂

Save up to £188

New year. New deals.
January Sale, now on

In-store | online | 0800 089 0702

Apple Intelligence
Available now

Apple Intelligence is available in beta on all iPhone 16 models, iPhone 15 Pro, and iPhone 15 Pro Max with Siri and device language set to English (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, UK, or US), as an iOS 18 update. Additional features and languages will be available in 2025.

Representative example	Duration of Device Plan	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total Amount Payable for Device	Interest Rate	Representative APR	Cash Price	Airtime Plan Today to March 2025	Airtime Plan April 2025 to March 2026	Airtime Plan April 2026 to March 2027
iPhone 16 128GB	36 months	£30	£19.98	£719.20	£749.20	0%	0%	£749.20	£24	£24 + £1.80 = £25.80	£25.80 + £1.80 = £27.60

£19.98 Device Plan for 36 months and £24 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. £30 upfront. £188.36 saving consists of £116.36 discount applied to Device Plan (total cost of device was £865.56 now £749.20) and further £72 saving achieved by £2 per month discount on all Airtime Plans, excluding Ultimate Plans over 36 months. Airtime discount applies until you change tariff, leave or upgrade. Data allowances must be used within the month and cannot be carried over. Subject to availability. Ends 19 March 2025. O2 Refresh custom plans: Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 36 months (excludes dongles). 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. Offer Ends 19th March 2025. UK calls/texts to standard UK landlines and mobiles and when roaming in our Europe Zone. Europe Zone data only. Fair usage policy applies. Special and out of bundle numbers chargeable. Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+ Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, RG2 6JU. Telefónica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms

£19.98 Device Plan for 36 months and £24 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. £30 upfront. £188.36 saving consists of £116.36 discount applied to Device Plan (total cost of device was £865.56 now £749.20) and further £72 saving achieved by £2 per month discount on all Airtime Plans, excluding Ultimate Plans over 36 months. Airtime discount applies until you change tariff, leave or upgrade. Data allowances must be used within the month and cannot be carried over. Subject to availability. Ends 19 March 2025. O2 Refresh custom plans: Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 36 months (excludes dongles). 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. Offer Ends 19th March 2025. UK calls/texts to standard UK landlines and mobiles and when roaming in our Europe Zone. Europe Zone data only. Fair usage policy applies. Special and out of bundle numbers chargeable. Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+ Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, RG2 6JU. Telefónica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms

Logo on books will show that the author was not a chatbot

Peter Chappell

The American body that represents writers has created a logo for books to show readers that a work “emanates from human intellect” and not from artificial intelligence.

The Authors Guild initiative, called Human Authored, gives writers access to promotional materials to show their work has not involved the use of AI.

The campaign “isn’t about rejecting technology — it’s about creating transparency, acknowledging the reader’s desire for human connection and celebrating the uniquely human elements of storytelling,” Mary Rasenberger, chief executive of the Authors Guild, said.



Sir Ian Rankin is among writers concerned about unlicensed AI

“Authors can still qualify if they use AI as a tool for spellchecking or research but the certification connotes that the literary expression itself, with the unique human voice that every author brings to their writing, emanated from the human intellect.”

The guild said that “AI-generated books are flooding online market places and increasingly look like, and sometimes even read like, human-authored books”.

Readers had a right to know whether a text had been written by AI and authors should have the right to distinguish their work from AI-saturated markets, the guild said.

The certifications are listed on a database where the public can verify a book’s human origins. Readers can

search for the registration number from a Human Authored certification mark to see and confirm the details.

There is no such scheme currently available to authors in Britain although the Society of Authors has put together guidelines to help its members protect their work from the effects of AI. The society also conducted a survey last year that found more than a third of translators had lost work because of generative AI.

In light of the survey, the society — the UK’s largest trade union for writers, illustrators and translators — said there was an “urgent need” for government regulation of AI tools to ensure they are developed and used “ethically and lawfully”.

Last year writers including Sir Kazuo Ishiguro, Sir Ian Rankin and Tracy Chevalier were among 11,500 signatories to a statement from the creative industries warning about the “unjust threat” to their jobs from unlicensed AI.

It starkly set out the level of concern in the industries about the rise of services such as ChatGPT when they are developed using content they have not been granted permission to use.

“The unlicensed use of creative works for training generative AI is a major, unjust threat to the livelihoods of the people behind those works, and must not be permitted,” the statement said.

It was signed by musicians, authors and actors. They included Thom Yorke of Radiohead, Björn Ulvaeus of Abba and Robert Smith of the Cure, as well as actors including Kevin Bacon, Rosario Dawson and F Murray Abraham.

The News Media Association, which represents newspapers including The Times and The Sunday Times, was also among the signatories.



Rock on Bob Geldof joined Craigie Els, who plays the Boomtown Rats frontman in Just For One Day, the Live Aid musical, on stage for the curtain call in Toronto

AI screening to check 700k women for breast cancer

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

The NHS will use artificial intelligence to screen 700,000 women for breast cancer as part of a world-leading trial this year.

Several types of the technology, which can help read breast x-rays, or mammograms, will be introduced at 30 breast screening centres. It is part of a new national cancer plan announced by Wes Streeting, the health secretary, which aims to improve survival rates and treatment for the disease.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women, with about 55,000 cases and 12,000 deaths in the UK every year. The NHS screening project invites women aged from 50 to 70 for screening every three years via their GP surgery. About 2.1 million women have the checks each year.

The £11 million “Early detection using information technology in health” (Edith) trial will test different types of AI technology. Studies have suggested AI may be able to spot changes in breast tissue in a mammogram that even a well-trained radiologist might miss.

At present, two specialists are needed per mammogram screening, but AI technology allows only one to be used. If the trial is successful, it could free hundreds of radiologists, helping to cut waiting lists.

Streeting said: “As a cancer survivor, I feel like one of the lucky ones. With record numbers of people diagnosed with cancer, and Lord Darzi [in his 2024 review] finding that cancer survival is worse in this country than our peers, I know that urgent action is needed to save lives and improve patient care.”

Professor Peter Johnson, national clinical director for cancer at the NHS, said: “The NHS is diagnosing more cancers at an early stage than ever before — when treatment is most likely to be effective — but we need to accelerate progress further. A national cancer plan will give us the chance to do just that.”

He said that it would bring in new ideas and ensure the NHS was “at the cutting edge of new cancer developments and innovations”.

iPhone 16 Pro Max



Save £288

Plus save up to £372 when you trade in an eligible phone.

Ends 18.02

Apple Intelligence
Available Now



Scan to shop



Device	Duration of Credit Agreement	Monthly	Credit Amount	Upfront Cost	Total Cash Price	Representative APR	Airtime Plan	Duration	Monthly	Trade-in
iPhone 16 Pro Max	36m	£32pm	£1152	£40	£1192	0%	8GB	36m	£15pm	£15.50

Terms apply: [vodafone.co.uk/terms](https://www.vodafone.co.uk/terms). Vodafone EVO: Device Plan Credit Agreement with an Airtime Plan. You can pay off your Device Plan early, and if you do, keep your Airtime Plan on a 30-day contract or leave. Save £288: airtime saving achieved over 36 months (was £23, now £15 subject to April Annual Price Rise) and max saving of £372 achieved when you trade in an eligible iPhone in good working condition. [Terms: vodafone.co.uk/trade-in](https://www.vodafone.co.uk/trade-in). Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct debit required. Finance provided by Vodafone Limited, FCA Number: 712210, Vodafone House, The Connection, Newbury, RG14

British fighter, 18, killed by Russian drone in Ukraine

A British teenager was killed by a Russian drone while fighting in Ukraine (Mark Ludlow writes). James Wilton, 18, from Manchester, died minutes into his first mission last year.

His father said that he was struggling to deal with his son's death and wished he could have swapped places with him. "I'll never get over this. I didn't want him to go but his heart was set on it. He wanted to help Ukraine," Graham Wilton told The Sun.

"I've been told bits of the story of how he died, but have struggled to deal with it and wish we could have swapped places because he had his whole life in front of him. Then he could have been back home with a pint, watching the darts on telly instead of me."

Wilton died on July 23 last year and was cremated in Ukraine. His death has gone unreported until now.

About 15 British volunteers have been killed since the outbreak of war in Ukraine in 2022. Last week the former British Army sniper Alexander Garms-Rizzie was killed on the front line by Russian forces in the east of the country.

Garms-Rizzie deserted in 2022 to fight in Ukraine. He was court-martialled in Britain and sentenced to one year in jail, but returned to Ukraine last year after serving eight months of his sentence.

An American volunteer, who lost his leg in the same battle as Wilton, said that their division had been helping to resupply frontline soldiers. However, the group, carrying 60kg backpacks, had been left exposed in open ground with no cover when the drone strike took place.

"We had to cross an open field with no trees, no cover, nothing, to resupply other soldiers," the volunteer, who only



gave his first name as Jason, told The Sun. "I was team leader and there were six of us traversing in groups of

two, 20 metres apart. Myself and James were the last two."

Jason, who had been living and working in

London as a medical translator before volunteering

James Wilton died in battle, below; his father went to the funeral in Kyiv, left; next to him in a wheelchair is Jason who lost a leg

for Ukraine's 2nd International Legion, said he could tell Wilton was scared but told him to keep moving.

"I shouted after him, 'Why are you stopping, what are you doing?' and he didn't respond. Then I heard it — a buzz in the air above us — and thought 'oh f***'. It took me two or three seconds to spot it, then I saw it and realised we were in the worst possible situation we could be in — in an open field with nowhere to run."

Jason said once the drone had spotted Wilton, his friend "never stood a chance".

"He was only about 30 metres from the trench line when I saw the drone explode," he said. Jason had to dodge other drones 20 minutes later when he retrieved his friend's body.

"I've seen people die out here, I've killed two Russian soldiers myself, but nothing prepares you for losing someone who's close to you," he said.

Work starts for Letby case review

Constance Kampfner
Northern Correspondent

The body responsible for investigating alleged miscarriages of justice is preparing to examine new claims about Lucy Letby's convictions.

The revelation came as the former nurse's legal team announced it would be unveiling medical evidence which it hopes may pave the way for a retrial.

Three members of the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) are familiarising themselves with her case ahead of a formal application, which it is understood is yet to be lodged.

Minutes from a board meeting in September state: "The commission had yet to receive an application on behalf of Ms Letby, although one was expected."

"Given the likely complexity of the review, a senior case review manager, group leader and nominated decision-maker had been assigned and preliminary reading and familiarisation was underway. The team would be expanded once the application was received."

The CCRC said it had no further comment on the anticipated application.

Letby is serving 15 whole-life terms for seven murders and eight attempted murders of babies between June 2015 and June 2016.

Her defence team is now expected to outline details of an independent review by a "blue ribbon committee" of 14 international medical experts over the causes of death of the 17 babies the neonatal nurse was accused of harming.



Lucy Letby is serving 15 whole-life prison sentences

Defence's new evidence needs to be substantial

Analysis

"Significant" is the word used by Lucy Letby's defence team to describe the purportedly new evidence that they will announce today (Tom Ball writes). It will need to be if the former nurse is to have any chance of her case being reviewed.

Two juries have found Letby guilty of murdering seven babies and of harming seven others. Three appeal court judges have reviewed a multitude of strands of evidence against her.

The only option that

remains is for the case to be looked at by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), for which the bar is high. For the CCRC to open an investigation into an alleged miscarriage of justice, an applicant is required to produce new evidence — or present new legal argument.

Letby's team have given little indication as to what the new evidence is, other than that it was produced using analysis by "14 of the world's leading neonatal experts".

Sir David Davis MP is chairing today's panel where the evidence will be presented, along with Mark

McDonald, Letby's new barrister, and Dr Shoo Lee.

Lee, a Canadian neonatologist, is the co-author of a 1989 paper that featured prominently in the prosecution's case against Letby. The paper looked at the effects of air embolism — when air bubbles enter the bloodstream and cause a blockage — on newborn babies, an esoteric area of medicine owing to the small number of occurrences.

Of the 53 cases examined in the paper, some had exhibited signs of skin discoloration, described as "bright-pink vessels" against bluish skin.

It was largely on the basis of this description that Dr Dewi Evans, the prosecution's lead expert witness, developed the theory that Letby had injected air into her victims

through an intravenous line. His opinion was supported by Dr Sandie Bohin, the second expert medical witness.

There were nine instances in which babies under Letby's care were said to have shown unusual "mottling" on their skin.

Lee, who was not called to appear at the original trial, believes his research was misinterpreted by the prosecution. He has argued that skin discoloration can be symptomatic of various ailments and that, in and of itself, it is not an indication of air embolism.

His leading involvement in the panel today suggests that questions about air embolism may form a substantial part of their argument.

Other experts interviewed by The Times

last summer also expressed their surprise that skin discoloration had been used as the basis for diagnosis of air embolism.

Two neonatologists said they thought a more plausible explanation was the use of vasoactive drugs, such as adrenaline, given to a collapsing baby as part of resuscitation.

But these arguments alone are unlikely to meet the CCRC's threshold for review as they have already been considered and rejected in court, when Lee appeared by video link at the Court of Appeal last year during Letby's failed attempt to challenge her convictions.

In order to convince the CCRC to reopen the case, the defence's new evidence needs to be groundbreaking and wide-ranging.

According to The Sunday Times, the experts have recorded a different cause of death from the one used in Letby's prosecution in a "large number" of cases.

Among the experts speaking at a press conference in

Westminster will be Dr Shoo Lee, a retired neonatologist and president of the Canadian Neonatal Foundation. He claimed that a 1989 academic paper he had authored which was used by the prosecution in Letby's trial had been misinterpreted.

He said that infants in the trial should never have been diagnosed with air embolism as it was "a very rare and specific condition and should not be diagnosed by excluding other causes of death or collapse".

He added that skin discoloration was

a factor in only about 10 per cent of air embolism cases, whereas in the case of Letby's victims it was present in nine of the 17 babies.

Dr Dewi Evans, the prosecution's lead expert witness, has stood by his findings.

He said that while Lee's paper "got a lot of publicity" it was "not a major factor in the prosecution case".

Letby had an appeal against her first 14 convictions thrown out by the Court of Appeal, and a separate bid to challenge her 15th conviction following a

retrial failed in October. Her lawyer had told the Court of Appeal that her original trial in 2023 was unfair because the "exceptional" level of media coverage had prejudiced the proceedings.

A Crown Prosecution Service spokesman said: "Two juries and three appeal court judges have reviewed a multitude of different strands of evidence against Lucy Letby. She has been convicted on 15 separate counts following two separate jury trials. In May 2024, the Court of Appeal dismissed Letby's leave to appeal on all grounds."

News

Readers raise £1.5m to help charities in Times appeal

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES
CHRISTMAS
APPEAL



Lara Wildenberg

Readers raised nearly £1.5million for charities during The Times and Sunday Times Christmas Appeal, which has now closed.

Donations will contribute towards a new suicide prevention centre, the roll-out of a national allergy education programme, and the reform of child-care in nine different countries.

During December and January the newspapers published over 60 articles on the work of three chosen charities: James' Place; the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation; and Hope and

Homes for Children. The articles included interviews with ambassadors for the charities including Sarah, Duchess of York, and Tom Kerridge, the celebrity chef, as well as dispatches from overseas.

The amount raised by this year's appeal was an estimated £1.48million, bringing the total since the first joint appeal in 2020 to more than £11.2million for 15 charities over five campaigns. Donations are still being finalised.

More than £783,000 was raised for Hope and Homes for Children, which works to close orphanages where children are at risk of violence, neglect or trafficking and place them with families instead.

Over £368,000 was donated to the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation to help fund clinical research, campaigning and education.



James' Place is named after James Wentworth-Stanley, who died aged 21 in 2006

Some £328,000 was raised for James' Place, a charity dedicated to the prevention of male suicide.

Excluding gift aid and matched funding, readers' direct donations had an average value of £138.95 — enough to provide a suicidal man with an initial assessment at a James' Place centre,

train 100 primary school teachers about allergies, and trace the birth family of a child in an orphanage to reunite them with relatives.

Matched funding for all three charities added a further £860,767.21 while gift aid, which is yet to be confirmed, is expected to exceed £115,000.

James' Place said readers' donations would contribute towards the opening of its fourth centre in Birmingham later this year. Ellen O'Donoghue, the charity's chief executive, said: "We are so grateful to The Times and would like to say a huge thank you to all the readers who have donated."

"It has helped us not only raise funds to stop men dying by suicide, but to also raise awareness of the free, life-saving therapy we offer so that more men can find us and get help."

Mark Waddington, chief executive of Hope and Homes for Children, said the generosity of readers had helped make the world "a better place for children to grow up in", with donations accelerating their work to make Romania, Moldova, Rwanda and Bulgaria completely orphanage-free in the near future.

Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse founded the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation after their daughter Natasha died aged 15 from a severe allergic reaction to sesame seeds in a baguette in 2016.

They expressed their gratitude to readers for their donations, which will help fund the charity's current projects, including the new national education programme, Allergy School, which will launch in February.

The first £100,000 donated to the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation was tripled, thanks to matched funding by Morrisons and Marks & Spencer.

Donations up to £165,000 for James' Place were matched by Fenwick, the Henry Oldfield Trust, the Nick Kilhams Foundation and an anonymous donor.

An anonymous donor who pledged to double donations up to £500,000 for Hope and Homes for Children agreed to donate the entire amount to the appeal.

Leukaemia patient given all-clear after cutting-edge NHS treatment

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

When he first went to hospital suffering "unbearable pain" at the start of 2020, Iain McDonald was sent away with painkillers for backache.

"One morning I was in so much pain it took the air out of my lungs, it was so unbearable," he said. "I went to A&E, but they thought I'd just strained my back while moving house, advised me to take ibuprofen and sent me home."

After symptoms persisted, including weight loss and muscle spasms, the 38-year-old was diagnosed with leukaemia, a type of blood cancer, in March

that year. He began treatment during lockdown, including intensive chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant from his brother, Ross.

Two years later, however, tests revealed his leukaemia had returned.

It was then that McDonald was told of a cutting-edge therapy being tested in the UK that could save his life — and transform survival rates for leukaemia, one of the deadliest cancers.

McDonald, who works as a general manager for a car dealership, became one of the first to have CAR-T therapy, a revolutionary treatment recently approved on the NHS for some cancers.



Iain McDonald recovered from blood cancer and married Maria last year

It involves genetically modifying immune cells in a patient's blood to "train" them to recognise and kill cancer cells.

After a few weeks, the engineered T-cells are infused back into the bloodstream, where they destroy cancer.

Within months of beginning the treatment in October 2022 at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, McDonald was given the all-clear. His recovery meant he could celebrate his wedding to Maria in August last year.

"I'm now enjoying being married and just trying to live as normal life as possible," he said. "I'm so grateful to the doctors who treated me and got me on

the trial. I trusted them completely." CAR-T has been proven effective in boosting survival against cancers including B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (B-ALL), which McDonald had. In 2023 it was approved for NHS use in hundreds of adults per year, but charities warn many patients are missing out on treatment because it is not available everywhere in the UK.

Leukaemia UK has called for more access to lifesaving treatments. "Blood cancers are the fifth most common cancer type in the UK," it said. "However, they have been neglected by national cancer policies for decades."

New Year on the Danube

CRUISE

WITH THE SERVICES OF A CRUISE DIRECTOR AND CONCIERGE

Free drinks package*

SIX DAYS FROM
£1,899
PER PERSON

Return flights plus transfers
Five nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
All meals on board, including the Captain's Dinner and farewell drinks plus a free drinks package*
Guided tours of Budapest, Bratislava and Vienna
Visit to the magnificent Schönbrunn Palace and its Yuletide market
New Year's Eve gala dinner and midnight drinks and canapés

Welcome in the New Year on this splendid cruise along the mighty Danube. Experience the imperial grandeur of Vienna and the elegance of Budapest, browse at the atmospheric Yuletide markets and enjoy the enchanting New Year's Eve celebrations on board.

Departures in December 2025



RIVIERA TRAVEL



Call now to book, quoting KS859

0808 304 4566

thetimes.com/riviera-rcy

TIMES Travel Partner

Prices based on two people sharing. Single cabins available at a supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. Travel insurance is not included but is strongly recommended. This holiday is operated by and subject to booking conditions of Riviera Travel, ABTA V4744 ATOL 3430 protected, a company independent of News UK. Subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. For further information please write to Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton upon Trent, Staffs, DE14 1SP quoting The Times. KS723. See website for full details. *2025 river cruises include an unlimited quantity of drinks at lunch and from 6pm to midnight while on board (selected drinks available).

ABTA
ABTA No. V4744

Did you stay for the end of my biopsy melodrama?

Giles Coren

Page 18



Comment

Divided West is precisely what Putin wants

While Trump picks fights with America's allies, UK and Europe must be alert to Russia's vote-rigging and subversion

William Hague



After Brexit, we British are rather like a family that had a blazing row, called each other names, threw some crockery and decided to lock the doors against the neighbours. Some years later, the younger members of the family still regard this as a mistake, and many others have an uneasy feeling about it, but most don't want to have the argument again. The policy of the Labour government is to say the issue is settled. It wishes to improve relations with the offended neighbours if possible but not to kick off the blazing row again, at least until Grandad goes into a home.

As Sir Keir Starmer heads to Brussels, he is therefore tiptoeing down to the garden gate to see if it can be pushed open a little without the neighbours expecting to grab all our fish. Even if the rest of the world was stable and untroubled, this would be a painstaking and politically hazardous process. One false move will ignite the family row again, with Uncle Nigel screaming betrayal. And there are genuine risks.

Removing bureaucratic checks on trade would help our exporters, but if the UK aligned with EU rules, such as in the new AI Act or on gene editing, innovation in Britain could be seriously damaged. Brussels wants a youth mobility scheme — and better links between young people would benefit everyone in the long term — but ministers are terrified of inflating the immigration numbers.

Interrupting this delicate tiptoeing now comes big cousin Donald, who

this weekend started throwing some very large rocks at anyone who has upset him, irrespective of whether they were relatives. Trump's announcement of 25 per cent tariffs on Canada stands out as a warning of how arbitrary and baseless his measures might be, even against America's friends. The justification given for this economic assault on a Nato and Five Eyes intelligence ally is that fentanyl comes into the United States over the Canadian border. Yet the amounts are so small the real explanation can only be that the president has taken a dislike to Canada and its lack of interest in becoming America's 51st state. It is a whim, a personal bugbear, rather than a rational act.

The trade wars being launched from the White House are a fundamentally mistaken policy. As I write, the dollar is surging on global markets, a trend that will make American exports more expensive

What has happened in eastern Europe should set alarm bells ringing

and less competitive to the rest of the world. Increased prices will slow down cuts in interest rates and damage growth. The irrationality of it is the most alarming aspect, since patient explanation of reality does not appear to be an antidote to a trade policy based on whims.

As Peter Mandelson arrives in Washington — and I wish him the very best of luck — he will no doubt explain that there is no need to pick on the UK, as our trade with the US is not seriously unbalanced. This is true, although the Trump version of this is that the UK is “way out of line”. Then he will need to show that the

PM really is just making that small opening to the EU — “nothing to worry about, Mr President” — even though Trump despises Brussels.

Next, he will need to hope that when the US slaps tariffs on the EU, which it will, the goods that pass through the UK or are partly made here are not caught in the crossfire. It is the complexity of modern manufacturing — think of an Airbus plane, assembled in France with wings made in Britain — that makes a trade war likely to spread very quickly. What happens after he has explained all these things will depend, alarmingly, on a whim.

The tragedy of the US so seriously disrupting relations with its own allies is that anyone who wants to weaken western democracies can have a field day. China will gleefully seize the moral high ground as emerging economies suffer from Trump's trade policies. President Putin will seek to press home his advantage in Ukraine. In parallel, Moscow is perfecting a new playbook of how to throw free societies into disorder or submission, working through steadily more countries one by one, with devastating effect, while we distract ourselves trying to manage a raging US president.

What has happened over the last six months in eastern Europe should have alarm bells ringing across the West. In Georgia, the ruling party, which has shifted to a more pro-Russian position, won elections many observers believe were swung by vote-rigging and intimidation, provoking a constitutional crisis. In Moldova, officials estimated that Moscow spent around \$100 million, in a country of 2.5 million people, in an attempt to elect its favoured presidential candidate, which only narrowly failed.

Romania is a good illustration of the

GEORGIA ARJEVANDZE/GETTY IMAGES



Claims of meddling by Moscow drew protesters on to the streets in Georgia

tactics being employed. A massive, very expensive effort in the two weeks before polling in December's presidential election lifted a far-right candidate friendly to Russia from a few points in the polls to winning the first round of voting. Social media influencers were paid generously to promote him, aided by many thousands of TikTok accounts — all of which, according to a Romanian intelligence service, was “co-ordinated by a state actor”. With the election consequently cancelled by the courts and rescheduled for May, Romania presents an early demonstration of what the new tactics are intended to produce: a deeply divided society in which authorities are accused of unfairly obstructing far-right candidates who receive vast funds from outside the country.

Last month, the president of

Croatia, known as a Nato critic, was re-elected with the support, according to the Centre for Information Resilience, of pro-Russian bots. Next in line could be the Czech Republic, where an opposition party calling for an end to that country's co-ordination of ammunition to Ukraine can probably look forward to similar support. The advent of social media has left European democracies wide

Russia knows how to overthrow democracies without firing a shot

open to subversion.

Starmer is right to use his Brussels debut to emphasise his wish to do more together on defence and security. On that, Britain has much to offer Europe without displeasing Trump. But amidst trade wars that will divide the West and highly detailed talks that could preoccupy the UK and EU, he and his European counterparts should understand that defence is not only about tanks and aircraft. Russia has worked out how to weaken or overthrow western governments without firing a shot. New defences, including revealing the scale of these activities, strengthening election laws and discrediting those who are paid by Moscow, are needed urgently.

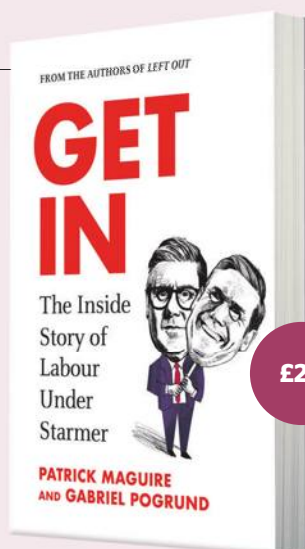
A US president who thinks Canada is the enemy will not help with this. As we discuss opening the garden gate to our neighbours just a crack, we should notice that the end of the street is on fire — and an arsonist is heading this way.

Listen to William Hague on Times Radio from 9.05am every Tuesday

The Inside Story of Labour Under Starmer

Gabriel Pogrund and Patrick Maguire's new book *Get In* has arrived. Find out what the people running government really think of the prime minister and how close they came to replacing him.

Don't miss this explosive account, visit timesbookshop.co.uk/get-in or scan the QR code



£25

20% OFF
FOR TIMES+
MEMBERS



T TIMES Bookshop

Comment

Let schools pursue excellence, not 'equality'

The education secretary seems determined to drag high-flying academies into mediocrity

Melanie Phillips



@MELANIELATEST

The education secretary, Bridget Phillipson, has been on a charm offensive to deflect the criticism that has been raining down over her "Marxist" approach to schools. So far, her efforts have hardly been a conspicuous success. Her latest announcement, that Ofsted is to introduce colour-coded report cards, has provoked a chorus of complaint from all sides.

Under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Ofsted will move away from one-word school assessments and supposedly provide parents and schools with detailed information about performance. This follows criticism that Ofsted's classifications are too arbitrary and have caused teachers such stress that one head, Ruth Perry, took her own life after her school was downgraded.

It is being claimed the new system won't address that problem and will make Ofsted's rulings even more obscure. Phillipson's own report card is flashing red over the more fundamental charge that her bill will harm prospects for the disadvantaged children she claims to champion. There appears to be no reason for the bill other than a desire to return schools to the ideological straitjacket in which they were trapped before they were liberated

by one of her most vigorous and forensic predecessors, Michael Gove.

As a result of the freedoms and traditional teaching measures he introduced, schools in England rose up the OECD's league tables. By contrast, in Scotland and Wales, where a "child-centred" model is still pursued, attainment has fallen, sometimes below the OECD average.

Yet Phillipson intends to restore the old system of giving local authorities responsibility for opening new schools, reversing the presumption in favour of free schools and academies.

In a speech to the Centre for Social Justice she declared: "The way we hold schools accountable underpins it all." For accountability, however,

Traditional teaching fosters knowledge and the ability to think

read control. The only accountability that should matter for a school is to the parents of the children at that school. It was local authorities, captured by class-warrior Labour councils, that imposed centralised education diktats on schools and trapped countless disadvantaged children in what was called "the soft bigotry of low expectations".

Creating academies that freed teachers and heads from such control by bureaucrats in Whitehall or town hall silos was Gove's signature achievement. Now he has accused Phillipson of trying to dismantle such schools "brick by brick". Yet the education secretary claims to be a big fan of academies. In an interview

with The Times yesterday, she insisted she "holds no torch" for local authority education, which let children down so badly, and would be happy for all schools to become academies. Does she really not get the point? The reason academies have raised standards is that they aren't enslaved to centralised controls. They have a measure of flexibility over the curriculum, can hire teachers they believe have the necessary skills, thus escaping the dead hand of ideologically captured teacher training institutions, and can recruit good teachers by paying them more than others.

At Michaela, the phenomenally successful London community school Phillipson has pointedly refused to congratulate, the head teacher, Katharine Birbalsingh, says she has lost count of the unqualified teachers she has hired because of the gifts they display and who have subsequently used the expertise they gained at Michaela to fill middle and senior roles at other schools. Phillipson's bill threatens to wreck Michaela and similar schools. That's because it will ensure that all of them follow the national curriculum, force them to employ only qualified teachers or those working towards qualification and introduce the same pay scales across all state schools. As Gove said, the bill is a "ready-made agenda fashioned by the teaching unions and their allies in academia — radical left-wingers who hated seeing their ideology proven consistently wrong over the past 14 years".

Accordingly, it will stamp out traditional teaching, which fosters knowledge, excellence and the ability

to think. A review of the curriculum is under way headed by Professor Becky Francis, an educationist specialising in gender and equality who has objected to the "obsession with academic achievement".

Phillipson has already summarily withdrawn the government's scheme to fund Latin teaching in schools, spitefully axing it only months before children take their GCSE Latin exam.

Deprived schools where Latin has been introduced often see a startling jump in achievement across the board because of the way this ancient language, with its logical and orderly construction, helps marshal the brain. Doubtless Phillipson assumes that Latin is associated with private schools and privilege and is thus an "elitist" waste of time.

Although she claims not to be a Marxist, she is nevertheless an obvious class warrior. She has said education in Britain was long "the preserve of the wealthy". In fact, it was long the preserve of excellence and helped the most disadvantaged, if they were bright, to achieve social mobility. It did this through grammar schools, which encapsulated the idea of academic differentiation on which the most successful education systems in Europe are based — but to which this and previous Labour governments have been implacably opposed. They have thus destroyed social mobility for millions of disadvantaged children in pursuit of the chimera of equality of outcomes. Of all this government's cack-handed, obtuse and ideologically destructive policies, the agenda Phillipson is inflicting upon the country will have the most baleful long-term outcome.



Touring musicians need freeing from EU red tape

Michael Berkeley

As Sir Keir Starmer talks of a reset with the EU and Rachel Reeves strives for growth, now is surely the time to free up musicians and artists from the massive bureaucracy and costs of performing in Europe.

Currently, if an opera house or orchestra in Paris, Vienna, Berlin or Milan needs to book a singer or soloist, especially at short notice, they are avoiding the UK because of the form-filling and costs. This is depriving many singers and players of much-needed income — and so denying the Treasury too.

There are further losses: the soft power of reputation that we used to enjoy as a leading cultural force in the world and the ability to exchange ideas that lies at the heart of creativity. It has got to the point where UK artists feel, and perhaps are, blackballed on the continent of Europe. Even that champion of Brexit, Lord Frost, has recognised that these rules need to be finessed and has admitted that when he led negotiations for the UK the government got this aspect wrong.

Then there is the issue of cabotage — not a vegetable, sadly, but the crazy reciprocal rules governing the movement of trucks carrying the instruments and staging that groups and orchestras need in order to tour. On arrival in Europe, everything must be unloaded from the UK lorry and loaded on to a European one instead and then, every two venues, unloaded again and a new vehicle employed.

This, clearly, makes touring so expensive that very few can even consider it — yet touring only becomes viable when there are enough venues to spread the costs. Dame Kathryn McDowell told a group of parliamentarians that, in her experience, while an organisation like the London Symphony Orchestra, of which she is managing director, can just about cope with these burdens, heaven help smaller organisations without the orchestra's resources.

Creativity in this country, particularly at the small venues where local talent can be fostered, is under threat from cuts to and from local government.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the present malaise lies in education. Music lessons remain the preserve of the better off, yet research has consistently shown that exposure to music-making improves learning skills and leads to a more cohesive society. If we are to have the touring musicians of the future in our orchestras and groups, our priority must be to get music back into schools, ideally on the curriculum, and to sort out the ongoing bureaucracy with the EU.

Lord Berkeley of Knighton is a composer, broadcaster and crossbench peer

Giles Coren Notebook

Did you stay for the end of my biopsy melodrama?

OK, so the good news is that my column on Saturday about my transperineal biopsy was read by 125,000 people. And that's just online. You can double that figure with newspaper reads. And without wanting to sound too Donald Trumpy about it, that's a lot of people. A lot. If you want to know the truth, it's unheard of. They're calling it "unprecedented". People are telling me — I don't know whether to believe them — people are saying: "Giles, you know, it's probably the most read-about biopsy in the history of cancer." And that's a long history. Very long. Huge, in fact.

So, yes, looking at the online stats, I can see that my column was read by around three times as many people as read my next most popular piece and sold 14 new subscriptions to the paper. The boss will be wanting me to get cancer every week. But what the stats also

showed, which I am less happy about, was that the "quality" of the read (which I think means how long people stayed on the page) was only 62 per cent, which is considerably higher than average but nonetheless means (if I understand the algorithm right) that around a third of you started reading about my trip to the Royal Free Hospital to find out if I had cancer ... AND THEN GOT BORED!

This means you didn't get to the bit where I said it was really just baby cancer, doesn't need treatment and may never need treatment, and almost certainly won't be the thing that kills me. And nor did the reporters who wrote up the story for other newspapers, which reported only that I had "opened up" about my "heartbreaking cancer ordeal".

I mean, gosh, I'm genuinely delighted and grateful that other media outlets considered my medical woes newsworthy, but it really isn't an "ordeal" or "heartbreaking" and I definitely didn't "open

up" (except rectally, to receive a well-lubed ultrasound probe); I just made a lot of bum gags.

The result of this, essentially, is that the news of my cancer was free at the point of consumption but the news that I'm basically fine was paywalled. To non-Times readers, in other words, I am a dead man walking, but to subscribers (at least, the 62 per cent with an adult concentration span), I am all tickety-boo. In short, I am Schrödinger's columnist.

Brum note

Seeing as, from a news point of view, I am currently both alive and dead, it was interesting to get a sneak peek of how the announcement of my death (many years from now) will be framed. To The Guardian and Telegraph, it turns out, I am "restaurant critic Giles Coren, 55", which feels about right. Whereas to the Express and Daily Mirror I am former BBC star Giles Coren", which gave me more of a downer than the cancer

news, as it seems to be a declaration not only of the end of a life but, worse, of a career. My 15-year flirtation with television was only ever a jolly side hustle that took up a lot of time and wasn't very well paid — I never wanted it to define me.

That said, the online paper Birmingham Live warmed the very cockles of my heart with its "BBC star shares shock cancer diagnosis", which appeared to suggest, in a regionally nuanced variation of Schrödinger's columnist, that in Brum I am still on the telly.

Probing question

On my way to hospital for the biopsy that day, I dropped Sam off at school, which is just round the corner. When he asked what I was doing later, which he always does, I told him, which I always do.

"Ouch!" he said. "Ouch indeed," I replied. "But it comes to most men in the end. Forty years from now, you'll probably be facing the exact same thing." "Rubbish," he said. "By the time I'm your age they won't still be sticking medieval needles up people's bums, it'll all be done by gene identification and AI. Probably without me even having to leave home."

And I suspect the little bugger is bang right.





Buy prints or signed copies of Times cartoons from our Print Gallery at [timescartoons.com](https://www.timescartoons.com) or call 0800 912 7136

Radical right's mission is to wind up liberals

Trolling 'normies' online with contemptuous humour and yah-booo insults seems to be the priority for Maga groupies

James
Marriott



@J_AMESMARIOTT

Perhaps every age dreams up a nemesis for itself. In the era of Senator Joseph McCarthy, an excess of patriotic paranoia led many Americans to imagine a red under every bed. The fantasy enemy of the 2020s is more ubiquitous even than that. Luigi Mangione, who is accused of shooting dead the CEO of United Healthcare at the end of last year, was greatly exercised by the idea that "people everywhere were becoming 'NPCs'". Dominic Cummings suggests the government and the civil service are run by NPCs. Elon Musk has speculated that NPCs run many powerful businesses and most of the mainstream media.

An NPC, for those Times readers happily unacquainted with the jargon of computer gaming, is an algorithmically controlled "non-player character"; as a pejorative, it describes a person of such conventional opinions and responses that they might as well be automated. "Normie" is a close

synonym. The term owes its ubiquity and vituperative force to a fashionable contempt for the mainstream, the predictable and the sincere.

The NPC, I submit, is a bogeyman worth watching. A horror of the obvious is one of the ruling passions of modern politics. For many highly engaged online activists, the sine qua non of a successful political career is not to effect meaningful change but to find an opportunity to roll your eyes at the naivety of some chump with more predictable views than your own. To be caught entertaining an ordinary opinion is the deepest imaginable humiliation. This impulse flourished in the woke movement with its endlessly updating exotic jargon and its

The taunt 'orange man bad' mocks liberal responses to Trump

bitter vilification of that normie to end all normies, the middle-aged white man. But normie hatred finds its fullest expression in the new online right.

Radical conservatives delight in outraging (or imagining they are outraging) the bovine sensibilities of unthinking liberals. In recent days, American right-wingers have been indulging in the rich hilarity of

sharing the mugshots of especially attractive illegal immigrants and smirkingly proposing they should be excluded from Trump's deportation scheme. (Musk responded to one of these squibs with an emoji indicating that it made him cry tears of laughter.)

The joke is not funny but the entirety of its pitiful effort at humour depends on the imagined horror of a person of conventional liberal opinions. "Orange man bad", another popular taunt of the Maga movement, mocks the perceived mindlessness of liberal responses to Donald Trump. Whether it is reasonable to worry about the threat Trump poses to democracy is beside the point: what is embarrassing for liberals, in the view of their antagonists, is that their outrage is so dreadfully predictable. So normie.

Obviously, such attitudes speak to the anti-establishment spirit of the times but hostility to the mainstream is built into the structure of the internet. For the internet boasts no truly common ground, no "BBC". Instead, it is made up of niche interest groups, weird forums, obscure Subreddits and algorithmic filter bubbles.

Indeed, to be mainstream on the internet is to be homeless. But when you have found your niche, the easiest route to a sense of solidarity and superiority is scoffing at those

hapless normies who fail to understand the intricacies of whichever computer game, political movement or knitting community you are into.

This tendency is compounded by the fact that life online moves fast, so the internet's most intensive users pride themselves on keeping up to speed and nurturing an attitude of weary contempt for those even slightly behind the times. These incentives mean that in online

To be offended is a mark of low intelligence or deficient irony

culture — where Musk and many politicians spend most of their time — the esoteric is prized over the obvious and transgressive novelty over conventional wisdom.

In her insightful book about the internet *Kill All Normies*, the Irish essayist Angela Nagle traces the culture of the online right to the internet's dingiest primeval corners — forums such as 4chan, where users share racist jokes, Nazi memes and pornographic images. In these communities to be offended by horrible things is taken as a mark of low intelligence, deficient irony or "midwit" tendencies; a sign that the sharpness of your thinking has

been dulled by social convention or foolish mainstream niceness. According to the logic of the internet, faux-Nazism is preferable to liberalism because it is more unexpected, less obvious.

To the sneering, ironic online Maga movement, to think the obvious thing is axiomatically a mark of low intelligence. The recent spat between the US vice-president JD Vance and the podcaster Rory Stewart was informed by the same perverse logic. Responding to Stewart's suggestion that Jesus taught us to love one another, Vance replied: "The problem with Rory and people like him is that he has an IQ of 110 and thinks he has an IQ of 130." The subtext is: how obvious, how conventional, how nice — and therefore how stupid.

Sometimes it seems the Trump administration, with its ill-conceived trade war and wild threats to annex Canada, is being run less with the aim of achieving realistic policy goals than with the intention of outraging normies. The weird fringes have taken over the centre. Meaningless transgression is now the official policy of the United States.

Perhaps being a normie — believing earnestly in democracy and disapproving of racism, however ironic — is now the edgier position. Normies unite!

Letters to the Editor



Assisted dying bill 'is being rushed'

Sir, We are alarmed at the haste of the committee considering the bill for assisted dying. Three days of oral evidence seems insufficient to consider such a huge question as doctor-assisted suicide. We hope there will be much more consideration of the written evidence in the weeks to come.

A law on doctor-assisted suicide will undermine the daily efforts of psychiatrists across the United Kingdom to prevent suicide. Those who have suicidal thoughts at any time in life may be vulnerable to pressures to take their own life by the introduction of doctor-assisted suicide. Vulnerability can arise owing to external factors such as lack of decent palliative or social care; overt coercion or undue influence; and personal losses including bereavement, poor housing or financial hardship. Internal factors may include major depressive disorder, a sense of burdensomeness, loneliness and social isolation. Understanding and responding to these vulnerabilities is at the centre of suicide prevention.

The initial reluctance of the committee to see the need to call the Royal College of Psychiatrists to give evidence is in itself shocking and betrays a lacking understanding of the job that we do in understanding suicide and its prevention. This bill should be overwhelmingly rejected.

Professor Jonathan Cavanagh, consultant neuropsychiatrist, Glasgow;
Dr Musa Sami, consultant psychiatrist, Nottingham; **Dr Andrea Tocca**, consultant psychiatrist, Uxbridge; **Dr Adrian Treloar**, consultant in old age psychiatry, Bromley; **Dr Agnes Ayton**, consultant psychiatrist in eating disorders, Oxford; **Dr Jenny Bryden**, consultant psychiatrist in rehabilitation, Scottish Borders; **Dr Elizabeth Corcoran**, psychiatrist, E Sussex; **Dr Mark Parry**, consultant psychiatrist, Reading; **Dr Sunil Raheja**, consultant psychiatrist, London; **Dr Stefan Gleeson**, consultant psychiatrist, Winchester
For the full list of signatories, go to thetimes.co.uk/letters

Corrections and clarifications

- An article on Admiral Taverns was wrongly illustrated with a picture of The Mayfly pub in Stockbridge, Hampshire (Business, Feb 3). The Mayfly is owned by Fuller's.
- A blackboard used by Albert Einstein is on display in Oxford at the History of Science Museum, not Rhodes House as we wrongly said (leading article, Feb 1).

ipso. Regulated The Times takes complaints about editorial content seriously. We are committed to abiding by the Independent Press Standards Organisation ("IPSO") rules and regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces. Requests for corrections or clarifications should be sent by email to feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to Feedback, The Times, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Scrapping of AstraZeneca's new vaccine plant

Sir, Any new government requires a period of settling-in to its new role. That honeymoon period has long expired, and we need to see evidence of sensible decision-making. The decision by AstraZeneca to pull investment in a vaccines plant in the northwest is soul-destroying, particularly to those of us who work in the industry ("AstraZeneca scraps UK vaccine plant", Feb 1). I find it implausible that anyone in the government has carried out a proper cost-benefit analysis of this decision.

In addition to AstraZeneca helping to place the UK in the vanguard of vaccines technology — as evidenced by our response to Covid-19 — unusually the UK is also at the forefront of developing and implementing cancer vaccines, focusing on both preventive measures and innovative treatments. Someone in the government needs to get on the phone, grovel and offer AstraZeneca whatever it asks for — and more.

Dr Craig Currie
Chief scientific Officer, Human Data Sciences, Cardiff

Sir, The government's failure to support investment in the AstraZeneca vaccine factory is a

disastrous and short-sighted decision. The UK led the world in the fight against Covid with its vaccine programme, and the Covid inquiry has highlighted that mass vaccination helped to manage the pandemic. There are regular shortages and difficulties in supplying vaccines, and vaccine production capacity is a global problem. The government's decision is even more surprising given the chancellor's growth agenda, as new and better vaccines are being developed all the time. Along with clean drinking water, vaccines are the biggest advances in improving people's health across the world.

I have worked as a doctor and epidemiologist on infections for more than 40 years. Every year there have been many emerging infectious disease problems where a new infection is recognised, or the organism has become a new threat. Vaccines are our main defence, so this new factory would have been a key part of our defences.
Professor Keith Neal
Emeritus professor of epidemiology of infectious disease, Derby

Sir, The chancellor talks eagerly of growth but when a deal is ready she

haggles until it disappears. Far more money will be spent on the recently announced national infrastructure projects than would have been on the fixed contribution to AstraZeneca's vaccine plant in Liverpool. The grant was for one of our most important companies, and was crucial to the credibility of the government's wish for growth. I hope the chancellor can see that growth is made of deals like this, quicker and with greater certainty than by vast and complex projects finishing in a distant future.

Piers Ripley
North Weald Bassett, Essex

Sir, As you report, AstraZeneca has decided not to go ahead with its planned £450 million investment in a vaccine facility in Liverpool after the government reduced the size of the grant it was offering towards the project on the grounds of value for the taxpayer. This fervour for taxpayer value is commendable. What a pity it was not in evidence when the government settled the junior doctors' and train drivers' pay disputes without securing anything in return to increase their productivity.

Gordon Lethbridge
Sherborne, Dorset

Digital ID plan and protecting privacy

Sir, Sir Tony Blair is right: Britain needs a digital ID system (report, Feb 1). However, the need for a comprehensive digital health record is omitted from his list of reasons. This record — a kind of health passport attached to a digital ID — would be the property of the patient and would transform healthcare. It would integrate all records in GP and hospital care and give patients control over their own health. Such a system would make the digital ID widely accepted and would surely be the greatest of all likely benefits.
Peter Prinsley MP, FRCS
House of Commons

Sir, I might be prepared to sacrifice privacy for the improvement in government efficiency that Sir Tony Blair believes would follow from the introduction of digital ID cards — if in exchange the relevant authorities would guarantee the security of the database holding my personal data. However, given the inability of the government at all levels to prevent

data losses by hacking and other causes, why should I take the risk?

Duncan McKay
Aberdeen

Sir, Sir Tony Blair is putting more faith in digital ID than many of us experience in practice. My newly acquired phone uses facial recognition to open but is very reluctant to comply. Early morning is the least likely time to be granted access. A crumpled face and weary expression is completely rejected. I smile, I pout, I put on lipstick. Occasionally it surprises by cheerfully lighting up. But mostly it is back two steps to the old technology of entering digits.

Sue Linacre
Chippenharn, Wilts

Qualified to teach

Sir, The apparent criticism of Bridget Phillipson, the education secretary, for wanting to bring in a ban on academies employing unqualified teachers is bemusing (I'm no Marxist ... I'd be happy if every school became an academy", Feb 3). It is a practice that would not be acceptable in any other profession, and which

not only does a disservice to children but also plays to the narrative that "anyone can teach", undermining teachers' skills and professionalism. Young people should no more expect to be taught by an unqualified teacher than anyone would be represented by an unqualified barrister or treated by an untrained doctor. Children should of course be taught by fully qualified teachers, and Phillipson is absolutely right to insist on this change so as to provide excellence in education.

Fran Stuart
Carlisle, Cumbria

Heard but not seen

Sir, How right Ann Treneman is to keep mentioning those who are no longer with us ("We must keep talking about those we've lost", Notebook, Feb 1). I frequently bring my late husband into the conversation and say: "Well, James would not have approved of that." And on a recent cruise on the Douro river I was genuinely sorry he was missing the impressive locks. He is never far from mind.

Marlene Maguire
Claygate, Surrey

OIL WIPES OUT LIFE IN THE OCEANS

FROM THE TIMES FEBRUARY 4, 1925

Sir, During the war I was apprehensive of the effect of the oil on the fisheries of the North Sea, and just about four years ago you were good enough to publish a letter of mine in which I drew attention to the fact that Professor Meek, who from his laboratory at Cullercoats looks after the fishes of the North Sea, recorded a singular diminution in the supply of plaice, that fish so beloved by frequenters of fried-fish shops.

I attributed this fact to the sinking of oil-carrying ships: but oil is destroying the marine fauna in

many places of the world where no tankers or oil ships have been sunk. Already in the summer of 1920 there were great complaints from Atlantic City and other bathing resorts that the oil on the Western shores of the Atlantic was destroying the highly elaborate costumes of the American bathers. In places one could not even recline on the sands without ruining a "creation". So serious was the matter that the last time but one I was in New York I found the insurance companies gravely alarmed about the insurance of the numerous wooden piers which line both sides of Manhattan Island. There was then so much oil on the harbour waters that they feared a conflagration. I think this oil had exuded from ships.

The trouble is that a thin film of oil destroys life in the ocean. It ruins the inshore animals — many of them of startling beauty, brightly coloured star-fish, many-hued anemones. With the exception of the herring, the eggs

of most edible sea-fish float near the surface of the water. These the oil destroys and with them countless millions of the most delicate and beautiful larvae of all sorts of marine creatures perish. I have been a little bit perturbed at the many letters from the lovers of birds destroyed by this floating oil, because their writers have shown a very imperfect sympathy with members of other groups of the animal kingdom. Perhaps because they are so small, we cannot see them without artificial aid. But there they are, some of them surpassing in beauty, form and colour any bird-of-paradise, and others as gorgeous and scintillating as Mr Brock's fireworks at the Crystal Palace.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
AE Shipley, Christ's College Lodge, Cambridge

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Inspired by Einstein

Sir, As an undergraduate of Nottingham University in the late 1950s, all our physics lectures were held in the large lecture theatre of the Trent Building where Einstein's own presentation was given ("Stump up or Einstein heritage will turn to chalk dust, plead scientists", news, Feb 1; letter, Feb 3). "His" board was mounted on the wall at the front next to the large sliding blackboards used at the time. We humble students hence had years of opportunity to watch university staff scratch their thoughts in chalk alongside those of the great man, on the very spot where he stood. Whether that inspired them — or us — I am not sure, but I would like to think so.

I cannot believe there is actually an issue in preserving this historic artefact. The university is one of the most successful in the country, and comparatively wealthy. I recommend that the vice-chancellor stumps up, allowing the present storm in the staff's tea cups to subside.

Dr Tony Wood
Vice-chancellor emeritus, University of Bedfordshire; Ashford, Kent

Student mayhem

Sir, Your report of inmates at Corpus Christi College spraying a few toilets and showers with vomit and faeces shouldn't surprise us unduly ("Cambridge party ban over student mayhem", Feb 3). Students have been behaving like this off and on for centuries. What is shocking is that the college cleaners seem to have been left to clear up the mess. At the risk of inflicting irreparable damage to their mental health, the miscreants should have been issued with rubber gloves and mops and told to get on with it — or be ejected from the college permanently. What sort of people run our universities these days?

Roger Burgess
Lodsworth, W Sussex

Miss Austen's error

Sir, The BBC is renowned for its costume dramas but its latest, *Miss Austen*, contains a historical howler. At one point, the young Austen sisters are shown playing canasta, a game of which they are evidently fond. This scene takes place, we are invited to assume, in the 1790s, when canasta was wholly unknown in Europe. According to one authority canasta originated in Uruguay in the 1930s, reaching "the US in 1949 and there in the early 1950s became one of the biggest fads in the history of card playing". The Misses Austen might well have played whist, piquet, or loo in 1790s England but they most certainly wouldn't have known about, let alone played, canasta. The producers of *Miss Austen* should hang their heads in shame: they might as well have had the sisters playing Space Invaders.

Richard Hopton
Gillingham, Dorset

Flower trauma

Sir, Missing from Ben Cooper's letter (Feb 1) about wearing differently coloured carnations for finals exams was the requirement that carnations were not bought personally: they had to be a gift. It created much angst.

Carol Tullo
London N20

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Daily Universal Register

UK: The home affairs select committee takes evidence on the work of the Home Office; Westminster Social Policy Forum hosts an event on devolution in Manchester.

Nature notes



Lichens can be excellent indicators of air quality. Some species, such as the beard lichens in the *Usnia* genus, the mossy, lobed and branching species in the *Evernia* genus and the tube lichens in the *Hypogymnia* genus, are highly sensitive to nitrogen, and tend only to grow in areas with extremely clean air. But there are other lichens that love nitrogen and grow more strongly in its presence: the yolky yellow species in the *Xanthoria* genus and the diverse, widely distributed 80 or so species in the *Physcia* genus, in particular. These nitrogen-sensitive and nitrogen-loving species have been shown to be reliable bioindicators of pollution, both from road traffic and in the form of ammonia produced by livestock.

MELISSA HARRISON

Birthdays today



Natalie Imbruglia, pictured, singer, *Torn* (1997), and actress, *Johnny English* (2003), 50; **Jerry Adler**, actor, *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), and director, 96; **Peter Allen**, broadcaster, Radio 5 Live (since 1994), 79; **Richard Bradbury**, executive chairman, River Island (and former chief executive, 2007–11), 69; **Jeanette Brakewell**, equestrian, Olympic silver medallist, team event (2000, 2004), 51; **Alice Cooper**, singer, *School's Out* (1972), 77; **Jim Cunningham**, Labour MP for Coventry South (1992–2019), 84; **Tsitsi Dangarembga**, writer, *Black and Female* (2022), and filmmaker, 66; **Vice-Admiral Sir Nick Hine**, chief executive (marine), Babcock International Group, second sea lord (2019–22), 59; **Granville Gordon**, Marquess of Huntly, premier marquis of Scotland and chief of the House of Gordon, 81; **Winton Keenen QPM**, deputy lieutenant for Northumberland, chief constable, Northumbria police (2018–23), 60; **Dame Irene Lucas-Hays**, chairwoman, Hays Travel Group, chief executive, Sunderland city council (2017–18), 71; **Prof Julie Mennell**, vice-chancellor, University of Cumbria, 55; **Alex Norris**, Labour Co-op MP for Nottingham North & Kimberley, local growth and building safety minister, 41; **Dara Ó Briain**, comedian and presenter, *Mock the Week* (2005–22), 53; **Sir Lee Pearson**, dressage rider, 14-time Paralympic Games gold medallist, 51; **Sir Charles Pollard QPM**, pioneer of restorative justice, chief constable, Thames Valley police (1991–2002), 80; **Lord (Richard) Ryder** of Wensum, chairman, Child Bereavement UK (2013–21), 76; **Dame Jenny Shipley**, politician, prime minister of New Zealand (1997–99), 73.

On this day

In 1974, at the Oscars ceremony, as David Niven was about to introduce Elizabeth Taylor to announce that *The Sting* had won best picture, a naked man, Robert Opel, ran across the stage flashing a peace sign. After a delayed introduction, Taylor said: "That's a pretty hard act to follow."

The last word

"Human relationships don't belong to engineering, mathematics, chess, which offer problems that can be perfectly solved. Human relationships grow, like trees." JB Priestley, writer, *Journey Down a Rainbow* (1957)



Self-Harm

Donald Trump's threats of a trade war are angering America's friends and hardening the resolve of his enemies. It is time for the tariff-loving US president to think again

Stock markets are plummeting. America's trading partners, friend and foe alike, are complaining they have been left high and dry by the first shots in Donald Trump's looming trade war. Evidently the president of the United States has registered the dismay of Canada, once regarded as the closest friend of the United States, its most trusted ally, its most critically integrated trading partner. But not before notoriously polite Canadians loudly booed *The Star-Spangled Banner* at ice hockey games. US standing with its northern neighbour has not been so low since the Iraq war.

During the election campaign Mr Trump boasted of his love for tariffs. Levies on imported goods, he argued, could be deployed not just to revive American manufacturing but to win back respect from rivals, such as China, which had exploited America's openness to trade. To the left-behind rust belt workers who voted for a second Trump presidency, tariffs were presented as a fix, one that could blunt global competition, attract foreign investment and create new jobs. Indeed the mere threat of tariffs would be enough to persuade companies to pre-empt and evade them by establishing businesses in the US. All well and good, except that a trade war is a two-way affair, and one with geopolitical as well as economic consequences.

For Mr Trump it is a matter of shame that America pays many hundreds of billions of dollars to defend the West while operating a trade deficit of similar weight. According to his narrative America is being taken for a ride by allies as well as adversaries. Tariffs, he believes, are an expression of strength by the world's biggest economy, providing not only commercial but diplomatic leverage.

In fact, they are an act of self-harm. Back in the Eighties and Nineties Canada and then Mexico were persuaded that a free trade agreement with the US would be of mutual benefit. In his first term Mr Trump renegotiated the Nafta accord but now he is trampling his own revamped deal. Despite hastily arranged stays of execution yesterday, Canada and Mexico face 25 per cent tariffs on exports to what is by far their most important customer (aware of the importance of imports of Canadian oil Mr Trump has limited the charge on that commodity to 10 per cent). Meanwhile, China, is facing a 10 per cent across-the-board hit.

America's neighbours are not taking this lying down. Davids to the US Goliath they have nevertheless threatened countermeasures. Mooted Canadian retaliation includes taxes on imports of American orange juice, whisky, peanut butter, beer, wine, vegetables, perfume, clothes and furni-

ture. Mr Trump may shrug off this action: the US economy is too big to be catapulted into recession purely because of a trade war with Canada, an economy one thirteenth its size. But there will be real costs to US businesses if a tariff war kicks in earnest. Mr Trump promised that it would be worth "the price that must be paid". One price could be California having to import more oil from the Middle East. Others could be higher inflation and in time reduced growth. But the supply chain integration fostered by Nafta makes all of its members vulnerable to dislocation. Yesterday Mexico and Canada won a month's reprieve from Mr Trump. While hailed as a victory south of the border, the threat of punishing and mutually destructive tariffs remains a potent threat.

As much as any great power the US has benefited hugely from a liberal global trading regime. Now it is picking fights with everyone. That includes the European Union, together with China, Mr Trump's arch villain. But the EU has heft and can hit back across a whole range of products. The question is, will Mr Trump use other weapons, like the US commitment to Nato, to leverage concessions? Meanwhile, Britain stands by as the US, EU and China, square up for a fight, seemingly at the mercy of events rather than fashioning them.

Defending Excellence

On standards and academies, Bridget Phillipson must stand up to teaching unions

From dark green "exemplary" to red "causing concern", parents in England will soon have new ratings to understand their local schools. Out go Ofsted's single-word grades, in comes a report card to be introduced later this year. The reforms, triggered by the death of Ruth Perry, a headteacher who killed herself after her school was sharply downgraded, have become a difficult subject for the government, pitting parents against unions over what is the most apt way to grade schools.

Bridget Phillipson, the education secretary, has risked seeking to please everyone and ultimately pleasing nobody with this approach. There is no doubt that the new grading system puts extra pressure on inspectors, who have to cover extra categories within the same two days of school inspections. Although it is ludicrous to suggest, as one teaching union leader has, that it is "bewildering" for parents, it is hard to dispute that the new system is more convoluted than what came before.

However, Ms Phillipson has at least stood up to the teaching unions by rejecting calls for grading to be ditched altogether. Some unions, who would prefer a narrative description of schools, are doing

a great disservice to parents in calling for a weaker system that would result in less scrutiny. The new grades, drawn up by Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted's chief inspector, must ensure there is no watering down of how to hold schools accountable.

By rejecting the calls of teaching unions, Ms Phillipson appears to be recanting somewhat from her previous rhetoric. In particular, her plans to throttle the academies programme have flown in the face of all evidence on the attainment progress made in recent decades. Yet in a speech yesterday, she sought to tone down her criticism of the Conservative Party's record, praising one of her predecessors, Michael Gove, for bringing a "real drive" into improving standards and continuing "a succession of great education reformers".

In an interview with this newspaper, Ms Phillipson has insisted that "academisation will continue" and praised their importance for being at "forefront of driving improvements". Yet her actions still suggest she is not delivering on these words. Her Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill will challenge some of the key tenets of academy freedom, including an insistence to follow the

national curriculum while introducing the same pay scales across all state schools. It is the power to diverge from these scales that has allowed academies to attract better teachers and drive up standards. Ms Phillipson must still prove that she believes in academies, especially when it comes to failing schools. Her announcement of £20 million of funding to help some 600 "stuck" schools goes further and faster than the current system for intervention, but it must be backed up by forced academisation orders to make a real difference.

Ms Phillipson may be sanguine about criticism of her strategy. It is indeed welcome, as she has said, that education is back at the heart of the policy debate. But not if it risks schools going backwards. The education secretary would do well to listen to Dame Rachel de Souza, the children's commissioner, who is "deeply concerned" about her plans. Even the government's own impact assessment has shown that the majority of sponsored academies have boosted standards. The education secretary has stood up to the trade unions on grading. She should do so again in the case of academies.

Another Country

Beyoncé's foray into country and western shows that genres are there to be escaped

Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter is not the kind of woman to take a slight, real or imagined, lying down. Speaking at the Grammys on Sunday the singer mused: "Sometimes genre is a codeword to keep us in place as artists." She had waited almost nine years to say that, after being "put in her place" by fans of country and western who took to the internet to criticise her appearance at the 50th annual Country Music Association Awards in Nashville. Attacking the dancefloor convener of all single ladies as a musical interloper, a country aficionado fumed: "Beyoncé could not be bothered to put some clothes on for the occasion."

True, her dress was about as far from wholesome gingham and denim as could be imagined, but Beyoncé's rendition of *Daddy Lessons* was pure southern fried. There was something darker in some of the posts about that performance: a hint of racism; the suggestion that country music was properly the preserve of white artists. It was a moment to savour, therefore, when Beyoncé scooped not only the best album award at the Grammys but best country album for *Cowboy Carter*, her refashioning of a genre often denigrated for its twangy mawkish ballads with endlessly repeating themes, and questionable dress sense.

The awards were thoroughly deserved. *Cowboy Carter* is a Beyoncian take on country, throwing blues, rock, hip-hop and scanty clothing into the stewing pot, but songs like *Texas Hold 'Em* bear comparison with the best of the genre. What it proves has been proved before: that if you are a quality act, be it Bob Dylan, Fleetwood Mac or a girl from Houston it is possible to excel in multiple musical styles. One quibble about *Cowboy Carter*: Beyoncé's version of Dolly Parton's masterpiece *Jolene* alters the lyrics to portray a more assertive woman, warning not pleading with the eponymous maneater. One should not gild a country lily.

World

'Racist' baby test fuels Greenland's hopes of freedom

As Trump eyes up jewel in the Arctic, anger is growing at Denmark's colonial mindset, writes **Marc Bennetts** in Nuuk

On a snowy hilltop overlooking a windswept bay in Nuuk, the tiny capital of Greenland, is a statue of the Christian missionary who led an expedition to colonise this vast island for Denmark in 1721. Three centuries on, after years of discrimination by Copenhagen against the local population, many Greenlanders wish that Hans Egede had never set sail.

Among the most vocal critics of Danish policies is Pele Broberg, the leader of Naleraq, an opposition party that is pushing for independence. "We have nothing in common with Denmark. Nothing. We don't have the same culture. We don't have the same language. Nothing. What we have is systemic racism," Broberg said at his office in Greenland's parliament, a two-storey building near Nuuk's icy harbour.

Amid a row between Europe and the United States over President Trump's threat to seize control of Greenland, it is hard to find anyone in Nuuk who sympathises with Copenhagen's attempts to push back against Washington's expansionist ambitions. Some, like Broberg, barely bother to disguise their satisfaction at the predicament in which Greenland's former colonial master now finds itself and its discomfort at the prospect of losing its Arctic jewel.

"Denmark, in its imagination, is an Arctic power because of Greenland. The second we're gone, they have nothing to do with the Arctic anymore. They're just a European country," Broberg said.

A Danish colony for more than 230 years, Greenland gained home rule in 1979 and autonomy in 2009, but is still a part of the kingdom of Denmark. Its population of 57,000 is dominated by the indigenous Inuit, who have lived in Greenland for centuries.

Trump has said that he could use economic or even military force to make Greenland a part of the US and insists that its people "want to be with us". The island is home to large reserves of minerals, rare earth metals and uranium.

An opinion poll last week found that 85 per cent of Greenlanders have no wish to become American citizens. Mute Egede, the prime minister of Greenland, has hinted that his government could soon call a referendum on independence.

"It's crazy to imagine American soldiers invading Greenland," Karina, a Nuuk resident, said. "I don't think that will happen. But I am happy that the Danes have started paying more atten-



Keira Alexandra Kronvold's daughter was taken away from her after a test

tion to Greenland since Trump's comments. There are lots of problems."

Protests broke out in Nuuk in November when an Inuit woman's newborn daughter was forcibly removed from her arms by social workers in Denmark because she had failed a "parenting competency" test while pregnant. Critics say the test, which is used in child welfare investigations in Denmark but not Greenland, makes no allowance for Inuit culture.

Keira Alexandra Kronvold's case file said that the use by the Inuit of subtle facial expressions to communicate meanings that are lost on Europeans would make it hard for her to raise her child in accordance with the "social expectations and codes necessary to navigate Danish society".

"The psychologist who gave me the test said it was to see if I was civilised enough," Kronvold, 38, said. "I looked at her and said, 'After the 300 years that Greenland and Denmark have been together, you still don't see me as civilised enough?'"

Her daughter now lives with Danish foster parents and Kronvold's visits are restricted to one hour every two weeks under strict conditions. "I'm not allowed to calm her down if she cries, give her a bottle or change her diaper," she said.

Kronvold also previously lost custody of her two other children after taking the test for the first time in 2014. Her eldest daughter, Zoe, 20, said that she was banned by her foster parents from speaking her native language.

Some Inuit families fled to Greenland because of fears that their children would also be taken from them if they failed to the test. Among them were Bibi and Bjarne Knudsen, who were warned by a rights group that they were in danger of losing custody of their five children.

"Everything became scary," Bjarne said at the family's home on the outskirts of Nuuk. "We were told we needed to get our kids away from the Danish system. I was in Greenland at the time, for work, and planning to come back for Christmas. Instead, my

wife and the children flew straight to Nuuk from Copenhagen."

Up to 460 Inuit children may have been wrongly removed from their families as a result of the test, the Danish government admitted last month. It also said that it would scrap it for cases involving Greenlandic families.

It is the latest mistreatment of Inuits by the Danish state. In the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of young Inuit women, some of them children, had contraceptive devices fitted into their wombs without their consent.

Between the 1950s and 1970s, a Danish "modernisation" project forcibly relocated Inuit villagers to newly built tower blocks, a move that is believed to have caused a surge in suicides and alcoholism.

Perhaps predictably, the statue of Egede, the missionary, has been vandalised on a number of occasions. Five years ago, it was splashed with red paint and "Decolonise!" was scrawled across its pedestal. It also acted as the backdrop to the video for an angry rap song by Tarrak, an Inuit rapper, that lashed out against Danish racism.

"There is a lot of resentment and anger against the way Denmark has treated and lied to us for decades," Vittus Qujaukitsoq, a former foreign minister in Greenland, said.

Although support for independence is high, it is tempered by the fear that living standards could plummet if Greenland severs ties with Denmark. Subsidies from Copenhagen make up about a fifth of the island's annual GDP.

While 80 per cent of Greenlanders say they are in favour of independence, only 45 per cent would vote for it if it had a negative economic impact, according to an opinion poll carried out by Sermitsiaq, a Nuuk-based media outlet, and the Danish newspaper Berlingske.

Qujaukitsoq argued that an independent Greenland could partly make up for the loss of subsidies by taking control of fishing revenues. He also accused Copenhagen of using scare tactics to try to convince Greenlanders that they would not be able to survive without Danish assistance. "We need to get rid of this mental block to convince the people to take the necessary step for independence," he said.

Now that the "parenting competency" tests have been discredited, Kronvold hopes a court in Denmark will rule soon to reunite her with her daughter. Yet the traumatic experience has only strengthened her desire for independence for Greenland, as well as to achieve justice for her children.

"I want to make sure that the Danish government apologises to my children and to all the other children who lost their language and culture," she said. "We have had enough."

Trump's threats are angering America's friends, leading article, page 21



Law enforcement officers patrolled the streets around the Scarlet Sails apartment complex after the explosion in the lobby. Armen Sarkisian, below, was taken to hospital but died there of his injuries



Ukrainian crime boss killed in Moscow blast

Russia
Marc Bennetts

An explosion at an apartment block in Moscow has killed the head of a pro-Kremlin military unit from Ukraine.

The blast is thought to have been caused by a bomb planted in the entrance to the Alye Parusa (Scarlet Sails) luxury residential complex about ten miles northwest of Red Square.

Armen Sarkisian, a boxing official who founded the pro-Moscow Arbat battalion in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, died in hospital after being critically injured, Russian media reported. A second person was also killed and four others injured. Sarkisian

lost a leg in the blast, according to Baza, a channel on the Telegram platform with links to the Russian security services. His security guard is said to have been badly injured. The identity of the other person who died is unclear.

Video from the scene showed a badly damaged hallway, a blown-out door and shattered glass. The bomb is believed to have been hidden in a couch in the entrance, Russian media said.

"The assassination attempt on Sarkisian was carefully planned and was ordered. Investigators are currently identifying those who ordered the crime," a Russian law enforcement official told Tass, a state news agency.

In December, Ukraine's SBU secur-

World Cup kiss a stain on my glory, says footballer
Page 25

Underground peril gives Japan a sinking feeling
Page 26

TATYANA MAKEYEVA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; YURI KOCHETKOV/EPA; AP



ity service described Sarkisian as a "crime boss" in the Donetsk region and accused him of recruiting convicts to fight for Moscow. He is reported to have moved to Ukraine from Armenia when he was young. The majority of the fighters in his battalion are said to be ethnic Armenians.

The SBU also said he was close to Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Moscow Ukrainian president who was ousted by protesters in Kyiv in 2014.

Ukraine has not commented on the bombing. However, Russian military officials, propaganda agents and other pro-Moscow figures have been targeted by Kyiv since the Kremlin's invasion in February 2022.

In December a Russian general was killed when a bomb attached to an electric scooter detonated as he left his home in Moscow. Igor Kirillov's death came a day after Ukraine had ac-

cused him of ordering chemical weapons attacks on its troops. He was the most senior Russian official to have been killed since the start of the war.

A man from Uzbekistan, a former Soviet republic, was arrested in connection with the Kirillov assassination. Russia said he had been recruited by Ukrainian intelligence.

President Trump has said that American and Russian officials are "already talking" about the war in Ukraine.

President Putin said

last week that Moscow would not negotiate directly with President Zelensky because it did not consider him the legitimate leader of Ukraine. Elections that were due to take place last year in Ukraine were postponed under martial law introduced after Russia invaded in 2022.

"[Putin] is afraid of negotiations, afraid of strong leaders and does everything possible to prolong the war," Zelensky said. He said that Kyiv should not be excluded from negotiations to end the war.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are seen by Russia as possible venues for a summit between Trump and Putin, according to Reuters.

Traditional venues for US-Russia summits such as Helsinki, Geneva and Vienna are considered unsuitable by Moscow because of western support for Ukraine, Fyodor Lukyanov, a Russian political analyst, told Tass.

Divided West is precisely what Putin wants, William Hague, page 17



Trump pledges to cut funds over land grabs

South Africa

Jane Flanagan Cape Town

President Trump has said he will block funding to South Africa pending an investigation into its new land laws and the treatment of "certain classes of people", a reference to the country's white minority.

In a surprise announcement, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform on Sunday night: "South Africa is confiscating land, and treating certain classes of people VERY BADLY." He added: "I will be cutting off all future funding to South Africa until a full investigation of this situation has been completed!"

Trump's claim that a "massive human rights violation" was unfolding in South Africa came less than a fortnight after President Ramaphosa signed into law a bill that allows the government, in certain circumstances, to offer "nil compensation" for property it decides to expropriate in the public interest.

Trump criticised the country's land policy during his first spell in office and his most prominent billionaire backer, the South African-born Elon Musk, has also claimed its white farmers are facing a "genocide".

The government argues that the bill does not allow it to expropriate property arbitrarily and is necessary to address land ownership, since most farmland is still owned by white people three decades after the end of apartheid. White South Africans own almost three quarters of the country's farmland while making up about 7 per cent of the population.

Critics of the new bill have raised the prospect of a repeat of the state seizures of white-owned commercial farms in neighbouring Zimbabwe that began after independence.

Trump later told journalists that South Africa's leadership was "doing some terrible things, horrible things", without giving examples.

"So that's under investigation right now. We'll make a determination and until such time as we find out what South Africa is doing — they're taking away land and confiscating land, and actually they're doing things that are perhaps far worse than that."

Ramaphosa rejected Trump's claim that his government was "confiscating" land and said he was ready to explain his position to his American counterpart.

Musk shared Ramaphosa's statement on X, asking "Why do you have openly racist ownership laws?", a reference to the rules on company ownership that have prevented Musk from bringing his internet satellite business Starlink to his country of birth.

Officials in Pretoria recently confirmed they had denied Musk's request to reconsider Black Economic Empowerment laws that require a 30 per cent shareholding by black investors.

Trump's announcement revives the promise made during his first term of an investigation into "large-scale killing" of white farmers and violent land grabs. It is not clear if any investigation was carried out.

Ramaphosa said: "We look forward to engaging with the Trump administration over our land reform policy and issues of bilateral interest. We are certain that out of those engagements, we will share a better and common understanding over these matters."

Musk targets aid agency

President Trump has put his secretary of state in charge of the US Agency for International Development after Elon Musk vowed to destroy it (David Charter and Charlotte McDonald-Gibson write).

Confirming his appointment as acting director, Marco Rubio accused USAid of failing to answer questions on its funding and priorities. "That level of insubordination makes it impossible to conduct a sort of serious review," he said. "It's going to stop and it's going to end."

Police were ordered to keep employees out of the agency's head office yesterday. Its website went dark after Musk, who is leading a cost-cutting drive, said on Sunday that he would close the department, which manages \$72 billion.

Trump told reporters that Musk "can't do and won't do" anything without approval, but added he believed the agency had been taken over by "radicals".

Democratic senators headed to the offices to show their support. Andy Kim, senator for New Jersey, called the move a "blatant illegal action", saying its status as an independent agency was codified in federal law.

"Our country deserves to have a foreign policy, deserves to have public servants that are about serving our nation, but instead they're seeing from Trump and Musk this effort to try to demonise them," he said.

Trump has ordered a global freeze on most US foreign aid.

USAid is the world's largest single aid donor, providing 42 per cent of all humanitarian aid last year, according to the UN. It disbursed \$72 billion of assistance in 2023, including for women's health in conflict zones, access to clean water, HIV/Aids treatments, energy security and anti-corruption work.

South Africa is a constitutional democracy that is deeply rooted in the rule of law, justice and equality. The South African government has not confiscated any land."

Trump's comments triggered a fall in the South African rand against the dollar. Washington has sent more than \$8 billion in bilateral aid to South Africa over the past two decades. Much of those funds went to fighting HIV/Aids and to other development projects. About \$440 million was earmarked to be sent in 2023. However, all foreign assistance has been suspended for 90 days while Musk's Department of Government Efficiency looks for savings.

Musk forms part of the so-called PayPal mafia group of libertarian billionaires who have roots in southern Africa and hold influential positions within the Trump administration. They include David Sacks, Trump's artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency tsar, who was born in Cape Town and was the inaugural product leader of PayPal, which was co-founded by Musk. Maga is more about posturing than policy, James Marriott, page 19

World

Modi joins freebie frenzy to win support at the ballot box

India

Amrit Dhillon Delhi

When Tamil Nadu's voters go to the polls they have more on their minds than their democratic duty. The possibility of free laptops, televisions, mobile phones, blenders and washing machines are also part of the calculation.

The southern Indian state pioneered a tradition of politicians promising

freebies in exchange for votes. This has since travelled north to Delhi and has been on display for weeks as the capital prepares to vote in a new government.

Voters' phones ping through the day: "Vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] to get 2,500 rupees [£23] a month for women, cooking gas worth 500 rupees, and a million rupees' worth of medical treatment." Another ping: "Vote for the Aam Aadmi Party [Ordinary Man's Party, AAP] and get 100,000

rupees for the marriage of an auto-rickshaw driver's daughter, 2,000 rupees a month for women, free electricity and 17,000 rupees a month for priests."

Delhiites have become accustomed to bribes masquerading as "welfare" from the AAP, which has been in power in the capital for the past 12 years. For millions of poor voters, this has been a way to cut back on monthly costs and they continue to largely back the party. Now the BJP has joined in too. Its

leader, Narendra Modi, has been prime minister for a decade and the party rules 14 of India's 28 states, but finds it irksome not to be in charge of the capital.

Modi had previously dismissed the issuing of freebies to poorer sections of society and women, likening them to *revdis*, or cheap sweets made of dark brown sugar and sesame seeds. But now he and his home affairs minister, Amit Shah, are urging voters to give them a chance, with cash to sweeten the

deal. It may be, however, that politicians are underestimating voters.

Nadeem Ansari, 42, an Uber driver, is too shrewd to vote on cash offers alone. "I'm voting for the AAP not for the freebies but because they have improved schools and my kids benefit," he said. "Their school is cleaner now and the teachers are more committed than ever before."

Polling takes place tomorrow with the result declared on Saturday.



WAN YONG CHONG/SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2025

Up and under Freedivers in Malaysia take the plunge in this national winner from the Sony World Photography Awards. Highlights will go on show in London in April

Church forced to sever ties with Moscow

Estonia

Oliver Moody

The abess of a historically significant Orthodox convent in Estonia has claimed it will have to close under an impending reform that would oblige all religious institutions in the country to distance themselves from Russia.

The Moscow patriarchate is effectively the spiritual arm of the Russian state and has whipped up support for the invasion of Ukraine.

In Estonia it represents 10 per cent of the population. Tallinn officials say it is the most significant instrument of Russian influence on their territory.

The interior ministry wants the 150,000 members of the MPEOK church to join a smaller Orthodox church that falls under the Constantinople patriarchate. Its draft law will bar any religious association directed by or financially dependent on a country deemed to threaten Estonia's security.

It is in effect a tool to wrench the MPEOK from Russia's clutches but Filaret Kalatsova, the abess of the Puhitsa convent, in Kuramae, near the Russian border, said it would shut rather than sever ties to Moscow.

In the half-century that Estonia was under Soviet occupation the convent was one of only two monastic communities to remain open in the USSR.

'Hard man' ex-cop on brink of power

Australia

Bernard Lagan Sydney

He is a plain-speaking hard man who quit his job as a police officer after he was knocked unconscious chasing a heroin dealer.

Peter Dutton, according to the latest opinion polls, is also the man most likely to be Australia's next prime minister after an election expected to be held before April.

As disillusionment and frustration grow with the faltering leadership of Anthony Albanese, the present prime minister, Dutton, 54, the leader of the opposition who was dismissed as a no-hoper only 12 months ago, is considered the frontrunner to succeed him.

Dutton has appealed to disgruntled suburbanites with policies borrowed from President Trump of the US. Last week he mirrored Trump's war on diversity, equity and inclusion schemes, suggesting he would end such initiatives as they did "nothing to improve the lives of everyday Australians".

He had already replicated the aims of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency, tasked with slashing state spending. A week ago he appointed a shadow minister for government effi-

ciency to reduce the 36,000 additional public servants employed by Albanese's Labor government, which has been in office for almost three years.

Dutton has also increased his criticism of "woke" progressive causes, vowing to banish the Aboriginal flag from government press conferences and never to stand beneath it as prime minister. Immigration will be reduced and foreigners banned from buying houses, he has said.

Such policies appeal to those struggling with rising prices, sluggish wage growth and the 13 interest rate rises that have inflated mortgage repayments since Albanese came to power.

Last weekend Dutton tried to woo Melbourne's Chinese community by attending lunar new year celebrations. He was overshadowed by Albanese, who called out as Dutton's bald head beamed in the sun: "You need a hat, mate!" Flanked by lion dancers as cymbals crashed, the prime minister ambled just in front of the nipping mouth of a long dragon as Dutton followed along at its tail.

The outer suburb of Box Hill, home to one of the largest Asian communities in Melbourne, became the centre of Australian politics as both party leaders

chased the Chinese vote, considered crucial in the forthcoming election. When Albanese won in 2022, Chinese voters turned savagely on conservatives, unseating the China hawk Scott Morrison as prime minister. At the time, Dutton was defence minister and had compared Beijing's military build-up to the rise of Nazism in the 1930s.

Such talk has disappeared as Dutton seeks to win those voters back. He told the crowd on Saturday: "The Chinese



As a policeman Peter Dutton was infuriated by a legal system he saw as too soft

community ... have continued over the course of many, many decades to contribute to our amazing country."

Albanese's election prospects have faltered as supporters have fallen away. They include the Tasmania-based Booker prizewinner Richard Flanagan, who castigated Albanese in The Sydney Morning Herald for his capitulations to big business. "Under Anthony Albanese, Labor gives the ever stronger

impression that it has never seen a corporation that it won't prostrate itself to," Flanagan said.

In late November Albanese, under pressure from big mining companies, suddenly dropped his party's promise to stop environmental degradation by establishing a powerful new environment protection agency.

On Thursday his government gave in to pressure from big media businesses, betting companies and the wealthiest sporting bodies to suspend plans to stop the sports betting adverts blamed for fostering gambling addictions.

Although Dutton would be very unlikely to resurrect any of Albanese's abandoned promises, the prime minister's capitulations only bolster his rival's mission to paint Albanese as weak, which is now the opposition leader's key theme in the election campaign.

It is a trope suited to the 6ft 2in Dutton, who has spent decades fostering his hard man persona. The Catholic bricklayer's son abandoned his business studies course at university to become a police officer in Queensland. He was deeply affected by a series of child rape cases and became infuriated by a legal system he considered too soft.

Within a decade Dutton resigned

from the force after flipping his police car and being knocked unconscious while he was chasing a heroin dealer. In an unusually vulnerable moment in 2023, Dutton confided to a journalist that he probably suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

He did well investing in property and childcare centres before he entered parliament in 2001, at the age of 30.

It was not until the conservative prime minister Tony Abbott took office in 2013 that Dutton found a mentor confident enough to entrust him with a crucial job. He became minister for border protection in 2014, responsible for using the military to intercept small boats carrying asylum seekers from Asia and pushing them back out to sea or burning their boats and incarcerating the occupants on Pacific islands.

Dutton relished his notoriety, infuriating New Zealanders by forcibly returning Kiwi-born criminals, a process he called "taking out the trash".

The animosity of others, notably the former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull, under whom Dutton also served as a minister, has not ebbed. Last year Turnbull said Dutton was a "thug" and that any government led by him should be "contemplated with dread".

World Cup kiss a stain on my glory, says striker

Spain

Isambard Wilkinson Madrid

As the trial of the infamous kiss began, with Spain watching every deliberation live on television and online, Jenni Hermoso stated her case plainly.

"He grabbed my head with effusiveness ... without me being able to respond at any time," the football player said, recalling the actions of Luis Rubiales, who was then the head of Spain's football federation. "I felt it was totally out of context. I knew I was being kissed by my boss."

Rubiales, 47, will take the stand next week, arguing, as he has in the past, that the kiss was merely a spontaneous act of jubilation.

He provoked international outrage when he cupped Hermoso's head and gave her an unsolicited kiss after Spain beat England to win the 2023 Women's World Cup.

The case continues to divide Spain. Many hope it will mark an end to machismo in Spanish sport but others view it as a draconian witch-hunt against Rubiales by what he has called "fake feminists".

Hermoso, 34, has accused Rubiales of sexual assault for the kiss and of trying, along with others, to coerce her to produce a statement exculpating him. Prosecutors are seeking two and a half years in prison for Rubiales; one year for sexual assault and 18 months for alleged coercion.

Also on trial are Jorge Vilda, Spain's former women's national team coach, Albert Luque, the former sports director of Spain's men's team, and Rubén Rivera, the federation's former head of marketing. They are accused of pressuring Hermoso to defend Rubiales after the incident. All three deny the charge.



In court Hermoso was subdued but composed under questioning. Rubiales, who was sitting yards away, occasionally shook his head.

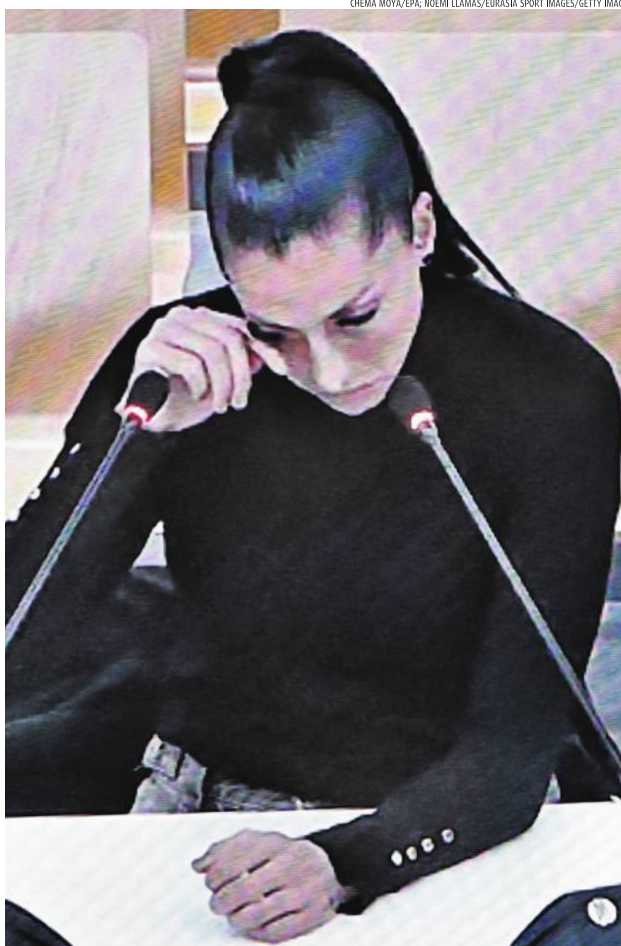
He made such a gesture after she said that following the kiss, Rubiales had summoned her out of dressing-room celebrations to ask her for her support to deflate the crisis that was already brewing on social media. She refused his overture, she said, adding: "I told him: 'It's going to fall on you because you know this is not right.'"

The high-profile case has fed into national and international debate about sexual violence and consent. Hermoso's equanimity and unexcitable demeanour — as well as the judge's irascible intolerance of apparently impertinent questions — did not give the prosecution or defence room to manoeuvre beyond probing the essential nature of the kiss and alleged coercion.

Rubiales has called the kiss an innocuous "peck between friends celebrating" and denied any coercion. Hermoso strongly disputed that characterisation. "I greeted the queen, her daughter ... the next thing was to meet Rubiales. We hugged ... then he jumped up and down and said to me: 'We won this World Cup thanks to you.' The next thing was his hands on my ears and the kiss on the mouth."

The prosecution asked: "Did he say: 'Can I give you a little kiss?'" Hermoso replied: "No, at that moment I didn't understand or hear anything. I didn't see him gesturing with his mouth any kind of question."

She added: "This shouldn't happen in any social or work setting ... A kiss on the lips is only given when I decide so. As a woman I felt disrespected. It was a moment that stained one of the happiest days of my life."



Jenni Hermoso accused Luis Rubiales of sexual assault over the kiss, below left

"At no point did I seek that act, let alone expect it," she added during more than two hours of testimony. "My attitude ... does not take away from what I feel. I don't have to be crying in a room or have thrown myself to the ground when the act happened to imply I didn't like it."

Anticipating the defence team's questioning of why she had carried on with the celebrations if she had been so upset by the kiss, she repeatedly stated her determination not to let the incident tarnish an achievement that had been years in the making. "It was important for me to be able to celebrate that moment," said Hermoso, the all-time top scorer for Spain's women's team.

Hermoso, who now plays in Mexico, said she had to leave Madrid with her family because of the fear she felt. "Until today it feels like my life has been on standby," she added.

As well as the kiss, video of Rubiales grabbing his crotch while standing next to the Queen of Spain and her teenage daughter engulfed public debate.

At first Rubiales refused to step down.

His mother's short-lived confinement in a church on hunger strike, saying she would not eat until the "witch-hunt" against her son ended, was viewed by most as a crowning moment of national embarrassment.

Rubiales, who was already under investigation for alleged corruption in his role as federation head, finally gave in to pressure and stepped down in September 2023, two days after the start of an investigation into the kiss. He had been federation chief since 2018.

The trial is expected to last at least ten days. Among nearly 20 witnesses expected to testify are the men's national team coach, Luis de la Fuente, and some of Hermoso's team-mates, including Alexia Putellas, a former world player of the year.

A recent reform of the Spanish criminal code classifies a non-consensual kiss as sexual assault. "Thank you again, Jenni, for your bravery," Ana Redondo, the equality minister, wrote on X shortly before the trial started. "Thanks to you and your team-mates we add another victory for feminism."

Film director found guilty of abusing child actress

France

Charles Bremner Paris

Christophe Ruggia, a French film director, has been sentenced to two years of home detention for sexually assaulting the actress Adèle Haenel, in the first conviction stemming from French cinema's MeToo moment.

Ruggia, 60, was convicted of abusing Haenel, now 35, when she was aged between 12 and 14 while working on his 2002 film *Les Diables* (The Devils).

She said the director groomed her while coaching her for her role as an autistic girl who suffers sexual abuse.

Haenel, who is best known for starring in the 2019 drama *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, waited almost two decades before denouncing Ruggia publicly.

In the first French MeToo allegations to reach trial, she accused the French film industry in 2019 of denying the existence of its predators despite Hollywood's reckoning with sexual abuse two years earlier, when dozens of actresses accused Harvey Weinstein of sexual offences.

Ruggia, who was convicted in December last year, received a four-year sentence, of which two years were suspended. The remainder of the sentence will be spent under house arrest. He must wear an ankle tag during this time.

"The court finds you guilty," the presiding judge told the film-maker. "You took advantage of your position of power over the young actress."

Ruggia, who denied the charges and accused Haenel of telling "pure lies" to damage him, said he would appeal. Under French law the case will be retried, probably in 2026.

Fanny Colin and Orly Rezlan, Ruggia's lawyers, called the verdict unjustified and dangerous. A crowd applauded as Haenel left the court building.

Haenel, who has won two Césars, France's national film awards, became a symbol for French feminists and women in the film industry when she spoke out in 2019, accusing the industry of refusing to confront abuse.

The French MeToo movement was given impetus last year by Judith Godrèche, now 52, an actress who alleged she had been abused in her early teens by two directors, Benoît Jacquot and Jacques Doillon. Jacquot faces rape charges involving other women. They deny the charges.

Another case will reach court next month when Gérard Depardieu, the veteran star, will be tried on charges of sexually assaulting two women on set in 2021, which he denies.

Teacher resisting eviction becomes hero of Barcelona's rent wars

Isambard Wilkinson

Spain's housing crisis has found an unlikely hero in a maths teacher who has managed to win a stay of eviction in Barcelona due to the support of hundreds of local residents.

However short-lived the victory of Josep Torrent, 49, who has lived in the same apartment for more than two decades, he has become a symbol of resistance for protesters against the effects of tourism and gentrification.

The eviction of Torrent, who has paid €700 rent a month at the art nouveau Casa Orsola block of flats since 2001, was set to be the first from the block. Torrent refused to leave when an invest-

ment fund, Lioness Inversiones, bought the building in the Eixample district in 2020. He claims Lioness offered a 50 per cent rent rise to renew his contract.

"My intention is to stay in my house quietly, peacefully, but firmly, when the judicial procession comes," Torrent said. The eviction has unleashed indignation among hundreds of locals who gathered in front of the building for a "defence marathon".

His case illustrates the housing crisis affecting much of Spain, an increasingly serious problem for Pedro Sánchez, the Socialist prime minister, and his fragile minority government.

The country is struggling to balance its dependence on tourism with citi-



Josep Torrent, 49, has paid €700 rent a month for his penthouse for 20 years

zens' concerns over unaffordable rents inflated by gentrification and landlords seeking more lucrative tourist rentals, especially in urban and coastal areas.

According to a 40dB opinion poll for El País, 84 per cent of Spaniards are concerned about the price of housing and the difficulty of accessing it. The Bank of Spain estimates there is a shortage of 600,000 homes. Only 90,000 new houses and apartments are built a year amid a surge in migration and record levels of tourism.

Spain spends four times less on social housing than the European average,

spending €34 per inhabitant in housing assistance between 2007 and 2021.

Torrent's eviction has been postponed until February 18. Albert Ollé, the head of Lioness, complained in an open letter of the "occupations, vandalism and smear campaigns" waged against him. He stated that "Mr Josep Torrent never wanted to talk to us directly. Now, after more than three years of confrontation, he has managed to be the hero and I, it seems, the criminal."

He added: "I wonder, Mr Torrent, what values do you transmit to your students when you defend rent strikes and occupations to justify that you cannot pay more than €700 for a penthouse with 60 metres of terrace?"

World

Kim opens door to tourists

North Korea

Richard Lloyd Parry Asia Editor

Foreign tourists eager to pay their respects to the late dictator of North Korea can finally satisfy their urges with the first tours of the country for more than five years, to coincide with Kim Jong-il's birthday.

For the first time since it shut its borders as an anti-Covid measure in January 2020, foreign tour companies have been given permission to take international tourists to the city of Rason, in the far northeast, close to its borders with Russia and China.

Even by North Korean standards Rason is not a charismatic city. Among the attractions on the itinerary are a "combined foodstuff processing factory producing various snacks and drinks" and a "sea cucumber breeding farm".

In compensation, the tours will coincide with February 16, the Day of the Shining Star as it is known in North Korea. It is the birthday of Kim Jong-il, late father of the supreme leader Kim Jong-un, right. The day is sometimes celebrated with

parades and other commemorative solemnities.

Koryo Tours, a Beijing-based company, is advertising the four-night Kim Jong-il birthday tour for €705, with two additional nights in China. Young Pioneer Tours is offering a similar, shorter itinerary for €645.

"We will visit various factories, see a taekwondo demonstration at the Rason Taekwondo School and make a stop at the Golden Triangle Bank to learn about Rason's unique economic system," Koryo Tours said on its website. "Here, you can even open your very own North Korean bank account."

Banking in one of the most heavily sanctioned nations in the world may be of limited use. Koryo Tours carefully notes that the tour is not yet confirmed.

North Korea used to be host to a small but constant population of diplomats, aid workers and UN employees, as well as about 5,000 tourists a year. However, apart from strong supporters of the regime, such as China, Russia, Mongolia and Cuba, few diplomats have been allowed to return.



Swish and grab Misty, a bald eagle, used her 100mph diving speed to fish at Chaparral Lake, in Scottsdale, Arizona

TIMES Travel Partner

Times readers save £100pp off any Exodus trip with code **TIMES100***

15 DAYS FROM £3,145*
per person

Essential Peru

Departures | April 2025 to October 2026

Discover the highlights of southern Peru, from Nazca to Arequipa

Journey through the vastly contrasting visual and cultural landscapes of Peru, including coastal desert, snow-capped Andean peaks, the altiplano and cloud forest. Along the way, visit world-renowned highlights, including: the mysterious Nazca Lines; Machu Picchu; Lake Titicaca, where we spend the night in an island homestay; and the 9,843ft (3,000m) deep Colca Canyon. We also encounter traditional culture, condors, llamas, and a warm welcome from the Peruvian people.



Price includes

- International flights
- All transport and listed activities. Arrival and departure transfers
- All accommodation: one superior night in a hotel, 12 classic nights in hotels and one simple night in a homestay
- All breakfasts, one lunch and one dinner
- Tour leader throughout
- See the Nazca Lines, one of the great archaeological mysteries
- Explore the Inca ruins of Machu Picchu, a new Wonder of the World

CALL TODAY ON
0808 303 4766
thetimes.com/
ex-essentialperu
QUOTE TIMES100*

Underground peril gives Japan a sinking feeling

A large hole in Tokyo that swallowed a truck and its driver has put nation on edge, writes Richard Lloyd Parry

He is unnamed and faceless. All that has been made public is his age — 74 — and where he was at the fateful moment last Tuesday morning. But for the past week, Japan has been rapt by the strenuous, desperate and so far unsuccessful effort to save the man who disappeared into a sinkhole.

It began in Yashio, an unremarkable commuter town ten miles north of central Tokyo. Videos show the moment at 9.50am when his two-ton flatbed truck gently rounded a corner on a busy main road. Moments earlier, the asphalt had gaped open to expose a hole 30ft wide and 20ft deep into which the vehicle neatly toppled.

It was a sinkhole, a cavity beneath the road caused by the softening effect on the soil below the road of water from a leaking pipe. The emergency services were quickly on the scene, deploying ladders and ropes, pumps, cranes and lifting equipment. Almost a week later, they are in a worse position that they were at the start.

On the second day, set off no doubt by the vibrating machinery, a second sinkhole appeared, swallowing utility poles. It quickly merged with the first, forcing the rescuers to retreat.

The water that caused the problem continues to leak — the rescuers find themselves confronted by a hole the



The sinkhole was caused by sewage leaking from a pipe, softening the soil

size of a swimming pool slowly filling with sewage. Having pulled out the trailer of the lorry, they have been unable to extract the cabin, in which the driver is presumed still to be. It is covered with litter and debris, and they are unable even to see inside it. Immediately after the accident, emergency workers reported being able to speak to the driver. But since then, they have heard nothing.

The apparent simplicity of the challenge adds to the sense of frustration. The saga has also revealed the complex engineering hidden beneath the country's smooth roads.

The disaster was caused by a 9ft concrete sewage pipe laid beneath Yashio in 1983. Urine and detergents in the sewage reacted to form sulphuric acid, which corroded the iron reinforcements in the concrete, breaching the pipe. The leaking sewage

softened the earth beneath the road. Residents of 12 local municipalities have been asked to use as little water as possible — but clearly, it is too much to expect 1.2 million people to stop going to the lavatory.

Having lived for thousands of years with earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods and landslides, the Japanese might have felt that they had enough potential disasters to worry about. It turns out that similar decaying sewage pipes cause 2,600 sinkholes nationwide every year, although most of them are less than 20 inches deep.

"Such drainage pipes are all around the country, and most cities in Japan are built on soft ground," Shinya Inazumi, a professor of engineering at the Shibaura Institute of Technology, told The Japan Times. "This is not a one-off accident. We should recognise sinkholes as a big disaster risk."

*Prices are inclusive of flights and correct at time of going to press. *Save £100pp when booking through Times Travel - quote TIMES100 at time of booking. The price above is reflective of the discount already included. Prices correct at time of going to press. Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Offer subject to availability and prices may fluctuate. This offer is not combinable with any other offers, including Loyalty Discounts Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Exodus Travels, ABTA Y0751, ATOL 25825, a company wholly independent of News UK.

Our trusted partner

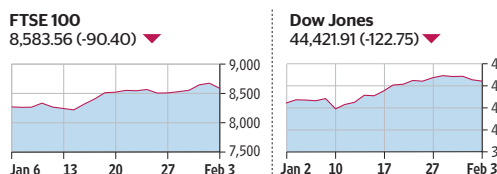
exodus
ADVENTURE TRAVELS

ABTA
Travel with confidence

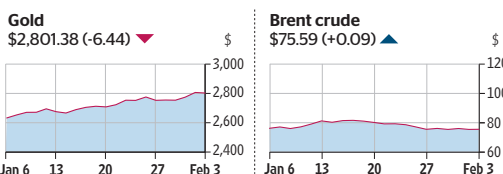


Business

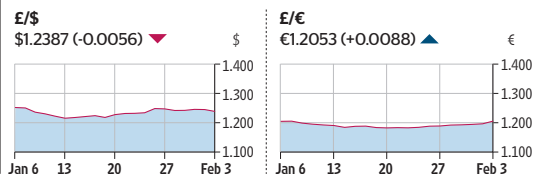
WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)



COMMODITIES



CURRENCIES



Audit fees for small businesses investigated over growth worries

Tom Howard

Concerns that audit firms are charging small businesses too much for work they do not always need have led to an investigation into the market by the industry regulator.

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) confirmed yesterday that it had begun a market study examining how effectively the audit market serves small and medium-sized enterprises

(SMEs). It is part of the watchdog's broader campaign to support growth among Britain's small businesses by reducing red tape and making audits more relevant and affordable.

As part of its study the FRC will see what, if anything, can be done to "reduce [SMEs'] reporting burden". There have been concerns in the industry that audit fees for some small businesses are out of step with the complexity of the work needed.

Whereas blue-chip firms will often work in multiple countries, have numerous subsidiaries and several income streams, smaller businesses are typically much less complex. Auditors are allowed to scale back their work to fit with the size of their client but there is a suspicion that risk aversion is leading to them doing more work than needed.

The FRC is known for monitoring auditors' work for Britain's biggest com-

panies but it is making a concerted effort to try to help those at the smaller end of the scale.

"SMEs are at the heart of job creation and innovation in our economy," Miranda Craig, director of strategy and change at the FRC, said.

Companies with revenues of less than £10.2 million and fewer than 50 staff are not required to have their accounts audited but many choose to because of their obligations to share-

holders or if they are trying to raise money from banks or investors.

"The FRC is committed to supporting SMEs' aspirations to grow and scale by examining how the audit market is working for these businesses, given their ability to access capital is often dependent on having audited accounts," Craig added.

Interested parties have until April 25 to submit comments and evidence. The study is expected to conclude this year.

Markets hit by Trump turbulence

Tariffs on US's trading partners spark rate fears

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent
Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

President Trump rattled global equity markets yesterday after he imposed blanket tariffs on the US's largest trading partners, threatening to destabilise the global economy and keep interest rates high.

Europe's main markets retreated from Friday's record closes, with the FTSE 100 down 1.04 per cent, or 90.40 points, to 8,583.56, its third highest finish, while the European Stoxx 600 index of the continent's biggest company fell by 0.9 per cent.

On Wall Street, US stocks fell sharply in early trading before paring losses after President Sheinbaum of Mexico said that the White House had delayed tariffs on Mexico by a month. The Dow Jones industrial average closed down 122.75 points, or 0.3 per cent, at 44,421.91 while the S&P 500 lost 0.8 per cent to 5,994.57 and the tech-heavy Nasdaq slipped by 1.2 per cent to 19,391.96. After the close Trump announced a 30-day delay in imposing tariffs on Canada.

The motor vehicle sector warned that profits could be squeezed and production halted. Flavio Volpe, president of the Canadian trade body the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, said: "The markets are going to get very hairy, very fast and automotive production will halt very quickly in the USA and Canada and Mexico." General Motors slid 3.2 per cent, Ford was down 1.9 per cent and Tesla lost 5.2 per cent.

Chip designers and manufacturers of semiconductor equipment were hit

because of the threat of disruption to global supply chains. Nvidia's shares closed down by 2.8 per cent in New York last night.

The dollar index, which measures the dollar against six comparable currencies, rose by 0.24 per cent. The pound strengthened by 0.62 per cent against the euro to €1.203 after Trump suggested that the UK will avoid tariffs. The yield on the benchmark ten-year US government bond edged down to 4.521 per cent and the yield on the UK equivalent fell to 4.499 per cent.

The price of a barrel of Brent crude, the global benchmark, rose 0.4 per cent to \$75.96. Bitcoin fell sharply before reversing to top \$101,240 as gold too reversed early losses to hit a new record of \$2,833.90.

Trump's decision to tax Canadian, Mexican and Chinese imports will curb global economic growth, analysts said. The French investment bank BNP Paribas said that the move would "not only hurt the United States, but global growth [will] be significantly worse off".

At the weekend Trump said a 25 per cent levy on Canadian and Mexican imports and a 10 per cent charge on Chinese products would come into effect yesterday. He also signalled he would put tariffs on EU imports.

Economists warned that tariffs will raise US inflation and could derail central banks from cutting interest rates. A global trade war "will drive significant inflation in other countries, which may result in central banks pausing their easing cycles", BNP Paribas said.

Tariffs analysis, pages 28-29
Mehreen Khan, page 31



Liverpool's Mo Salah celebrates scoring against the Premier League champions Manchester City at Anfield this season

Football regulator's powers 'bonkers'

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

One of the UK's leading authorities on financial regulation has warned that legislation for an independent football regulator threatens to damage the Premier League's status as one of the country's leading global brands.

James Palmer, a partner of the law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, who was made a CBE in the new year honours for his work on regulation and mergers and acquisitions, said some of the financial aspects of the Football Governance Bill were "mad" and "bonkers" and would lead to a decline in investment from club owners.

The bill is going through parliament and the regulator will be given the role of ensuring financial sustainability in

football clubs. Palmer said football's existing regulation from competition organisers was more than sufficient.

He told The Times: "I'm not a libertarian. I believe in regulation and I genuinely come at this independently but I have been talking to government ministers saying this football bill looks bonkers. I'm spending a massive amount of my time at the moment trying to reverse regulation in other areas."

"We've a Labour prime minister very sensibly talking about cutting bureaucracy, accepting risk, understanding that the government can't fix everything. Why are we the only country in the world that thinks it should have a statutory regulator for football? That is a warning bell."

The new regulator will issue licences

to clubs every year after they have provided proof of financial sustainability. It will also prohibit clubs joining a break-away European Super League and will "backstop" powers to dictate how much money the Premier League provides to the leagues below it.

Palmer added: "If a financial regulator thinks they're there to stop clubs going bust, there's one easy answer to how they do that: massively reduce how much clubs can spend and don't let them borrow."

"So we're going to have capital ratios for football clubs. What planet are we on? We don't even do that in most other sectors that are regulated."

The Premier League is the most successful domestic league in world
Continued on page 32

Business

Need to know

1 President Trump rattled global equity markets after he imposed blanket tariffs on America's largest trading partners, threatening to destabilise the global economy and keep interest rates high. **Page 27**

2 Concerns that audit firms are charging small businesses too much for work they do not always need have led to an investigation into the market by the industry regulator. **Page 27**

3 An authority on financial regulation has warned that legislation for an independent football regulator threatens to damage the Premier League's status as a global brand. James Palmer, a partner of the law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, said some financial aspects of the Football Governance Bill were "bonkers" and would discourage club owners from investing. **Page 27**

4 Claims that defects in Funding Circle's documentation and processes have left a firm owned by the hedge fund Elliott Management unable to pursue small business owners over personal guarantees are to be heard by the High Court. **Page 30**

5 The Very Group has replaced HSBC as the bank running its customer loan portfolio, after the high street lender ordered the sale of other assets owned by the Barclay family. **Page 32**

6 A fashion brand worn by the TV presenter Amanda Holden is preparing to open more shops in the UK after a successful debut in London. Saint + Sofia, an "affordable luxury" womenswear label, plans to open at least two new shops in the capital this year, with a goal of reaching about ten across the country. **Pages 32-33**

7 The London-listed Baillie Gifford US Growth Trust has emphatically seen off a threat by the New York activist hedge fund Saba Capital. Excluding Saba's own votes, 98.5 per cent of shares that were voted went against the proposals to sack the board. The smaller Keystone Positive Change Investment Trust also saw off Saba by a similar margin. **Page 35**

“

Sanctions imposed by the US have risen from about 900 to more than 15,000 since the turn of the century

Mehreen Khan,
page 31



For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter
thetimes.com/newsletters

From cars to crypto, what

British and European companies are exposed to the import duties on goods announced by the US president

In the automotive sector and beverages and retail to paper and packaging, swathes of the global economy stand to be affected by President Trump's tariffs, which threaten a global trade war. They will cover all goods including small packages, which have historically been exempt from such measures. As planned, the tariffs cover about 44 per cent of all US imports.

SECTORS

Automotive

Car manufacturers are among the most exposed to Trump's new measures. The investment bank Jefferies estimates that the 25 per cent tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, before would add an extra \$43 billion in costs to the industry and increase the cost of an average vehicle in the United States by about \$2,700 (Tom Saunders writes). After trading closed, Trump announced a 30-day pause in tariffs on Canada.

Volkswagen and Stellantis, European car manufacturers with significant operations in Mexico, are both particularly vulnerable to the tariffs. Analysts at the investment bank Stifel estimate that the levies will result in a 12 per cent hit to Volkswagen's operating income in 2025 and a 40 per cent downgrade for Stellantis. Volkswagen said on Sunday that it was "counting on constructive talks... to avoid a trade conflict".

Other car companies will also be affected. Germany's Daimler and Traton, the Volkswagen-backed maker of Scania and Man lorries, would be among the most exposed, Jefferies told clients, given that about 65 and 60 per cent, respectively, of the vehicles made by the two companies were assembled in Mexico in 2023. Volvo, meanwhile, would be among the least affected, it reckons, given that it does not yet have an assembly base in Mexico.

Beverages

Diageo, the FTSE 100 drinks group behind Johnnie Walker whisky, Guinness and Smirnoff vodka, is among the most vulnerable to tariffs in the beverages sector, analysts believe (Jessica Newman writes).

North America is where it makes the



The new taxes would put \$43 billion on imports to Mexico and Canada. On the stock markets miners shares fell but crypto

biggest chunk of its revenues, accounting for over one-third of net sales last year. Of the \$20.3 billion sales generated by Diageo in 2024, Bernstein Research estimates that about \$8 billion came from US spirits, of which 44 per cent were imported from Mexico and Canada, including Crown Royal whisky and tequila brands such as Don Julio. Falling agave prices and a weak Mexican peso and Canadian dollar could help, however, especially for tequila.

The gross impact of the proposed tariffs on Diageo could range between \$500 million and \$600 million annually, according to analysts at the stockbroker Goodbody.

Other drinks companies are also exposed. About a third of US sales of Campari, the Italian spirits group, are imports from Mexico and Canada.

Retail

Retailers and manufacturers warn that the new tariffs could increase global inflation and hit consumer confidence in America (Isabella Fish writes).

Harvir Dhillon, an economist at the British Retail Consortium, said that the "overall impact of trade barriers may be to increase global prices of goods and create inflationary pressures that could be felt globally".

Clothing retailers such as H&M, Pri-

mark and JD Sports may be hit particularly hard if US consumer confidence weakens and EU grocers will face a "very limited impact", analysts at Bernstein think. On clothing sourced from China, Adam Mansell, chief executive of the UK Fashion and Textile Association, said that if duties were applied not just to direct imports from China but also products using Chinese-made materials, the impact would be far-reaching across the global fashion supply chain.

Paper and packaging

The Trump administration is yet to follow through on its threat to hit the EU with tariffs, and the levies already an-

Thames Water judgment faces delay

Robert Lea

The long-awaited restructuring of heavily indebted Thames Water could be delayed further after the judge in a High Court case said he would consider overnight whether the "complex" hearing should go beyond a scheduled close on Thursday.

Mr Justice Leech is considering whether an application for a £3 billion refinancing of Thames brought by the company and its senior creditors can be sanctioned.

It is widely believed that if the restructuring plan does not go ahead, the likely alternative is that the privatised regional monopoly, Britain's largest by far, will be put in a "special administration regime".

That unprecedented decision would be in the hands of the secretary of state for the environment and the industry regulator Ofwat and has been likened

to a temporary renationalisation of the company.

Yesterday, the first day of the scheduled four-day hearing, ended with legal representatives of the junior or class B creditors applying for the judge to consider extending the hearings and therefore delaying his judgment from a planned date of February 14.

After examination of Thames Water's finance director Alastair Cochran and its general counsel Andy Fraiser, the judge conceded that the proceedings had been "complex" and said: "Let me think about it overnight."

A delay in the court's decision would hamper the release of tranches of up to £3 billion, which the senior creditors have offered through the creation of a new "super senior" class of debt.

It could also hold up the financial restructuring of Thames which among other things envisages bringing in new equity investors prepared to inject a

further £5 billion into the company. It could mean that the court's ruling is delayed until after the crucial date of February 18, the last day by which Thames can demand a revision of a five-year funding plan which Ofwat ruled upon in December — a process that could itself further delay a restructuring of the company.

Earlier in the day, Mark Phillips KC, barrister for the class B creditors, challenged the class A plan, saying they were acting "entirely in their own interest" and not that of the company. The class B creditors are seeking to block the class A plan and allow their own alternative offering to be considered.

Thames Water, which operates in and around London and the Thames Valley, supplies water or sewerage services to almost a quarter of households in the UK. Debt and interest payments on at least £17 billion of debt are at a standstill to allow a restructuring.

Speedy hits brakes after profit alert

Fintan Hogan

Shares in Speedy Hire fell as much as 30 per cent yesterday after the tools and equipment rental company predicted lower-than-expected full-year profits.

Despite having achieved 5 per cent year-on-year growth in December, the company told shareholders that "the widely reported economic downturn" had stalled business so far this year.

Speedy primarily blamed a slowdown in wider spending on railway infrastructure and the early "shutdown" of contracts in Kazakhstan, where it has a joint venture.

Shares in the company closed down 7½p, or 28.4 per cent, at 19½p.

Trump's tariffs mean



regained early losses, and beverages became a cross-border bone of contention



nounced could in some ways benefit the European forestry and paper and packaging markets at the expense of Canada (Alex Ralph writes).

The main threat to Europe is the knock-on impact on global trade demand and Chinese pulp consumption, but the stronger US dollar and prices could help, analysts believe.

The US is a net importer of pulp and lumber from Canada, meaning that tariffs could drive up prices, leading to US consumer inflation on tissue and laundry paper and the closure of higher-cost Canadian mills.

This could help EU pulp producers, such as SCA, Jefferies said, including

gaining "some marginal Canadian share", although any future US tariffs on EU products would be a "clear negative" and Canadian mills could also look to other markets.

The stronger dollar is also a tailwind for European paper and packaging companies that report in other currencies, both from foreign currency translation and transaction benefits. Jefferies added. Shares in the Swedish company SCA rallied, although Mondi, a FTSE 100 constituent, weakened.

ASSETS Cryptocurrencies

Investors fleeing from cryptocurrency

market wiped more than \$500 billion off the value of digital assets (Ben Martin writes). Bitcoin, the world's top cryptocurrency, fell to a three-week low of \$91,442 overnight but later reversed the gains to reach \$101,240 while Ethereum, the second-most popular digital asset, pared early steep losses but was still down 5.6 per cent on the day at \$2,706 as traders reduced their holdings in digital coins as part of a wider sell-off in riskier assets, including equities.

The sell-off left the global crypto market valued at about \$31 trillion, down from more than \$3.6 trillion on Friday afternoon, which was before Trump roiled markets with his first salvo of tariffs, according to data compiled by the CoinMarketCap website.

It marks a sharp reversal for the crypto market, which had rallied hard after Trump won the US election in November amid hopes the digital assets industry would enjoy a renaissance under the new president because a number of senior figures in his administration are pro-crypto. Bitcoin hit a record high of more than \$109,000 last month.

However, given that crypto, unlike other markets, trades throughout the weekend, it was one of the first to react when Trump began imposing tariffs on Mexican, Canadian and Chinese imports on Saturday.

Commodities

Shares in the world's biggest diversified mining companies fell amid fears that a trade war would hit economic growth and limit demand for metals (Emily Gosden writes).

BHP was down 0.78 per cent, Rio Tinto 1.13 per cent, Anglo American 1.34 per cent and Glencore 2.4 per cent.

Gold, meanwhile, had a turbulent day. Having hit an all-time high of \$2,817.23 an ounce on Friday as tariff fears drove demand for the precious metal as a safe-haven investment, gold initially fell more than 1 per cent on Monday in response to the surging US dollar, since that makes the dollar-priced metal more expensive for holders of other currencies. However, by last night it had erased losses to trade 0.8 per cent higher at a new record of \$2,833.90.

Oil prices rose slightly as the tariffs raised fears of disruption to global crude supplies. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was up slightly to \$75.59 a barrel and the American benchmark West Texas Intermediate was 0.07 per cent higher at \$72.58. Gains were muted, however, because of concerns about a trade war limiting demand.

Artist of the deal falls off pedestal

BUSINESS COMMENTARY Alistair Osborne



Let's be generous here. Maybe there's genius in The Donald's see-sawing doublethink. But making America great again looks a right contradictory rollercoaster.

The US president wants lower interest rates, a higher stock market, a dollar that helps the nation's exporters and some sort of nirvana for his crypto chums. So, what better than to tease the world with a policy that would deliver the precise opposite? His weekend threat to slap 25 per cent tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico and a further 10 per cent on those from China triggered short-lived market jitters. Yet, the yo-yoing indices also posed a familiar question: to what degree should investors take what he says literally or seriously?

Before the election he'd called "tariff" the "most beautiful word in the dictionary". Yet his rationale for his latest threat wasn't trade deficits. He cited "the extraordinary threat posed by illegal aliens and drugs, including deadly fentanyl": a pretext for using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act for the first time ever to levy tariffs.

There are more targeted ways to tackle those two issues than a global trade war. So it proved. By yesterday Trump had put Mexican tariffs on hold for a month after President Sheinbaum agreed to send 10,000 National Guards to its northern border. Trump looks open to similar deals with Canada and China.

Even so, "art of the deal" shouldn't disguise a wider truth. If he goes on to implement his threatened tariffs, they are certain to hurt the people who elected him. In Trump's first reign he targeted \$350 billion of Chinese goods but his latest blitz would be "huge versus anything seen for decades", as Deutsche Bank put it, even before dragging the EU into the net. As Capital Economics noted, Canada, China and Mexico "together account for 43 per cent or \$1.3 trillion of the \$3.1 trillion value of goods imported into the US in 2023": a respective \$419 billion, \$427 billion and \$475 billion.

Or, as ING economists put it: "With more than 15 per cent of all imports coming from Mexico, 13.7 per cent from Canada and 13.9 per cent from China in 2023, almost half of everything the US imports will be affected." Worse, the US is a big exporter to that trio, leaving it prey to retaliatory tariffs, as Canada proved, lining up \$107 billion of its own. Even Trump's cheerleader, Elon Musk, got caught in the crossfire: Doug Ford, the Ontario premier, said he'd cancel a \$68 million Starlink contract, adding that he "won't do business with people hell bent on destroying our economy".

On top, US supply chains are entwined with those of its two neighbours. American carmakers, for example, ship parts across the Mexican border many times before they are turned into finished goods. In 2023 US manufacturing output totalled \$2.85 trillion, \$250 billion less than the goods imported. So whatever Trump's exhortations to "make your product in the USA", domestic manufacturing would "need to more than double in size to

allow full substitution", as ING put it: "unfeasible in the near term".

In 2019 a study from Moody's Analytics found that Trump's last go on the tariffs front had cost the US economy almost 300,000 jobs and 0.3 per cent of GDP. It's hard to see how troubling this time around would have a happier result.

No trust in Saba

Mind the gap. Who knew that Boaz Weinstein's investment trust campaign slogan would prove so apt? The gap between the votes for and against his plans to kick out the boards of the so-called "Miserable Seven" is so far proving canyon-esque.

Three EGMs in and his New York hedge fund, Saba Capital, has taken a hammering. At Baillie Gifford US Growth Trust, 98.5 per cent of independent investors voted against his plans to sack its chairman, Tom Burnet, and four other non-execs and install himself and some chum in their place. At Keystone Positive Change Investment Trust, "nearly 99 per cent" of independents voted down Saba's attempt to fire the chair Karen Brade and four non-execs and put in two conflicted nominees. That follows a 99.78 per cent hitting at Herald Investment Trust.

As Burnet said of US Growth: "The result is unambiguous and conclusive." In fact, Weinstein's failure to persuade almost anyone else is impressively inept. He built a 29 per cent stake in each trust, did shareholders a favour by closing their discounts and made a case of sorts that their recent performance had hardly shot the lights out.

Still investors voted en masse against him. Could this be because he's run such a charmless, bullying campaign — right down to not even bothering to turn up at the meeting voting on his own election to a board? Or that investors don't fancy his brand of fee-grabbing financial arbitrage built on muscling aboard, making Saba the manager and using their company as a vehicle to buy other "discounted trusts"? True, there are four more votes to go but it's hard to think of a worse start.

Bad medicine

People have short memories. AstraZeneca's Covid jab wasn't perfect but it delivered it to the nation profit-free. So, while it may look a bit much that a group valued at £175 billion wants a public subsidy for a job-creating £450 million investment in its vaccine plant at Speke, Liverpool, it doesn't owe us anything. It's the way of the world too: everywhere from the US to Singapore offers similar subsidies.

Besides, Astra had a deal with the previous government for a facility to boost UK "pandemic preparedness", signed off in March last year by the former chancellor Jeremy Hunt. So, for Labour to chip away at it until the deal collapsed, all to save a few million quid, is spectacularly stupid. Judge this government by what it does for growth, not what it says.

alistair.osborne@thetimes.co.uk

Manufacturing output beats expectations amid the jitters

Jack Barnett

Manufacturing output in the UK contracted more slowly than expected last month but experts gave warning that President Trump's tariffs would constrain the sector by curbing global economic growth.

The final purchasing managers' index (PMI) for the sector rose to 48.3 in January from 47 in the previous month, slightly higher than the initial estimate but below the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction.

Sluggish demand for consumer goods weighed on growth in manufacturing activity and overseas sales remained weak in the European Union and Middle East, partly resulting in exports falling across the past three years.

Manufacturers surveyed by S&P Global said that they had trimmed non-

essential spending in anticipation of the coming rise in employer national insurance contributions in April.

Despite signs of an early recovery in UK manufacturing output, analysts said that Trump's imposition of tariffs on China, Mexico and Canada, among the US's largest trading partners, would depress global economic activity.

"Tariffs will hit the manufacturing sector hard by cutting global growth and roiling supply chains even if the UK avoids direct tariffs on its exports, so the four-month high the PMI reached in January is as good as it gets for now," Rob Wood at the consultancy Pantheon Macroeconomics said.

Trump has announced tariffs of 25 per cent on Canadian and Mexican imports and 10 per cent on Chinese imports. He has not ruled out imposing levies on UK and European imports.

Business

Government signed trade agreement with emirate accused by judge of fraud

Tom Saunders, James Hurley

The UK signed a partnership agreement with one of the emirates that comprise the United Arab Emirates despite its state investment authority being subject to a worldwide asset-freezing order from the High Court after a judge found it "behaved dishonestly and fraudulently".

Ras al-Khaimah's investment

authority — Rakia — has so far refused to pay a £17 million UK court order, the product of a lengthy dispute between the wealth fund and a US businessman.

Rakia's refusal led the judge, Mr Justice Michael Green, to grant a worldwide freezing injunction against the investment authority in June of last year.

Despite this, in November, Jonathan Reynolds, the business secretary, signed an agreement with the emirate

to explore opportunities for collaboration in trade and industry.

The judge noted that Rakia had failed to pay several orders against it and said it had previously obtained "judgments from this court by fraud". The asset-freezing order remains in place.

The trade agreement sought to explore the establishment of a platform for UK companies to expand into the UAE. Reynolds said at the time that the

agreement would "pave the way for significant industrial co-operation" and was a "testament to the wealth of opportunities for British business in the northern emirates across every sector".

Ras al-Khaimah is the northernmost emirate of the seven that make up the United Arab Emirates.

The partnership agreement comes as the UK has been pursuing a wider trade deal with the Gulf Co-operation Council

which consists of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain. In December, Sir Keir Starmer, the prime minister, visited Saudi Arabia, just weeks after the emir of Qatar visited the UK.

The Department for Business and Trade said: "While we cannot comment on specific cases, it is clear that companies operating in the UK must follow UK laws." The Ras al-Khaimah government was contacted for comment.

Resolute Mining boss held in Mali is laid off

The gold mining boss who was detained in Mali last year has been ousted from his company after a leave of absence (Emily Gosden writes).

Resolute Mining said that Terry Holohan was leaving his positions as chief executive and managing director with immediate effect and that they were in discussions over "the terms of a proposed settlement in connection with his termination of employment". He is to be replaced by Chris Eger, the acting chief executive.

Holohan and two other employees were detained in a government building in Bamako, capital of Mali, for almost a fortnight in November after talks over its business practices and claims made against Resolute.

Although Resolute insisted that the claims were unsubstantiated it agreed to pay

\$160 million to settle the matter. The three were released shortly after.

Resolute's share price roughly halved during the saga and is yet to recover, having fallen another 9 per cent on news of Holohan's departure. The stock closed down 6.5 per cent at 18½p.

Resolute is an Anglo-Australian group that mines gold in Mali and Senegal and began trading in London in 2019. The Syama gold mine in Mali is its biggest asset, producing more than 211,000 ounces of gold last year.

There have been rising tensions between the military junta that took power in Mali in 2020 and foreign miners operating in the country, as the government seeks



a greater share of the spoils. Holohan, a British citizen, was appointed chief

executive in 2022 to lead a turnaround of Syama, cutting costs and boosting production. In mid-December, a few weeks after his release from Mali, Resolute

announced that he was taking leave until January 31 "to spend time with his family".

Resolute gave no further detail about his termination. Andrew

Wray, non-executive chairman, said: "Over the last three and a half years, first as chief operating officer and since May 2022 as chief executive, Terry played

Terry Holohan has been credited with turning around the Syama gold mine in Mali, Resolute's biggest asset

an important role in the team that has improved operational performance across our business, particularly at Syama."

Richard Hatch, an analyst at Berenberg, said: "While the departure of Mr Holohan is not a major surprise after what we imagine has been a challenging period, it is a sad end to a period where he and his team had done an excellent job of turning Resolute around."

Eger has been Resolute's chief financial officer since February 2023 and acting chief executive during the leave of absence. He will be replaced in that role by Dave Jackson, who has been acting chief financial officer.

Wray added: "In Chris and Dave we have a team who have worked closely with Terry over the last two years and have the expertise and knowledge to help realise the full potential of our assets."

Trial to decide if Azzurro can chase guarantor debts

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

The High Court is to hear claims that defects in Funding Circle's documentation and processes have left a firm owned by the hedge fund Elliott Management unable to pursue small business owners over personal guarantees.

Azzurro Associates, which is owned by one of the world's largest hedge funds, is pursuing two directors of a business borrower in a closely watched case that will test claims that payment under the guarantees is not due to Azzurro despite its contentious acquisition of loans from Funding Circle.

Personal guarantees involve directors putting their own assets on the line when taking out business finance.

Last year a judge said in an interim ruling that the two guarantors had a "real prospect of success" in establishing that money they had personally guaranteed was not payable to Azzurro or Funding Circle because of alleged problems with documentation and processes. Judge Terence Phillips said there was a "more than arguable case"

that "assignments" of rights in the case were "not, in effect, legal assignments of the underlying debts". He also said that Funding Circle's definition of "lender" may have the "effect of limiting the ambit of the guarantee ... to a very narrow class of creditors ... that would not include" Azzurro. He said the guarantors "have a real prospect of success in relation to amounts said to fall due under both personal guarantees".

The comments were made as he dismissed an application by Azzurro and Funding Circle to strike out the guarantors' defence against enforcement of the guarantees, and/or for summary judgment against them. At a hearing related to the case, the judge said drafting of Funding Circle documentation "gives them specific problems".

The claim now sits solely with Azzurro, a debt buyer ultimately owned by Elliott, a New York investment fund. Azzurro said it "notes the decision of the judge, which is respected but is not agreed" with it and it is "confident that the claim will be successful at trial".

David & Goliath, a firm that advised

the two guarantors in the case, has estimated that Azzurro has bought about 10,000 loans from Funding Circle with a combined face value of about £500 million. David Bloom, the owner, alleged that the ruling "calls into serious question whether Azzurro can enforce any of the personal guarantees".

He claimed that purported problems with the handling of the loans and guarantees were a "shambles" and "totally unprofessional" on the part of Funding Circle and Azzurro. "The structure Funding Circle created just wasn't thought through," he said.

Funding Circle and Azzurro strongly disagree with Bloom's comments. Funding Circle is confident that there is no question over the enforceability of personal guarantees on its platform. Lisa Jacobs, its chief executive, said: "We're really confident in our position."

Lucy Vernall, the chief legal officer, said: "It is not disputed that the loans were validly entered into and that there is money owed under the personal guarantees. We are confident that Azzurro will be successful at trial."

Lloyds rebuked after legal win over hotels tycoon

Ben Martin Banking Editor

Lloyds Banking Group has won a £118 million High Court battle against a hotels tycoon but has been criticised by a judge over "hurtful" comments that emerged in the lawsuit.

The Bank of Scotland division of the FTSE 100 lender was sued by Macdonald Hotels Limited (MHL), which was founded by the Scottish entrepreneur Donald Macdonald, over allegations that it had forced the business to offload properties, including the Randolph in Oxford and the Old England on Lake Windermere, at knockdown prices a decade ago to cut its debts.

The claim has been dismissed by a judge, however, following a trial last autumn and the hotels group has been ordered to pay £11.6 million towards the bank's costs. It had originally sought £118 million from Lloyds before dropping part of its claim during the trial.

The judge was critical in his judgment of comments about Macdonald that were made both by a director of a Bank of Scotland subsidiary that was a shareholder in the hotels business and a non-executive director on the board of the hotels group who was appointed by

the same bank subsidiary. In an email exchange referred to during the trial, Macdonald was described as "Bonnie Prince Charlie". One of them wrote: "Will he be ousted by his own men or met on the battlefield where he turns and runs dressed as a woman leaving his loyal team to be tortured and hung?"

In his ruling Judge Mark Pelling said the remarks were "hurtful, inappropriate and unprofessional" and that "Mr Macdonald is fully entitled to object to bank officials referring to him in these terms". He added: "However, whilst it represents an error of judgment ... to have communicated in these terms and possibly a failure by the bank's senior management to control the manner in which its officials and appointees communicated, in my judgment it reflects a degree of frustration that had developed as a result of what was perceived to be intransigence on the part of MHL led by Mr Macdonald."

Lloyds said: "We welcome the court's decision [it] confirms our view that this claim was without merit."

Macdonald Hotels said: "Whilst we are of course disappointed ... we have been vindicated in a number of the allegations we have made."

Mehreen Khan

Donald Trump has turned to tariffs because sanctions just don't work



President Trump's decision to impose punitive tariffs on America's closest trading partners has roiled complacent financial markets and put the country's allies on notice. US tariff duties are now heading back to levels last seen in the 1940s if Trump's 25 per cent tax on Canadian imports comes into force this week.

Of the various justifications for swingeing import taxes — raising revenues, reducing the US trade deficit — the president has also consistently stated that tariffs are a better use of America's economic might than sanctions. "What we're doing with sanctions is we're forcing everyone away from us. So I don't love sanctions," Trump said on the campaign trail last year. The aversion to sanctions comes from the belief that the widespread use of financial coercion that prevents blacklisted individuals and entities from financial transactions involving the ubiquitous dollar will damage the US currency's dominant role in global finance.

The Trumpian worldview sees tariffs as a way to achieve the same degree of economic coercion over rivals with the additional benefit of strengthening the global role of the greenback, as seen this week. In keeping with this thinking, the president has frequently threatened a 100 per cent tariff on the expanded Brics countries over their attempts to develop a rival reserve currency.

The "tariffs over sanctions" mantra has also gained traction because of the broadly ineffectual impact of the unprecedented exclusion of Russia from the global financial system since March 2022. Supporters of sanctions assumed that landmark steps to freeze Russia's central bank assets and to hit companies operating in the country with threats would hobble the domestic economy, collapse the currency, weaken support for President Putin and halt the Russian war effort. Measured against these aims,

the sanctions regime, three years on, seems to have failed. The Russian economy grew faster than the European Union average in 2023 and 2024 and is projected to do the same this year, driven by the war footing.

Some economists think 2025 will be the year the Russian economy finally keels over in the face of worker shortages and biting inflation but this could also be the year that the war comes to an end and it will be Trump, rather than the prolonged impact of sanctions, that will be decisive.

Pro-sanctions US officials admit that the biggest unintended consequence of the weaponisation of the dollar has been to draw Russia closer into China's orbit and create a clunky, but ultimately effective, system of diverted trade and supply chains across emerging markets who have become the main customers of Russian oil.

The efficacy of sanctions as a weapon to thwart America's geopolitical rivals has been dealt a blow by news that the Chinese company DeepSeek has developed a far cheaper, more efficient generative AI model that can compete with OpenAI and Google. The leap from a largely unknown Chinese start-up is in defiance of export bans of advanced chip technologies from the US giant Nvidia, put in place by the Biden administration.

Hundred of billions were wiped off Nvidia's stock market value amid speculation about how a Chinese company could come up with an AI chatbot at a reported tenth of the cost and with inferior chips. There are plenty of competing claims that try to account for this "Sputnik" moment, including the accusation that Nvidia may have still exported chips that

were close to the line prohibited by the sanctions, or that advanced chips entered China through neighbouring markets such as Singapore.

Whatever the reality, the fact that necessity is the mother of all invention has humbled the belief that chip bans will give the US a permanent advantage in AI and digital

development, of the kind that China has long held in clean tech.

All this is to suggest that the accumulation of sanctions, which have been the go-to weapon of US economic and diplomatic assault, could be stopped. The number of sanctions imposed by America has risen from about 900 to more than 15,000 since the turn of the century.

If Trump chooses to wield tariffs over sanctions on rivals, what will be the impact? Sanctions are supposed to block all imports, exports and transactions with a listed entity, rather than just impose taxes on them. To be successful, tariffs also rely on near-total compliance from all transacting parties to be effective as any attempts at evasion can nullify the impact entirely. In this, the protean Trump era is ill-suited to enforcing a sanctions regime.

Since he's been in office, Trump has been more tempted by the sanctions lever than his pronouncements would suggest. He has already threatened additional sanctions on Russia if Putin refuses to engage in peace talks over Ukraine and has mentioned sanctions in the same breath as tariffs when threatening Colombia. This suggests that there will be no hard break with sanctions accumulation under Trump 2.0 but rather the deployment of customs taxes mixed with export and technology transfer bans all under the banner of America First economic lawfare.

What is novel is Trump's choice of targets. Thus far it seems that the president wants to use tariffs against America's closest trading partners and old allies as exemplified by Canada, rather than hegemonic rivals such as China. Marco Rubio, Trump's secretary of state, has opened the door to increasing sanctions on foes such as Venezuela and Iran.

Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, an expert on sanctions, has dubbed this the shift from "pax Americana to tax Americana". "The unipolar order remains, but it is being rebuilt through the coercive power of tariffs and other economic weapons. Trump comes knocking and countries will pay. It's the tax for letting America stay first," he said.

Mehreen Khan is Economics Editor of The Times

Tomasz Wieladek

How governments can tackle debt — before markets force them to

After decades of calm, financial markets are now challenging OECD countries' fiscal policies. Because of population ageing and the green transition, public debts will continue to rise significantly. Bond market vigilance could eventually turn into vigilantism.

High public debt levels are not the fault of governments in power today but of three decades of policy decisions, overly optimistic growth forecasts and putting off hard decisions by accumulating more debt. Debt-to-GDP levels in OECD countries have doubled in the past 30 years.

Borrowing is the insurance mechanism that allows governments to cushion the effects of large shocks on the economy. Like any

'Low growth and fragile public finances is why the debt sustainability of advanced economies is being challenged more and more'

insurance, this can only work when the premiums are paid. In the case of borrowing, this means giving markets the confidence that public debts will be repaid.

Exorbitant borrowing in the United States will keep global bond yields high, pushing debt burdens closer to unsustainable levels in many countries. Debt demand from pension funds and central banks is falling. Governments need to find new buyers for a large amount of debt in the coming years. A buyers' strike, to demand higher yields, will be a significant risk.

Growth in advanced economies, except the US, has been low. This, along with fragile public finances, is why bond markets are beginning to challenge debt sustainability.

An institution committed to debt sustainability could help to mitigate these risks. A "debt brake" fiscal rule has reduced public debt to GDP in Germany but the static nature of this rule promotes debt reduction above all, often at the cost of growth-promoting public

investment. Even the fiscally cautious Germans are now considering a change in this framework.

An independent debt policy committee (DPC) is a better solution. This would provide guidance on the amount of borrowing that is consistent with a declining path of public debt to GDP over a five-year horizon. The government would still decide whom to tax and where to spend, but rely on the DPC's guidance when setting the overall planned borrowing envelope.

Fluctuations in economic growth can lead to borrowing above the guidance but large deviations would require a formal explanation from the government. A build-up of credibility in good times would allow governments to suspend borrowing targets in an emergency, without the fear that markets will lose confidence in their ability to refinance public debt.

This institutional setup provides several important advantages. First, there is an explicit incentive to raise the potential growth rate of the economy through supply side policies such as education, housing and labour market reforms. Second, it rewards growth-supportive fiscal policy. Third, it would limit the reliance on debt to avoid difficult fiscal decisions, unless there is a true emergency. Financial markets would reward such a move.

Delegating debt guidance to an independent body will lower long-term bond yields by 70 to 100 basis points. This would provide the government that announces this with significant fiscal headroom.

Many countries have high debt levels now. Significant challenges lie ahead, such as the transition to net zero and population ageing. Future economic emergencies may require more borrowing. Maintaining market confidence the next time this happens is the key to avoiding future bond market crises. The best way to prepare for this future is to introduce a DPC today, before a more draconian and less flexible fiscal rule is forced upon governments by financial markets.

Tomasz Wieladek is chief European economist at the global asset manager T Rowe Price



Donald Trump aims to use tariffs against Justin Trudeau's Canada

Win a wellness break with Unplugged

To celebrate the release of the bestselling book *The DOSE Effect* by Tj Power, one Times+ member has the chance to win a three-night digital detox with Unplugged. Read and reset your brain in perfect peace surrounded by nature whilst enjoying breathtaking views. **Visit mytimesplus.co.uk**



Subscribe with Google

T&Cs apply.

T TIMES+
OFFERS | COMPETITIONS | EVENTS

unplugged.

Business

SharkNinja's quick recipe to become a household name

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

SharkNinja is fast becoming a household name in Britain, from its Ninja air fryers, which have transformed home cooking, to its Shark vacuum cleaners, which are giving competitors such as Dyson a run for their money.

The American consumer electronics

company, under the leadership of Mark Barrocas, has turned the UK into its second-largest market globally, behind the US, thanks to the rapid release of new products and categories. "Today, our business in the UK is fast approaching \$1 billion a year in revenue," he said.

The New York-listed business, which comprises two multibillion-dollar

brands in Shark and Ninja, has not yet released its full-year figures but expects to have delivered more than \$5 billion in group revenue in the year to the end of December 2024. That compares with \$250 million in 2008, when Barrocas joined the company.

SharkNinja first entered the UK market in 2015 but pulled back in 2017 to

refine its approach. By 2018 it had relaunched with a more targeted strategy and since then it has become a dominant force in a number of product categories. "We've really accelerated our business in the UK. It's a sizeable, super-important market for us," Barrocas said.

SharkNinja's rapid UK expansion is part of a much larger global success story. The company, originally called Euro-Pro, was founded in 1994 by Mark Rosenzweig in Montreal, Canada, selling steam cleaners and upright vacuums. In 2007 Rosenzweig created the Shark brand with the "no loss of suction" vacuum technology and the Ninja brand followed in 2009. The company rebranded as SharkNinja in 2015.

Under Barrocas, the company has evolved from a relatively modest home appliance business into a production innovation powerhouse, serving hundreds of millions of consumers in 32 international markets and 34 product categories. It employs 3,300 people.

The company, which has increased revenue organically rather than through acquisitions, sells its products on its own website and via third-party retailers such as Amazon.

One of SharkNinja's biggest breakthroughs has been in kitchen appliances. The Ninja air fryer has become a global sensation, driving a cultural shift in faster and healthier home cooking.

New products to join the Ninja family include the "Creami" ice cream maker and the "Slushi" frozen drink maker, which will be released this month. There are already 90,000 people on the waiting list in the UK for the Slushi. "These are products that really hit a nerve with consumers and they go viral," Barrocas said.

Meanwhile, Shark has disrupted the UK vacuum cleaner sector, taking significant market share from Dyson and other legacy brands. It has also made significant inroads into beauty technology with the Shark FlexStyle hair styler, a competitor to Dyson's Airwrap, and the new CryoGlow LED face mask, which made its UK debut towards the end of last year. It has not yet been released in the US but Barrocas said that its arrival here "really showed us that we could launch a global product in the UK".

He added that SharkNinja had created a "consumer products innovation machine. We identify problems that consumers have, and we've got an amazing team of 1,100 engineers around the world that solve those problems." About 200 of those engineers are based in the company's office at Battersea power station in London.

SharkNinja introduces more than 25 new products a year, ensuring that it stays ahead of consumer trends and rapidly adapts to emerging needs.

Barrocas explained that it uses social media to create consumer demand and gain traction long before its products even reach the shops. "We're great storytellers. We invest a tremendous amount in marketing and advertising."

SharkNinja's growth has also been fuelled by its financial moves. In 2023 the company transitioned its stock market listing from Hong Kong to New York. Since relisting the share price has surged from about \$30 to about \$110.

"Hong Kong through Covid was a stock exchange that was very challenged to attract US or European investors," Barrocas explained. "So the decision was made to... do a direct listing on the New York exchange and really be able to tell our story as a high-growth public company."



Saint + Sofia fashions UK growth after model debut

A fashion brand worn by the TV presenter Amanda Holden is gearing up to roll out more shops in the UK after a successful debut in London (Isabella Fish writes).

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27
Football regulator plan 'bonkers'

football but Palmer said that would be threatened by a regulator.

"There is a correlation between money and success, and so if you have less investment, you will have less money available to go around," he added. "But the problem is once you lose momentum, you can't necessarily get your market back."

The bill was first put forward by the last Conservative government, following the fan-led review of football by the former sports minister Dame Tracey Crouch, which was commissioned after the failed European Super League in 2021. Palmer pointed out that the Super League had been "killed off in 24 hours" by fan power without a regulator. The Labour government has kept most of the bill intact but has increased the regulator's financial scope.

At present the Premier League clubs, under a voluntary arrangement, pay the English Football League £110 million in solidarity payments and £40 million in youth development funding a year. Talks to increase that sum have failed to reach a resolution

Big opinions on the big stories

Listen for free now

TIMESRADIO
THE VOICE OF THE TIMES



DAB
RADIO



FREE
APP



'PLAY
TIMES RADIO'



SAINT & SOFIA

Saint + Sofia, an “affordable luxury” womenswear label, plans to open at least two new stores in the capital this year, with a goal of reaching about ten sites across the country in the next two years.

Targeted locations include Cambridge, Glasgow, Surrey and Leeds, as well as other key cities and “neighbourhood” towns. In London, the brand is exploring areas such as Marylebone, Richmond and Chelsea.

The expansion plans follow Saint + Sofia’s launch of its first bricks-and-mortar store in Covent Garden, which opened in November. The shop has “exceeded expectations”,

according to the firm’s founders, and marks a shift for a brand that had operated exclusively online since its launch in January 2020.

The company was founded by the husband-and-wife team Dessislava and Malcolm Bell, who call it their “Covid baby”. From an initial range of just 20 products at launch, the label now sells between 900 and 1,200 lines at any one time and counts Holden and the Australian singer Natalie Imbruglia as fans.

Saint + Sofia, which has 70 staff, sells “fair, sustainable fashion” inspired by the arts, music and popular culture, and AllSaints, Me + Em and Mint Velvet are among its

rivals. Prices range from £39 for a T-shirt to £799 for a shearing coat.

The brand is targeting revenues of £40 million for the year to the end of December, against £25 million in the previous year. The founders have ruled out external investment, instead looking to take a “more considered and slower approach” to growing their firm.

Premium womenswear labels have continued to thrive amid the cost of living crisis as middle England shoppers are less squeezed by macroeconomic factors. Me+Em reported a 46 per cent increase in revenue to £119.5 million in the year to January 28, 2024.

and if the impasse continues the regulator will be able to impose settlement.

Palmer described the proposed backstop power as “mad and unprecedented” and “the ultimate political fudge”. He said: “It will be subject to legal challenge, in my view: it is an accident waiting to happen ... I’ve done literally hundreds of investments into the UK in my career. I’ve never done one where we didn’t analyse the risk of uncertain cost and liability. If I was trying to explain to an investor how that backstop thing worked, I would say it’s very uncertain and it is a significant contingent liability.”

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport said: “Backed by fans across the country and with cross-party support in parliament, the Independent Football Regulator will foster the certainty required to drive future investment and growth so that English football remains a global success story.

“As we have always said, the regulatory regime will be light touch, designed to improve the financial sustainability of clubs, ensure financial resilience across the leagues and to safeguard the heritage of English football for generations to come.”

Very Group customer loans move

Helen Cahill

The Barclay family’s Very Group has replaced HSBC as the bank running its customer loan portfolio, after the high street lender ordered the sale of other assets owned by the Barclays.

The family’s online retailer and financial services provider has appointed NatWest to run the securitisation of its “buy now, pay later” customer loans after working with HSBC on the £1.8 billion portfolio for about ten years.

Very provides finance options for the purchase of items such as clothes, toys and household appliances. About 90 per cent of sales are made through customer loans, which the group repackages into a securitisation facility that has been running for over 20

years. HSBC had a longstanding role in the securitisation as both the arranging bank and account provider, but it has been replaced after putting the Barclay family’s logistics company into administration last year.

The bank appointed restructuring advisers to handle the insolvency of Logistics Group Limited to seek payment on debts of £143.5 million.

HSBC’s move came after the Barclay family’s media assets were seized by Lloyds Bank over unpaid debt of £1.2 billion, forcing the sale of the Telegraph titles and The Spectator. Lloyds had been calling on the Barclay family for repayment for many years, before finally calling in its debt and placing a Bermuda-based holding company into receivership in June 2023.

RedBird IMI, an investment group funded by the UAE, is now in control of a sale of the Telegraph titles after it bought the debt secured against them. RedBird IMI also invested in debt secured against Very as part of its bid to secure the titles and now hopes asset sales will help it to recoup its total outlay of £1.2 billion. But its sale of the titles has stalled as it struggles to find a buyer willing to pay the price it is seeking.

Airlines call for incentives to use sustainable fuel

Kendall Field-Pellow

The aviation industry has called on the government to push on with plans to provide incentives for the use of sustainable fuel in an effort to reach net zero.

International Airlines Group (IAG), owner of British Airways, Iberia and Aer Lingus, has urged ministers to introduce a revenue guarantee for producers of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), which would in turn encourage investment in its production.

A mandate came into effect last month requiring a minimum of 2 per cent of jet fuel used in Britain to be sustainable, rising annually to 10 per cent by 2030 and 22 per cent by 2040.

Sustainable Aviation, an industry body, forecast that SAF could account for about 40 per cent of the sector’s carbon emissions reduction by 2050.

Jonathon Counsell, sustainability officer at IAG, said: “As global demand for sustainable aviation fuel grows, it’s crucial to expand production in the UK.

“The recent government mandate will help reduce aviation’s overall carbon impact but airlines need confidence that the planned revenue certainty mechanism will support UK businesses in developing SAF technology without further increasing the cost base for UK airlines.”

IAG announced last week that it was investing in the development of a plant that would turn used tyres into fuel. The Norwegian company Wastefront said the planned facility in Sunderland would be fully operational by 2027 and process up to ten million tyres a year.

The Wastefront SAF plant is the first

British Airways’ owner urged ministers to provide a guarantee on revenues

to be funded entirely by private investment after a government-backed fund sponsored 13 such developments across the country. The government pledged to have at least five plants under construction this year.

The International Air Transport Association said it was important that the SAF mandate was followed by a revenue protection scheme “as quickly as possible” to encourage SAF production before prices escalate.

Lara Maughan, the association’s area manager for the UK and Ireland, said Britain was unique because it was

deploying both a demand-side incentive on a par with a European Union mandate as well as a supply-side push to rival the tax incentives for producers in the US.

She added: “I think the government recognises the opportunity this nascent industry brings to the UK, specifically to be a SAF developer at source. If, as a country, we don’t put forward incentives and use this

opportunity to create jobs with this new industry, we are essentially going to be importing SAF to meet the mandate.”

The industry’s interest is in an assurance scheme, used in solar and offshore wind energy, known as the guarantee strike price, which Maughan said the government also favoured. The model would ensure that SAF producers were reimbursed when the market price fell below an agreed rate, but that any surplus above that rate would be paid to the government.

A spokeswoman for the Department for Transport said: “We are fully committed to the SAF mandate and have confirmed we will introduce a revenue certainty mechanism for SAF producers to attract investment in new plants in the UK.”



Games Workshop takes on Lego boss to lead growth

Isabella Fish

Games Workshop has hired a Lego veteran with a background in international growth to its board as the *Warhammer* maker pushes ahead with global expansion plans.

The Nottingham-based retailer, which joined the FTSE 100 last year, said Eric Maugein had joined as non-executive director with immediate effect. He is also expected to become a member of the audit and risk, remuneration and nomination committees.

Maugein has more than 35 years of experience in the consumer goods sector and has spent the past two decades at the Danish toy production company Lego Group, where he served as regional president in its Asia-Pacific division.

Games Workshop said the new board member had “considerable experience in building and leading successful strategies for new markets in the Middle

East, Europe and Asia, defining and implementing expansions in markets such as China and India.”

The manufacturer of fantasy figurines and computer games announced last month that it planned to open 28 shops around the world during the financial year. It has 553 shops in countries including Germany, Japan and the US. The company gave no details as to where the new shops would be located.

Games Workshop was founded by three friends from a flat in London in 1975 and started out as a mail order business. Its breakthrough came in 1983, when its designers came up with *Warhammer*, now the most popular miniature war game in the world.

Its progress was rewarded last month with a promotion to the FTSE 100. The share price of the business has risen from £5 in 1994 to £145.70 at the close last night, valuing the company at £4.8 billion.

Business Unit Trusts

The Times unit trust information service

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
ALLIANCE GLOBAL INVESTORS				
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573				
Strategic Bond Fund ÷	130.22	...	-0.03	4.40
UK Equity A ÷	322.96	...	-4.83	5.02
UK Growth ÷	8251.79	...	-124.08	2.98
UK Mid Cap A ÷	4654.61	...	...	0.14

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS				
0800 092 2051				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Global Income Fund R Acc 1267.2	...	-4.21	...	...
Global Income Fund R Inc 1133.19	...	-3.79	...	...
Global Select Fund R ÷	1252.82	...	-3.55	...
High Income Fund R Inc ÷	66.83	...	-0.12	...
Income Fund R Acc ÷	546.35	...	-6.62	...
Income Fund R Inc ÷	261.89	...	-3.49	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ÷	74.15	...	-0.88	...
SmartGarp Eur Equity R 1527.42	...	-9.31	...	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R 1434.77	...	-6.34	...	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R 12812.33	...	-32.34	...	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ÷	88.15	...	+0.31	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ÷	107.46	...	+0.24	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ÷	51.86	...	+0.11	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ÷	107.27	...	+0.23	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ÷	51.78	...	-0.06	...
UK Select R Acc ÷	999.96	...	-18.68	...
UK Smaller Cos R Acc ÷	2045.19	...	-18.56	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ÷	846.71	...	-14.19	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT				
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511				
Health ÷	3277	...	-51.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ÷	1916	...	-32.00	1.09
UK Smi Cos Inc ÷	277.9	...	-2.90	0.80
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ÷	221.0	...	-3.50	1.03

AXA FUND MANAGERS				
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808				
UK/Global Investment Companies				
Global Gwth Acc R ÷	288.1	...	...	0.52
Japan Acc A ÷	162.3	...	...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS				
08457 46 46 46				
European Growth ÷	231.1	...	-2.28	1.56
Sus Leaders ÷	905.2	...	-1.27	1.37
UK Growth ÷	716.7	...	-2.00	2.06
UK Income ÷	219	...	-0.77	4.51

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT				
Dealing 020 7426 6232				
Winchester ÷	4355.31	...	...	1.04

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083				
Share Class 1-Retail				
Euro Gwth & Inc ÷	1428	...	-34	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ÷	474.1	...	-6.5	2.60
Global Gwth SCI ÷	392.2	...	-1.9	...
North Amer ÷	1256	...	+	1
Strategic Bd ÷	210.4	...	...	2.90

EDENTREE INV MGMT				
0800 358 3010				
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond 186.55	...	+0.31	4.45	
FTSE All Shr Track ÷	351.7	...	-8.70	2.43
Resp & Sust Gbl Eq ÷	385.4	...	-4.00	1.13
Res & Sust Mgd Income ÷	122.7	...	-1.20	4.49
Resp & Sust UK Eqty ÷	224.6	...	-3.20	1.94
Resp & Sust UK Eqty Opps 331.7	...	-3.20	1.48	

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL				
Private Cnts:0800 414161 Broker Dpks:0800 414181				
Amer Spec ÷	2797	...	...	...
American ÷	7725	...	...	...
Euro Opps ÷	629.1	...	...	...
European ÷	3886	...	...	...
Extra Income ÷	22.74	...	...	6.12
Global Special Sits ÷	7045	...	...	...
Global Focus ÷	340.7	...	...	...
Japan ÷	456.2	...	...	...
MoneyMdr Bal ÷	42.96	...	...	4.34
MoneyMdr Inc ÷	28.99	...	...	4.90

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
MoneyMdr UK Ind ÷	152.65	...	...	3.09
Special Sits ÷	5530	...	...	...
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis 1104.15	...	-1.69	2.44	

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS				
01296 386 386				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Share Class C				
Corporate Bond ÷	35.72	...	...	4.30
Ethical ÷	142.6	...	...	...
European ÷	128.0	...	...	...
Far Eastern ÷	132.1	...	...	...
Intl Gwth ÷	172.6	...	...	0.70
Japanese ÷	83.91	...	...	...
North Amer ÷	217.7	...	...	...
UK Equity Inc ÷	102.1	...	...	3.90
UK FTSE 100 IT ÷	82.95	...	...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ÷	92.63	...	...	...
UK Growth ÷	94.04	...	...	2.50

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)				
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri:8-6				
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)				
Amer Ind Acc ÷	1363	...	-18	0.92
Euro Ind Acc ÷	1397	...	-33	2.37
Health ÷	3277	...	-51.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ÷	1916	...	-32.00	1.09
UK Smi Cos Inc ÷	277.9	...	-2.90	0.80
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ÷	221.0	...	-3.50	1.03

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class				
Corp Bd Acc ÷	297.2	...	-0.9	3.80
Corp Bd Inc ÷	106.2	...	+0.3	3.80
Income Acc ÷	827.5	...	-10.0	3.84
Income Inc ÷	312.4	...	-3.7	3.96
Monthly Inc Acc ÷	313.4	...	...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ÷	135.6	...	-1.2	4.06
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ÷	216.04	...	-2.3	3.58
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inc ÷	668.73	...	-0.90	3.68

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)				
American Index Retail Inc ÷	1069	...	-13	0.93

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD				
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677				
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121				
Invesco Perpetual Funds				
Childrens ÷	561.54	...	...	1.95
Corp Bond ÷	221.43	...	...	3.69
High Income Inc ÷	347.47	...	...	3.78
Income & Growth Inc ÷	452.04	...	...	3.39
Income Inc ÷	1356.67	...	...	3.31
Money Acc ÷	101.42	...	...	4.59
Monthly Inc Plus Inc ÷	94.06	...	...	5.78
UK Growth Acc ÷	1039.17	...	...	1.95
UK Smi Cos Eqty Acc ÷	1272.24	...	...	1.39

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD				
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900				
OEIC Series I, II, III & IV				
American A Acc ÷	873.92	...	-9.45	...
Asia ex Japan A Acc ÷	812.07	...	-10.0	0.01
Cautious Managed A Acc ÷	1407.57	...	-2.64	2.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ÷	1243.99	...	-1.57	2.95
Diversified Growth A Acc ÷	1290.44	...	-3.07	1.41

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Diversified Growth Inc ÷	104.37	...	...	...
Diversified Income A Acc ÷	1345.47	...	-0.91	3.62
Diversified Income A Inc ÷	66.89	...	-0.54	3.03
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ÷	1128.86	...	-0.4	5.64
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ÷	1128.86	...	-0.2	7.32
Emerging Mkts Eqty A Acc ÷	1181.12	...	+0.62	1.00
Emerg Mkts Local Cur Debt A Acc ÷	198.01	...	-0.45	6.46
Emerg Mkts Local Cur Debt A Inc ÷	168.71	...	-0.16	8.18
Global Equity A Acc ÷	283.03	...	-4.82	...
Global Franchise A Acc ÷	374.4	...	-3.66	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ÷	11619.74	...	-19.33	0.09
Global Gold A Acc ÷	239.93	...	-4.37	0.29
Global Special Situations A Acc ÷	1403.82	...	-7.97	0.45
Global Special Situations A Inc ÷	1310.29	...	-6.12	0.47
Multi-Asset Protector A Acc ÷	126.93	...	-0.27	2.42
UK Alpha A Acc ÷	3092.18	...	-46.63	1.64
UK Smaller Companies A Acc ÷	1534.35	...	-40.75	0.22
UK Smaller Companies A Inc ÷	1594.25	...	-36.25	0.22
UK Special Situations A Acc ÷	1974.43	...	-37.68	1.29
UK Special Situations A Inc ÷	1688.01	...	-13.12	1.30

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)				
JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS				
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlg:0845 946 4646				
All Stocks Credit A Inc ÷	115	...	+0.4	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ÷	1078.88	...	-1.79	6.70
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ÷	1311.3	...	-1.5	3.90
Cautious Managed Fd A Inc ÷	10142.1	...	-1.9	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ÷	1056	...	+	0.90
Emerg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ÷	2086.7	...	-3.0	...
Env Mgt Gwth Int Acc Opps A Inc ÷	928.6	...	-9	0.90
Env Sst Opps Fd A Acc ÷	2620	...	-63	0.20
Fin Intensity Inc Fd Acc ÷	1031.08	...	+0.04	5.40
Global Equity Fund A Acc ÷	5642	...	-63	...
Global Equity Income A Acc ÷	170.86	...	-0.59	3.10
Global Tech A Acc ÷	5063	...	-52	...
Instl UK Ix Opps A Acc ÷	1136.5525	...	-1.2174	2.80
M-Accept Abs Rtn A Acc ÷	174.4	...	-0.2	2.00
M-Man Actv Acc A Acc ÷	295.2	...	-2.3	1.10
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ÷	135.5	...	+6.1	3.60

TRAILFINDERS

THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

ALL YOUR ARRANGEMENTS IN ONE PLACE

★ Trustpilot

★★★★★

No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

First & Business Class Holidays & Flights

Corporate Travel

Worldwide Holidays & Flights

Cruise Holidays

020 7368 1400

020 7368 1499

020 7368 1200

020 7368 1300

NO ONE LOOKS AFTER YOU BETTER

M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ÷	210.7	...	-0.2	3.50
Sterling Bond U Trust Acc ÷	1212.7	...	-0.7	4.10
Sterling Bond U Trust Inc ÷	1056.14	...	-0.18	4.10
Strategic Bond A Inc ÷	97.92	...	+0.24	4.40
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ÷	190.6	...	-0.3	2.30
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ÷	162.4	...	-2.2	1.70
US Growth Fund A Acc ÷	2716	...	-22	...

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD				
020 7581 3020				
Distribution & Growth ÷	108.46	...	-0.6846	2.84
Euro Special Sits ÷	468.98	...	-2.3396	...
European ÷	3162.86	...	-2.4112	...
Financial Opps ÷	883.31	...	-1.2904	0.56
Global Macro Bd I GBP Acc ÷	1440.14	...	-0.5544	2.69
Income Trust ÷	1548.41	...	-1.1261	5.20
Merlin Bal Acc ÷	268.09	...	-0.9643	2.74
Merlin Growth Acc ÷	656.44	...	-0.9601	0.31
Merlin Inc Acc ÷	385.5	...	-0.6030	3.11
Merlin Worldwide Inc ÷	473.76	...	-0.7777	0.12
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis 1220.15	...	-1.4040	2.78	
UK Growth ÷	288.06	...	-0.9781	0.44

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANAGRS) LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956				
Euro Ind Acc ÷	613	...	-14.5	2.20
Euro Ind Inc ÷	382.7	...	-9	2.20
Fixed Int Acc ÷	143.5	...	-0.4	3.70
Fixed Int Dist ÷	63.06	...	+0.21	3.70
Global Health ÷	119.7	...	-1.7	0.80
Glob Tech Acc ÷	161.6	...	-5.7	...
High Inc Acc ÷	143.3	...	-0.1	6.40
Japan Ind Acc ÷	83.1	...	-1.46	1.40
Pacific Ind Acc ÷	229.9	...	-6.2	2.30
UK Index Trust Acc ÷	408.5	...	-5.6	2.90
UK Index Trust Dist ÷	134.5	...	-2.5	2.90
US Ind Acc ÷	1191	...	-29	4.60
Worldwide Acc ÷	390.9	...	-3.1	1.00

M&G SECURITIES				
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Charifund Inc ÷	1491.88	...	-32.91	6.03

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2				
Extra Income A Acc ÷	702.74	...	-4.87</	



Recipe for growth The chef Gordon Ramsay at Lucky Cat, one of his three new restaurants at 22 Bishopsgate, the tallest building in the City of London, where he is also opening a bar and cookery academy

Investors at two 'Miserable Seven' trusts vote to reject Saba threat

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

A London-listed investment company used by investors to back potential US tech winners has emphatically seen off a threat by the New York activist hedge fund group Saba Capital.

The £750 million Baillie Gifford US Growth Trust said shareholders had voted by 65.6 per cent to 34.4 per cent to reject Saba's proposals to sack the board, take over running the trust and give investors an option to cash out at close to net asset value. Excluding Saba's own votes, 98.5 per cent of shares that were voted went against Saba.

Tom Burnet, chairman of the trust, said: "Faced with the threat to their investment posed by Saba's self-serving and destructive proposals, shareholders have mobilised and acted decisively to protect their investment. The result is unambiguous and conclusive."

The smaller Keystone Positive

Change Investment Trust, which is valued at about £147 million, also saw off Saba when its shareholders voted by 60.5 per cent to 39.5 per cent to reject its proposals. Excluding Saba's votes, less than 1 per cent of votes cast were in favour of the activist's resolutions.

Keystone and the US Growth Trust were dubbed two of the so-called "Miserable Seven" trusts by Saba, which stunned the City in December with plans to take control of them. The response in the UK has been universal condemnation by the trust boards, who accuse Saba and its founder, Boaz Weinstein, of a self-serving and opportunistic campaign.

Saba controlled 29.7 per cent of the Baillie Gifford trust, which is more commonly known as USA because of its stock market code, and about 29 per cent of Keystone. The siege of USA was particularly symbolic because it was the only one of the seven where Weinstein

personally had hoped to be elected to the board.

The battles were characterised by high levels of voting: 78 per cent of USA shareholders and 72 per cent of Keystone shareholders voted their shares. Baillie Gifford, the Edinburgh fund management house that manages both trusts, hailed the results as "a display of shareholder democracy".

James Carthew, of the equities research house QuotedData, said he expected the focus to now harden further against Saba because of the heavy costs imposed on trusts defending themselves: "We expect that sentiment will turn from relief to anger at the disruption that this has caused and the considerable sums that have had to be spent to ward off the attack."

Last week the biggest of the targeted trusts, the £1.2 billion Herald Investment Trust, also voted against Saba.

USA has been seen as a convenient

way for UK investors to gain exposure to exciting US unlisted companies including Elon Musk's Space X, its biggest holding, and the payments processing company Stripe. Shareholders have almost trebled their money in USA since its flotation in 2018, although Saba tried to focus attention on a poorer patch of underperformance over the past three years to argue its case.

Another of the UK trusts in Saba's sights, Henderson Opportunities Trust, has published its own proposals, offering shareholders a cash exit at net asset value. Shareholders are due to vote today on Saba's proposal.

Shareholders of two other targeted trusts, CQS Natural Resources Growth and Income and European Smaller Companies Trust, are due to vote respectively today and tomorrow. Edinburgh Worldwide Investment Trust will meet on February 14.

Saba was approached for comment.

M&A hopes rise after a £160bn spree

Tom Howard

Private equity firms spent close to £160 billion buying UK businesses last year in what bankers will hope is evidence that the mergers and acquisitions market is bouncing back after a difficult couple of years.

There were 1,699 transactions in the UK involving buy-out funds in 2024, collectively worth £158.9 billion, data from PitchBook and the Big Four accountant KPMG shows. In value terms, last year's dealmaking was up almost 12 per cent on a slow 2023.

Hargreaves Lansdown, the trading platform being sold to a consortium led by CVC Capital Partners, part-owner of the Six Nations rugby tournament, for £5.4 billion, was among the big private equity deals in 2024. The £4.3 billion sale of the cybersecurity business Darktrace to the US investor Thoma Bravo was another high-profile example.

Most of the dealmaking took place towards the end of the year, when interest rates fell and the outcome of the general election was known. In the run-up to Christmas, close to £3 billion of private equity takeovers were announced within a few days of each other: Learning Technologies Group, TI Fluid Systems, Loungers and Renew were all acquired.

Alex Hartley, head of corporate finance at KPMG UK, said many business owners had also tried to get ahead of expected increases in capital gains tax announced at the budget. "There are encouraging signs from the 2024 data that deal activity may have bottomed out in the UK in 2023, as we saw activity, both in volume and value, pick up last year," he said.

L&G raises funds for thousands of affordable homes

Tom Howard

Legal & General is to build thousands of affordable homes across the country after raising more than half a billion pounds, including from the London council workers' pension fund.

The FTSE 100 insurer and investor set up its affordable housing fund last summer, since when it has convinced investors to back it with £510 million. That includes a £100 million commitment from London CIV, which invests

the pensions of local authority workers in the capital. It said that the amount raised demonstrates the "strong client demand" to invest in affordable housing.

The money is expected to fund between 3,500 and 4,000 new affordable homes across England, which will either be rented out as social housing or at affordable rents, which is usually at least 20 per cent below market rates. Some will be shared ownership.

"The level of interest we have seen in

this fund since its inception last year is a testament to the attractive proposition that investors see in contributing to much-needed affordable housing in the UK, while seeking to invest in steady inflation-linked returns and positive social impact," Ali Farrell, who runs the affordable housing fund, said.

Rental housing has become increasingly popular with big institutional investors, which are happy that they are doing a societal "good" but at the same time earning a decent return. While

other parts of the property market, such as offices and shopping centres, have declined in value and their rents stagnated, such is the chronic shortage of homes that rents are at record highs and prices are trending upwards too.

The problem is particularly acute at the affordable end of the market: on average 55,000 or so affordable homes have been built each year over the past decade, barely a third of what the National Housing Federation has estimated is needed.



Gen Z and Millennials. *The difference revealed.*

Twenty years ago we surveyed Britain's Millennials to find out what they were thinking. Now we've surveyed Generation Z and it paints a startlingly different picture.

Discover what Gen Z think all next week in The Times

THE  TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Lauren Almeida Tempus

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Reliable Experian ticks all the boxes

EXPERIAN

Market cap
£36.9bn

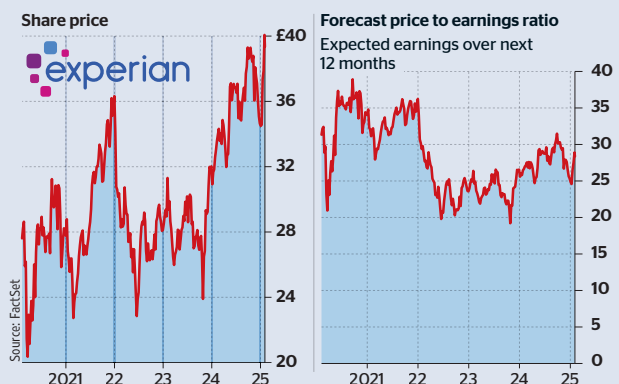
Forward p/e
28.4

Experian is one of those names in the FTSE 100 that can be easily overlooked: a corporate giant that operates largely in the opaque world of credit data and analytics, the £37 billion company rarely appears in the headlines. The stock has consistently delivered for its investors, however, notching up a compound annual growth rate of 6 per cent since 2006, with an average operating profit margin of 27 per cent over the past decade and a formidable economic moat. So the real question is: do the shares offer decent value?

The Dublin-based group specialises in credit data and analytics, with businesses in both consumer and B2B markets. Its institutional customers use its analytics services to make decisions about credit risk but it offers other services such as Experian Boost to consumers, designed to help people to improve their credit scores. This service has more than 15 million customers in the United States alone.

Its B2B data business made up 52 per cent of its global revenue last year, followed by 27 per cent from its consumer services. Its B2B decisioning business, which covers its predictive tools and software to help organisations to manage and automate large volumes of decisions and processes, makes up the remaining 21 per cent. By geography,

Credit where it's due



ADVICE Buy
WHY High-quality stock with consistent growth record

two thirds of its revenue comes from North America and just over a tenth from the UK and Ireland. The rest is split across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Asia Pacific region.

The group ticks all the boxes of a quality investment: an asset-light model means that cash conversion stands at more than 90 per cent and return on capital employed, which measures how effectively it turns

investments into profit, at a chunky 17 per cent last year. That is not to mention an extremely high barrier to entry for rivals trying to set up in a market that requires companies to have access to vast amounts of personal and corporate data. It is perhaps not so surprising then that Experian features in many "quality" style portfolios, including that of Nick Train, who counts the company among his top-ten holdings in his UK-focused funds at Lindsell Train, the investment manager that he co-founded.

In B2B, its largest market, Experian is the only company that has elegantly integrated data analytics, decisioning and fraud

detection into a single interface. This makes it much more likely for clients with native applications already running on its platform to buy more data or other software from it.

More than 60 per cent of revenue from decisioning already comes from clients that are buying at least six solutions: about a tenth of all customers. Analysts at Bank of America think this could rise to 30 per cent in the medium term, with revenue rising to \$3.2 billion by the 2027 financial year.

Its growth prospects are also impressive: the company is targeting organic growth of 6 to 8 per cent in 2025 and it bumped up its operating margin growth for this year to the top end of its 30 to 50 basis-point guided range. If lending activity in the American and British consumer credit market improves, then organic growth could drive up by 1 to 2 percentage points further.

This growth is certainly compelling but is already highly valued by the market and the shares are trading at close to an all-time high of near £40. The stock now trades at a forecast price-to-earnings multiple of 28.4, which makes it one of the most expensive stocks in the FTSE 100 on this basis. Its forecast enterprise value to adjusted cash profit ratio stands at 17.1, which is still not particularly cheap, although it is at a discount to data companies of similar sizes, such as the London-listed Relx and Equifax, at 19.9 and 18.1 respectively. For a reliable, quality compounder, the price tag on the shares looks worth biting the bullet.

WIZZ AIR

Market cap
£1.3bn

Forecast p/e
5.5

It has not been an easy year for WizzAir. The budget airline has lost more than two fifths of its market value since Tempus last rated it as an "avoid" in January 2024, and a disappointing set of results for the December quarter has not set the tone for a more uplifting year ahead. But at a forecast price to earnings ratio of 5.5, is the stock worth a punt for value investors?

The company, which has headquarters in Hungary, is the third

biggest low-cost airline in Europe, behind Ryanair and easyJet. It has a big presence in UK airports, mostly in Luton, but its real strongholds are in eastern Europe. It has been grappling with heightened costs, however, as it deals with the faulty Pratt & Whitney engines that have grounded a chunk of its fleet.

Its most recent update for December was disappointing: it carried 15.3 million passengers in the period, up 2.6 per cent from the same period in the previous year, and higher fares meant that revenues rose by 10.5 per cent to €1.17 billion. Costs per flight also rose, however, for several reasons, including

rescheduling operations and changing staff shifts because of the number of planes grounded for engine checks. Excluding fuel, its unit costs rose by 17 per cent year-on-year. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that it had to lower its profit expectations by at least €100 million.

Its growth has also been damaged by production problems at Airbus, which has slowed delivery rates of its new aircraft. WizzAir had to downgrade its plans for expansion, from a fleet of 380 narrow-body aircraft by the spring of 2028 down to 305.

Investors should also be wary of WizzAir's leverage. Although it did

not publish a full balance sheet or cashflow statement in its latest quarterly update, it reported net debt of €5.1 billion, up from €4.8 billion in the previous quarter. That means its net debt to earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation multiple stands at 4 on a trailing 12-month basis. This could leave it more exposed in the event of a deeper industry downturn.

ADVICE Avoid
WHY Lowly valuation reflects high risk

Gold rush for investors looking for a safe haven

MARKET REPORT

Investors sought out safe havens on a difficult day for markets and their search sent them to stocks tied to gold (Helen Cahill writes).

The West African gold miner Endeavour Mining had already proved its credentials in recent weeks as it has been buying back its own shares and recently announced its largest-ever final dividend because its production levels had been beating analysts' expectations. Yesterday its shares closed 8p, or 0.5 per cent, at £16.51. **Fresnillo**,

another big gold miner, also took centre stage, with its stock gaining 13½p, or 1.9 per cent, to close at 709½p.

The FTSE 100 came down from the record high achieved last week, falling 1.04 per cent or 90.4 points to 8,583.56 as tariff fears prompted a sell-off across a number of industries. The FTSE 250 lost 1.14 per cent or 238.72 points to close at 20,711.76 as investors predicted that UK-focused stocks would face inflationary pressures from a global trade war.

Diageo proved to be one of the most heavily affected as almost half its US revenues are booked on products imported from Mexico and Canada,



Diageo, which sells tequila to drinkers in American, is a prime target of tariffs

leaving its shares down 54p, or 2.2 per cent, at £23.65.

Tobacco groups were insulated from the market turmoil because most London-listed brands already manufacture cigarettes destined for US

smokers in the home market. **Imperial Brands** gained 20p, or 0.7 per cent, to close at £27.41, and **British American Tobacco** proved to be stable as it edged up 3p, or 0.1 per cent, to £32.00.

On the FTSE 250, investors turned to the US gas and oil producer **Diversified Energy Company** and **Bakkavor Group**, a supplier to British supermarkets, for protection. They gained 34p, or 2.6 per cent, to £13.41, and 1½p, or 1.1 per cent, to close at 135p respectively.

Infrastructure investments also appeared popular for those seeking insulation, as **BBGI Global Infrastructure** was up 1½p, or 1 per cent, to 112½p, and **International Public Partnerships Limited** was up 1½p, or 1.1 per cent, to close at 114p.

Mining stocks were hit as copper prices moved to a three-week low. **Antofagasta** was down 44p, or 2.5 per cent, to £16.81, and **Glencore** was down 8½p, or 2.4 per cent, to 342p.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Eurozone rate-cut hopes

Eurozone inflation increased in January but remained on an anticipated course that could allow the European Central Bank to cut interest rates further. Consumer price inflation in the 20 nations sharing the euro rose to 2.5 per cent last month from 2.4 per cent in December, as sharply higher energy costs added to price pressures. The ECB lowered borrowing costs for the fourth consecutive time last week and hinted at even more policy easing since inflation could be back at its 2 per cent target by the late summer.

Equities 24-hour service

Retail investors will be able to place buy and sell orders for US equities through the Chicago Board Options Exchange service called Choe Global Markets. The 24-hour service will operate on a five-day week and will break on the weekends. The move comes amid increasing demand for extended-hours trading from retail investors, which is driving some brokers and exchanges to expand their offerings. The New York Stock Exchange, a division of the Intercontinental Exchange, said last year that it would file for permission to extend its trading hours to 22 hours each business day.

Coffee breaks records

Arabica coffee prices set a record high for the eighth successive session yesterday, with supplies tightening ahead of an expected drop in production in Brazil this year. The top arabica grower is likely to harvest a smaller crop this year, partly due to hot and dry weather in 2024. Arabica coffee futures on the US intercontinental futures exchange rose 0.5 per cent to \$3.7980 per lb after touching a new high of \$3.8895. Arabica is used in about 60 per cent of global production. The market has risen by 19 per cent so far in 2025 after climbing by 70 per cent in 2024.

Gobbetti out of fashion

Marco Gobbetti, the former boss of Burberry, is to leave his current post as chief executive of Salvatore Ferragamo next month after failing to stem a slide in sales at the Florentine brand. Ferragamo, like other family-owned Italian brands, has been struggling to adapt to fast-changing luxury consumer tastes. Gobbetti, 66, who arrived at Ferragamo in January 2022, will receive a €4.5 million exit package after agreeing to waive his 2024 bonus, the company said.

Wall Street report

Delayed trade tariffs on Mexico boosted hopes of a settlement and helped to pare early heavy losses. The S&P 500 shed 45.96 points, or 0.8 per cent, to 5,994.57, while the Dow Jones industrial average lost 122.75 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 44,421.91. The Nasdaq fell 235.49 points, or 1.2 per cent, to 19,391.96.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Foresight Group Holdings	Traders see a safe bet 2.5%
Bakkavor Group UK supermarkets strong	1.1%
Imperial Brands Tobacco stocks insulates	0.8%
BAE Systems Safe haven stock	0.6%
British American Tobacco Not risky in trade war	0.2%
Diageo Trump trade hit	-2.2%
Glencore Copper price falls	-2.4%
Antofagasta Metal price declines	-2.6%
Ferrexpo Mining stocks sold off	-6.5%
Speedy Hire Profit warning	-28.4%

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.

12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

12 month High Low Company	Price (p)	Forecast Yield% P/E
Automobiles & Part		
197 97 Aston Martin Lag	103½ - 1½	... -3.4
Banking & Finance		
174½ 130½ abrdn	153½ - 1½	9.5 ...
43½ 1½ Acuity RM	1½	... -1.2
3143 2383 ADVA	2727 + 24	3.9 24.5
29½ 9½ ADFM	13	... -4.5
529 281 AJ Bell	443 - 4	2.8 21.2
31188½ 21468½ AON Corp	3006½ + 208½	0.7 ...
1139½ 830 Arbutnot	932½	5.0 4.2
7 3 Argo Group	4½	... -0.2
234½ 140½ Ashmore Group	169½ - ½	10.0 12.1
1688½ 1387½ Australia & NZ	1507½ - 29½	7.1 13.5
518½ 414½ Aviva	507½ - 6½	6.7 13.5
423 308 Banco Santander	400½ - 13½	3.3 24.1
5510 3540½ Bank of Georgia	4690 - 65	4.9 5.3
299½ 139½ Bardays	290½ - 6½	2.8 10.5
20½ 2 Blue Star Capital	7½	... -0.3
760 413½ BP Marsh & Ptns	675 - 15	2.2 5.9
9 3 Braveheart Inv Grp	5½	... 2.1
391½ 202½ Britannia Grp	380 - 1½	2.4 42.2
289½ 240 Chesnora	265 - ½	8.1 21.4
400 302 City of London Grp	352 - 14	9.4 12.4
564 179½ Close Bros	21½ - 5½	... 5.3
349 131½ CMC Markets	334½	4.6 13.4
1644½ 985½ Deutsche Bank	1518½ - 55½	3.7 8.8
269½ 147½ Direct Line Ins Grp	265½ - 2½	2.3 16.7
68 44 EFG-Hermes Hldgs	64½ + ½	... ..
191 135 EPC Special Vents	150 + 1½	... -30.9
88 49½ Fical	70	1.4 10.1
100 39½ Foresight Ventures VCT	95½	3.2 1.7
54½ 33 Frenkel Topping	35½	3.9 25.4
1396 830 Georgia Capital	1208 - 4	... 2.8
440 330½ H&T Group	338 - 6	5.2 6.9
56 42½ Hargreaves Global	46½ + 1½	9.6 12.2
1169 688 Hargreaves Lans	1101 - 1½	3.9 17.8
279½ 135 Helios U/W	217 - 1	2.8 10.1
1282 1008 Hiscox	1075 - 10	2.8 6.5
849½ 572½ HSBC	821½ - 24½	5.9 8.0
1106 671 IG Group	1016 - 3	4.6 12.8
550 198½ Impax Asset Mgmt	219 - 2	12.6 7.7
2448 1727½ Intermediate Cp	2338 - 32	3.4 14.1
166 99½ Intl Personal Fin	127½ - 1	8.3 5.9
134½ 110½ Intl Public P'ship	114 + 1½	7.3 10.2
627½ 49½ Investec	501 - 18½	7.1 4.8
389½ 292 Investment Co	361 - 1	... -1.4
56½ 35½ IP Group	51½ - ½	2.4 -3.1
88 43 Jarvis Securities	45½	11.5 5.1
94 73½ Jupiter Fund Mgmt	79½ - ½	8.3 -13.8
166 78½ Just Group	161½ - 3½	1.4 14.3
721 559 Lancashire Hlds	641 - 8	12.0 5.9
257½ 211½ Legal & General	236½ - 5½	8.7 32.2
865 382 Liontrust Asset Mgmt	450½ + 1½	16.0 42.5
61 23½ Livemore Inv Grp	59 + 2½	5.8 9.2
64½ 41 Lloyds Banking	61½ - 1	4.7 8.1
24 15 LMS Capital	16½ - ½	5.5 ...
12110 8648½ London Stock Exchange	101 - 135	1.0 85.7
241½ 184 M&G	201½ - 3	9.6 16.2
279½ 196½ Man Group	212 - 2½	6.0 13.2
29½ 13 Max Financial Grp	15½	2.9 3.4
41 1 Marechale Capital	3½ - ½	... -38.6
108½ 28½ Metro Bank	98½ - 4	... 7.1

12 month High Low Company	Price (p)	Forecast Yield% P/E
212 133 Istock	166½ - 1½	3.1 30.8
210 163½ James Halstead	172½ + ½	4.9 17.2
1704 821½ Keller	1366 - 8	3.5 19.1
5471½ 5388½ Kingspan Group	5605½	0.8 11.1
694 531 Land Securities	578 - 7	7.0 ...
59 31½ Life Science REIT	33½ - ½	5.9 ...
13½ 7½ London & Assoc Profs	8½	... -1.9
210½ 170½ LondonMetric Prop	184½ - 1½	6.0 ...
45½ 24 Macau Prop Op Fd	26½	... -1.0
366 221½ Marshalls	257 - 4	3.2 34.7
111½ 85½ Michelmersch Bldg	108½ - ½	4.2 10.4
1½ 0½ Mifflair	1	... -0.7
3970 2150 Morgan Sindal	3650 - 35	3.3 14.4
10400 8500 Mountview Estates	9200 + 225	5.2 12.6
85 67½ NewRiver REIT	73½ - 2½	8.4 ...
250 200 Palace Capital	225 - 4	6.7 -9.5
350 270 Panther Securities	315	3.8 12.5
1721½ 1047 Persimmon	1265 - 1	4.7 15.8
41 15 Plaza Centers	20	... -0.0
105½ 85½ Primary Health Propts	91½ - 2½	7.6 ...
37½ 28 Real Estate Inv	31 + ½	6.9 -5.7
930 587 Safestore	613½ - 3	5.0 ...
1298 900 Savills	1048 - 20	2.0 34.9
5 3½ Secure Prop Dev & Inv	4	... -0.7
949 699½ Segro	704½ - 13	4.0 ...
156½ 126½ Shaftesbury Capital	121½ - 3½	2.8 2.7
33½ 14½ SIG	14½ - ½	... -3.8
81½ 61½ SigmaRock	72½ - ½	... -36.4
101½ 72½ Sirris Real Estate	77½ - 2½	6.5 10.7
143½ 100 Smart (J)	125	2.6 29.6
23½ 12 St George Cement	14	... 8.3
169½ 106½ Taylor Wimpey	119 - 1½	8.1 12.0
165 113 Town Centre	121 - 1	4.1 ...
978 564 Travis Perkins	691½ - 22½	1.6 38.2
168½ 125½ Tritax Big Box	145½ - ½	5.2 ...
1032 780½ Unite Group	855½ - 1½	4.2 ...
1436 51½ Vistry Group	591½ - 7	5.4 9.2
92½ 74½ Warehouse REIT	78 - 2½	8.2 ...
664 427½ Workspace Group	468½ - 1	6.1 ...
740 625 Wynnstay Propts	700 - 10	3.7 13.9

Consumer Goods

1 0½ Asitron	0½	... -0.2
35½ 17½ Alcoa	26 - ½	1.1 13.1
778 589½ Anglo-East Pltns	676	3.5 -6.1
288 177½ Aminalcare	237	2.1 ...
2765 1833 AB Foods	1848½ - 53½	4.9 9.5
165 89½ Bakavor Group	135 + 1½	5.6 14.4
686 513 Barr (AG)	618 + 8	2.5 17.9
48½ 19 Brand Architects	47½	... -9.1
3225 2252 British Amer Tob	3200 + 3	7.4 -4.9
1351 555½ Burberry Group	1191 - 1	... 16.1
178½ 139 C&C Group	143½ - 2½	5.5 -19.8
6 1½ Capital Metals	1½	... -42.8
150 101½ Carri's Group	125½	4.1 -20.6
1394 550 Churchill China	60 + 15	6.1 8.5
2896 2173 Coca-Cola HBC	2866 + 56	2.7 19.9
917 646 Colefax	805 + 10	0.7 9.1
5260 3128 Crown House Cap	34½ + 14½	... -12.8
2530 1823 Derwent London	1921 - 40	4.2 ...
5½ 4½ DCI Advisors	5	... 30.4
20 12½ First Property	13½	... -3.8
55 32 Fletcher King	36½	6.2 13.3
71½ 51½ Foxtons Group	67½ + ½	1.4 37.7
405 226 Galford Try Hldgs	366 - 7	4.2 10.1
518 342 Genuit Group	388 - 3½	3.2 25.0
564 439½ Gleason (MI)	474½ - 13½	2.3 14.3
1097 398 Gratton Grp Units	916½ - 13½	4.0 40.8
276 205 Grainger	209 - 4	3.6 49.8
381 263 Great Portland Est	281½ - 7	3.8 0.0
325 246 Hammons	280½ - 4½	5.5 0.0
195 125 Harworth Group	168½ - 6½	0.9 14.3
440 250 Heath (Samuel)	320	4.1 10.6
259 167½ Helical	179½ - ½	1.8 -1.2

12 month High Low Company	Price (p)	Forecast Yield% P/E
269½ 160 Portmeirion	170 - 3½	2.1 -2.8
0½ 0½ Proxecto	0½	... -20.9
137 74½ PZ Cussons	80½ + 1½	4.5 -5.9
99 62½ REA	72½ - ½	... -2.8
249½ 141½ Tandem	160	... -7.1
340 234 The Character Grp	250 + 4	7.6 9.6
527½ 365½ Treatt	416½ - 5½	2.0 17.6
41½ 1½ Uiproduct Grp	2½	... 2.6
4654½ 4597½ Unilever (NV)	4644½	3.1 21.7
5934 3730 Unilever	4637 + 5	3.2 21.6
294½ 37 Victoria	109½ - 1	... -1.2

Engineering

15 15 Assoc Brit Eng	15	... -5.2
1550 805 Avon Technologies	1470 - 16	1.3 3.1
594 424½ Babcock	541 + 3	1.0 16.4
1417 1217 BAE Systems	1231 + 7	2.5 20.1
1500 825 Bralme A N/V	1150	1.3 7.1
2599½ 1500 Bralme Group	1650	0.9 10.2
550 400 Caffrys	450	2.2 -10.2
0½ 0 Cap XX Ltd	0½	... -0.5
404 230 Castings	269 - 1	6.8 7.0
28 15 Checkit	16½ - ½	... -3.9
1230 520 Cohort	1180 + 30	1.2 31.2
1350 799 Dowhaust	1070	1.5 16.1
275½ 86 Dyalight	114 - 5	... -1.9
152½ 16 Feedback	19½ + ½	... -0.8
665½ 380 Gooch & Housego	420 - 19½	3.1 33.1
8860 4700 Goodwin	7280 - 60	1.8 32.4
2904 2136 Halma	3016 - 27	0.2 43.3
2330 1758 H&I Smith	1992 - 2	2.2 32.2
31 1 Image Scan	3½	... -20.7
2017½ 1630 IMI	1961 - 51	1.5 21.4
0 Inspire Energy	0	... -0.8
12250 7000 Judges Sci	7140 + 40	1.4 49.0
80 50 LP	54 + 1	... -22.0
681½ 413½ Melrose	613 - ½	0.9 -9.1
347 231½ Morgan Advanced	265 - 9	4.6 16.0
590 355 Moxac	550 - 15	... 42.0
1180 785½ MS Intl	965 - 35	2.2 13.6
2765 1870 Oxford Instruments	2060 - 40	1.0 23.5
2514½ 1850½ Phillips Elec	2189½ - 49½	... -52.7
9½ 1½ Pipetram	1½	... -0.8
43½ 24½ Pressure Tech	38½	... -21.4
4500 3065 Renishaw	3475 - 130	2.2 26.1
660 36 Rend	50½ - 1½	1.0 6.1
624½ 297 Rolls-Royce	995½ - 10½	0.0 20.6
0½ 0½ Ross Group	0½	... -0.6
363 297½ Rotork	340½ - 8½	2.2 25.8
75 49 SD Group	52½ - 1	... 12.8
180½ 120 Senior	163½ - 2	1.5 21.7
89½ 39½ Swirefield	49	7.6 9.4
1585½ 1553½ SKF Group	1575½	3.5 15.5
349 200 Slingstap (HG)	300	... 13.5
2118 1514½ Smiths	2034 - 32	2.2 26.1
1540 100 Solid State	125 - 7½	3.0 8.8
380 245 Somero Enter	275 - 10	6.2 6.8
3803 2370 Spectris	2982 - 54	2.7 21.3
11280 6300 Spirax Group	7980 - 115	2.0 32.0
10½ 0½ Surface Transforms	0½	... -4.1
41½ 3 Tanfield	3½ + ½	... 18.6
408 285 Thorne FW	304	2.2 14.7
194½ 90 Transense Tech	157½	... 15.5
509 349 Vesuvius	407 - 3½	5.7 9.2
75 261½ Vole	282 - 8	1.5 16.1
2634 1737½ Weld	2354 - 72	1.6 26.7
1750 884 XP Power	1194 - 48	... -26.3
80 40 Zyticon	52 + ½	... -3.4

15 15 Assoc Brit Eng	15	... -5.2
1550 805 Avon Technologies	1470 - 16	1.3 3.1
594 424½ Babcock	541 + 3	1.0 16.4
1417 1217 BAE Systems	1231 + 7	2.5 20.1
1500 825 Bralme A N/V	1150	1.3 7.1
2599½ 1500 Bralme Group	1650	0.9 10.2
550 400 Caffrys	450	2.2 -10.2
0½ 0 Cap XX Ltd	0½	... -0.5
404 230 Castings	269 - 1	6.8 7.0
28 15 Checkit	16½ - ½	... -3.9
1230 520 Cohort	1180 + 30	1.2 31.2
1350 799 Dowhaust	1070	1.5 16.1
275½ 86 Dyalight	114 - 5	... -1.9
152½ 16 Feedback	19½ + ½	... -0.8
665½ 380 Gooch & Housego	420 - 19½	3.1 33.1
8860 4700 Goodwin	7280 - 60	1.8 32.4
2904 2136 Halma	3016 - 27	0.2 43.3
2330 1758 H&I Smith	1992 - 2	2.2 32.2
31 1 Image Scan	3½	... -20.7
2017½ 1630 IMI	1961 - 51	1.5 21.4
0 Inspire Energy	0	... -0.8
12250 7000 Judges Sci	7140 + 40	1.4 49.0
80 50 LP	54 + 1	... -22.0
681½ 413½ Melrose	613 - ½	0.9 -9.1
347 231½ Morgan Advanced	265 - 9	4.6 16.0
590 355 Moxac	550 - 15	... 42.0
1180 785½ MS Intl	965 - 35	2.2 13.6
2765 1870 Oxford Instruments	2060 - 40	1.0 23.5
2514½ 1850½ Phillips Elec	2189½ - 49½	... -52.7
9½ 1½ Pipetram	1½	... -0.8
43½ 24½ Pressure Tech	38½	... -21.4
4500 3065 Renishaw	3475 - 130	2.2 26.1
660 36 Rend	50½ - 1½	1.0 6.1
624½ 297 Rolls-Royce	995½ - 10½	0.0 20.6
0½ 0½ Ross Group	0½	... -0.6
363 297½ Rotork	340½ - 8½	2.2 25.8
75 49 SD Group	52½ - 1	... 12.8
180½ 120 Senior	163½ - 2	1.5 21.7
89½ 39½ Swirefield	49	7.6 9.4
1585½ 1553½ SKF Group	1575½	3.5 15.5
349 200 Slingstap (HG)	300	... 13.5
2118 1514½ Smiths	2034 - 32	2.2 26.1
1540 100 Solid State	125 - 7½	3.0 8.8
380 245 Somero Enter	275 - 10	6.2 6.8
3803 2370 Spectris	2982 - 54	2.7 21.3
11280 6300 Spirax Group	7980 - 115	2.0 32.0
10½ 0½ Surface Transforms	0½	... -4.1
41½ 3 Tanfield	3½ + ½	... 18.6
408 285 Thorne FW	304	2.2 14.7
194½ 90 Transense Tech	157½	... 15.5
509 349 Vesuvius	407 - 3½	5.7 9.2
75 261½ Vole	282 - 8	1.5 16.1
2634 1737½ Weld	2354 - 72	1.6 26.7
1750 884 XP Power	1194 - 48	... -26.3
80 40 Zyticon	52 + ½	... -3.4

Health

Abcam	2174½	... ..
275½ 176½ AdvaMed Medical	201 - 8	1.2 27.3
8 2½ Allerg Therapeutics	5½ - 1½	... -5.4
25½ 7½ Angio	16 - ½	... -1.8
468½ 220 Anaparo	412½ - 12½	2.6 30.5

12 month High Low Company	Price (p)	Forecast Yield% P/E
13388 9461 AstraZeneca	11276 - 68	2.1 36.4
4½ 2½ Cambridge Nutri Sci	3½	... -34.5
295½ 211½ Convatec	242½ - 4½	2.0 47.1
41 14½ Crelghen	29 - 1	1.6 -5.6
0½ 0 Delrex Medical	0	... -4.5
135 60 Eco Animal Health	64½	... 41.6
33½ 23 EKF Diagnostics	25½ + ½	... 49.3
47½ 13 Futura Medical	16½ - ½	... -7.4
2306 1424 Genus	1898 - 46	1.7 ...
1823½ 1282½ GSK	1980 - 6½	4.4 11.

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E		12 month High Low Company		Price (p) +/- Yld% P/E																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
0	0	Bezan Resources	0	...	-0.3	8%	4%	Proplex Energy	7½	...	-18.3	73%	45%	PCI-PAL	71½	-	½	...	-11.1	1162	681	Renew Holdings	720	-	12	2.6	13.7	823%	534	Renewi	801	-	1	0.6	-22.4	517%	336%	Rentokil	392½	-	6½	2.3	25.9	295%	213	Restore	216	+	1	2.5	-9.6	536%	231	Ricardo	236	-	16	5.4	...	18	12	Reebuck Food Group	17½	...	-3.0	113%	58	K3 Business Tech	81	...	-15.0	1386%	1024%	LG Electronics	1168½	+	1½	2.8	...	55	34%	MTI Wireless	46½	-	1	4.1	12.6	24	8%	Nanoco Group	11½	-	½	...	-26.0	115	81	Netcell	109	+	½	0.8	30.2	51	25%	Northamber	26½	2.3	-5.5	118	48%	Oford Metrics	49½	+	¼	6.5	85.6	1068%	821	Biotech Growth	881	-	17	...	215	177%	BkRckr Amer Inc	207½	-	2½	3.9	56.5	129%	104	BkRckr Com Inc	119½	-	1	3.8	32.9	165%	137%	BkRckr Fro Inv	154½	-	2	4.9	19.2	653	531	BlackRock Grt Euro	586	-	13	1.7	75.7	212	175	BkRckr Inc&Grt	204	+	4	3.7	28.3	1622	1294	BkRckr Smpl	1350	-	14	1.1	33.2	682	551	BkRckr Thrgomant	597	-	6	2.5	36.1	634	465	BkRckr WHl Mtn	490	-	7	6.8	14.4	1565	1229	Brown Adv US Sm	1430	-	25	...	-23.0	1545%	1150	Brunner	1410	-	20	1.7	53.5	3795	3200	Caledonia Inv	3745	-	50	1.9	50.3	454	387%	City of Lon IT	433½	-	5	4.8	20.8	123%	71	Cystal Amber Fd	109½	+	1	-6.0	...	531½	412	CT Priv Eq Ord	530	5.3	...	347	299%	CT UK Cap & Inc	325½	-	2½	3.8	25.1	94	80%	CT UK HIT B	99½	6.0	29.8	102	77%	CT UK HIT F	97½	+	1	5.8	24.3	540	439%	Dunedin Ent	475	786	647%	Edinburgh IT	758	-	7	3.6	31.7	202	136%	Edin Wvide	194	-	5	...	-37.1	912%	79%	European Assets	84	-	1	6.6	54.5	927%	762	European Opps	849	-	16	0.2	...	1196	957%	F&C Inv Trust	1160	-	28	1.3	73.3	549%	467%	Fidty Asian Val	494	-	8	2.9	34.7	249%	170%	Fidelity China Sp	230½	-	3	2.8	39.9	740%	600%	FidelityEmrMkt	708½	-	4%	2.2	55.0	412%	342%	Fidelity European Trst	377	-	9	2.3	40.5	186%	144%	Fidty Japan Tru	173	-	4½	...	-79.7	335%	268	Fidty Spec Val	321	-	2½	3.0	27.7	964	803%	Fins Gwth & Inc	954	-	8	2.1	45.9	85	67%	GCP Infrastructure	72½	-	1	0.7	32.1	314	269%	Global Opps Tst	291	+	1	1.7	54.9	43	40%	Golden Prospect	41	-	25.3	...	80%	63%	Greencoat Renew	65½	+	¼	6.2	...	148%	118%	Greencoat UK Wind	131½	-	½	8.4	22.0	250	196	Hansa Investment Co	236	1.4	90.4	244	190	Hansa Inv Co A	224	1.4	86.2	2795	2202%	Harvest Gbl Pt Eq	2770	+	10	...	-132	196	169	Hend Euro Tst	182½	-	4½	2.4	24.2	174	149%	Hend High Inc	165	-	½	6.4	15.9	987%	752	Hend Smfr	815	-	7	3.3	27.3	2570	1959%	Herald Inv Trust	2315	-	35	550	408	Jersey Capital Trust	522	1.7	84.6	133%	107%	HLCL Infra	114½	+	1½	7.2	76.3	1356	1150	ICG Ent Tr	1330	-	12	2.6	-75.1	140	367	Impax Env Mkts	399	-	8	1.7	82.1	358	287%	Invesco Asia Tr	336	-	6	4.6	41.4	177	164	Invesco Bond Inc	172	+	½	6.8	13.9	323%	258	Invesco Gbl Eq Inc	316	-	2	3.8	35.0	1198	885	JPM American	1154	-	24	0.7	...	394	317	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	373	-	6	4.4	82.7	281	182	JPM China	228	-	4	4.8	67.3	748	644	JPM Claverh	722	-	10	4.9	23.5	289%	65%	JPM Emr EMEA Sec	209	-	½	0.2	...	114%	99%	JPM Em Mkts	111	-	2	1.7	52.4	493%	412	JPMorgan Euro	466	-	9	2.4	38.7	142%	122%	JPM GEMI	134	-	2½	4.0	23.8	614	511	JPM GGI	598	-	11	3.8	71.6	1074	886	JPM Japan	1014	-	10	605	474%	JPM Japan	593	-	8	1.1	80.5	528	373	JPM Smfr Co	502	-	6	0.6	...	258%	195%	Keystone Pos Change	254	-	1	0.2	...	929	761%	Land Debature	899	-	14	3.7	26.9	135	112%	Lowland Inv	130	-	1½	4.9	20.7	276	215	Majedie Invs	256	-	4	3.2	...	399	334	M Currie Port	370	-	11	1.1	...	100%	99%	Marwyn Val Inv	100	11.0	...	269	210%	Mercantile IT	242	-	4	3.2	26.9	605	512%	Mercants Trust	546	-	10	5.3	17.9	838	740	Mid Wynd	818	-	18	1.0	...	1340%	102%	Monks Inv Trust	1310	-	26	0.2	...	156	129%	Montanare Euro Sm	153	-	2	0.8	...	908	795	Murray Income Trust	850	-	12	4.6	22.7	270%	236%	Murray Intl	266½	-	4	4.4	22.0	390	346	Pacific Assets Trust	354	-	4	1.1	1.2	341	297	Pantheon Intl	320	-	2	...	-56.3	586	500	PatricPrivEq	561	+	1	3.0	...	4368	3282	Pershing Sqr	4112	-	170	1.3	3.9	513	471%	Personal Assets	512	+	1	1.4	58.4	383	265%	Polar CapTech	365	-	10	...	-48.6	116	80	Prem Global Infra	84½	9.3	10.4	109%	76%	Renewables Infra	79	+	¼	9.5	...	2030	1698	RIT Cap Ptnr	1970	-	2	2.0	-88.2	1045	729%	Rivestone	810	-	24	...	-80.8	499%	416	Schroder TotRt	487	-	5	2.4	47.5	568	465	Schrd Asia Pac	534	-	9	2.3	41.8	305	248	Schrd Inc Gwth	258	-	2	5.2	24.5	266	227%	Schrd Jap Gwth	254	-	6	...	-45.9	686	539%	Schrd UKMdt	608	-	4	3.5	29.6	13%	9%	Schroder UK PP Tr	10	-	½	...	-50.0	536	481	Scot American	519	-	5	2.8	38.5	1088	733%	Scot Mortgage	1041½	44	0.4	84%	72%	Sequoia Eco	77½	+	8	8.8	11.8	246%	207	STS Gbl Inc Gwth	242	-	1	2.8	39.8	175%	144	Temp Eng Mkt	169	-	1½	3.0	32.6	285	224%	Temple Bar	278½	-	3	3.9	29.9	172%	142	The Gbl Smaller	162½	-	2½	1.7	57.2	0%	0	Tiger Royal & Inv	0%	...	-1.9	241	200	Utilico Emerging Mkt	213	...	4.3	24.1	616	532	Winton Ent Inv	597	-	9	...	9.4	372%	311	Ww Health	340½	-	2½	0.8	...
♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; Ex dividend; Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex alt; \$ Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; ... No significant data, Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		

Exchange rates

Australia \$	2.00535 (+0.01026)
Canada \$	1.80848 (+0.00832)
Denmark Kr	8.9931 (+0.0721)
Euro	1.20538 (+0.00938)
Hong Kong \$	9.651 (-0.003)
Hungary	492.096 (+5.276)
Indonesia	20332.44 (+133.12)
Israel	4.4345 (-0.0056)
Japan Yen	191.562 (-0.71)
New Zealand \$	2.21652 (+0.01864)
Norway Kr	14.14742 (+0.12012)
Poland	5.0988 (+0.07249)
Russia	123.517 (+1.387)
S Africa	23.28889 (+0.18137)
Sweden Kr	13.8096 (+0.0598)
Switzerland Fr	1.13194 (+0.00309)
Turkey Lira	44.50852 (+0.15912)
USA \$	1.2392 (nc)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)	
Bullion: Open \$2797.46	
Close \$2816.5 High \$2830.57	
Low \$2772.2	
AM \$2794.15 PM \$2826.10	
Platinum \$963.976	
Silver \$31.438	
Palladium \$1010.347	

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 4.75% ECB Refi 3.0% Fed Fund 4.25-4.50%

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 8.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 months
Copenhagen	8.9926	8.9264	-148.475	-519.67
Euro	1.2051	1.1960	-16.58	-57.83
Montreal	1.8084	1.8001	-24.58	-75.27
New York	1.2392	1.2390	-1.03	-3.29
Oslo	14.1379	14.0310	-9.46	-56.6
Tokyo	191.5780	192.3380	-63.54	-203.51
Zurich	1.1319	1.1288	-37	-121.3

Other sterling

Argentine peso	1303.91016-1303.91211
Australian dollar	2.00532-2.00583
Bahrain dinar	0.46580-0.46780
Brazilian real	7.22290-7.22490
Euro	1.20506-1.20556
Hong Kong dollar	9.65100-9.65500
Indian rupee	107.71070-107.79070
Kuwaiti dinar	0.38130-0.38330
Malaysian ringgit	5.54100-5.54300
New Zealand dollar	2.21636-2.21704
Singaporean dollar	1.68918-1.68963
South African rand	23.28889-23.29889
UAE dirham	4.54810-4.55010

Dollar rates

Australia	1.61886-1.61929
Canada	1.46026-1.46043
Denmark	7.26216-7.26329
Euro	0.97310-0.97350
Hong Kong	7.79250-7.79350
Japan	154.65401-154.66400
Malaysia	4.47000-4.48000
Norway	11.42070-11.42760
Singapore	1.36388-1.36405
Sweden	11.15380-11.16200
Switzerland	0.91399-0.91403
Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication	



Billions owed to millions

Claim your mis-sold
vehicle finance refund with

GET YOUR R£FUND

Hidden PCP and HP finance commissions might have cost you
£1,100+ in additional interest charges per vehicle.

If you've bought a car, van, motorbike, motorhome or caravan on
finance, you could be eligible for a significant refund.

Start your no win
no fee* claim today



Estimated **£30 billion** to be repaid
Had multiple finance deals? **You could get multiple refunds**



Get Your Refund is a trading style of Stephens Wilmot Ltd, registered in England and Wales (Company number 10411634). Authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA number 635237). You do not need to use a legal representative; you can complain directly to your finance provider or broker and refer your complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service for free.

* No win, no fee: If your claim is successful, our fee is 25% plus VAT of any compensation amount. Our fee is capped at £5,000 plus VAT per claim. If you cancel your claim after the 14-day cooling-off period, you will be liable to pay us for the reasonable costs we have incurred in relation to our Services. See our Terms and Conditions for more information: getyourrefund.co.uk/terms

WE'RE A
**REGULATED
LAW FIRM**





**Pioneering founder of
Slimming World**
Margaret Miles-Bramwell
Page 42



Register

Obituaries

Diana Melly

Fearlessly, terrifyingly frank memoirist and bohemian known for her open marriage to the flamboyant jazz singer George Melly

When Diana Melly met her future husband at the Colony Room in Soho in 1961 she was 24 but already had a considerable history, having left school at 14 and having had a child from each of her two previous marriages.

George Melly was 35, "quite short", she recalled, "and just getting to be rather plump; his feet were tiny, so he minced slightly when he walked; he had brown eyes, a big nose, a huge smile and was famous for singing in a jazz band and being bisexual."

As well as being known for his flamboyant dress sense — the striped jackets and wide-brimmed hats — Melly was a legendary libertine and when his then wife rang to say that she couldn't make it to the opening of Peter Cook's Establishment club, he promptly asked Diana to take her place. "Later on that evening George and I made love on Hampstead Heath," she wrote. "The following day we met in a pub and rather casually decided that somehow we would live together."

Diana had her third child two days after they married in 1963. Their marriage lasted for "44 long years", as she put it, until her husband's death in 2007. Surviving numerous affairs, which were carried out by both parties, it was one of the more unconventional unions of any era and was nowhere more candidly chronicled than in her painfully honest memoir *Take a Girl Like Me* (Chatto, 2005).

They decided, rather casually in a pub, that they would live together

Diana Margaret Campion Dawson was born in Southampton in 1937. Her father, Geoffrey, was a British Rail clerk and away for much of her childhood on wartime service with the RAF. Her mother, Margaret, a cleaner, responded to her absent husband's former philanthropy by having an affair with an American serviceman.

The young Diana was deemed to be "in the way" so was sent, at the age of four, as a boarder to a convent in Norfolk, where her aunt taught. After the war the family moved to the Essex coast, where Diana had elocution lessons and at the village school enjoyed being tied to a tree by a boy and kissed. After passing her 11-plus, she went to a girls' grammar school in Chelmsford, and later, aged 14, to another grammar school in the New Forest, having been sent to live with relatives after her parents' divorce.

On her third day there, as she recalled, "a girl said: 'The head boy wants to meet you behind the cricket pavilion for a snogging session.' I said: 'Yes, of course.' But I remember not enjoying it much: he was very plain and said: 'I'm sorry if my breath smells — I've just been to the dentist.'"

She left after a term and a half, after which the only other school she attended was the Lucie Clayton School of Modelling, "where you learnt how to open a door without turning your back on the room and how to get out of a car without showing your knickers".

Diana worked as a shop assistant, cleaning lady and, after lying about her



Diana Melly was 24 when she met her husband, George, right, who was a legendary libertine and was married to another woman at the time

age, a nightclub hostess. In 1954, aged 16, she married her first husband, Michael St George Ashe, "an imaginative, feckless Irishman of aristocratic origins which impressed me at the time but meant that he considered most jobs beneath him".

They lived in bedsits on handouts from her mother, by then employed as a housekeeper, and later with Ashe's parents in Sussex. However, after a few weeks there Diana left, taking their son, Patrick, with her.

Back in London, she had some success as a model. "Some people thought I was beautiful," she wrote, "but not everyone." She also waitressed and after hours could be seen sitting on the piano at Muriel Belcher's club the Colony Room.

Patrick was sent to a crèche each day, but at night he was often left at home alone until his mother returned. When he was two, Diana sent him to live with her aunt in Essex and barely saw him again until he was six. He used to point at posters of models and say: "Mummy? Mummy coming back?"

Diana was by then abroad with her

latest boyfriend, the writer and adventurer Michael Alexander, on an overland journey to Afghanistan suggested by George Weidenfeld, who published the resulting book *Offbeat in Asia* in 1960.

Alexander left her on their return, rendering Diana distraught — she was briefly admitted to a mental hospital — but after recovering she got engaged a further three times before marrying her second husband, the journalist John Moynihan, with whom she had a daughter, Candy.

She promptly divorced Moynihan after meeting George Melly, with whom she plunged into bohemian London and went on tour with Mick Mulligan's band, including a night spent in Swansea with their friend Kingsley Amis, who apologetically walked in on them having sex on a bed propped up with old paperbacks. His son, Martin, later unsuccessfully applied to be their au pair.

As Melly recalled, for the first three



or four years of marriage, "we lived in a haze of irritating-to-others, uxorious bliss". Using money inherited from George's family, they bought the medieval Scethrog Tower near Brecon, where she gardened and George fished on the River Usk, and in London moved to Gloucester Crescent in Camden Town, where their neighbours included Jonathan Miller, Alan Bennett and AJ Ayer. Behind her carefree veneer, Melly was anxious about her husband's roving eye and took to altering her appearance

so that he "could be fooled into thinking that he had more than one woman". She suffered panic attacks at the thought of losing him and "would lie in bed clasp[ing] razor blades".

George was infinitely kind and patient during her various crises — "he liked mad, difficult women," according to Diana — but eventually he began to itch for the freedom to stray, and in 1971 he encouraged her to have an affair with a handsome 18-year-old school dropout while on holiday in France.

On their return to London, they rearranged their house so they no longer shared a bedroom and George lost no time in taking a lover of his own, the first of many.

They never discussed the idea of having an open marriage, yet sensing that was what George wanted she went along with it. "Once I was no longer fixated on keeping George away from other women, I felt a lot more peaceful," she said later. "Despite our affairs, we kept it together as a family. It was taken for granted that we would stay together."

The arrangement, however, seemed to work better for George than it did for her. Among a series of ultimately unsatisfactory lovers was one with a room immediately opposite their house in London, who would summon her over by turning over a corner of the bedspread; a doctor at the Release drug charity where she worked for many

Kingsley Amis found the couple having sex on a bed propped on books

years; and a womanising mining engineer first encountered on holiday in Sierra Leone, who appeared to be so bafflingly unsuitable that one friend eventually asked her: "Isn't he a bit middle management for you?"

It was in Sri Lanka with another on-off boyfriend that Melly began her first novel, *The Girl in The Picture* (1977). Her second, *The Goosefeather Bed* (1979), continued the semi-autobiographical adventures of her turbulent heroine. Both books were published by Duckworth and critically well received, the latter described by her friend Francis Wyndham in *The Times Literary Supplement* as "almost unnervingly readable".

Introduced by their mutual friend Sonia Orwell, Diana had meanwhile befriended the famously difficult novelist Jean Rhys, who had belatedly sprung to fame after the publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) but was now in need of looking after as she approached the age of 90.

Melly bravely had her to stay for several months over the winter of 1977-78, giving up her bedroom, redecorated in Rhys's favourite shades of pink, which made it "as warm, cosy and mildly exotic as a gypsy caravan", as George described it. The first two

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

Margaret Miles-Bramwell

Groundbreaking founder of Slimming World who believed in 'a sin a day' and changed the way the nation thinks about dieting

Margaret Miles-Bramwell was a 17-year-old mother "weighing a modestly overweight 12st 7lb" (80kg) when she decided that she wanted to shed some pounds. Her doctor prescribed amphetamines, which removed the desire for food but came with horrendous side-effects. She then reduced her daily diet to little more than a biscuit, a hard-boiled egg and a piece of lettuce. After two months she had lost 28lb, but put it back on when she reverted to her usual diet.

Her weight continued to mount and by age 20 she weighed 16 stone. "I tried both major slimming clubs that were around at the time. One was a glorified coffee morning ... The other reminded me of being back in junior school ... lectured to, judged and humiliated," she wrote.

After poring over countless books and trying several diets, Miles-Bramwell and her Derbyshire neighbour, Josie, decided to start their own slimming club, based on her idea for a "sin-a-day" diet that allowed slimmers to satisfy their appetite while still losing weight. "The word appealed to my sense of mischief and fun. I wanted, even then, to lighten the heavy emotional burden that comes with being overweight, to inject a sense of fun into slimming," she wrote.

Their choice of name, United Slimmers' Society, was rejected by "the powers that be" and instead they opened as J&M Slimming Club, rebranding the business as Slimming World in 1977. Josie's husband, Pat, provided the start-up capital, enabling Bramwell-Miles to give up her job, rent venues and place adverts in local newspapers with lines such as "Slim your way to Rome" and "The club which really cares".

"Our very first group was held in a church hall in Alfreton in 1969. The membership fee was £1 and the weekly fee was two shillings and sixpence, 12½p in new money," she wrote. Within a few weeks she realised that the "sin-a-day" concept needed more work. "Plenty of people took full advantage of the free rein over butter, cream and cheese (why wouldn't you?), and the weight losses weren't what I wanted them to be," she added.

By the end of the first year there were about 25 groups across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire led by local teachers, known as "consultants". Eventually she bought Josie out of the business but during a brief move to Barnsley for her husband's work she found herself running the company from a red telephone box. By the winter of 1974 they were back in Derbyshire and the company had its own offices, where she was surrounded by her loyal team.

Meanwhile, she started the Slimmer



Miles-Bramwell began Slimming World after clubs she attended as a young woman made her feel "judged and humiliated"

of the Year awards, arriving on stage each year to the sound of Natalie Cole's song *Wild Women Do*, which formed part of the title of her memoir, *Wild Women Do (and they don't regret it!)* (2019).

During the 1980s Miles-Bramwell tried stepping back from the day-to-day running of Slimming World. However, the business fell on lean times, with the number of groups falling from more than 800 in 1982 to 200 in 1986, each with an average of only 12 members. "Drastic action was required," she wrote, recalling how a Barclays bank manager in Chesterfield came to the rescue. Within a decade the business was not only running classes involving image therapy, in which members discuss keeping to their eating plans, but also publishing a self-named glossy slimming magazine that soon became a top seller among so-called "diet titles".

On the cusp of the new millennium, Miles-Bramwell stepped back again, though she remained the company's chairman and driving force. Today Slimming World, which employs 400 staff in Alfreton, continues to operate through its network of consultants and is a multimillion-pound operation. It pioneered the first NHS weight

management referral scheme, Slimming World on Referral, has worked with health authorities around the country and is referenced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. However, in 2000, the original "sin-a-day" plan was renamed "food optimising".

Margaret Miles-Bramwell was born in London in 1948 as Margaret Glynis. Her parents were Joy, a nurse, and Harry, a "sophisticated and handsome man-about-town", who was also

She pioneered the first referral scheme on the NHS for weight reasons

married to another woman. She was handed over to Harry's sister, Emma, who in turn passed her on to Samuel Birch, a miner, and his wife Emma, a childless couple living in the small mining village of South Normanton, Derbyshire. Although the adoption was unofficial, they were "always mum and dad to me".

The Methodist chapel played a big part in her childhood and by the age of six she was often singing on stage with

her cousin, Edwina. She learnt of her true parentage after being tormented by children at junior school and was later acquainted with her birth parents. She went on to Swanwick Hall Grammar School, in Alfreton, but left at the age of 15 after becoming pregnant by her boyfriend Roy Miles, "a charming, charismatic and good-looking jack the lad" with an Ariel Arrow motorcycle. They were married in a frugal ceremony four days after her 16th birthday and their daughter, Claire, was born two months later.

She started work as a secretary, fending off advances from amorous bosses and customers, before taking a job at the Alfreton branch of

Ladbroke's. Yet life was a constant financial struggle, not helped by discovering her husband's lack of financial acumen when a debt collector came calling. "I felt the sting of that humiliating visit keenly and ever since, I've been ferociously against any type of unnecessary debt and, consequently, strongly against credit cards," she wrote.

The couple later had two sons, Dominic and Benjamin, and opened a design studio that put more pressure on their marriage, which was dissolved in 1984. For the next decade she was in a relationship with Steven "Bram" Bramwell, whom she had known since her teens. They developed an interest in canal boats and decided to broaden their horizons on the open seas, booking a sailing course through the Royal Yachting Association.

Their instructor was Tony Whittaker, who was some years her senior, "dependable and mature". The relationship ended in 1991 and five years later she married Whittaker. In 2003 they bought Pearl Yachts, based in Stratford-upon-Avon, and one day sailed into Mallorca, immediately falling for the Spanish island which would go on to become home. They acquired the Son Amar night spot in Bunyola and later started the Mood Beach Club in Costa d'en Blanes. Whittaker died in 2021 and Miles-Bramwell is survived by the three children from her first marriage.

Miles-Bramwell remained a woman of substance, in build, hair and character, explaining her stature as "a weight I'm comfortable with and it's certainly not slim". Despite her many business ventures, Slimming World

remained her enduring passion and she often explained how her own struggles enabled her to understand and help others. "Weight Watchers should have wiped the floor with us," she told a newspaper in 1999, referring to the rival slimming organisation. "But we were doing something that people wanted ... It's OK not to be slim. People decide for themselves what weight they want to be. We just help them get there."

Margaret Miles-Bramwell OBE, entrepreneur and founder of Slimming World, was born on April 20, 1948. She died of cancer on February 2, 2025, aged 76



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

months went surprisingly smoothly but by February the dark side of Rhys's volatile character had begun to show. George nicknamed her Johnny Rotten (whose initials she shared) and Melly later recalled how she often felt like sitting into the soup she carried upstairs to her vitriolic guest.

After eventually taking Rhys home to Devon, Diana admitted her failure to make Rhys happy: "I can't even make her feel all right," she told Orwell.

She formed a far calmer and more rewarding friendship with Bruce Chatwin, who first came to stay the summer after her son Patrick died from a heroin overdose in 1980, aged 24.

Chatwin barely so much as made a cup of tea but because he was "very childish and needed looking after", she recalled, he fitted the bill after she lost her son. He would occupy the top room



Behind Melly's shocking frankness lay a proud refusal to ask for sympathy

of her Welsh tower on and off over the next five years and they remained close until he died from Aids in 1989.

Melly instinctively adopted a mothering role. His novel *On the Black Hill* (1982) was finished at her house, and he would follow her around her kitchen,

large yellow pages fluttering, as he read out the latest excerpt. "I'm looking forward — very much to the next chapter," she wrote to him, to be "read aloud while apple chutney is on the boil".

From there they undertook expeditions as rehearsals for incidents in the novel, and the book was dedicated to her and Wyndham, who was also staying at the tower, co-editing with Melly a selected edition of Rhys's letters, published by André Deutsch in 1984.

It was after a trip to Patmos with Chatwin in 1982 that Melly returned to find that Molly Parkin had betrayed their friendship by installing herself as George's latest live-in girlfriend. "You've lost your child," she told Melly, "and you're about to lose your husband, so go back to your mental home, we're selling the tower." Fortunately for Melly, George soon tired of her, but more girlfriends would come and go.

As George's fame grew, Melly would

often be asked if she was any relation of his when she said her name, to which she replied: "Only by marriage." She firmly rejected the label of "long-suffering wife", insisting that she considered herself very lucky to have married him.

"Our marriage is an elastic band that stretches but does not break," George said towards the end of his life. "It began passionately and is finishing with com-

The marriage was like an elastic band, it stretched but never quite broke

passion. I suppose she has lived in my shadow a little, but only in public. Here [at home] she's the WingCo. The wing commander. She makes sure I do what I have to do, go where I'm meant to go, and I still love her very much."

Interviewing Melly after the publica-

tion of *Take a Girl Like Me*, Lynn Barber applauded her "fearlessly, terrifyingly, frank" memoir and eventually warned to "her prickly character, her proud refusal to ask for sympathy". Melly admitted that motherhood was not her forte but she believed that she had been a good grandmother to Candy's daughter Kezzie, who had lived with her from the age of 11.

Her last book, *Strictly Ballroom: Tales from the Dancefloor* (Short Books, 2015), described how ballroom dancing lessons helped her cope with her grief after losing her husband in 2007 and her daughter, Candy, in 2012.

In later life she became a spokeswoman for Dignity In Dying and a volunteer in the visitors' centre at Wormwood Scrubs prison.

Diana Melly, writer and bohemian, was born on July 26, 1937. She died on February 2, 2025, aged 87

Thomas Gaither

Civil rights activist who participated in the highly effective 'jail, no bail' protests

On January 31, 1961, ten young black student volunteers led by Thomas Gaither organised a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter called McCrory's in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Over the previous year civil rights activists had organised plenty of similar sit-ins across the Deep South to protest against racial segregation, but this one was different because the students were adopting a new tactic dubbed "jail, no bail".

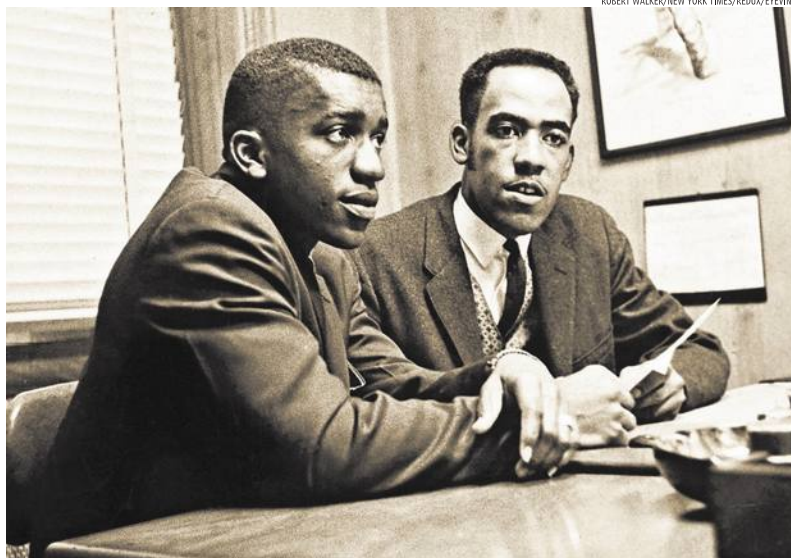
Instead of paying the standard \$100 fines, which the civil rights movement could ill afford and subsidised their own repression, the students would opt for 30-day jail sentences instead. "I felt there should be more of a commitment on our part — being willing to suffer for something that we really wanted to happen," Gaither told the Southern Oral History Program in 2011.

Their plan exceeded their wildest expectations. The ten were duly arrested in McCrory's. All but one, who was worried about losing his college scholarship, refused to pay the fines. They were then sent to the York County jail where they had to do hard labour in a chain gang.

While they laboured, their sacrifice galvanised a national civil rights movement that had been in danger of stalling. "Jail, no bail" caught the popular imagination and spread to other states and cities, generating yet more headlines. At weekends hundreds of supporters gathered outside the students' jail. Irate white supremacists burnt a cross in front of Gaither's parents' home.

"What we didn't realise and couldn't possibly realise was the impact that was going on out there," said Gaither, who was the oldest of the students at 22. "The amazing thing ... was that we took essentially a group of college students who had no knowledge at all of tactical non-violence and we pulled off one of the most important protest events of the [civil rights] movement."

Nor was that Gaither's only contribution to the movement. The following year he and a white activist, Gordon Carey, found themselves stranded on a bus on the New Jersey Turnpike during a snowstorm. They passed the time by reading a biography of Mahatma Gandhi, India's champion of non-violence. That gave them the



Thomas Gaither, right, with Robert McCullough, instigated the "freedom rides" in the southern states

idea of staging a "freedom ride" where black and white activists would make a bus trip through the southern states to expose how those states were ignoring a recent Supreme Court ruling banning segregation on interstate buses and terminals.

Gaither was not one of the 13 activists who made the first freedom ride from Washington DC to New Orleans in May 1961: his job was to scout the route, check schedules and find places for the activists to stay. But he witnessed first hand the extreme violence that the activists encountered in Alabama, forcing them to curtail their journey.

That and the brutal attacks on subsequent freedom rides shocked America and generated even more support for the civil rights movement than "jail, no bail".

"I don't think we estimated how big it would become," said Gaither. "I think it ultimately was one of the signature protests of the entire civil rights movement."

Thomas Walter Gaither was one of five siblings born in Great Falls, South Carolina, in 1938. His parents, Walter and Fannie (née Little), were both teachers until his father was fired for challenging a white member of the school board who was stealing \$5 from his salary each month. He instead went to work in a cotton mill, then as a brick

mason. Gaither was educated first in a rudimentary one-room infants school, then at the local high school.

He excelled academically and won a \$75 annual scholarship to Claflin, a historically black college 90 miles away in Orangeburg, South Carolina. There he became president of the youth chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), and helped to organise a peaceful march that was attacked by police using fire hoses and tear gas and ended

Gaither was viewed as the 'Moses' of the Friendship Nine, who saw him as wise

with more than 350 arrests.

After graduating in 1960 he was employed as a field organiser with the Congress of Racial Equality (Core) which fought discrimination through non-violent direct action. He worked in several states before returning to work at another black institution, Friendship Junior College in South Carolina. There he took charge of the so-called Friendship Nine who had volunteered to stage the trail-blazing "jail, no bail" protest, and trained them in non-violent

techniques. "We looked to Tom for wisdom, for guidance," said David Williamson, one of the last two surviving members of the group. "He was our Moses."

After the Rock Hill protest and the freedom rides, Gaither was drafted to fight in Vietnam. He avoided the war by enrolling for graduate studies, first at Clark Atlanta University in Georgia, and then at the University of Iowa, where he earned a PhD in botany.

He never returned to live in the south. He married a mental health therapist named Diane Jenner, had two sons, Kenn and Edmund, and in 1968 became a biology professor at Slippery Rock University in western Pennsylvania where he taught until his retirement 38 years later. His wife died in 2021 after 52 years of marriage.

In Rock Hill a historical marker now stands outside the old McCrory's lunch counter in Main Street. In 2015 the Friendship Nine had their convictions overturned by Judge John Hayes, a nephew of the judge who had sentenced them back in 1961.

"We cannot rewrite history, but we can right history," Hayes said.

Thomas Gaither, civil rights activist, was born on November 12, 1938. He died on December 23, 2024, aged 86

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: newsukadvertising.co.uk for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

O LORD, what is man that you regard him, or the son of man that you think of him? Psalm 144.3 (ESV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

MITCHELMORE

On 15th January 2025 to Camilla (née Down) and Alexander, a daughter, Winifred (Winnie) Alma Willis, sister to Iona. Floreat.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR M. R. ARKWRIGHT AND MISS S. M. HARCOURT

The engagement is announced between Miles, son of Mr and Mrs Martin Arkwright of Eccinswell, Hampshire, and Sophie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Jonny Harcourt of Fulham, London.

MR T. R. H. WILLS AND MISS E. A. WEBB

The engagement is announced between Thomas, elder son of Mr Christopher and Lady Katharine Wills of Litchfield Down, Hampshire, and Emma, younger daughter of Mr Michael Webb of Boxford, Berkshire, and Mrs Christopher Rouppel of Kintbury, Berkshire.

Deaths

BEALE John died peacefully at home on 18th January, aged 87. Much-loved husband to the late Yolande Beale and father to Gideon, Jonathan, Hannah and Rachel. The funeral service will be held at Herne Bay Evangelical Free Church, CT6 8LU, on Friday 7th February 2025 at 3pm.

BETTLE Roger, on 4th January 2025, aged 81. Younger son of the late Lawrence and Jessie Bettie.

CAMERON Mary Fleur, aged 90. Widow of Ian Cameron and mother of Alex, Tania, David and Clare, died peacefully at home on Sunday 2nd February 2025.

MACMILLAN Sally Elizabeth (née Mudge) died peacefully on 12th January 2025, aged 79 years. Beloved wife of Iain, devoted mother of Emily and Letitia. Adoring grandmother of Oliver, Polly, Honor and Miles. Funeral service at Kingsdown Crematorium, SN25 6SG, on Thursday 13th February 2025 at noon. Donations in memory of Sally to Alzheimer's Research UK: <https://sallymacmillan.muchloved.com>. Family flowers only. All inquiries to Jackson and Browning Funeral Service. Tel: 01367 244992.

MARKS Ann Morwenne (née Simpson) died peacefully on 29th January 2025, aged 91. Loved by all. Funeral service at St Mary's, Churchgate Street, Old Harlow, on Tuesday 18th February at 2pm.

NEWTON Matthew Fraser died peacefully on 24th January 2025, aged 76. Beloved husband of Jill and dearly loved father of Evie and Claire. Proud grandfather of Clemmie, Oscar, Archie, Louis and Ludo. Private family cremation. A service of thanksgiving on Thursday 20th March at 2.30pm at St Michael's Church, North Cadbury. Family flowers only, donations if desired to The Injured Jockeys Fund c/o Harold F. Miles, South Cadbury BA22 7ES.

NICHOLSON Sir Paul KCVO Kt died on 17th January 2025, aged 86. Adored husband of Sarah, father to Lucy and grandfather. Funeral service to be held in Durham Cathedral on Thursday 13th February at 2pm. Donations, if desired, to Point North, a community foundation serving the northeast of England. (pointnorth.org.uk)

SPRAGGE Caroline (née Baird) passed away on 14th January 2025, aged 89. Much-loved mother of Hannah, Clare and Katie. Loving Granny of Iona, Archie and Neve. She will be very sadly missed by all her family and many friends. The funeral service will be held at Isle of Wight Crematorium on 11th February at 10.30am.

STEWART Gillian (née Corley Smith) on 17th January 2025, aged 84. A beloved mother, sister, aunt, grandparent and friend to many. She will be greatly missed by all. Memorial service for Jill on 21st February at 2pm at Fotheringhay Church and afterwards at The Falcon.

VENNART Dr William (Bill). 04.10.1949 - 13.01.2025. With great sadness the family announces his passing after a long illness, aged 75. Graduated in Physics from Bristol (1971) and with a PhD in radiation damage, amino acids, Nottingham (1975). Lecturer in Medical Physics at Exeter University (1980-99). Researching nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) scanners. Pfizer, Sandwich (1999), became senior director, site head clinical technology. Honorary professor of physics and astronomy, Nottingham (2010). Visiting professor (medical physics) at Cardiff and Sheffield. Editor, British Institute of Radiology. Bill will be lovingly remembered by his wife, children and grandchildren. Donations to Pilgrims Hospice, Thanet, www.djlinotsmith.co.uk/ donate-in-memory/

WATERS General Sir John, late the Gloucestershire Regiment, died on 29th January 2025, aged 88. A loving husband, deeply loved by his wife, Hilary, father to Patrick, Harry and George and proud grandfather to Max, Hannah, Charlie, Harry, Polly, Amelia and Ollie. A funeral service will be held on Friday 21st February at St Andrew's Church, Colyton, Devon, at 2pm, with a memorial service at RMAS to follow in due course.

Thanksgiving Services

JOHNSTON Lieutenant General Sir Maurice. A service of thanksgiving will be held at St John's Church, Devizes SN10 1NP, on 5th March 2025 at 2.30pm. Kindly notify your intention to attend, or to book livestream, by email at Lucybyrom@icloud.com

General Announcements

MARRIAGE Nicholas Anthony Ide and Sheila Anne Jean Coburn are delighted to celebrate their marriage today, 4th February 2025, in Cooden, Bexhill-on-Sea, with family and close friends.

The simple way to place your Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register. Available 24 hours a day. Go to: newsukadvertising.co.uk



Legal Notices

SUMMONS

Eswatini - Hhohho District - Case 58/2025 Mphumuzi Sukuti - Plaintiff Gugu Sukuti (née Dlamini) - Defendant Duly served by edictal citation You are hereby summoned that within 3 Days after serving of this summons upon you, enter or cause to be entered with me at the address specified herein an appearance to answer the claims of lodging a divorce against you on grounds of desertion. Mngomezulu Attorneys Lot 2484 Tembelihle +268 7602 6626/ sabelo@smatlators.net

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 27(1) OF THE TRUSTEE ACT 1925 ICI Specialty Chemicals Pensions Fund ("the Fund")

This notice relates to former members of the Unilever Superannuation Fund and former members of the Williams Holdings Pension Plan who joined the ICI Specialty Chemicals Pension Fund (the Fund) in 1978, and any other members who joined the Fund after this date. Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925, that the Trustee is winding up the Fund. If you have already received a communication from the Trustee regarding this matter then you do not need to take any action as the Trustee already has details of your claims and entitlements. Any person who has not been contacted by the Trustee regarding the wind up of the Fund and believes that they have a claim against, or entitlement to a pension or any benefit from the Fund (or any of the former schemes listed above) is hereby required to send particulars in writing by 6 April 2025 of their claim or entitlement (together with full name, present address and date of birth) to: ICI Specialty Chemicals Pension Fund Lane Clark & Peacock LLP St Paul's Hill Winchester Hampshire SO22 5AB marked for the attention of Daniel Parsons. The Trustee will distribute the assets of the Fund among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to those persons of whose claims and entitlements they have notice and will not be liable to any other person. Issued on behalf of the Trustee of the Fund. 4 February 2025

Court Circular



Buckingham Palace

3rd February, 2025
The King spoke to The President of the Republic of Kenya via telephone this morning.

The Rt Hon Olukemi Badenoch MP (Leader of the Opposition) was received in audience by His Majesty.

The King this afternoon received

the Lord Browne of Madingley upon relinquishing his appointment as Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering Foundation and the Lord Vallance of Balham upon assuming the appointment.

Dr Hayaatun Sillem (Chief Executive Officer) was present.

The Lord Mandelson was received in audience by The King and kissed hands upon his appointment as His Majesty's Ambassador to the United States of America.

Mr Reinaldo Avila da Silva was also received by His Majesty.

Dame Judith Weir was received by The King upon relinquishing her appointment as Master of The King's Music.

St James's Palace

3rd February, 2025

The Duke of Edinburgh, accompanied by the British High Commissioner to the Republic of India (Her Excellency Ms Lindy Cameron) today carried out engagements in India.

His Royal Highness, Chairman, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, this afternoon visited the British School, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

The Duke of Edinburgh later called upon Mr Jagdeep Dhankhar (Vice President of the Republic of India).

His Royal Highness afterwards called upon Mr Dharmendra Pradhan (Union Minister of Education).

The Duke of Edinburgh, Chairman, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, this evening attended a Dinner at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Mansingh Road, New Delhi.

The Duchess of Edinburgh this afternoon departed from Heathrow Airport, London, for Nepal.

Mrs Angus Galletley and Captain George Hopkins are in attendance.

Appendix to Court Circular

3rd February, 2025

Notice is hereby given that in 2025 the date for observance of The King's Birthday at home and abroad will be Saturday, 14th June.

ONLY AVAILABLE TO BOOK WITH READER OFFERS LTD

ROL CRUISE 30 YEAR Anniversary

THE 5★ ALL-INCLUSIVE 2025 Beautiful Bordeaux EXCLUSIVE PRICE DROP

EXPERT LED
SHORE EXCURSIONS
*Included**

SAVINGS
OF UP TO 45%[±]

Exclusive
RIVER CRUISE PROMOTION
WILL END 8PM
11TH FEBRUARY 2025

ALL-INCLUSIVE
DRINKS, WI-FI &
GRATUITIES
*Included***

SCENIC[®]
LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS

10 NIGHTS DEPARTING 9TH APRIL, 13TH & 23RD MAY AND 9TH AUGUST 2025

Other dates are available, please call for more details

- Day 1 **Fly from London to Bordeaux, France**
Upon arrival, transfer to your 5★ *Scenic Space-Ship* for your luxurious 10 night all-inclusive river cruise (D)
- Day 2 **Bordeaux – Saint-Émilion, France**
Take in all of Saint-Émilion's beauty as well as exploring the underground catacombs of Saint-Émilion (B, L, D)
- Day 3 **Libourne – Fort Médoc, France**
★ **Wine Tasting** ★
★ **Freechoice**★: Enjoy a guided tour of Libourne. Alternatively, explore the exclusive estate of Château Siaurac by foot or bike with a wine tasting (B, L, D)
- Day 4 **Fort Médoc, France** ★ **Wine Tasting** ★
★ **Freechoice**★: Sample the region's finest at a local estate, or cycle to a local château for a wine tasting
★ **Enrich**★: Enjoy a classical concert at Château d'Agassac, one of the oldest winemaking establishments in the region. Wander through the Château and its gardens and soak in the ambience of this magnificent property before a string quartet performs classical masterpieces for your enjoyment (B, L, D)
- Day 5 **Cadillac, France**
Cruise the Garonne River into Cadillac (B, L, D)
- Day 6 **Cadillac, France** ★ **Wine Tasting** ★
★ **Freechoice**★: Venture into the Sauternes region for a delicious wine tasting at a prestigious Château, or cycle to the Grand Cru Classé estate of Château Mayne la Merci for a tasting. Visit Roquetaillade Castle, or visit Château Toulouse-Lautrec (B, L, D)
- Day 7 **Bordeaux, France**
★ **Freechoice**★: Shop with a Chef at a local food market or enjoy a guided tour of Bordeaux, or choose to cycle the historic regions of the city. Back on board, enjoy a tasting of fresh oysters delivered straight from the waters of Arcachon Bay
★ **Enrich**★: This evening, enjoy after-hours access to Les Bassins de Lumière, an impressive art installation (B, L, D)

- Day 8 **Bordeaux – Bourg, France**
★ **Freechoice**★: Journey to Arcachon and join a walking tour with a visit to local markets, or stay in Bordeaux and visit the Cité du Vin Museum (B, L, D)
- Day 9 **Bourg, France**
★ **Freechoice**★: Discover the Carriages Museum in Bourg Castle. Or, explore the town of Cognac before a tasting at the acclaimed property of Rémy Martin (B, L, D)
- Day 10 **Blaye – Bordeaux, France**
★ **Freechoice**★: Enjoy a guided walking tour, or a more active walk through the Citadel of Blaye. Or, explore the stunning fairytale Château de La Roche Courbon on a guided tour. Alternatively, join a 30km roundtrip cycle along the Captain's Road (B, L, D)
- Day 11 **Bordeaux, France**
Disembark and transfer to the airport for your return flight to London (B)

Itinerary is based on 9th August 2025 departure date. Meals are as stated:
B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner



What's Included

- 10 nights 5★ all-inclusive river cruising including:
 - **Three wine tasting experiences**
 - Personalise your trip with 24 included Scenic Freechoice activities*
 - **Two Scenic Enrich experiences** including after hours access to Les Bassins de Lumière and a private classical evening concert at Château d'Agassac – exclusive to Scenic
 - **COMPLIMENTARY** premium branded beverages all day, every day
 - Butler service
 - Mini-bar fully restocked daily, including snacks
 - Multiple dining options from casual to fine dining
 - All included gratuities
 - **COMPLIMENTARY** Wi-Fi**
 - Master French cookery in the exclusive on board cooking school, Scenic Culinaire
 - The freedom of e-Bikes
 - Return flights from London (regional flights may be available on request*) and overseas transfers
 - **PLUS**, book a Balcony Suite by 8pm 11th February 2025 and receive a **COMPLIMENTARY** Trio of French Wine*
- Earn up to **6,978 EXCLUSIVE** Cruise Miles* towards your next booking^{††}

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER OFFERS LTD SALE FARES FROM

SUITE	9 TH APR 2025	13 TH MAY 2025	23 RD MAY 2025	9 TH AUG 2025
Standard Suite	SOLD	SOLD	£2,899	SOLD
Balcony Suite	£3,149	£3,489	£3,489	£3,239

PAY IN FULL TO RECEIVE THIS SPECIAL OFFER

www.rolcruise.co.uk/times

TRAVEL WITH
CONFIDENCE

ABTA
ABTA No F9235

CALL ONE OF OUR
CRUISE SPECIALISTS
FREE ON

0808 239 9631
QUOTE OFFER REF 638143

WE ARE OPEN 7
DAYS A WEEK
FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot
★★★★★

Platinum Trusted
Service Award
2025
feefo

Full payment due at the time of booking to secure these fares. Water levels are subject to change therefore the itinerary may be amended or modified. Fares are based on two adults sharing, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. Dates may run in reverse. **Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. A flight credit is included and may incur an additional supplement. *Gift is based on one per booking, for UK mainland addresses only. †Savings are based on two adults sharing a Balcony Suite on 9th August 2025 departure, and relates to the cruise element only. ††May incur a supplement. *Tours are subject to change. 5★ relates to the cruise element only. Offer is not combinable with any other offer. ††Cruise Miles* T&Cs apply. Scenic T&Cs apply. E&OE.

Today A breezy day with rain and showers spreading east. Driest further southeast. Max 12C (54F), min -6C (21F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy, du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=halt, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, ss=sun, t=thunder
*previous day **data not available

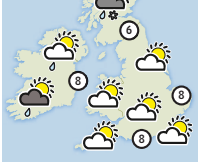
	Temp C	Rain mm	Sun hr*
midday yesterday			
Aberdeen	8	C	0.0 0.0
Aberporth	9	C	0.4 1.3
Anglesey	9	C	0.0 0.0
Aviemore	9	C	0.0 0.0
Barnstaple	10	PC	0.0 **
Bedford	7	C	0.0 **
Belfast	10	C	0.0 1.1
Birmingham	8	C	0.0 **
Bournemouth	10	D	0.0 7.8
Bridlington	7	S	0.0 **
Bristol	9	D	0.0 4.5
Cambridge	10	B	2.2 0.1
Cardiff	10	PC	0.0 0.1
Edinburgh	10	PC	0.0 0.2
Eskdalemuir	6	D	3.6 0.0
Glasgow	10	C	0.0 0.3
Hereford	11	PC	0.0 **
Hertsmere	9	PC	0.2 6.6
Ipswich	5	M	0.2 8.2
Isle of Man	10	M	0.2 0.0
Isle of Wight	8	D	0.4 **
Jersey	7	C	0.0 5.4
Kewstich	8	R	0.0 0.2
Kinloss	11	C	0.0 0.0
Leeds	7	S	0.0 **
Lerwick	8	C	10.2 0.0
Leuchars	9	C	0.0 0.0
Lincoln	8	C	0.0 6.6
Liverpool	10	PC	0.0 0.0
London	7	C	0.0 8.0
Lynham	8	C	0.2 8.1
Manchester	9	PC	0.0 1.1
Margate	8	S	0.2 8.7
Millford Haven	11	PC	1.0 **
Newcastle	9	S	0.0 **
Nottingham	8	C	0.0 6.4
Orkney	9	R	8.4 0.8
Oxford	7	C	0.2 **
Plymouth	11	C	0.0 **
Portland	10	M	0.0 **
Scilly, St Mary's	11	C	0.0 **
Shoreham	3	M	0.2 7.9
Shrewsbury	10	PC	0.0 2.3
Snowdonia	6	C	1.4 **
Southend	7	M	0.6 8.5
South Uist	9	C	10.8 **
Stornoway	10	R	6.6 3.0
Tiree	9	R	6.4 2.6
Whitehaven	6	D	0.6 0.0
Wick	10	R	0.2 **
Yeovilton	11	C	0.0 2.2

Five days ahead

Turning colder and mainly dry until the weekend. Overnight mist, fog and frost in places

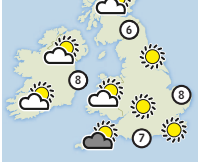
Tomorrow

A few showers in northern and western areas but mainly dry with sunny spells across England and Wales. Showers will fall as sleet and snow over the Scottish mountains.
Max 9C, min -5C



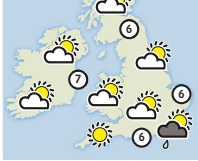
Thursday

Some fog patches may be slow to clear during the morning. Mainly dry with sunny spells, especially in eastern England.
Max 9C, min -8C



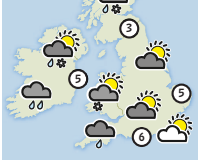
Friday

A frosty morning, especially in western areas. Most areas will remain dry and bright, although a few wintry showers may push into the southeast of England overnight.
Max 8C, min -6C



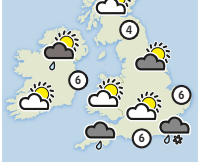
Saturday

A cloudier day in many areas, perhaps with outbreaks of rain and hill snow pushing in at times.
Max 7C, min -4C

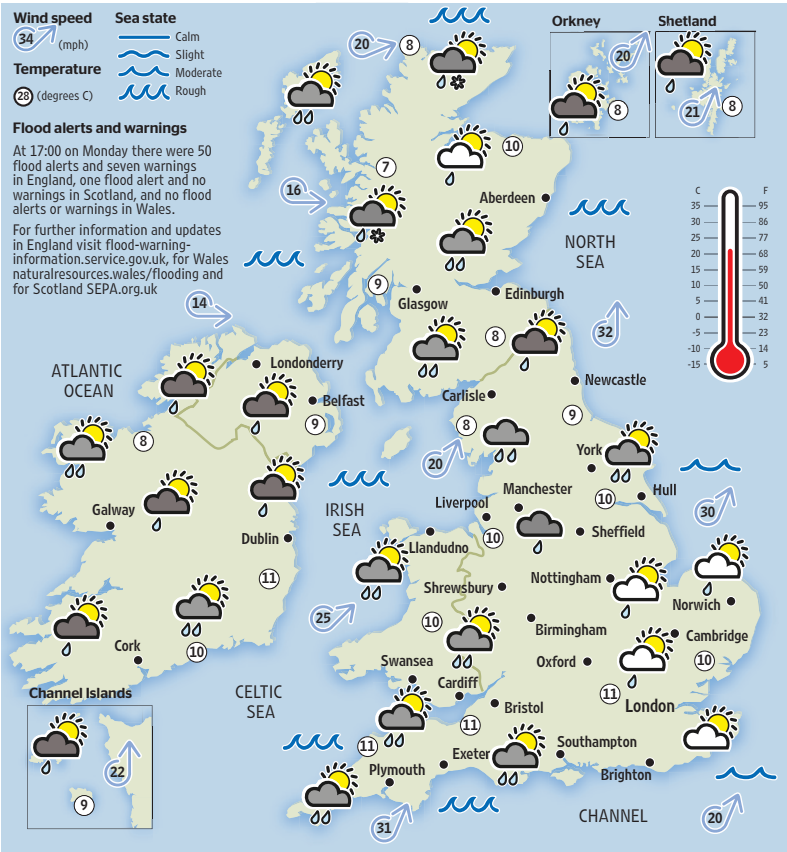


Sunday

Thicker cloud may lead to a few outbreaks of rain and sleet in places, especially further south.
Max 8C, min -3C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

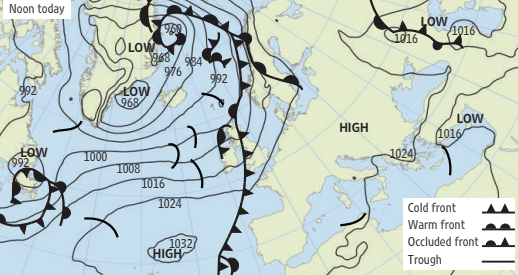


General situation: A breezy day with outbreaks of rain spreading east followed by scattered showers.
SE Eng, London, E Anglia: A mainly dry day with moderate southwesterly winds. Cloud amounts will increase with patchy rain arriving during the evening. Maximum 11C (52F), minimum 1C (34F).
SW Eng, Lake District, NW Eng, Wales, IoM, SW Scotland, Borders, Edinburgh and Dundee: Cloud will thicken from the west with rain turning persistent

for a time. This will clear followed by sunny spells and a few showers later. Fresh southwesterly winds. Maximum 12C (54F), minimum -2C (28F).
cen S Eng, Midlands, NE Eng, cen N Eng, E Eng: Initial sunny spells will be replaced by thicker cloud and outbreaks of rain spreading in from the west. Fresh southwesterly winds. Maximum 12C (54F), minimum 1C (34F).
NW Scotland, cen Highland, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, N Isles: A cloudy day with outbreaks of

showery rain turning wintry over high ground. Driest to the northeast of the mountains. Light to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 11C (52F), minimum -6C (21F).
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland, Argyll, Glasgow: Thick cloud and rain will clear eastwards during the morning followed by scattered showers. Some showers may turn heavy and blustery with the risk of hail. Gentle to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 11C (52F), minimum 0C (32F).

Tides			
Tidal predictions. Heights in metres			
Today		HT	HT
Aberdeen	05:22	3.9	17:26 4.2
Avonmouth	11:09	12.6	23:28 12.1
Belfast	02:57	3.2	15:12 3.6
Cardiff	10:56	11.7	23:14 11.2
Devonport	09:44	5.3	22:06 4.9
Dover	02:40	6.7	15:02 6.3
Dublin	03:22	3.8	15:40 4.0
Falmouth	09:05	4.9	21:25 4.5
Greenock	04:09	3.4	16:28 3.6
Harwich	03:16	3.9	15:57 3.7
Holyhead	02:03	5.2	14:22 5.5
Hull	10:16	7.0	22:26 7.4
Leith	06:36	5.2	18:44 5.3
Liverpool	02:50	8.8	15:10 9.1
London Bridge	05:32	7.0	18:04 6.6
Lowestoft	00:52	2.7	13:37 2.2
Millford Haven	10:14	6.7	22:34 6.3
Morecambe	03:02	8.8	15:22 9.2
Newhaven	02:53	6.6	15:11 6.3
Newquay	09:09	6.6	21:29 6.1
Oban	09:36	3.6	21:42 3.3
Penzance	08:38	5.3	20:59 4.9
Portsmouth	03:30	4.6	15:40 4.4
Shoreham	02:54	6.2	15:12 5.9
Southampton	02:51	4.5	14:44 4.3
Swansea	10:20	9.0	22:38 8.5
Tees	07:48	5.1	19:50 5.3
Weymouth	10:32	1.9	22:52 1.7



Synoptic situation

A cold front will spread east across the British Isles bringing thicker cloud and outbreaks of rain to most areas. This will be followed by the arrival of a colder and more unstable airmass which will bring scattered showers to Ireland and western Scotland by the afternoon. It will be mainly dry in the southeast of England until the cold front arrives later.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday
Warmest: Kinlochewe, 13.0C
Coldest: Santon Downham, Norfolk, -4.5C
Wettest: Harris Quindinish, Western Isles, 29.4mm
Sunniest: Manston, 8.7hrs
Sun and moon
Sun rises: 07:32
Sun sets: 16:55
Moon rises: 09:41
Moon sets: 01:18 Wed
First quarter: 5 February

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	17:13-07:29
Belfast	17:38-07:34
Birmingham	17:29-07:11
Cardiff	17:37-07:13
Exeter	17:41-07:13
Glasgow	17:27-07:32
Liverpool	17:30-07:19
London	17:25-07:01
Manchester	17:27-07:16
Newcastle	17:19-07:18
Norwich	17:16-06:59
Penzance	17:51-07:19
Sheffield	17:24-07:12

Weather Eye
Paul Simons



It sounds like a horror story — a voracious biting mosquito that lives in the London Underground and preys on the blood of unwary travellers. But if you travel on the Tube and find nasty irritating bites afterwards, there is a chance that this is the work of the aptly named *Culex pipiens molestus* mosquito. This creature, colloquially known as the London Underground mosquito, grew into a thoroughly annoying pest in the Second World War, when Londoners sheltering together during the Blitz found themselves being frequently bitten.

This particular breed of mosquito has a closely related cousin that lives above ground, and even though they look similar there are distinct behavioural differences. The above-ground mosquito cannot tolerate cold weather and hibernates in winter, and usually only bites birds. In contrast, the underground variety has no need to hibernate because the Tube network is warm and conducive to breeding all year round, with tunnels providing plenty of pools of stagnant water that the mosquitoes can lay their eggs in.

Without birds to feed on, the mosquitoes bite mammals instead, including humans, although fortunately they don't carry disease.

The *molestus* mosquito also thrives in sewers and in the summer of 2011 a horde invaded some of the older townhouses in Manhattan. People found them emerging from air vents into their homes, and the problem grew so bad that many people resorted to sleeping under mosquito nets at night.

It was thought that the *molestus* mosquito had evolved into a separate species in the London Underground tunnels, but the same species has since been found in underground systems in many other parts of the world, although how it spread so far remains a mystery.

Analysis of the genetics of the mosquitoes suggests they first adapted to environments above ground with the rise of agricultural civilisations, such as in ancient Egypt thousands of years ago, before turning to a life underground.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

WeatherQuest
weatherquest.co.uk

TIMES Travel Partner

Book now to receive triple on board credit. T&Cs apply*

QUEEN MARY 2'S Literature Festival at Sea 2025

Departure | December 8, 2025

Find yourself in literary heaven, surrounded by authors, journalists, historians, and fellow book lovers, on this seven-night sailing dedicated to the power of the pen. Curated by the programming team of The Times and Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival, this unique voyage celebrates the written word in its many forms.

Sailing on board Queen Mary 2 is the ultimate way to cross the Atlantic. You'll find an incredible sense of freedom from the space she offers. Whether you're in the mood for complete relaxation or something more active, you can find it on board. Immerse yourself in enthralling entertainment, indulge at the spa, or simply relax with a book in her vast library.

*Book between December 19, 2024 and February 17, 2025 to receive triple on board credit on selected 2025 & 2026 voyages between seven and 43 nights. Valid on voyages departing between April 13, 2025 and December 31, 2026. Offer excludes voyages 08104 - 0827A. Cunard fares shown are based on two adults sharing the lowest grade of stateroom available within the applicable stateroom type and are subject to availability. Fares for sole occupancy and supplementary fares are available on request. Programme of Literature Festival at Sea talks are included in your fare. Literature Festival at Sea workshops will be at an additional charge and are available to book on board. Other activities may incur an additional charge. Speakers and on board activities are subject to change. Cover charge applies for alternative dining options. Complimentary money to spend on board applies to new Cunard Fare bookings only. The Cunard Fare benefit of on board credit must be selected to qualify rather than car parking/return coach travel. On board credit can only be spent on board and amounts vary by stateroom grade. Applicable to new bookings only. For full terms and conditions visit luxurycruises.com 2025, 2026 & 2027 - Cunard UK. Cunard reserves the right to change the format and any included elements of the in-venue event. This offer is available to UK residents only. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Cunard. ABTA 18764 ATOL 6294 protected, a company wholly independent of News UK. All information is correct at the time of going to print.

Confirmed Speaker
MANY MORE NAMES TO BE ANNOUNCED

Richard Coles
Writer, broadcaster and an Anglican priest, who co-presented Saturday Live on BBC Radio 4 for 11 years and appears on QI. Have I Got News For You, and Would I Lie To You? He writes regularly for the Sunday Times, and is the author of half a dozen books.

SEVEN NIGHTS FROM*
INSIDE: £1,889 pp
BALCONY: £2,139 pp
GRILL SUITE: £5,239 pp

CALL TODAY ON
0808 304 2724
thetimes.com/litfest2025
QUOTE TIMES*

Sport

Selfies, Sachin and the £20k street cricketer

In his latest dispatch from England's tour to India, **Elgan Alderman** embraces the chaos of scores of games at once

India offers culture shocks within culture shocks. From Calcutta and Chennai, Rajkot was a step up in rusticity. A freckled Welshman is rarely seen walking through the streets, judging by perplexed looks, and there were a handful of polite selfie requests outside the stadium. Out of novelty, I presume.

A short flight from Rajkot International Airport (which made Inverness look like Heathrow) took me to Pune. Noticeably different. Here the rickshaws accept contactless payment by app, unlike in the previous three cities, and this is where Ed Sheeran began the Indian leg of his +---+ tour (did no one teach him Bodmas?).

Pune's ground is removed from the cosmopolitan business of the city, in the village of Gahunje. It is an hour's drive on paper, although the jams of cars, bikes and pedestrians along small, country lanes — one of which had an enticing snooker club by the side — turned it into two. En route, there are opportunities galore to stop on a highway to buy India jerseys, laid out along the hard shoulder.

On my first night in Rajkot, I had turned on Star Sports for the opening night of the Indian Street Premier League (ISPL): ten-over, tennis-ball cricket ("from street to stadium" is the tagline) without gloves and pads, and with Sachin Tendulkar as its figurehead.

ISPL2 began on January 26, Republic Day, at Thane's Dadoji Konddev Stadium, northeast of Mumbai. Among the rule variations are the tape-ball

over, where swing is prodigious, and the toss is decided by tip-top, in which the captains walk heel-to-toe towards each other and the winner is the one who steps on the other's foot.

The ISPL reports that more than three million prospects registered, and after trials across the country 350 were put forward for auction by six franchises owned by Bollywood stars. Abhishek Kumar Dalhor, who has almost 500,000 followers on Instagram, went to Majhi Mumbai for £20,000. Devid Gogoi, the Chennai Singams bowler, has made a living from tennis-ball cricket for about ten years. "Until ISPL's arrival, tennis-ball cricketers were taken lightly," he said last month. "ISPL has changed all that, we are now regarded as professional sportspersons." There are plans for expansion in the Middle East.

A week later, I move from stadium to street. It is Sunday morning in SoBo (southern Mumbai), nine hours before India and England meet at the Wankhede Stadium. This is an affluent area with Unesco World Heritage status for its Victorian gothic and art deco ensembles. "South Bombay is, for me, the heart of cricket," Mihir Bose, chronicler of the Indian game, told me last month.

In the course of a three-hour circuit of 12,000 steps, I visit baked-red bucolia with mythical status: the maidans and gymkhanas, the stadiums where India takes form, and Cooperage Football Ground.

To the Oval Maidan. Surrounded by the fabulous architecture of the High Court of Bombay and Rajabai Clock Tower, there must be thousands playing cricket here. It has to be seen to be understood.

At the northern end is a red-ball game in whites with space to breathe. As you work south, the density ramps up. Another red-ball fixture, only now the fielding space is encroached by a row of smaller games. Thereafter come



The Oval Maidan is the place to go in Mumbai to play or watch cricket, with scores of games taking place at the same time

scores of tennis-ball matches; it is impossible to discern who is fielding for who, standing and chasing through the arenas of others. One could forgive a Mumbai fielder for being bored by the IPL. Where's the fun in monitoring one ball?

A short amble north is Cross Maidan, where there are eight matches — red balls, white clothes, not much encroaching—for clubs such as Youths Own Union and Sunder, each with a little pavilion on the perimeter.

Over the road to the east is Bombay Gymkhana and a pitch for two lucky sides who have no alternative fixtures to contend with for space. This is where England played their first Test in India, in December 1933 (at the time the only Indians allowed in the club were servants, a rule that had to be waived for

CK Nayudu, Lala Amarnath et al). On the other side of the path are yet more matches on the Azad Maidan.

Brabourne Stadium, headquarters of the Cricket Club of India (CCI), took the Gymkhana's place as Mumbai's premier venue, hosting England in 1951. Last week this was the site of another franchise competition: the inaugural edition of the World Pickleball League. Bose told me: "The story goes that Frank Worrell, when asked what is your favourite cricket ground, said: 'It's the CCI, because I can be in my dressing gown till I'm asked to bat, and then I can just take off my dressing gown and put on my pads and walk down on to the cricket field.'"

To approach Brabourne from the north, I walk down Marine Drive, the promenade overlooking Back Bay.

Along here are three neighbouring gymkhanas: Parsee, Islam and P.J. Hindu. These clubs used to contest the Bombay Quadrangular against the Europeans.

The Parsees were the first community to thrive at cricket, touring Britain in 1886 and 1888, but not since Farokh Engineer has a Parsee played in men's Tests for India. The issue inspired a recent documentary called *Four on Eleven: The Fading Glory of Parsi Cricket*, a reference to the quartet who were in India's XI in the early 1960s.

When I walk through the gates of a club that will celebrate its 140th anniversary on February 25, there is work being done on the facilities and no match taking place. Rishi Sunak has been here for a photo opp, but I missed him.

Manchester Originals sell 70% stake

CONTINUED FROM BACK

£295 million. The sequential nature of the auction process meant that RPSG could go back in for those other franchises of interest, in this case Manchester Originals.

It is understood that RPSG beat two other IPL franchises, Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore, to win Manchester. Having lost out for Lord's, Goenka, 64, has secured a majority stake in an attractive franchise at a much lower cost.

Lancashire have long signalled their desire to work with an IPL team but the decision to sell some of their gifted 51 per cent stake in the Hundred franchise comes as a surprise. They are the first host venue to do so, having indicated previously that they would most likely keep their stake, as, so

far, Lord's, the Oval, Cardiff and Birmingham have done.

Lancashire's ground development at Old Trafford has come at considerable cost, and it may be that the club felt it prudent to pay down some debt now. Manchester became the third-most valuable franchise after Lord's and the Oval, benefiting from the control premium that RPSG was prepared to pay and the attractiveness of Manchester as a sporting city.

Manchester's valuation of about £110 million means that five franchises

have now been valued at a total of £685 million, with Leeds, Nottingham and Southampton to follow this week. The sums raised, for the 49 per cent sold of Lord's, Oval, Cardiff and Birmingham, along with Manchester's 70 per cent, amount to about £365 million, which will be split between the recreational game, the 18 first-class counties and MCC.

Goenka, the founder of RPSG, becomes the second Indian investor, after the Ambani family, who bought a 49 per cent stake in the Oval franchise on Thursday, to buy a stake in the Hundred.

With the Sun group, the owner of the Sunrisers Hyderabad, thought to be interested in Yorkshire, and the GMR group well placed to buy Southampton, having already bought Hampshire last year, RPSG will not be the last.



Goenka made an unsuccessful bid for Lord's franchise

Change of plan for Ahmed as he remains for ODI series

Elgan Alderman

Rehan Ahmed will remain with the England squad for the three-match ODI series against India, which begins in Nagpur on Thursday.

Ahmed was the only member of the 15-man squad who did not feature in the five T20s and was expected to return home, with Joe Root taking his place.

"He's learning so much from Adil Rashid and they get on so well which is good for his development," Brendon McCullum, the head coach, said. "Such a great opportunity and he's a wonderful team man. He might get a chance in one of those games too."

England lost the first series 4-1

and will now switch to the 50-over format before the Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

Jamie Smith is expected to be available for the third ODI in India, having sat out the past few matches because of a tight calf. As part of the rotation of his pace attack, McCullum said Saqib Mahmood would play in Nagpur and Jofra Archer, who was ever present in the T20s, would play two of the three ODIs.

"I know the scoreline reads 4-1 and it's disappointing to lose the series but Rome wasn't built in a day," McCullum added. "I think we've seen a pretty clear gameplan of how we want to play."

"Ultimately I think we'll win more games than we lose."

Pebble Beach glory a good omen for McIlroy

Golf

Tom Kershaw

After a season memorable for its squandered chances, Rory McIlroy streaked to a two-shot victory in magnificent style at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

It is always the majors that will inevitably define the Northern Irishman's year, but a maiden win at one of golf's most iconic venues — McIlroy's 27th on the PGA Tour — provided plenty of positive omens as the 35-year-old fended off a trio of Ryder Cup teammates in the form of Shane Lowry, Justin Rose and Sepp Straka.

McIlroy had started the final round one shot adrift of the Austrian but surged clear with two birdies after the turn before an emphatic eagle at the 14th propelled him into a four-shot lead with as many holes to play. A fabulous approach at the 15th extinguished any

prospect of calamity and meant the world No 3 was able to adopt a safety-first approach at the signature closing hole, with a six-under-par round of 66 leaving him just one shot shy of the tournament record.

"Some people would argue the golf courses I have won at are not up to a Pebble Beach or an Augusta, so to win at one of the cathedrals of golf is really, really cool," McIlroy said.

"With it being Pebble Beach, I had to put that to the back of my mind and just shoot a score, which I was able to, but it was really cool to have that walk up 18 and sort of take it all in.

"I said to Harry [Diamond, his caddie] walking up the last, 'Start as you mean to go on.' To get this win, this early, it means a great deal and hopefully I can just keep the momentum going."

A sloppy front nine ultimately left Lowry too late to recover but



The win at Pebble Beach was McIlroy's 27th career victory on the PGA Tour

a closing birdie ensured the Irishman of solo second in the \$20 million (about £16 million) event, while Rose finished tied for third after a dramatic chip-in eagle at the last that will bolster his chances of making a seventh appearance for Team Europe in September, by which time he will be 45.

Luke Donald was among the first to embrace McIlroy outside the recorder's hut and Europe's captain will have reaped great encouragement from watching a quarter of his victorious team in Rome vying for glory.

After a missed birdie putt from just four feet at the sixth, McIlroy made amends and took the outright lead at the picturesque short par-three 7th, but a poor chip at the 8th left him tied with Straka at the turn.

McIlroy restored his advantage at the 10th with a fine approach from the fairway bunker and another birdie at the 12th opened up a two-shot lead as

Straka, Rose and Tom Kim erred. Lowry clawed himself back into the reckoning with three birdies in four holes, but McIlroy's 339-yard drive at the 14th cut the corner of the par five and left him just 200 yards for his second, and a 26ft eagle putt was in effect the death knell.

"I've hit three really good tee shots on 14," McIlroy said. "The previous two times I didn't take advantage of them, and I was determined to today. I had a perfect seven-iron after that drive. To hole a putt like that is a bit of a bonus but that really gave me a cushion to play the last four holes."

Lowry's birdie at the 16th drew him to within three, but a great chance from eight feet at the 17th slipped by. All that was left then was for McIlroy to avoid the water that lines the last. He sensibly opted for an iron off the tee and has now won an event on the PGA Tour for an eighth season in succession.

Taunton Rob Wright

1.25 Jurancon 3.30 Camino Road
1.55 Golden Move 4.05 Diesel Line
2.25 Mount Gay Run 4.04 Grenadier Jed
2.55 Anno Power

Going: soft, good to soft in places
Racing TV

1.25 Novices' Hurdle (€4,955: 2m 3f) (12)

1 -2121 JURANCON 20 (T) D Pipe 6-12-20 J Tudor
2 -10/51 GO WEST 44 P Nicholls 7-11-9 H Cobden
3 -4-6 CORNISH COMEDY 30 (H) R L Llewellyn 5-11-2 L Harrison
4 -00/3 DRUG ALACE 75 (C) P Nicholls 5-11-2 J Tibbitts (5)
5 -32/45 FORTUNATE FELLA 55 P Nicholls 5-11-2 B Bromley (5)
6 -00/6 HECTOR'S HOPE 48-4 Down 7-11-2 B Carver
7 -03123 JAJALETEMPS 30 (HBF) D Pipe 6-11-2 D Noonan
8 -5/33 NOT SO WOOLLY 46 J Tizzard 6-11-2 B J Powell
9 -PF123 SEYMOURJOHN 17 D Pipe 6-11-2 T Bellamy
10 -46/40 SUPER SAINT 49 P Nicholls 6-11-2 L Williams
11 -5 THE MAGUS 55 E Williams 5-11-2 C Ring
12 -6 WISTMANS PRINCE 286 Kerry Lee 5-11-2 R Patrick
14-15 Jurancon, 5-2 Not So Woolly, 10-1 Jajaletemp, 16-1 Seymourjohn, 25-1 Dingo Magic, Super Saint, The Magus, Fortune Fella, Rob Wright's choice: Jurancon won at Newbury; this step up in trip will suit Dangers: Not So Woolly, Jajaletemp

1.55 Handicap Hurdle (€5,545: 2m 10-4yd) (14)

1 -21/1-1 MANUELITO 199 (D) P Hobbs & J White 5-12-1 Sean Houlihan
2 -14/214 NINTH LOCH 17 (H,D) Harry Derham 6-12-4 Miss Victoria Maltard (5)
3 -23FF/1 THE WIDOW MAKER 706 (W,H,C,D) J Tizzard 11-12-4 H Kimber
4 -P/320 BLACK HAWK EAGLE 45 (D) Kerry Lee 7-12-4 L Harrison
5 -60260 LATIN VESPE 19 (P,D) Anthony Charnock 5-11-12 C Pritchard (5)
6 -2/21 SAINT ANAPOLINO 22 P Hobbs & J White 6-11-12 M G Nolan
7 -12402 MOSTLY SUNNY 118 (D) D Skelton 6-11-11 T Durrell (3)
8 -2/203 ADMIRALTY HOUSE 45 (H,D) A King 6-11-11 P Armon (3)
9 -13 CAMPAIGN TRAIL 39 (T,BF) K Bailey & M Nicholls 7-11-12 T Bellamy
10 -33/10 GOLDEN MOVE 46 (P) Nicholls 5-11-9 H Cobden
11 -33/10 INTERPRET SUD 61 (H,T,D) F O'Brien 7-11-8 J Burke
12 -F/320 WALK ON HIGH 40 (T) Fry 8-11-6 B Carver
13 -5/26 WASTHART 372 (H,T) Kerry Lee 7-11-6 R Patrick
14 -60214 PHOENIX REISEN 36 (P,D) J Scott 8-10-9 R Dingle
4-1 Saint Anapolino, 6-1 Manuelito, Campaign Trail, 13-2 Black Hawk Eagle, 12-1 Admiralty House, Golden Move, Mostly Sunny, 14-1 others.
Wright choice: Golden Move has been given a break since a poor run at Ascot Dangers: Campaign Trail, Interpret Sud

2.25 Handicap Chase (€8,714: 2m 7f) (9)

1 P/3-5P ISAAC DES OBEAUX 52 P Nicholls 7-11-9 H Cobden
2 -41U/2 PIMLICO POINT 276 (T,BF) Kerry Lee 8-12-4 R Patrick
3 -F02U STORMY FLIGHT 18 (P) D Scott 11-11-8 L Williams
4 -01/31 THE DOYEN CHEF 60 A King 8-11-8 T Bellamy
5 -1013H INVESTMENT MANAGER 47 (T) J Tizzard 9-11-7 B J Powell
6 -51/46 JUPITER ALLEN 47 (P) Mrs J Williams 6-11-4 D Noonan
7 -3/405 FIRST LORD DE CUET 19 (B) D Pipe 11-10-13 C O'Farrell
8 -45/34 MOUNT GAY RUN 34 K Burke 7-10-11 J A Anderson (3)
9 -21/PP CASTLE DARAGH 97 (P) D Pipe 8-10-8 J Tudor
9-4 Pimlico Point, 11-4 The Doyen Chief, 6-1 Mount Gay Run, 8-1 Isaac Des Obeaux, Jupiter Allen, 12-1 Investment Manager, 14-1 others.
Wright choice: Mount Gay Run can improve for a switch to fences Dangers: The Doyen Chief, Investment Manager

2.55 Mares' Novices' Hurdle (€7,134: 2m 10-4yd) (11)

1 -31110 TOUR OVALIE 18 (D) E Williams 6-11-12 Isabel Williams (3)
2 -211-1 ANNO POWER 86 (H,D) H Fry 6-11-8 J Burke
3 -5/215 BARBAROOL 16 (D) Harry Derham 5-11-8 Paul O'Brien
4 -DAWNY'S DESIRE R Walford 5-11-2 H Kimber
5 -56 DON'T TELL ROSIE 36 (H) J Scott 5-11-2 B Carver
6 -3/PP0 DORSET LADY 20 (T) G Brown 8-11-2 R McLenon
7 -PF/PP JANEPRICESLESS 27 (T) Ella Pickard 9-11-2 B Godfrey
8 -0/2-4 VIVA VALENTINA 33 D Skelton 7-11-2 T Durrell (3)
9 -P/P06 WHATMAKES HONEY B 19 (T) H Brown 6-11-2 D Noonan
10 -L/NOUBILLABLE K Bishop 4-10-4 Sean Houlihan
11 -ORGANIC F128 N Mulholland 4-10-4 C O'Farrell
5-4 Anno Power, 7-4 Tour Ovalie, 5-1 Organic, 10-1 Barboroool, 20-1 Viva Valentina, Dawn's Desire, 33-1 L'Unbuable, 66-1 Don't Tell Rosie.
Wright choice: Anno Power can build on a winning debut over hurdles at Sandown Dangers: Tour Ovalie, Barboroool

3.30 Novices' Handicap Chase (€5,439: 2m 2f) (12)

1 -50111 CAMINO ROCIO 49 (V) J & S Best 7-12-0 J Tudor
2 -0/P32 LADY PRETENDER 38 (BF) V Williams 6-11-10 N Fox (3)
3 -F/000 SIAM PAK 19 (H,T) J Tizzard 6-11-9 B J Powell
4 -6P/25U TIME TO DAZZLE 12-5 Davies 7-11-6 J Turner (5)
5 -26/00 STAR TURIN 15 (T) P & M Bowen 5-11-2 S Fendlen (5)
6 -30/034 MUTLEY CREW 34 R Walford 9-10-13 H Kimber
7 -7/006 SHEKA SUPREME 34 G Harris 7-10-12 C Ring
8 -0/555 PALAWAN DU MAZET 46 (B) A Jones 6-10-7 P Armon (3)
9 -4P/FF EL ROZANO 666 Katy Price 8-10-7 Shane Quinn (5)
10 -00/0 BALYELLY 34 (W,T,F) Mies & Bishop 7-10-2 J Best
11 -50/300 SEVENFOUS 36 C J Gray 8-10-2 Sean Houlihan
12 -PP/PS FOC WALLACE 27 (T) Ella Pickard 7-10-2 B Godfrey
6-4 Camino Rocio, 2-1 Lady Pretender, 10-1 Mutley Crew, Palawan Du Mazet, Siam Pak, 12-1 El Rojo Grand, 25-1 Ballyolly, Sheka Supreme.
Wright choice: Camino Rocio has won all three starts since switching trainer Dangers: Lady Pretender, Mutley Crew

4.05 Handicap Hurdle (€4,753: 2m 3f) (12)

1 -P164 ACTIVIST 20 (B,C,D) D Pipe 6-12-0 J Tudor
2 -6/600 CHANKAYA 20 N Mulholland 7-11-12 R McLenon
3 -1/005 CANYAN 9 (P,C,D) T Vaughan 8-11-11 A Johns
4 -23/16 OUR DYLAN 24 (D) K Woolcott 8-11-10 Mr J Newman (5)
5 -4/6-ZUCYAN 223 (T) F O'Brien 8-11-8 N Slater (3)
6 -6/350 JUST GO FOR IT 17 (T,C,D) K Scott 12-11-4 Sean Houlihan
7 -632P/ GALPADRE 371 (H,BF) W Greaves 9-11-3 Paul O'Brien
8 -40/04 RODNEY 126 (T) Kerry Lee 6-10-12 R Patrick
9 -0/04 TOME TIGLE 69 E Williams 5-10-10 A Wedge
10 -0/002 DIAGLE 17 J Scott 7-10-9 L Williams
11 -0/46P MOONLIGHT ARTIST 34 (P) J Tizzard 7-10-7 B J Powell
12 -P00 ALDERLEY CHARLIE 27 (P) G Pandey 5-10-8 B Poste
5-2 Diesel Line, 4-1 Activist, 8-1 Moonlight Artist, Our Dylan, 10-1 Zucyuan, Gallopade, Chankaya, 12-1 Just Go For It.
Wright choice: Diesel Line was a good second at Chestnut on his first try at this trip Dangers: Activist, Chankaya

4.40 Handicap Hurdle (€4,753: 2m 3f) (12)

1 -53332 TWO TO TANGO 36 E Lavelle 7-12-0 H Cobden
2 -P4322 TED'S FRIEND 34 (T) F O'Brien 9-11-12 M Kendrick
3 -10/63 STATE OF FAME 17 (T,V) T Lacey 9-11-10 C Hies (7)
4 -P005 KING OF BRAZIL 61 (T) Katy Price 8-11-10 Shane Quinn (3)
5 -23050 IMPECUNIOUS 54 Down 6-11-7 B Carver
6 -2/2/23 DRAUGH ON RUBY 24 (T) J Scott 8-11-3 R Dingle
7 -04/00 GET THESEY 79 (W) N Hawke 6-10-12 D Noonan
8 -46/00 LUCKY DRAW 15 (H) D Bourne 8-10-11 C Ring
9 -26/45 SENOR DIAZ 273 Seamus Mullins 6-10-10 M G Nolan
10 -2/00P KILPAT 36 (P,C,D) D Pipe 7-10-7 J Tudor
11 -3/005 GRENADEIR JED 19 R Walford 5-10-5 H Kimber
12 -5P/3P JOKER JACK 35 Claire Hitch 6-10-2 J Best
9-2 Two To Tango, 7-2 State Of Fame, 9-1 Ted's Friend, 5-1 Drash On Ruby, 14-1 Getuptheyay, Grenadier Jed, 16-1 Senor Diaz, 20-1 others.
Wright choice: Grenadier Jed has been given the his handicap debut Dangers: Drash On Ruby, Ted's Friend

Market Rasen Rob Wright

1.10 Jingle Jangle Jet 3.10 Court Ciano
1.40 Belliano 3.45 Heard That (nap)
2.10 Emotional Roller 4.20 Shotgun Shirley
2.40 Morandi Second

Going: good to soft, soft in places
Racing TV

1.10 Conditional Jockeys' Novices' Handicap Hurdle (€3,961: 2m 5f) (7)

1 -4503 AMI BONDHU 48 N Gifford 6-12-0 Tabitha Worsley
2 -3540 SCOTTISH KING 35 R Armon 9-11-11 Charlie Price
3 -60/10 HENRYSSEROTERACK 46 O Murphy 6-11-6 L Stones
4 -06652 JINGLE JANGLE JET 40 (P) R Kirby 7-11-3 J Williamson
5 -00033 GMS PRINCE 10 (T) Sarah Hollinshead 10-11-2 J Hogan
6 -50/PP SEAHOUSES 61 F Brennan 5-10-11 Isabelle Ryder (7)
7 -P/00P OUR JESSE BOY 53 (P) O Greenall & J Guerrero 6-10-11 T Wynne (3)
Evens Henrysbrotherjack, 10-3 Gms Prince, 4-1 Jingle Jangle Jet, 10-1 Ami Bondhu, 12-1 Our Jesse Boy, 25-1 Scottish King, 50-1 Seahouses.

1.40 Novices' Hurdle (€4,225: 2m 5f) (5)

1 -1/21 BELLIANO 46 P Nicholls 6-11-8 F Gilling (3)
2 -30/21 FM A LUMBERJACK 54 (D) A King 6-11-8 T Cannon
3 -2/55 SILVER THORN 34 L Lavelle 6-11-8 B R Jones
4 -P/2-1 ESPOIR DES FORGES 17 Mrs M Rowley 7-11-2 C Deutsch
5 -12/3 FRISBY 38 (P) O'Neill 7-11-2 H Brooke
6-4 Mm A Lumberjack, 13-8 Belliano, 5-1 Silver Thorn, 10-1 Espoir Des Forges, 12-1 Frisby.

2.10 Novices' Handicap Chase (€4,225: 3m) (10)

1 -6/5P4 DARK MIX 18 Mrs P Sly 6-12-0 C J Todd
2 -12/55 SOCIALISER 34 (T) J Snowden 9-11-13 G Sheehan
3 -F/000 SOLDIER DAND 20 L Morgan 7-11-6 H Reed
4 -4/30 CHECK THE SCORE 54 (P) F O'Brien 6-11-3 J Hogan (3)
5 -245P1 ASA 40 (P,C,D) P Kirby 6-11-4 J Williamson (3)
6 -46/40 AN CAILIN CUINN 49 (T) Miss H Knight 7-11-4 T Cannon
7 -22P51 EMOTIONAL ROLLER 13 J Parkinson & S Smith 7-11-3 D McMenamin
8 -P4/34 GAVROCHE D'ALLIER 38 (BF) O Murphy 9-10-13 B Sheehan
9 -06/5 LADY PACIFICO 40 (P,T) George Howell 7-10-2 Tabitha Worsley (3)
10 -26150 HALFWAY HOUSE LAD 38 (M) M Barnes 6-10-7 Charlie Price (3)
7-4 Emotional Roller, 11-4 Asa, 15-2 Gavroche D'Allier, 10-1 Socialiser, Dark Mix, Check The Score, 14-1 An Cailin Cuinn, 25-1 others.

2.40 Handicap Hurdle (€4,489: 2m 1f) (10)

1 -0F463 VOOK DE BOCELLI 20 Miss H Knight 5-12-0 B Hughes
2 -52/1- LOOKFORARAINBOW 640 (T) Sarah Hollinshead 12-12-0 Tabitha Worsley (3)
3 -45000 CAWTHORNE BANKER 19 J & A O'Neill 7-11-11 Junio O'Neill Jr
4 -1/40 JIE VIENS DU LARGE 61 E Edmunds 6-11-10 Claran Gettings
5 -7/0835 LADY BABS 9 (P) A Croom 11-11-6 Conor Rabbit (5)
6 -0/463 MORANDI SECOND 82 (B,T) P Neville 6-11-5 H Brooke
7 -B34 ADAPY FOREVER 67 (W,B,T) A King 4-11-2 T Cannon
8 -000 TIGERS MOON 39 T Ellis 5-10-13 Mr J Andrews (3)
9 -0015 TREASURED COMPANY 40 (T) J Parkinson & S Smith 9-10-12 D McMenamin
10 -02/45 ROCK ON TOMMY 57 (B,T) O Murphy 10-10-9 S Bowen
3-1 Morandi Second, 9-2 Treasured Company, 5-1 Vioix De Bocelli, 6-1 Adapy Forever, Rock On Tommy, 12-1 Jie Viens Du Large, Lady Babs, Lookforarainbow.

Blinkered first time: Market Rasen 2.40 Adapy Forever, 3.10 Bridge North.

3.10 Handicap Hurdle (€5,809: 2m 7f) (8)

1 -3U/46 BRIDGE NORTH 37 (B) H Daly 9-12-0 S Twiston-Davies
2 -P/2P BENASSI 35 (P) O Murphy 8-12-0 S Bowen
3 -54/21 COURT CIANO 34 (D) S Edmunds 7-11-12 Claran Gettings
4 -P/3P BASS ROCK 39 (P,T) G Nicholls 9-11-9 Miss Olive Nicholls (7)
5 -P5562 HARDY FELLA 19 (O) E Lavelle 8-11-4 B R Jones
6 -4564 VELASCO 52 (W,P,T,D) S Corbett 9-11-5 N Moscrop
7 -P34P2 RIALANNAH 11 (P) J Parkinson & S Smith 6-11-2 G Sheehan
8 -32/0F BARRANCE 35 (D) O Murphy 10-11-1 J Bryan
11-8 Court Ciano, 7-2 Hardy Fella, 11-2 Rialannah, 13-2 Benassi, 12-1 others.

3.45 Handicap Chase (€6,337: 3m) (8)

1 -30/54 TANGANYIKA 51 (BF) V Williams 7-12-1 C Deutsch
2 -5314P UNIVERSAL FOLLY 58 (D) W Collier 10-12-0 S Cotherd
3 -1324P PEELJAYBEE 18 (D) P & M Bowen 9-11-11 J Bowen
4 -30/36 YES DAY 63 (BF) J & A O'Neill 7-11-10 Junio O'Neill Jr
5 -5/502 CONETTO 40 (P,T,D) O Greenall & J Guerrero 8-11-8 Brooke
6 -P151 HEARD THAT 33 (T) O Murphy 6-11-2 S Bowen
7 -P535 HIGH MOON 34 (P) R Menzies 10-11-5 C Maggs (5)
8 -53254 JESSIE LIGHTFOOT 35 (T,D) Henry O'Flynn 11-10-3 Miss Imogen Mathias (3)
9-4 Heard That, 7-2 Peeljaybee, 11-2 Tanganyika, 7-1 Yes Day, 8-1 others.

4.20 NH Flat Race (€2,178: 2m 1f) (10)

1 -131 LADY KLICK 40 (D) D Skelton 5-11-9 H Skelton
2 -BABY THYME A King 5-11-2 T Cannon
3 -0 CRYSTAL DYES 55 (T) B Pauling 5-11-2 B R Jones
4 -444-4 GEM ON BABE 269 F O'Brien 6-11-12 Fern O'Brien (7)
5 -6 KARLITA DESBOIS 35 Mrs M Rowley 5-11-2 C Deutsch
6 -2 LA ZOUBIDA 40 N Richards 5-11-2 Sean Quinn
7 -5 SHARP GLANCE 42 A King 5-11-2 Doubled
8 -0 SURE TO PLEASE 62 E Williams 5-11-2 E Collier (5)
9 -0 PEPPER CUNCE 62 H Daly 4-10-4 S Twiston-Davies
10 -SHOTGUN SHIRLEY L Wadhams 4-10-4 G Sheehan
5-2 Lady Klick, 3-1 La Zoubida, 9-2 Baby Thyme, 6-1 others.

Newcastle Rob Wright

4.30 Midnight Lion 6.30 One Horse Town
5.00 Conquest Of Power 7.00 Dark Kestrel
5.30 Tasever 7.30 Impeach
6.00 Tomorrow Day (nb)

Going: standard Sky Sports Racing
Draw: no advantage

4.30 Handicap (€4,972: 2m) (6)

1 (6) 34-16 DREAMS ADOZEN 18 (V,C,D) C Johnston 5-10-0 J Hart
2 (5) 3-114 BURNING LION 16 (C,D) G Hughes 5-12 P Mulrennan
3 (4) 47-6 ROYAL DESIRE 13 (B) H Morris 5-9-9 D Nolan
4 (1) 66-3 SCOTLAND THE BRAVE 112 (T) Davidson 4-9-9 Scott
5 (2) 66-4 SAXON STARY 29 F Ellison 5-8-13 B Robinson
6 (3) 30-53 ZIVANYIA 13 (B,T,D) H Palmer 5-8-11 H Doyle
15-8 Midnight Lion, 9-4 Dreams Adozen, 5-1 Zivanyia, 6-1 others.

5.00 Handicap (€3,410: 6f) (12)

1 (4) 5-311 TIME PATROL 1 (P,C,D) A Carroll 5-9-13(50) Mally Gunn (7)
2 (7) 7-5656 SPARTAN FIGHTER 12 (V,C,D) A Brittain 9-9-4 C Hardie
3 (8) 0460-50 GRATEFUL 37 (BF,D) M & D Easterly 7-9-8 L Challely (7)
4 (6) 3040- MADAME FENELLA 170 (D) D Shaw 6-9-8 L Edmunds
5 (3) 0/556 ATHOLLBARBOY 3 (P,C,D) N Tinkler 12-9-5 F McManoman
6 (9) 06/00 CONQUEST OF POWER 24 (T) J Scott 7-9-4 Jack Doughty (3)
7 (10) 04/53 MIAMI HILLS 24 J Camacho 4-9-4 J Fanning
8 (5) 060/0 KORROOR 33 (H,W,C) J Camacho 4-9-4 Ryan Sexton
9 (11) 0/310 ASADJUMIEHRAH 3 (P,C,D) A Brittain 7-9-4 A Jary (5)
10 (1) 0/401 POCKLEY 3 (B,C,D) Miss L Perratt 7-9-4(40) J Tokes (5)
11 (2) 030/6 SYDNEY BAT 33 (P,C,D) G Barker 6-9-4 S James
12(12) 65-52 SATIN VENTURE 12 Miss L Perratt 4-9-4 P Mulrennan
3-1 Asadumiehra, 4-1 Time Patrol, 6-1 So Grateful, 6-1 Athollbarbo, 10-1 Spartan Fighter, Shatin Venture, 12-1 Pockley, 16-1 others.

5.30 Handicap (€3,716: 7f) (9)

1 (7) -1412 TASEVER 3 (P,C,D) P Morris 5-9-9 Warren Fentiman (7)
2 (5) 3-225 STREAK LIGHTNING 14 (P,C,D) Carr 8-9-9 P Mulrennan
3 (2) 00/3 HARLEM NIGHTS 10 (P,D) Jessica Magee 5-9-11 L Edmonds
4 (6) 32/4 BLACKJACK 34 (C) A Brown 8-9-9 H Doyle
5 (9) 2040- MEREDISE MADNESS 95 (B,D) D & N Barron 4-9-4 C Rodriguez
6 (1) 0/434 BOBBY JOE LEG 14 (B,C,D) R Carr 11-9-7 Joanna Mason
7 (4) 4/210 SIR MAXI 12 (C,D) S England 7-9-4 C Hardie
8 (8) 0/000 RORY 10 (C,D) J Gollie 7-9-1 Lauren Young (7)
9 (4) 600/0 YORKSTONE 14 (D) M & J Easterly 5-9-4 L Challely (7)
3-1 Tasever, 7-2 Streak Lightning, 9-2 Harlem Nights, 5-1 others.

6.00 Handicap (€3,716: 6f) (7)

1 (5) 000/6 ONE MORE DREAM 18 (C) J & S Quinn 6-9-9 J Hart
2 (1) 45/6 BRIAN THE SNAIL 10 (P,C,D) P Morris 11-9-9 R Kavanagh (5)
3 (4) 000/4 MACCA 18 (C,D) Miss L Perratt 6-9-6 T Tokes (5)
4 (2) 60/34 BIPLANE 12 (P,C,D) J Wainwright 7-9-6 P Mulrennan
5 (5) 5/213 TOMORROW DAY 10 (T,V,BF,C,D) M Usher 4-9-4 Jack Doughty (3)
6 (7) 1/250 BELLARIO MAN 4 (P,D) A Bailey 7-9-5 A Jary (5)
7 (4) -1221 BENEFICIARY 12 (B,C,D) L Riggall 6-9-4 Warren Fentiman (7)
5-2 Tomorrow Day, 7-2 Beneficiary, 5-1 Bellario Man, Biplane, 6-1 others.

6.30 Maiden Stakes (€3,942: 1m) (6)

1 (2) 5 -ABSOLUTELY NOT 353 A Watson 4-9-9 H Doyle
2 (3) 4 -CRACK ON BOYS 63 Tom Cusack 3-8-11 J Mitchell
3 (2) 001 ONE HORSE TOWN 10 (P,BF) Harry Derham 3-8-9 J Hart
4 (6) 22-2 ORANGESANDLEMONS 29 (BF) E Bethel 3-8-5 Osborne
5 (4) 2 -SOVEREIGN CLANCE 24 Tuer 3-8-6 C Hardie
6 (1) 32 WAR AND LOVE 24 (BF) Sir M Prescott 3-8-6 L Morris
2-1 Orangesandlemmons, 5-2 One Horse Town, 11-4 War And Love, 10-1 others.

7.00 Handicap (€4,972: 5f) (9)

1 (5) 2/11 WILLIAM DEWHIRST 12 (C) B Haslam 5-9-9 P Mulrennan
2 (8) 2513- MOON FLIGHT 20 (BF,C,D) Miss L Perratt 5-9-7 T Tokes (5)
3 (3) 3201 PADDY'S DAY 10 (D) N Tinkler 5-9-7 J Jary (5)
4 (6) 44/32 DARK KESTREL 12 (C,D) A Brittain 5-9-3 C Hardie
5 (3) 6/20 WATER OF LEITH 10 (C,D) Gollie 7-9-4 Amie Waugh (3)
6 (7) 2000- REINFORCE 61 (D) Miss K Brown (D) 5-8-12 H Doyle
7 (1) 5413- LEODIS DREAM 99 (C,D) P Midgley 9-8-11 Warren Fentiman (7)
8 (4) 1000- MATHY PATT 117 (D) D Shaw 5-8-6 Mark Winn
9 (7) 25/01 POPULAR DREAM 18 (D) D Shaw 5-8-6 Joanna Mason
3-1 William Dewhurst, 7-2 Paddy's Day, 5-1 Popular Dream, 11-2 others.

7.30 Handicap (€3,140: 7f) (10)

1 (7) 36/61 ELETTARIA 10 (C,D) J Wainwright 6-9-9 P Mulrennan
2 (3) 4/52 CONCERT BOY 10 (D) K Scott 5-9-9 D Keenan
3 (10) 4/63 IMPEACH 10 (B,T) R Menzies 7-9-9 J Fanning
4 (3) 3/12 MISS MONTEPANSIE 10 (C,D) J Wainwright 7-9-9 P Mulrennan
5 (1) 34/16 BELIEVE ME NOW 10 (T) J Jarman 5-9-7 A Mullen
6 (8) 3/520 YAAHOBBY 4 (H,C,D) A Brittain 6-9-6 C Hardie
7 (9) 4/342 JEMS BOND 12 (C,D) A Brown 8-9-5 D Nolan
8 (2) 00/00 MACCARLO 51 (C,D) M Dods 7-9-3 C Lee
9 (4) 6440- RETROSPECT BECKONS 105 (C) Miss L Perratt 10-9-3 T Tokes (5)
10 (5) 6/005 MR COCO BEAN 10 (P) Helen Chutliff 11-9-3 R Kavanagh (5)
3-1 Eleettaria, 7-2 Monsieure Fantaisie, 11-2 Yaahobby, 13-2 others.

Course specialists

Market Rasen: Trainers O Murphy, 38 from 14

Sport Six Nations

We need players who can adapt on fly — start Fin Smith at 10

Courtney Lawes



Something has to change for England before Saturday's game against France because the situation is beginning to get desperate.

We are starting games really well. The plan from Steve Borthwick is meticulous and the execution of it early on has been excellent. Against Ireland we were 10-5 up and playing well.

But we keep losing our way in the second half. It has been a common theme over the past year and in Dublin we did not adapt to Ireland's change of tactics or find a way of relieving the pressure.

Successful England teams in recent years would have had Owen Farrell and George Ford to manage our way through those pressure periods. You could always rely on Sam Underhill to put in a big hit or win a turnover that would change the momentum. But he is injured.

Does this England side have enough players of that ilk, who are capable of turning a game?

Or are the players not involved enough in developing the game plan to be comfortable reacting to what they see and feel out on the field and adapting it on the fly?

I am not inside the England camp any more but, from my own recent experience of Test rugby and playing under Borthwick, it seems to be a bit of both.

The more that players are involved in the construction of the game plan, the more they are able to adapt on the fly. That is critical in rugby. If you're just being told "when and where" all week, then when it all goes wrong you've got no idea. You're in a boat without a paddle.

It is that old military saying that was adapted by Mike Tyson: "Everyone has a plan until you get punched in the face." England landed the first blows in Dublin and Ireland adapted. When Ireland countered, England had no answers and hit the canvas.

I think back to the 2023 World Cup. We didn't have a great warm-up campaign. On tour we, the leadership team, said we wanted to be involved in the process of developing the game plan. We said that the more we were involved, the better we felt about it on the pitch.

When Tom Curry was sent off two minutes into our opening pool game against Argentina, we constructed a new plan on the fly. Fordy drove it but once Cuzzu went off we knew we were going to have to defend for our lives, kick-chase to death and win territory.

If you can do that, you put yourself in a position to score. And so every time we got a chance, Fordy stepped up, nailed his drop-goals and took the

Who should face France?

Courtney Lawes's XV

1	2	3
Genge	Cowan-Dickie	Stuart
4	5	
Itoje	Martin	
6	8	7
Chessum	Earl	T Curry
9	10	
A Mitchell	F Smith	12
	Lawrence	13
		Slade
11	15	14
Freeman	M Smith	Steward

Alex Lowe's XV

1	2	3
Genge	Cowan-Dickie	Stuart
4	5	
Itoje	Martin	
6	8	7
Chessum	Earl	T Curry
9	10	12
Mitchell	Ford	Lawrence
		13
		Slade
11	15	14
Freeman	M Smith	Sleightholme

Will Kelleher's XV

1	2	3
Genge	Cowan-Dickie	Stuart
4	5	
Itoje	Martin	
6	8	7
Chessum	Earl	T Curry
9	10	12
Mitchell	Ford	Slade
		13
		Lawrence
11	15	14
Freeman	M Smith	Roebuck

points to keep the scoreboard moving. That shifted the pressure back on to Argentina. But it was never the plan going into that game in Marseille. We adapted on the field.

At the minute, England are lacking in that area.

Maro Itoje and Tom Curry stood up to the second-half onslaught from Ireland but there was no back-line strategist ready to grab hold of the game. Marcus Smith wants to but his skill set is different from that of Faz and Fordy. His strength is his ability

to get England going forward. Sometimes that's not what you need.

Territory is probably one of the most undervalued or underappreciated parts of rugby, and international rugby especially. If you lose the kick battle, you lose the territorial contest. If you compound that by conceding penalties and making errors under pressure then you're very unlikely to win the game.

That is exactly what happened in the second half against Ireland.

What we have been doing is not working. I would start Fin Smith at fly half against France. He's got very little experience of Test rugby and England waited too long to use him against Ireland. But when he was on the field we started winning the territory battle.

Giving Fin an opportunity is not going to hurt you as England head coach. Plus, he has a club relationship with Alex Mitchell, Tommy Freeman and Ollie Sleightholme, if the wing is fit to play. He could be a very, very important player.

There is talk that professional rugby no longer produces players capable of grabbing a game by the scruff of the neck, as Martin Johnson or Farrell did. I have heard the blame apportioned to the academy system, to prescriptive coaching and to helicopter parenting.

That was never my experience at Northampton Saints.

Fin Smith, Mitchell and the other Saints were encouraged by Chris Boyd, the former director of rugby, and now Phil Dowson to understand from an early age the benefits of taking responsibility for their own preparation and ownership of the games in which they played. That leads to you becoming a more consistent player and then a leader.

England need to bring Ollie Chessum into the back row. He is another young lad who has no qualms about stepping up and being a leader. Plus, England need his physicality and presence in the lineout. The French pack is heavy and powerful. Their maul is the best in the world.

Although I would not start Marcus Smith at fly half, I would have him in the team. We need to pick our best players. Shoehorn him into centre or full back. Given that France tend to kick long, if Marcus is at full back he will not have much competition in the air. Then he can run the ball back and be available to capitalise on any scraps England gain from contestable kicks. England's route to victory against France has to be in the air.

Borthwick is a reactive coach. We had a very, very specific game plan for the 2023 World Cup semi-final against South Africa. It wasn't necessarily anything to do with our strengths or how we wanted to play. We just knew the most effective game plan to try to beat them.

Either you have your set game plan, which you stick to and batter everybody else with, or you switch it up and mould your approach depending on the opposition. The latter is Borthwick's style.



Fin Smith

(Northampton Saints)

Age: 22

Height: 5ft 10in

Weight: 13st 10lb

Caps: 6

England's best bet against France is to keep the ball on the field because *Les Bleus* have got a really big, kind of slow, grumbly pack. The longer you can keep the ball in play and make them move, the better off you're going to be.

The flipside of that is they've got an unbelievable back line. So if you don't kick well or you give them opportunities to counterattack, you're going to be in trouble. But France have got a good lineout, a good pack and a good maul. So you're probably

better off actually keeping the ball on the pitch as much as possible.

England could put Freddie Steward on the wing and have him leap above the French back three all day, hopefully win it back and then attack with the loose ball. If you can't get anywhere, stick it in the air again. Just keep plugging away.

In defence we've just got to be super, super physical. Grégory Alldritt and his pack like the pick-and-go game. I was at France-Wales on Friday and Antoine Dupont was in



Marcus Smith
(Harlequins)

Age: 25
Height: 5ft 9in
Weight: 12st
Caps: 42

complete control. You've got to be so switched-on at all times.

England need Mitchell and then Ben Spencer, whom I would bring on to the bench, to man-mark Dupont. If you think back to the Northampton v Bath Premiership final last year, Spencer did exactly that job on Mitchell. Really shut him down.

England need to employ all the usual disruption tricks on Dupont. When England's back row get a chance to put a shot in on him, make sure it lands ... even if it is a shade

late. Hold Dupont on the ground when the ball has gone. Clog up his running lines.

If we can impose an effective game plan on both sides of the ball for a sustained period, apply enough pressure to force France to make mistakes and then, crucially, cope with those periods when France are on top, we can win.

I believe we can make life difficult for France. The question will be how England cope when the momentum is against us. We have to find a way.

Murley a doubt for France clash due to foot injury

Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Cadan Murley is a doubt for England's Six Nations match against France after suffering a foot injury.

The Harlequins wing, 25, scored a try on his debut against Ireland, in the first half of the 27-22 defeat in Dublin on Saturday. However, he struggled in the second half with a couple of teasing kicks. First he touched the ball as a kick went over his head towards the England line, and was trapped by the oncoming Irish attackers. From that field position, Bundee Aki scored a try on the far side. Later on, Murley again could not find a way out after another kick deep into England territory.

The Times understands that Murley did not train yesterday in England's first session of the week as they prepare to face France at Twickenham on Saturday. He is now considered a doubt for the game, which opens the door for a return for Ollie Sleightholme, of Northampton Saints, or one of Tom Roeback or Elliot Daly on the wing.

Murley has not officially been ruled out of the squad, or Saturday's match, but is struggling to be in contention for selection this week.

Tom Curry was in "modified" training yesterday, so did not join the main group at England's base in Bagshot, Surrey. These days that is usual for the 26-year-old, who has suffered with a degenerative hip injury in recent years. Curry should be fit to face France.

Ollie Lawrence also went through modified drills on his own, stretching his legs with varied exercises alongside a fitness coach.

However Jamie George, the former captain, was back with the main group. The 34-year-old hooker has overcome a hamstring injury to return to the squad. It is expected that he will be involved against France, whether starting or on the bench.

He has been included as one of four hookers in an updated squad — alongside Luke Cowan-Dickie, Theo Dan and Curtis Langdon — and his



Murley scored a try on his debut against Ireland but had a testing second half

return to the match-day 23 would give England valuable experience.

Tommy Freeman, Murley's opposite number on the wing, hopes the Harlequins player gets another opportunity. "Cadán's obviously a very talented player," Freeman said. "To get your debut is an unbelievable achievement and I'm sure he'll have many more to come."

Freeman said that England's review of the Ireland game was honest, as they tried to pick themselves up for the France match. He says that England's challenge is to stay focused for 80 minutes, and not allow themselves to drift from their pre-match plan.

"There is an element of you've got to put your hand up, you've got to be honest and accountable for your actions and to be told that as well," Freeman, 23, said.

"As a squad, we're very good at

understanding these problems. We can put our hands up and we've got humility.

"Effort-wise, we couldn't fault it. The boss asked us to run for each other. We ran for each other. We chased back as much as we could. There were three occasions when they scored and it was a couple of missed tackles and in Test rugby that will cost us."

Freeman, who said England would need to be "squeaky clean" in terms of discipline against the French, added: "We know when we are direct and we go at teams from the off we can cause a lot of pressure. As soon as we sit back and allow teams to dictate to us, that's where you see us fall off and they take control of the game. The longer we can stay focused and keep implementing our game plan, the better the result will be."

Darge looks like a Lion, Bealham doesn't

Stephen Jones



Several British & Irish Lions contenders burnished their credentials in the opening round of Six Nations matches this weekend, but others did their chances more harm than good.

So who would have impressed the coach Andy Farrell as he mulls over his squad for the tour to Australia this summer — and whose hopes took a knock?

LIONS ON ATTACK

Jack Willis (England)

Willis managed to boost his claims for a place on the Lions tour — without even setting foot on a Six Nations pitch this weekend. Willis has been outstanding for Toulouse for more than a year now, and his herculean performances in the back row have outshone anything on view in Paris, Edinburgh and Dublin. It reminded England how vital it is they get the 28-year-old back across the Channel to play for an English club.

Huw Jones (Scotland)

He first served notice of Lions potential with Harlequins in 2021-22 but the centre surely sealed his passage to Australia with a devastating hat-trick against Italy. Jones, 31, showed power and composure but also a satisfying rugby nous as he disposed of a potentially dangerous opposition and encouraged notions of a strong Scottish touring core.

Rory Darge (Scotland)

Scotland used to provide a gang of flankers who would float around Lions selection but then fail to make the final cut — but Darge looked every inch a Lion against Italy. The 24-year-old played with a flat-out aggression and effectiveness which indicated that if he is an inch or two short of being a true Lions flanker, he can make up for it in other ways. The England-Scotland match is a career-defining chance.

LIONS AT BAY

Caelan Doris (Ireland)

The Irish No 8 Doris is rightly adored as both leader and player — the whole of Ireland appears to think he will be the Lions captain. That would be wrong on many counts, notably the grisly record the Lions have in choosing the man

who led the best individual team in the Five or Six Nations to be their captain. Remember Ciaran Fitzgerald and shudder. The 26-year-old may become a Lion but a Ken Goodall, a Mervyn Davies or a Taulupe Faletau he is not.

Tomos Williams (Wales)

There is no doubt whatsoever that Williams deserves to be in the Lions squad and that he would be a powerful contender for the Test team. You would also expect Andy Farrell to make at least two visits to Kingsholm this season, where Williams, 30, is playing out of his skin. But to be trapped at scrum half for Wales at present — he had no chance to shine in Paris — is to have the worst possible basis for making a case. You hope and pray that Farrell has a broader perspective.

Finlay Bealham (Ireland)

How Ireland miss the great tight-head, Tadhg Furlong, when he is unfit. He remains the best tight-head in the world game at his peak and on the evidence of last weekend Bealham, 33, is a game trier but not a Lions prop, let alone a Test prop of the awesome presence of Furlong. I would be surrounding Furlong with a gang of doctors, medicine men and faith healers. Bealham does not compare.

‘Questioning our mentality is silly. Tactics let us down’

Ollie Chessum talks about England bench’s failure to make an impact in Dublin, writes Will Kelleher

Ollie Chessum does not think that English players bear the scars of recent thrashings by French sides and are looking forward to showing what they can do against Antoine Dupont and co on Saturday.

Chessum has been on the end of two severe beatings by French teams. The first was England’s record home defeat two years ago, when they lost 53-10 in Steve Borthwick’s first Six Nations as head coach.

Then last month Leicester Tigers lost 80-12 to Toulouse in the Investec Champions Cup. Tigers had England players Chessum, George Martin, Freddie Steward and Joe Heyes in their team against the likes of Dupont, Thomas Ramos and Emmanuel Meafou.

Chessum is determined that those results do not matter one bit before France’s visit to Twickenham.

“The Tigers game is a Tigers game. There’s only four or five of us in this camp. So, there’s no scars there for the majority of the squad,” he said, speaking on The Times’s Ruck podcast from the England camp.

“We’re a new squad now. We’ve had a World Cup, an autumn and a Six Nations between that [2023] game at Twickenham.

“So, we’re very much a different squad with new players, and probably a different mindset towards certain areas of the game. So, what’s happened has happened. We’re very much looking forward to what we can do this weekend.”

If England lose on Saturday it will be their worst run against the Six Nations and Rugby Championship teams. Borthwick’s side have lost seven in a row against the top-ranked nations, beating only Japan twice in that period, since defeating Ireland 23-22 in last year’s Six Nations. Never in England’s

England’s losing streak

Longest England losing runs v Six Nations/Rugby Championship opposition

Start Date	End Date	Games
16/3/2024	Ongoing	7
25/02/2006	11/11/2006	7
19/03/1904	10/02/1906	7
20/03/1971	18/03/1972	6

history have they lost eight consecutive Tests against the traditional Tier One nations. They lost seven in 2006, and between 1904 and 1906.

Asked what he would say to supporters who may worry about Saturday’s result, having seen Toulouse and Bordeaux Bègles dominate in the Champions Cup, and the French team who beat Wales 43-0 on Friday, Chessum added: “You’ve not seen this England team play those teams. Bordeaux and Toulouse are not the French side either.

“We are playing France, not Toulouse this weekend — it is a different team. It’s a completely different game. It’s Test match rugby.

“It’s a different ball game to the club game. I’d be excited about what you can see from this England team at the weekend.”

Chessum is delighted to be back in the England fold after a succession of injuries have kept him out of the squad.

He missed the 2024 summer tour to Japan and New Zealand to have surgery on an injured shoulder, and then damaged knee ligaments in a freak training-ground incident before the November Tests last year, which ruled him out of the whole series.

Against Ireland, Chessum was part of England’s bench, who were disappointed with their impact.

“I was frustrated because I was given a job as a member of that bench to come on and win us the game,” he said.

“We just gave them a little bit too much leeway and they ran away with it. The positive is that we came back and secured that bonus point, which could prove to be massive, the nature of the Six Nations and how tight it’s predicted to be this year.”

England v France

Saturday, kick-off 4.45pm
TV: ITV
Radio: BBC
Radio 5 Live



Chessum is disappointed he was not able to make more of an impact after stepping off the bench in Dublin on Saturday

The Ireland match continued a theme of England falling away in the second halves of matches. Chessum believes this is a tactical issue, not a mental one.

“To question the mentality of the players is, from my eyes, silly,” he said. “The boys are playing for their country. They want to win. No one stepped on to that field on Saturday and thought, ‘I’m going to go through the motions here,’ or ‘I’m just going to see what’s going to

happen.’ We came on to the field with the intention of winning. So the tactical things and the accuracy is probably what let us down as a group.

“That’s not just the bench. That’s the 23. We win and lose as a group and the boys that weren’t involved at the weekend. You have to face the facts a little bit sometimes and watch clips that you otherwise maybe wouldn’t want to.

“We talk about trying to be the fastest

learning team and that’s what we’re going to aim to be this week. It’s easier said than done, but I fully believe in what we’ve got in the room.”

THE RUCK PODCAST

Listen to Ollie Chessum’s full interview on The Ruck podcast

Go to: <https://podfollow.com/the-ruck>

Huge setback for Amorim as Martínez faces spell on sidelines

CONTINUED FROM BACK

to be a big influence on the rest of the squad.

It is the third serious injury that Martínez has suffered since he joined United from Ajax in a £56.7 million deal in the summer of 2022.

Martínez missed 12 matches towards the end of his first season at the club after breaking a metatarsal during United’s draw against Sevilla in April 2023.

He aggravated the problem five

months later against Arsenal, ruling him out for a further 22 matches.

A year ago Martínez damaged his medial collateral ligament in his left knee during United’s match against West Ham United.

His comeback was then postponed by a calf injury, meaning that he started only 11 of United’s 52 matches in all competitions last season.

“Licha is a really important player for us, not just as a football player but as a character, especially in this hard moment,” Amorim said on Sunday



Martínez was stretchered off during United’s 2-0 defeat by Crystal Palace

night after United’s seventh home league defeat of the season.

“Now it’s time to help Licha like he’s done for us for so long. I think it’s a bad situation.

“Let’s wait to assess things with the doctor but I think it’s a serious situation.”

Although Martínez is one of United’s better players, Amorim has plenty of defenders in reserve.

Harry Maguire, Matthijs de Ligt, Leny Yoro, Jonny Evans and Victor Lindelof are his established centre

backs and the club recently signed Ayden Heaven, the 18-year-old centre back from Arsenal, for an undisclosed fee.

Heaven has played only one match for Arsenal but the teenager is expected to train with the first team and compete for a place in the starting XI.

Noussair Mazraoui, the full back, has played at centre back for Amorim, and Luke Shaw, who is viewed primarily as a centre back by the United head coach, is close to returning from a two-month hamstring injury layoff.

Taunting rivals is great theatre, just be ready for it to come back

England step up interest in Lewis-Skelly

Paul Joyce

Times Game podcast pundits discuss if it was wise for Lewis-Skelly to goad Haaland in the way he did on Sunday

TONY CASCARINO

Myles Lewis-Skelly has had quite the two weeks. In eight days he was controversially sent off at Molineux, had his card rescinded and as a result starred in Arsenal's 5-1 demolition of Manchester City. But it's the 18-year-old's mimicking of Erling Haaland's trademark celebration that is now a key talking point from Sunday's match.

It's a common saying that "nothing is better than scoring a goal" and for Lewis-Skelly this could not apply more. In the context of last week's events — and his previous confrontation with Haaland after City snatched a 2-2 draw at the Etihad in September — he is well within his rights to celebrate in this way. Celebrations are meant to be over the top. They enhance the game's entertainment.

Celebrations like this are not born from disrespect but are usually lighthearted. However, you have to be prepared for it to go both ways. When I played for third-tier Gillingham, I told a newspaper that I could "take down Spurs" before a League Cup third-round tie in 1982. We lost 4-2 at Priestfield that day, of course I received lots of verbals from Tottenham players and it was a learning curve for me.

You have to be careful with overcelebrating and there is a line that is sometimes crossed, but this is hardly like Emmanuel Adebayor's sprint across the pitch to taunt Arsenal fans after scoring against his old club for Manchester City in 2009.

This also applies with the wider criticism of Arsenal's celebrations, whether that's fans who held up "be humble" placards or the team themselves. Arsenal's jubilation comes from relief, knowing that anything but a win could have ended their title hopes. A week's preparation and a performance with such heart and determination will naturally lead to the scenes we saw at the final whistle.

To a City side full of multiple Premier League winners, the way Arsenal reacted will seem overstated, which is likely why Haaland was quick to point to his gold Premier League sleeve badge. However, I do not begrudge Arsenal for how they behaved. This result has put them back in the mix.



Lewis-Skelly caused a stir by copying Haaland's famous celebration while some fans, inset, also made their feelings clear

GREGOR ROBERTSON

I've got no problem with Arsenal's antics. Gabriel is nasty, he enjoys getting involved in that, it's stuff that's happening on the pitch which might actually affect Haaland and there's an actual battle with him. It's not like the players are smashing into each other in full-blooded challenges.

What I don't like is Haaland pointing to his sleeve to remind Arsenal who the champions are. I don't like the way City are dealing with this absolute nosedive. I think there have been moments after games, like the Liverpool one when Pep Guardiola went over and was holding up six fingers and clapping the fans. I don't want to sound like Roy Keane but you've just lost 5-1, what are you pointing at the badge on your arm for?

ALYSON RUDD

There are two ways of looking at it. One is that I don't mind at all because City

caused Arsenal the most pain under Mikel Arteta, and if you wanted to interpret it this way, snatched away their title chances. It's been City who have pipped them to it, it's been City who have outclassed them. It's understandable they'd want to crow a little bit, because the tables have turned and City are looking pretty rubbish. As I've said before, Arsenal were slightly guilty of showing too much deference.

On the other hand, it's not about City this season, is it? It's Liverpool they're chasing now.

TOM ALLNUTT

Right now, a lot of people are going to say it's great value, great fun, fair play Arsenal. As the weeks go by, though, City will obviously come back, they play Arsenal again next season. Guardiola's post-match press conference was quite something when he was told about what happened. He

claimed he didn't know what was going on.

He was informed that the Arsenal players were goading Haaland by imitating his celebration. He just looked at the table, and it has been clipped up a lot online but the clips have removed the delay — there was a long pause in the press conference room where he stared at the table and everyone was thinking, "What is he going to say?" And then he just said, "It's good, that's good." It felt like, "We're going to use this and come back."

It's not only City, though. Arsenal have this thing where they wind teams up. A lot of fans, even if you're not a City fan or an Arsenal fan, will have enjoyed what happened on Sunday, but this plays into that thing where everyone wants to beat Arsenal, they want this pantomime. They want to go to the Emirates and spoil the party, and this is only going to make that happen more.

England are to step up scouting missions on Myles Lewis-Skelly after the teenage left back's eye-catching emergence at Arsenal.

The new head coach Thomas Tuchel has already personally checked on the progress of the 18-year-old on at least two occasions and Lewis-Skelly's display in the 5-1 win over Manchester City will have further endeared him to the England set-up.

He scored the third goal in the dismantling of Pep Guardiola's side and then celebrated by mimicking Erling Haaland's "zen" pose which served as a pointed response to the City striker asking who he was when the teams met earlier this season.

Tuchel is believed to have reservations regarding the age of Lewis-Skelly, who is yet to even play for England's under-21s. He has played only 554 minutes of Premier League football.

However, Tuchel's 18-month contract up to the World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico in 2026 is about the here and now, having been tasked by the FA with winning the tournament and putting "a second star" on the England jersey.

Left back has become a problem position for England because of Luke Shaw's injury issues, with the right-footed Kieran Trippier filling in for the most part during Euro 2024.

The emergence of Newcastle United's Lewis Hall during the recent Nations League qualifying campaign eased that issue slightly, while Ben Chilwell's prospective loan move from Chelsea to Crystal Palace could enable him to return to the fold; the 28-year-old is a player Tuchel knows well from his time in charge at Stamford Bridge.

The German head coach was not present at the Emirates on Sunday having opted to instead go to the Milan derby where Kyle Walker made his first appearance for AC Milan after his loan move from Manchester City.

Walker is understood to have contacted Tuchel before his switch to Italy to discuss whether that would affect his England chances. The 34-year-old has won 93 caps and wants to prolong his international career in order to become his country's latest centurion.

His new team were held to a 1-1 draw after their city rivals Inter equalised three minutes into added time through Stefan de Vrij.

Tuchel will name his first England squad next month for the World Cup qualifiers against Albania and Latvia at Wembley on March 21 and 24 respectively.

I will prove that I can still be a match-winner, says Rashford

Charlotte Duncker

Marcus Rashford has vowed to prove he still has the quality to hurt the opposition and win matches after joining Aston Villa on loan.

The 27-year-old signed a contract on Sunday to keep him at Villa Park until the end of the season in the hope that he can revive his career after being frozen out by Ruben Amorim at Manchester United.

Villa will pay 75 per cent of his £325,000-a-week wages, with the potential to rise to 90 per cent, while the deal also includes an option to buy the

England forward for £40 million in the summer.

Rashford has not started in the league since he scored twice against Everton at the start of December. But despite his time out of the team — he has been involved in only one match-day squad since being axed for the Manchester derby on December 15 — he believes he still has the quality to impact games at the highest level.

"I know I can hurt teams and when I'm playing at my best I can decide football games, so that will be my only ambition and only goal — to help the team win more games and more points

and hopefully create history," he said in an interview with Villa's TV channel.

Having let Jhon Durán and Emiliano Buendía leave, Unai Emery was looking for reinforcements in attack as Villa look to progress in the Champions League after booking their place in the round of 16 while also trying to achieve



Villa have the option to buy Rashford for £40m

a second successive top-four finish. Villa are eighth, four points off the Champions League qualification places, but Rashford is confident he can help them achieve their objectives.

"I've had to choose somewhere where I feel my style of football is suited, and can help them and help me rediscover and improve as a player," he said. "Obviously it's only short-term I'm here, so I want to make the most of my time here. The only way to do that is by using my attributes and my skillset to help the team."

Rashford has played 33 times in the Champions League, scoring 12 goals,

and hopes that his experience in Europe's elite competition will enable him to help his team-mates. That, plus the fact he knows several Villa players from England duty, means he is hoping it is a smooth transition for his first move away from the club he joined aged seven.

"It's a new environment, new team, new team-mates," he said. "We're still in the Champions League. We want to get as far as we can and if we don't aim to win it then we're never going to win it. That will be my main objective and keep pushing in the league to get as high as possible."

Palmer's stroke of luck denies happy return for Potter

Chelsea	2
Neto 64, Wan-Bissaka 74 (og)	
West Ham United	1
Bowen 42	

Peter Rutzler

For two hours, Enzo Maresca was able to cut out the noise at Stamford Bridge. The Chelsea head coach feels that the transfer window has been a distraction for his players, which has contributed to their poor run of form. For this fixture to fall on deadline day, the noisiest day of them all, felt precarious but for a club like Chelsea, never far from a transfer rumour, it felt appropriate too.

After days of speculation, Chelsea managed to focus on the nuts and bolts here. They battled to victory over West Ham United, defeating Graham Potter on his return to his former employers, and in the process returned to the top four of the Premier League. It felt like an important victory, not least as they came from behind to win for the first time since victory away to Tottenham Hotspur six weeks ago. That felt like an important milestone.

"I was very happy because I consider tonight's game the toughest game, mentally," Maresca said. "Because when teams come here and sit back, wait for our mistake, there's no space to attack, you need to be patient."

This was a tough outing. For long spells it felt like Potter was going to pile on the pressure for Maresca, whose team were on a run of one win from seven. The two know each other well. Maresca and Potter played together as team-mates at West Bromwich Albion in the 1990s, with Potter chauffeuring Maresca to training. "He was my taxi," joked the Chelsea coach before the game. There would be no such favours on offer on last night.

West Ham looked comfortable in their own skin and Potter called his side "spirited", which was apt. They were threatening, particularly on the break, but history says Potter is luckless at Stamford Bridge and that proved the case again, as he lamented a foul in the build-up to Pedro Neto's goal and a deflection that secured Chelsea's win.

"We feel a bit unlucky with the first goal," Potter said. "We feel it was a foul on Jarrod [Bowen]. At that moment if we could have held out a bit longer we

How they stand										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
Liverpool	23	17	5	1	56	21	35	56		
Arsenal	24	14	8	2	49	22	27	50		
Nott'm Forest	24	14	5	5	40	27	13	47		
Chelsea	24	12	7	5	47	31	16	43		
Man City	24	12	5	7	48	35	13	41		
Newcastle	24	12	5	7	42	29	13	41		
Bournemouth	24	11	7	6	41	28	13	40		
Aston Villa	24	10	7	7	34	37	-3	37		
Fulham	24	9	9	6	36	32	4	36		
Brighton	24	8	10	6	35	38	-3	34		
Brentford	24	9	4	11	42	42	0	31		
Crystal Palace	24	7	9	8	28	30	-2	30		
Man Utd	24	8	5	11	28	34	-6	29		
Tottenham	24	8	3	13	48	37	11	27		
West Ham	24	7	6	11	29	46	-17	27		
Everton	23	6	8	9	23	28	-5	26		
Wolves	24	5	4	15	34	52	-18	19		
Leicester	24	4	5	15	25	53	-28	17		
Ipswich	24	3	7	14	22	49	-27	16		
Southampton	24	2	3	19	18	54	-36	9		

could have sustained something in the game."

West Ham's injuries have hindered their attack, with Lucas Paqueta the latest addition with a groin issue, but Potter was boosted by the return of his captain Bowen after a foot injury. There was also a first start for Andy Irving, the 24-year-old Scottish midfielder who has built something of a cult following among the West Ham fans.

The big news before kick-off for Chelsea was that Maresca had decided to pull the plug on Robert Sánchez. The Italian coach said he would take the weekend to make a decision over his error-prone No 1, but he ultimately opted to give Filip Jorgensen another run out. This was Jorgensen's first Premier League start since his league debut at Southampton last month. He received a huge ovation from the crowd when his name was read out before kick off.

For Maresca, the issues for Chelsea have been in "both boxes", referencing mistakes from his 'keeper but also wastefulness in attack. While Jorgensen had a couple of shaky early moments, it would be the latter that would be an issue in the first half. Repeatedly, Chelsea found good spaces in the box, but suffered head loss when trying to find the target.

Noni Madueke, Marc Cucurella and Enzo Fernández passed up good chances. Indeed, seven shots went by yet still

nothing for Alphonse Areola to do. At the other end, Jorgensen escaped a dodgy back pass from Cole Palmer but then blocked Bowen's effort at the near post after an Aaron Cresswell corner.

He was tested again on 38 minutes, through Mohammed Kudus, but this was a portent. After Jadon Sancho had blazed another great opening off target, Bowen struck. A poor back pass from Levi Colwill went straight to Bowen, who slotted the ball into the net. Four shots, three on target, 1-0.

Palmer at last hit the target in stoppage time, with a 25-yard free-kick which was denied by a sublime, one-handed stop by Areola.

But Maresca changed things five minutes after half-time. Nicolas Jackson was replaced by Marc Guiu and Sancho too was replaced by Neto.

The substitutes would have an impact. Chelsea finally crashed the ball into the net, by force of will if anything. Neto scored after Fernández had a shot saved by Areola. There was a long VAR check, trying to assess whether there had been a flick by Fernández in the build up which would have caught Cucurella offside. They should have looked at a foul by Colwill on Bowen instead. But they did not, and the goal stood.

West Ham responded well. Kudus hit the post with a header off an Irving cross. But Chelsea channelled the energy of the crowd and while they don't always hit the target, the weight of pressure can sometimes throw up some luck. That it did, when Palmer's cross deflected off Aaron Wan Bissaka, and looped over Areola and into the net.

Areola saved from Kostas Mavropanos, his own player, after a whipped free kick and then Palmer curled wide. West Ham could have equalised through Kudus, denied by Tosin with a strong block. But Chelsea had done enough.

Chelsea (4-2-3-1): F Jorgensen 6 – R James 6 (M Gusto 60min, 6), T Adarabioyo 6, L Colwill 5, M Cucurella 6 – M Caicedo 6, E Fernández 6 – N Madueke 6 (C Nkunku 60, 6), C Palmer 7 (T Chalobah 90), J Sancho 6 (P Neto 51, 7) – N Jackson 6 (M Guiu 51, 6). **Booked** James, Fernández, Palmer.
West Ham United (3-4-2-1): A Areola 7 – V Coufal 6 (K Mavropanos 7), M Kilman 6, A Cresswell 7 (L Guilherme 87) – A Wan-Bissaka 6, A Irving 7 (L Orford 76), T Soucek 6, Emerson 6 (O Scaries 71) – M Kudus 7, C Soler 7 (D Ings 76) – J Bowen 7. **Booked** Irving.
Referee S Attwell.



Left, Sánchez did not start for Chelsea

Kerr called police officer 'f***ing stupid and white', trial told

Kit Shepard

Sam Kerr, the star footballer for Chelsea and Australia, called a Metropolitan Police officer "f***ing stupid and white" after fearing she had been kidnapped by a taxi driver, it has been revealed in court.

Kerr, 31, has been charged with racially aggravated harassment of a white officer, PC Stephen Lovell. The incident occurred early on January 30, 2023 in Twickenham, southwest London.

Her trial began yesterday at Kingston upon Thames crown court. Kerr's

father is half-Indian and it was noted in court that the player identifies as "white Anglo-Indian".

The offence carries a maximum sentence of six months to two years in prison, as well as a £2,500 fine.

Kerr, who has not played competitive football for a year owing to an anterior cruciate ligament injury, is regarded as one of the best players in the world.

About 30 minutes of police bodycam footage was shown. Kerr and her partner, the United States footballer Kristie Mewis, are seen having an emotional debate with PC Lovell at Twickenham

police station after a dispute with a London taxi driver.

Jones said that Kerr and Mewis had been drinking on a night out. Their behaviour on the taxi journey home led to the driver calling the police to complain, saying they were trying to break a window. The driver was advised to go to the police station, rather than Kerr's house.

Lovell confirmed he had seen broken glass near the taxi, before spotting Kerr crawling out of the vehicle's broken rear window. Kerr later told police she had vomited out of a window. PC Lovell said

the taxi driver told him that they had refused to pay for the damage.

In the bodycam footage, Kerr and Mewis repeatedly say they were concerned they were being "held hostage" by the taxi driver. They referenced "a girl in Clapham" who was "raped and killed only a year ago". This was seemingly a reference to Sarah Everard, who was kidnapped in Clapham, southwest London, by a male Metropolitan Police officer, Wayne Couzens, in March 2021, before he raped and murdered her.

In the police station, Kerr claimed she had tried to call the police from

inside the taxi, to which PC Lovell said no such call had been received.

"You guys are f***ing stupid and white," she is heard saying. "Honestly, you guys are f***ing stupid and white."

"You guys are f***ing stupid. I'm f***ing over this shit."

PC Lovell then arrested her for suspected racial aggravated harassment, as well as criminal damage. She was soon de-arrested for criminal damage after agreeing, alongside Mewis, to pay for repairs to the taxi.

Kerr is due to give evidence today. The case continues.



as an own goal from Wan-Bissaka, top, and a strike from Neto, above, meant Potter left Stamford Bridge empty-handed

Le Fée lives up to comparisons with Zidane

Middlesbrough

Burgzorg 11, Hackney 59

2

Sunderland

Neil 33, Isidor 51, Giles 87 (og)

3

Sky Bet Championship

Martin Hardy

There were three minutes of a frantic and frenetic North East derby remaining when Luke O'Nien, the Sunderland centre half, played the ball to his left, in the hope of finding Enzo Le Fée. It was a wise choice. Sunderland's players are reaching the same conclusion as their supporters, that something happens when he gets the ball. The song they sing compares him to Zinedine Zidane.

In that moment, the deftness of his first touch took him beyond Luke Ayling, the Middlesbrough captain and right back. He then whipped over a low cross that the returning Ryan Giles, on loan from Hull City, crashed into his own goal from around ten yards in a desperate attempt to clear.

In a corner of the Riverside Stadium there was a red and white explosion of joy. In that moment Sunderland moved to within three points of an automatic promotion place, and the gap between the two North East sides stretched to 14 points. Middlesbrough had led, trailed and now they were done. There were jeers at full-time.

Not in that corner, however. Wilson Isidor, the Sunderland centre forward who had two penalties saved by James Trafford just over two weeks ago, had scored and was celebrating by waving his shirt on the top of a corner flag. The 3,000 Sunderland fans were singing for him, too, but the real acclaim was for Le Fée, the on-loan midfielder from Roma whose move to the Stadium of Light will become permanent if he helps the club win promotion. Le Fée, 25, is certainly doing his bit to help that happen. There is an assuredness and quality to everything he does. This was only the Frenchman's fourth game since his surprise move to the North East — Roma paid £20 million for him last summer — and he created two of the

goals and adds a new dimension to Sunderland's play with his creativity.

"He [Le Fée] could play at the best level," Régis Le Bris, the Sunderland head coach, said. "I expect more from him because he is so talented. Can he get better? Yes. What percentage is he now? Seventy-five."

The contrast in mood to his opposite number Michael Carrick was telling. It is now two wins in nine for them.

Middlesbrough led early through Delano Burgzorg. His goal in the 11th minute had a stamp of quality, racing onto a pass from Hayden Hackney, before calmly tucking a right-foot shot from the edge of the penalty area past Anthony Patterson.

Whenever Le Fée had the ball, however, Sunderland had moments of real quality, and it was from his cross, and a deflected Chris Rigg shot, that they equalised in the 33rd minute. The deflection went to Burgzorg, but he dallied and was robbed by Dan Neil and when the Sunderland captain cracked a shot from 25 yards, George Edmundson unwisely attempted to block with his chest and succeeded only in directing the ball into his own goal.

The lead was not far away now for Le Bris's side. Again Le Fée was the architect, sending Isidor through, and the forward made Mark Travers commit before almost walking the ball into the Middlesbrough net.

Back came the home side.

Aidan Morris nicked the ball off the feet of Jobe Bellingham and cleverly played it inside to Hackney. The midfielder took a touch and then blasted a right-foot shot that flew past Patterson.

It felt anyone's game, and then came Le Fée.

"To concede a deflection and an own goal is difficult," Carrick said.

"It's a horrible way to lose a game of this significance."



Middlesbrough (4-2-3-1): M Travers 7 — L Ayling 6, G Edmundson 6, R van den Berg, R Giles 6 — A Morris 7, H Hackney 8 — M Whittaker 6, F Azaz 6 (S Illing-Junior 60, 5), D Burgzorg 7 — M Forss 5 (T Conway 69, 5). **Booked:** Morris, Burgzorg. **Sunderland (4-2-3-1):** A Patterson 7 — T Hume 7, C Mephem 7, L O'Nien 7, D Kirkin 7 — D Neil 7, J Bellingham 6 — P Roberts 7 (I Poveda 88), C Rigg 6 (A Samed 72, 4), E Le Fée 8 — W Isidor 7 (E Mayenda 81). **Booked:** O'Nien, Bellingham. **Referee:** S Martyr.

Le Fée, on loan from Roma, created two of Sunderland's goals

Results

Football

Sky Bet Championship
Middlesbrough 2 Sunderland 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Leeds	30	18	9	3	60	19	41	63
Sheff Utd	30	19	6	5	41	21	20	61
Burnley	30	15	13	2	36	9	27	58
Sunderland	30	16	10	4	45	26	19	58
Blackburn	30	13	6	11	34	29	5	45
West Brom	30	10	14	6	39	27	12	44
Middlesbro	30	12	8	10	49	39	10	44
Norwich	30	11	9	10	49	42	7	42
Bristol City	30	10	12	8	38	35	3	42
Sheff Wed	30	11	9	10	43	46	-3	42
Coventry	30	11	8	11	41	38	-3	41
Watford	30	12	5	13	40	42	-2	41
Millwall	30	10	10	10	30	27	3	40
QPR	30	9	11	10	33	39	-6	38
Preston	30	8	13	9	33	38	-5	37
Oxford Utd	30	9	10	11	34	44	-10	37
Swansea	30	9	7	14	32	42	-10	34
Stoke	30	7	11	12	28	37	-9	32
Cardiff	30	7	10	13	33	51	-18	31
Portsmouth	30	7	9	14	36	52	-16	30

Basketball

NBA

Detroit 127 Chicago 119, Cleveland 144 Dallas 101, Toronto 115 Los Angeles Clippers 108, Philadelphia 110 Boston 118, Milwaukee 119 Memphis 132, Indiana 132 Atlanta 127, Utah 113 Orlando 99, Charlotte 104 Denver 107, Houston 98 Brooklyn 110, Oklahoma City 144 Sacramento 110, Minnesota 103 Washington 105, New York 112 Los Angeles Lakers 128, San Antonio 103 Miami 105, Portland 127 Phoenix 108.

Tennis

ATP: ABN AMRO Open, Rotterdam. Round of 32 (seeds in brackets): S Tsitsipas (Gre, 6) bt H Mayot (Fra) 6-1, 7-5, H Hurkacz (Pol, 8) bt

F Cobolli (Ita) 6-3, 6-2; D Medvedev (Rus, 2) bt S Wawrinka (Sui) 6-7 (8-10), 6-4, 6-1.

WTA: Abu Dhabi Open, Abu Dhabi. Round of 32 L Sun (NZ) bt C Garcia (Fra) 6-1, 6-3; A Krueger (US) bt M Kessler (US) 6-3, 6-7 (7-4), 6-3; S Wakana (Jpn) bt Y Yuan (Chn) 6-4, 6-3; K Volynets (USA) bt S Kartal (GB) 3-6, 6-4, 6-4; Kudermetova (Rus) bt L Samsonova (Rus, 5) 5-7, 6-1, 7-6 (7-5).

ATP: Dallas Open, Dallas. Round of 32 A Davidovich Fokina (Spa) bt B Holt (US) 6-1, 7-5.

Fixtures

Football

Sky Bet Championship (kick-offs 7.45pm)
Burnley v Oxford United, Queens Park Rangers v Blackburn Rovers.

Sky Bet League Two
Newport County v Morecambe, Salford City v Bromley.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Walsall	28	18	5	5	54	30	24	59
Doncaster	29	15	7	7	42	32	10	52
Notts County	28	14	8	6	45	28	17	50
AFC Wimbledon	27	14	6	7	39	20	19	48
Crew	29	12	7	10	36	25	11	47
Port Vale	28	13	9	6	35	29	6	48
Bradford	28	13	8	7	38	28	10	47
Salford City	28	12	8	8	33	26	7	44
Grimby	29	13	13	4	40	45	-5	42
Chesterfield	28	10	9	9	43	32	11	39
MK Dons	28	11	5	12	40	40	0	38
Cheltenham	28	10	10	10	37	39	-2	38
Colchester	28	8	13	7	33	29	4	37
Swindon	30	10	11	9	43	44	-1	37
Fleetwood Town	27	9	9	9	37	35	2	36
Bromley	28	11	9	9	36	37	-1	35
Gillingham	27	9	5	13	29	-4	-32	32
Barrow	28	7	13	17	27	52	-25	31
Newport County	27	8	6	13	35	46	-11	30
Harrogate Town	30	8	16	25	41	-16	-30	30
Accrington Stanley	27	7	8	12	34	45	-11	29
Tranmere	28	6	14	21	46	-25	-26	26
Morecambe	28	6	5	17	26	44	-18	23
Carlisle	28	5	6	17	22	46	-24	21

National League (kick-offs 7.45pm)

Dagenham & Redbridge v Forest Green Rovers, Halifax Town v Wyke, Rochdale v Oldham Athletic, Wealdstone v Tamworth.

William Hill League Two (kick-offs 7.45pm)

Elgin v Bonnyrigg Rose, Stirling v The Spartans, Stranraer v Forfar.

Tennis

ATP: ABN AMRO Open, Rotterdam. Round of 32 D Goffin v A de Minaur (Aus, 3), A Rublev (Rus, 4) v Z Zhang (Chn), L Sonego (Ita) v H Rune (Den, 5), C Alcaraz (Spa, 1) v B van de Zandschulp (Ned).

WTA: Abu Dhabi Open, Abu Dhabi. Round of 32 E Raducanu (GB) v M Vondrousova (Cze), O Jabeur (Tun) v J Ostapenko (Lat, 7), B Bencic (Sui) v R Sramkova (Svk).

ATP: Dallas Open, Dallas. Round of 32 F Tiafoe (US, 5) v T Daniel (Jpn), A Vukic (Aus) v B Shelton (US, 4), T Fritz (US, 1) v A Rinderknech (Fra), C Norrie v A Michelsen (US, 7).

Williamson sacked by struggling Carlisle

Mike Williamson has been sacked by Carlisle, leaving the EFL's bottom club looking for a third manager of the season.

Williamson, the former Newcastle defender, who was appointed in September to replace Paul Simpson, signed 11 players in January but a desperate run of form left the club at the foot of the League Two table.

A 5-1 defeat at home to Swindon on Saturday was the final straw, taking his side's run to five losses in six games.

Sport January window deadline day

City buying big is prudent

Martyn Ziegler

Analysis
Chief Sports
Reporter

Transfer spending in this window

Man City	£185m
The other 19 clubs	£176m
Brighton	£40.8m
Aston Villa	£26.9m
Man United	£25m
Ipswich	£22m
Tottenham	£17.4m
Wolves	£16.8m
C Palace	£12m
Bournemouth	£8m
Southampton	£4.2m
Leicester	£2.5m
Brentford	£0.4m

It had become almost a staple diet of transfer window analysis: Manchester City are happy to sell in January but they rarely buy established players who go straight into the first team.

That policy has gone out of the transfer window over the past month as City have dominated spending in the Premier League — and perhaps for more reasons than their unaccustomed struggles on the pitch. City alone have spent comfortably more than the entire English top flight did in January 2024.

There is uncertainty over what the future holds in terms of the Premier League charges that City are facing, so it could just be prudence to plan for all eventualities. City deny any wrongdoing but it is a fact that a transfer embargo is among the sanctions that could be imposed if City are found guilty of some of the 130 alleged rule breaches.

The outcome of the disciplinary hearing is due in the next few weeks and there may be no sanction at all or an extremely tough one, such as a large points deduction, so taking contingency action in case a transfer embargo is enacted seems like common sense.

The last big-money signing by City in the January window was Aymeric Laporte, who joined for £57 million from Athletic Bilbao in January 2018. In this window they have made three, and perhaps four, even if some of them still have the look of investing with an eye on the future.

The 25-year-old Egypt forward Omar Marmoush (£60 million from Eintracht Frankfurt) has gone straight into the starting XI, while Abdou Khusanov, the 20-year-old Uzbekistan defender signed for £40 million from Lens, and 19-year-old Brazilian centre back Vitor Reis (£30 million from Palmeiras) have also been in the first-team squad.

The arrival from Porto of Nico González, the 23-year-old Spanish holding midfielder who is seen as a stand-in for the injured Rodri, for about £50 million takes City's spending above £180 million.

SPENDING SLUMP IS OVER — MOSTLY

The final figure for the January window is expected to be between £350 million and £400 million, which is notably higher than the figure of £115 million for January 2024, when Crystal Palace unexpectedly emerged as the biggest spenders.

It is still way below the figure for January 2023, when Chelsea's £290 million spree contributed to a total outlay of about £800 million.

Kieran Maguire, the football finance expert, believes the growing amount of money owed by Premier League

Guardiola has broken a January habit by adding quality to City's first XI



clubs for instalments on previous signings also causes greater caution in the transfer market.

He said: "Based on my figures, Premier League clubs owe £3.5 billion in outstanding transfer fees so some may feel they have maxed out on the credit card. Manchester United's outstanding transfer fees were £34 million in 2013 — now they are £463 million."

Loan deals, such as Julio Enciso moving from Brighton & Hove Albion to Ipswich Town, and Evan Ferguson from Brighton to West Ham United, are increasingly attractive as a low-risk, high-reward strategy.

Maguire added: "The increased use of the loan market decreases the period of risk. If you are a club in a relegation fight you may not want to commit to a 3½-year contract if you could be in the Championship next season."

PSR RULES ARE STILL A DAMPENER
The Premier League's Profitability and Sustainability Rules (PSR) were responsible for the very limited spending in January 2024, and they are still inhibiting a number of clubs who may be at risk of breaching the limit of three-year losses totalling £115 million when their financial year ends on June 30.

Aston Villa appeared to have some PSR concerns that prompted them to seek buyers for Ollie Watkins and Jhon Durán, before the Colombia forward was sold to Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia for £71 million. That sale certainly gave Villa flexibility to spend themselves.

Manchester United are another team with PSR concerns, having told supporters in a letter last month that "significant"

losses totalling £300 million in the past three years — even though much of that can be exempted from PSR calculations — are "not sustainable and if we do not act now we are in danger of failing to comply with PSR requirements".

That explains why United have not made the kind of signings that Rúben Amorim, the head coach, believes they desperately need.

One club chief said that most clubs had an eye on PSR compliance now — and would not want to take unnecessary risks after Everton and Nottingham Forest both ended up with points deductions last season.

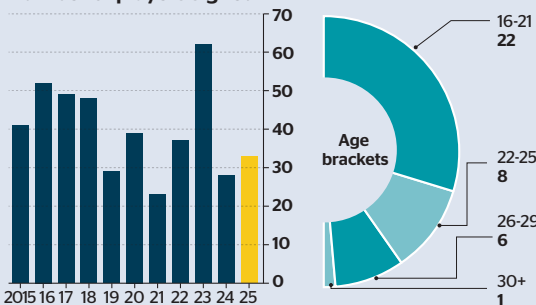
Your guide to the 2025 January

As of 11pm, Monday

Net spending by Premier League

Date	Net	Spent	Received
Jan 2015	£36.3m	£144.8m	£108.5m
Jan 2016	£143.1m	£229.7m	£86.6m
Jan 2017	-£10.5m	£248.9m	£259.4m
Jan 2018	£69.9m	£503.4m	£433.5m
Jan 2019	£69.7m	£184.1m	£114.4m
Jan 2020	£179.1m	£236.5m	£57.4m
Jan 2021	£53.8m	£79.8m	£26m
Jan 2022	£176.6m	£288.5m	£111.9m
Jan 2023	£638.3m	£741.5m	£103.2m
Jan 2024	£67.8m	£114.6m	£46.8m
Jan 2025	£224.4m	£358.6m	£134.2m

Number of players signed



Net spending by clubs this transfer window

	Spent	Received	Net (last Jan window net)
Man City	185	0	£185m (£9.8m)
Brighton	40.8	1.3	£39.5m (£7.8m)
Man United	25	0	£25m (£2.6m)
Ipswich	20	0.6	£19.4m (£1m)
Tottenham	17.4	0	£17.4m (£18.4m)
Wolves	16.8	1	£15.8m (£0)
C Palace	12	0	£12m (£24.9m)
Bournemouth	8	0	£8m (£0)
Southampton	4.2	0	£4.2m (£3.3m)
Brentford	0.4	0	£0.4m (£6.4m)
Arsenal	0	0	£0 (£0)
Everton	0	0	£0 (£0)
Fulham	0	0	£0 (£3.5m)
Liverpool	0	0	£0 (£0)
Nottm Forest	0	0	£0 (£7.7m)
West Ham	0	0	£0 (£6.5m)
Leicester	2.5	10	£-7.5m (£0)
Newcastle	0	8	£-8m (£0)
Chelsea	0	14.4	£-14.4m (£6m)
Aston Villa	26.9	93.4	£-66.5m (£15.8m)

Nico reads game just like Rodri, Pep can mould him

City's deadline day signing
Nico González

He first appeared after coming on for Sergio Busquets, played next to Busquets and was hailed, like so many young Barcelona midfielders, as the new Busquets. But few would see Nico González in that way now, even after being signed for

Manchester City by Pep Guardiola, who discovered Busquets (Tom Allnutt writes).

In the end it was Rodri who came closer than anyone to filling that Busquets-shaped hole, at least for Spain, so in theory it will be a fairly logical line of succession if Nico is now the chosen one to cover for Rodri's absence as City try to

Five most expensive signings this month*

*Initial fees, excluding potential add-ons

Omar Marmoush, right
£63m

From Eintracht Frankfurt to Man City

Nico Gonzalez

£50m

From Porto to Man City

Abdulkadir Khusanov
£33.6m

From Lens to Man City

Vitor Reis

£31m

From Palmeiras to Man City

Patrick Dorgu

£25m

From Lecce to Man Utd

By position

Defenders

18

Forwards

12

Goalkeepers

3

Midfielders

4

cobble their season back together. Yet Nico was never a perfect fit for that position at Barcelona. He came on for Busquets to make his La Liga debut in August 2021, under Ronald Koeman, and played 37 times that season as a cluster of exciting La Masia graduates, including Gavi, Pedri and Ansu Fati, were all coming through.

"Nico could never be a replacement for Busquets because Busquets was irreplaceable," Franc Artiga, who worked with Nico for four years as a Barça coach in La Masia, said. "But he could occupy a

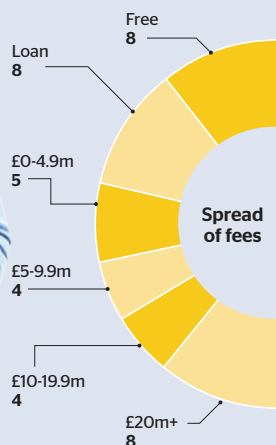
with uncertainty of charges

transfer window



Nationalities of foreign players new to the Premier League

3 French	1 Greek
2 Brazilian	1 Italian
2 Danish	1 Ivorian
2 Dutch	1 Japanese
2 Spanish	1 New Zealander
1 American	1 Paraguayan
1 Argentinian	1 Sierra Leonean
1 Austrian	1 South Korean
1 Czech	1 Uzbekistani
1 Egyptian	



Big five leagues' net spending this month

Cash spent	No of signings
England £224.4m	37
Germany £29.2m	38
Italy £11.2m	73
Spain £16.9m	22
France £52.5m	39

Origin of signings

Abroad	26
Premier League	7
English lower divisions	4
Rest of British Isles	0

similar position to Busquets at that time. He had all the right qualities technically but, above all, he had an understanding of the game. He is a very intelligent player."

Koeman had been taken by Nico earlier in 2021, during a Barcelona v Espanyol under-19s match. Nico broke into the first team in 2021-22 but lasted a season before he was sent on loan to Valencia and sold to Porto for €8.5million (about £7million) in 2023.

At Porto, they were even impressed by Nico's attitude during a spell out of the team last season,

when others from glamour clubs like Barca might have become disruptive. "Nico had a difficult time," said Sergio Conceição said. "But he kept working hard. I am very aware of that."

Perhaps that is the real link between Nico and Rodri: a maturity and intelligence that Guardiola will know he can mould. "With Pep, it's not a question of whether you play as more an attacking or defensive midfielder, it's about understanding the game, isn't it?" Artiga says.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

profit of more than £110million last summer and collected big transfer fees over recent years from the sales of players such as Cole Palmer, Raheem Sterling and Gabriel Jesus.

Tel, 19, has agreed to join Tottenham on loan and travelled to London last night to complete the move. Spurs will pay Bayern a loan fee of about £5million and will have an option to sign Tel permanently in the summer for a further £45million.

This is quite a coup for Tottenham given there were several clubs, including Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United, who were alerted to Tel's unexpected availability this month after he told Bayern he wanted to play more regularly.

Tel initially spurned the offer from Spurs after they agreed an immediate permanent deal worth about £50million with Bayern, but the Frenchman was persuaded by the loan after a lengthy chat with Ange Postecoglou. The Spurs head coach is believed to have convinced Tel with assurances about his game time in the coming weeks, his role in the team and the important contributions being made already by a talented group of young players at Spurs this season.

Spurs did not add a centre back last night despite learning that Radu Dragusin suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury and will be expected to miss the rest of the season. Tottenham had already signed Kevin Danso, a centre back, from Lens on loan last month with an obligation to buy for £20.9million in the summer.

Yesterday the club had a £55million bid rejected for Marc Guéhi by Crystal Palace. Guéhi has 18 months left on his deal at Palace and has been a long-term target. Spurs also revived and then cooled interest in Axel Disasi, of Chelsea, who joined Aston Villa instead for a loan fee of about £5million.

Villa also completed a loan deal for the Paris Saint-Germain winger Marco Asensio until the end of the season. The 29-year-old, a three-times Champions League winner during his time with Real Madrid, completed a medical on Sunday and Villa have agreed to cover all his wages.

Chilwell, 28, underwent a medical at Palace's training ground yesterday, before completing a move that ends his Chelsea exile. The England full back has been a peripheral figure under Enzo Maresca, making only one appearance for Chelsea this season, in the Carabao Cup against Barrow.

João Félix also left Stamford Bridge on loan, joining AC Milan until the end of the season. The Serie A club are covering the Portugal forward's salary and the total fee for the agreement is about £4.5million. Christopher Nkunku, however, is staying at Chelsea for the rest of the season. The 27-year-old forward had attracted interest from Bayern and Manchester United.

After securing a loan deal for the Brighton & Hove Albion striker Evan Ferguson, West Ham United yesterday recalled James Ward-Prowse from his loan at Nottingham Forest at the request of Graham Potter, the new head coach.

Tyrell Malacia, the Manchester United left back, is expected to complete a loan move to the Dutch league leaders PSV Eindhoven today.

Brighton have signed Stefanos Tzimas from Nuremberg for £20.8million but the 19-year-old forward will stay on loan at the German club. Fulham have agreed a deal to re-sign Willian, who is a free agent.

No short-term fixes at struggling United

Charlotte Duncker

Ruben Amorim may feel like a child on Boxing Day when they realise they did not get everything they had wanted for Christmas as he looks at his squad for the rest of the season.

After the defeat by Crystal Palace, the United manager said that he wants to "improve the team so badly" and that he knows "what the team needs" but there was no late gift for him.

The 40-year-old is aware of the club's financial situation so deep down he knew it would be unlikely there would be a last-minute, big-money spree but having seen his team lose their fifth game out of the past six at Old Trafford maybe there was hope of a last-minute surprise.

It was considered but United resisted. Remember Odion Ighalo and Wout Weghorst? Those signings screamed of a team who were panicking, and United, with their new-look hierarchy, are trying to avoid making the mistakes of the past; some of which they are still paying for.

Let's be frank, if they had surplus cash they no doubt would have pushed harder to finalise a deal and boost a squad that cannot push out of the bottom half of the table. The financial situation they find themselves in is partly a result of overspending in the past on talent that has not hit the level needed to get the club back to where they want to be competing.

Talks were held with Aston Villa about taking Leon Bailey on loan and they were offered the chance to sign 19-year-old France striker Mathys Tel from Bayern Munich but refused to pay a £5million loan fee.

Dorgu, a £29million signing at left back, will need time to adapt to the top flight

Bayern did not want to include an option for United to buy Tel. United therefore viewed the deal as counter-productive as they would — in their view — essentially be developing a player for another club.

The decision was made that they would not force a deal with someone for the sake of it. But it means the second half of the season will be up and down, as it has been since Amorim arrived.

Patrick Dorgu has arrived in a £29million deal from Lecce but the left back, 20, has not come to Carrington with a magic wand. He is an exciting addition who should further help to facilitate Amorim's system, with so much onus on attacking full backs, but he will need time to adapt to the top flight.

The same can be said of Ayden Heaven, the 18-year-old centre back signed from Arsenal, and Diego León, the 17-year-old Paraguayan left back who has signed a pre-contract agreement. But what about the short term?

Amorim is experimenting to work out the best strategy to get his forwards firing, and on Sunday that involved playing Kobbie Mainoo as a false nine, which did not have the desired spark. There is hope that Rasmus Hojlund and Joshua Zirkzee, who have 11 goals between them in all competitions, can kick on and they will have to if they have any hope of European football next season.

While there has been no short-term fix for Amorim the hope is that by sticking to a disciplined approach this window it will help them in the summer. They have also saved money by loaning out Marcus Rashford and Antony. In such a tight financial situation every little could help for the summer and be vital with Amorim desperate to add to his squad after a quiet January.

Fearless winger with tricks

Tottenham's deadline day signing Mathys Tel

Mathys Tel, who has joined Tottenham Hotspur on loan with an option to buy for £45million, is a player desperate for game time and yet to fulfil the potential that Bayern Munich had identified when they signed him from Rennes in 2022 (Constantin Eckner writes).

Tel is a freewheeling, fearless teenager with the full repertoire of tricks. He likes to fool defenders with back-heels and stepovers, and his biggest attribute is his first touch. He is blessed with pace and, as a right-footer, his favoured position is on the left wing where he likes to receive the

Tel is a pacey young forward who has lacked game time under Kompany

ball and drive inside. However talent is useless if you are not playing. Before the start of the season, Bayern's director of sport, Max Eberl, said he hoped the 19-year-old would get more opportunities. Instead, after playing 41 times in 2023-24, under Vincent Kompany he has been more of a bench-warmer.

Tel had played only ten times for the Rennes first team before his move to Germany, and Julian Nagelsmann, the Bayern manager at the time, said: "I have a vision that he'll one day score 40 goals a season." He had just captained the French under-17 team to European victory.

Tel has made 14 appearances in all competitions this season and is yet to find the net. His decision-making needs to be refined but that may just be a matter of experience.



Sport

Courtney Lawes

Fin Smith should be England's fly half but Marcus Smith should stay in team

Pages 48-49



Palmer's deflected glory

Cole Palmer, left, celebrates after his shot was deflected into his own net by Aaron Wan-Bissaka. It was enough to give Chelsea a 2-1 win over West Ham, report pages 52-53



Martínez out for six months

Paul Hirst

Manchester United fear that they could be without Lisandro Martínez for six to eight months after scans showed that the Argentina defender ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament during their defeat by Crystal Palace.

Martínez underwent scans on his right knee in Manchester the day after he fell awkwardly following a challenge on Ismaila Sarr for the ball in United's 2-0 loss at Old Trafford.

The 27-year-old was clearly in great pain and looked to be in tears as he was carried off the field on a stretcher in the 82nd minute of the contest.

Losing the defender for such a long time is a huge setback for Ruben Amorim, who has started Martínez in 16 of his 19 matches in charge of United.

His absence will be felt in the dressing room too, where he is understood

Continued on page 50

First majority Hundred sale

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent

Sanjiv Goenka's RPSG group became the first investor to own a majority stake in a Hundred franchise when it bought 70 per cent of Manchester Originals yesterday, valuing the franchise at about £110 million.

RPSG is an Indian conglomerate, with its headquarters in Calcutta, and the owner of Lucknow Super Giants, the most expensive franchise in the Indian Premier League. It paid about £75 million to acquire both the ECB's 49 per cent stake and 21 per cent of the host venue's, Lancashire.

Goenka was one of the two main bidders for the Lord's franchise on Friday, losing out to a consortium of Silicon Valley technology entrepreneurs in an auction that valued it at

Continued on page 46

City complete £185m spree

Champions the biggest spenders by far as they end busy month with £50m González signing

Paul Hirst, Peter Rutzler, Gary Jacob, Tom Allnutt, Charlotte Duncker

Manchester City completed the £50 million signing of midfielder Nico González last night to take the struggling Premier League champions' spending in this transfer window to £185 million.

On a busy final day of the window, Tottenham Hotspur struck a deal to sign Mathys Tel, Bayern Munich's teenage forward, on loan with an

option to buy, while Crystal Palace completed a loan move for the Chelsea and England full back Ben Chilwell.

González was left out of the Porto squad for last night's match against Rio Ave, having undergone a medical with City staff in Portugal in the afternoon, and the deal, including a 4½-year contract, was announced as the window closed at 11pm.

The 23-year-old, who can play as a deep-lying midfielder or further up field, said: "There isn't a footballer in

the world who would not want to be part of this set-up. I know the reputation Pep [Guardiola] has and I cannot wait to work with him. In fact, I am honoured he wants me to play in his team."

City, who are languishing 15 points behind the Premier League leaders, Liverpool, and last night dropped out of the top four, have also brought in Omar Marmoush, Abdoukodie Khusanov and Vitor Reis during this window for a combined £135 million.

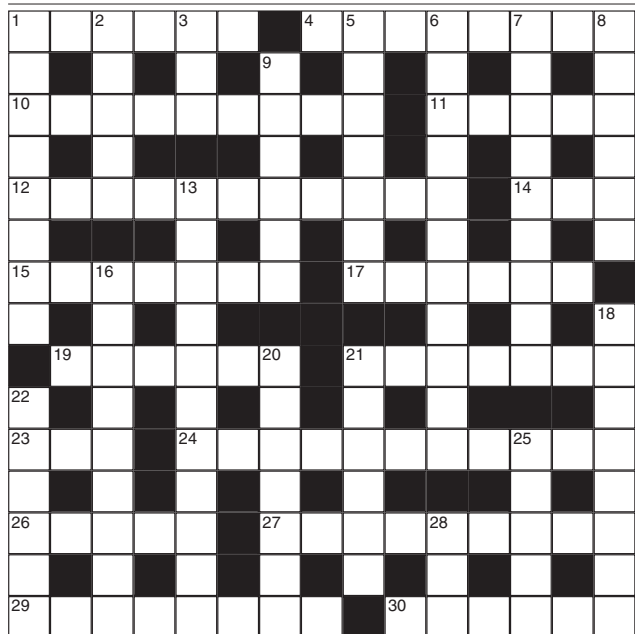
Their total outlay of £185 million

makes this the third-most expensive window of Guardiola's 9½-year spell in charge at the Etihad Stadium. In 2017, City spent big on players such as Kyle Walker and Ederson during a summer window in which their outlay was £213.8 million. In the summer of 2023, the likes of Jérémy Doku and Josko Gvardiol joined as City invested just over £200 million in their squad.

City have been able to spend so much this winter because they made a net

continued on page 55

Times Crossword 29,144



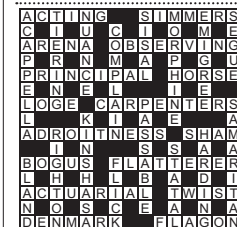
ACROSS

- 1 Riddler cross after hips broken by Batman, finally (6)
- 4 Glass boat (8)
- 10 Beach vehicle, due to bear north, full of problems (4,5)
- 11 Carry out crooked payment for union (5)
- 12 Returns to an irregular galactic body (7,4)
- 14 Musical more popular in Uruguay at first? (3)
- 15 Support Times on position trader takes on market (5,2)
- 17 Poet fooling around endlessly (6)
- 19 Inter Milan's leader bet on getting beaten (6)
- 21 Block board game piece (7)
- 23 Bit of needlework in gallery shunned by European (3)
- 24 Show fairy strange god (6,5)
- 26 Island not featured in *Scream* film (5)
- 27 Room left for launch zone (9)
- 29 Ancient way of cooking lard is OK (4,4)
- 30 Person at academy exhibits work (6)

DOWN

- 1 Take action to welcome Europeans and Africans (8)
- 2 Back uniform for religious adherent (5)
- 3 Centre of upside-down cake (3)
- 5 Keen kiosk gets rid of last sparkler (7)
- 6 Boss to get the drinks in? (5,6)
- 7 Fresh tear in cheap paper (9)
- 8 Guy ran off in piece of sci-fi literature (3,3)
- 9 Business with a commodity initially embraced by millennials? (6)
- 13 Flower and wine stolen before game (3-3,5)
- 16 Gold character left uncovered (2,7)
- 18 Mike stops to make a meal in the afternoon (5,3)
- 20 Italian city's expression of gratitude for drinks supplier (7)
- 21 Church exam for singers (6)
- 22 Secret police's period of inactivity (6)
- 25 A foreign greeting set up another? (5)
- 28 Introspective music contributing to pensive mood (3)

Yesterday's solution 29,143



Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

Newspapers support recycling

The recycled paper content of UK newspapers in 2023 was 45.5%



When to get tested

What the risks are

Men, what you need to know about prostate cancer

The top specialist's guide

times2

Male coercion regarding women's clothing used to be about more, not less

Robert Crampton



Ed Balls found the footage “upsetting”. I agree. Although I’d add “deeply creepy” to describe what happened on the red carpet at the Grammy awards ceremony in Los Angeles on Sunday night. Kanye West, 47, can be seen coaching his wife, Bianca Censori, 30, through the removal of her fur coat to stand naked under a sheer mesh (ie totally see-through) slip dress in front of the world’s media. Censori looks, to my eye, anxious, trapped, troubled. But also strangely catatonic. A body language expert said her posture went from confident and poised (in the coat) to “uncomfortable and embarrassed” (without it). Hardly surprising, really.

Since getting together with West, Censori is regularly photographed in public almost naked, reportedly at her husband’s insistence. West’s ex, Kim Kardashian, has said he controlled her wardrobe too. He has a long history of being an appalling human being, particularly the way he treats women. Obviously, Censori needs to bin him. But she needs guidance.

There’s a weird divergence going on. In the celebrity/social media/Trump White House world, men want women to be increasingly Barbiefied. Yet in the normal, non-famous, non-social media world, it seems to me things are slowly improving. Historically, male coercion regarding female clothing has been about getting them to wear more, not less. Now, across the civilised world, far fewer men attempt to control their wife’s wardrobe in this way than they did, say, 50 years ago. Even

traditionalists look aghast at Islamic dress codes for women.

Sexist Fifties adverts telling women how to dress to please men are now mocked. Judges don’t any longer tell rape victims they invited sexual assault by wearing a short skirt. The average woman in Middle England, out with the girls at prosecco o’clock on a Friday night, wears what she likes. If one of the gang confided



that her husband had issues with a short skirt or exposed cleavage, the rest would tell her to, in Mumsnet shorthand, “LTB” (leave the bastard).

I wouldn’t dream of telling my wife what to wear. (Or what not to wear, in West’s case.) More revealing? Less revealing? Looser? Tighter? Not my call. OK, if she wanted to model the Censori “fur coat then no knickers” vibe at, say, Uncle Dave’s 90th at the King Billy in Cottingham, west of Hull, I’d seek to dissuade her, for all sorts of sensible reasons, temperature not least among them. In that extreme case an intervention

would be merited. I certainly wouldn’t stand next to her in the street calling the shots.

Most normal men know to stay away from expressing opinions (always supposing we have any) on outfits. We confine ourselves, if we’ve any sense, to “you look great”. Asked to elaborate, we plead the Fifth Amendment to avoid self-incrimination. I once remarked that a complicated, layered new dress looked like it was still in its dry cleaning bag. That observation can still get me put on the full rinse cycle, 20 years later. Ever since, I’ve channelled my inner downed Allied airman captured by the Gestapo. Name, rank and serial number. That’s all you’re getting.

It feels wrong to even argue the case against West supposedly instructing his wife to expose herself, because the very act of doing so may confer spurious legitimacy. It’s like saying “it’s wrong to torture animals for fun”, as if there might be a world in which such cruelty had moral validity. But evidently making the case is necessary, because of the way youngsters, by which I mean a sizeable minority of young men, are influenced by the likes of West, Andrew Tate and indeed Donald Trump. These young folk like dictators, we found out last week. And capital punishment. And many of them don’t like non-submissive women. And they think such attitudes are appealing.

Take it from me, guys, they’re not. West-style micro-management is wrong. It’s weird, women hate it and you know what? It makes you look silly and weak because, hey, silly and weak is what you’re being. You’re trying to be all tough but rest assured, the watching world thinks you’re pathetic.

Gen Z and anxiety issues

Gareth Parker-Jones, head master of Rugby School, thinks Gen Z have anxiety issues because they’ve been mollycoddled in childhood, with their mums and dads exaggerating real-world risks while ignoring online dangers. He’s got a point, especially about the risks of leaving

youngsters to be babysat by their phones. Australia has the right idea: ban social media for under-16s.

Why would you risk exposing your teenager to suicide websites? Or anorexia forums? Or sadistic pornography? Why would you give an obvious wrong ‘un like Elon Musk unfettered influence over your kids? What possible upside is there to justify such mass parental neglect? Poor form used to be parking your kids in front of some cartoons while you

took a breather. Now, the average 14-year-old is vulnerable to every crackpot theory on the planet, and his or her parents throw up their hands in defeat and choose to view it as an inevitable part of growing up.

As for Parker-Jones’s argument that society is obsessed with eliminating all childhood risk in a “culture of safetyism”, that’s more complex. Just look at the sport that takes its name from Parker-Jones’s school. I suspect he’s

a rugby fan, as am I. But I’m glad my son’s school didn’t force him to play the game as a 12-year-old boy, as used to be the norm in many British schools.

Full-blooded contact sport will only ever be a minority taste, and should not be imposed on those not suited to it, as it was in my day. Yes, we should be all for more “adventurous play”, but that shouldn’t mean a return to “violence and pain makes a man of you”, which is, if we’re honest, how it used to be.

Trolls plunged me into a world of shame — will I face more abuse now?

Polly Vernon’s first book, *Hot Feminist*, was greeted with so much hostility from women that it has taken her ten years to risk writing another

I have been feeling a little off lately. Prone to anxiety, I thought it might be about winter at first — so miserable, so cold, so long. Then I thought it might be about the time that I was assaulted by a stranger in the street. Finally I realised it was about finishing my new book, a precursor to it being published, which, in my experience, is what happens before you get trolled to abstraction. Trolled into a terrible self-worth-demolishing state of shame. Trolled into feeling really not at all great about leaving the house.

I wrote my first book ten years ago. It was called *Hot Feminist*. It was a book about a lot of things. How — if! — feminist politics can ever be reconciled with a desire to be sexy, to look sexy, to flirt and be flirted with. It was about choosing your battles, making sure they actually were battles. (There was a trend for poor-me victim-embracing-style feminism abroad. I’ve always thought feminism should predominantly be about what you do for other women, the laws you get changed and so forth — rather than the pity you feel for yourself.)

It was a memoir. It was about the times I got pregnant when I didn’t want to be and how I managed that. The time I was nearly raped (awful). The time I went out with a footballer (hilarious). The time I worked in a cocktail bar and the times I worked in the fashion world and the times I worked in newsrooms. It was, above all else, a book about abortion rights, how important it had been to me to access them and how fragile they are (which, given what’s happened subsequently, in the US and Poland, was valid, if nothing else about that book was).

I can say that now. I couldn’t for a long time. I couldn’t even look at it for a long time. It was published in May 2015, then promptly destroyed by the internet. By other women, on the internet. By other women who considered themselves to be feminists

and who honestly considered ripping me to shreds to be a feminist act in itself. It, and by extension I — it was my life story, the cover bore a picture of my face — was called “stupid” and “dangerous” and “silly” and “gross”. “Sloppy” and “vacuous” and “foolish” and “vomit-inducing”.

For a few weeks that summer, I was one of those women it was OK to hate on the internet. It was fashionable to hate me. What happened to me wasn’t, for the main part, literary criticism. It was more an exercise in legitimised mass meanness.

What kind of things were said to me? Things like: “OMG I’ve just seen your book and been sick in my mouth!” — someone on Twitter, who’d just walked past Waterstones. “What an utter piece of shit!” — someone else on Twitter, with “feminist” in her bio. Most of them had “feminist” in their bio. “Who’d actually read that f***ing bilge?” said another.

Very few of the people trolling my book claimed to have read any of it. “What did you expect?” asked a panellist on a TV show which I’d been invited on to talk about the furore.

“Honestly? People should read it first,” I said. The panellist shook her head at my naivety.

The other reason I knew people weren’t reading my book was because had they been buying it in a way that correlated with their ire, it would have been at the top of the bestsellers list. It was by no means a complete flop — but nor did it trouble JK Rowling in terms of sales.

“You’re the kind of stupid cow who thinks stripping is good for the sisterhood,” spat someone else. (I had said no such thing, but she wouldn’t know — she hadn’t read my book.)

Hot Feminist got a mixed response from reviewers, from raves in some papers and mags to multiple kickings in a newspaper I’d worked for years. All of this nearly destroyed me.

Let me tell you what happens to you when you get trolled on the internet.



Let me tell you how it feels when the whole thing turns against you for a few weeks, when your name gets booted around it like it's some kind of disgusting football. You feel awful. You feel desperately lonely. Because it is just you, on your own, with all these things being said, all this gleeful rage you don't understand. And the couple of people who stand up for you online instantly start getting it in the neck too, so then they back off sharply.

And you feel physically threatened. As if you've been suddenly surrounded on the street by what starts off as a small group kicking off, all convinced you said something you just didn't say, something really offensive and gross, and you try to explain you didn't say it, those weren't the words you used, they maybe misheard? Or misunderstood? But then? They get angrier with you for suggesting they're wrong, when it's clearly you, *you're* wrong, and they get more threatening yet, accusing you of worse things, things that have no bearing at all on anything you have ever said or written or done, but who cares? Others join them — because being mean is fun! — and that small group becomes a baying mob.

And after a week or so of this, of you flinching every time you see even the shape of your name on social media, you start wondering if you *are* guilty of those things your detractors claim. Maybe you went crazy and wrote 80,000 words of hate speech instead of that mild-mannered book (which smuggled in some stronger points about abortion and rape) you'd planned on writing?

You'd check, except lately the sight of your own book has started to make you flinch. Which is particularly unfortunate in my case, because that

book has a portrait of my face on it. Which has left me feeling uncomfortable about my own reflection. So I've started avoiding it too. My own face. And you find it hard to leave the house because your nervous system can't quite distinguish between the internet apparently hating you and the intention of random strangers you pass in the street. And you can't really eat or sleep (you keep getting up in the middle of the night to check what new horror Twitter is hurling at you).

And the worst of it passes in a few weeks, a month; the tweets become less frequent, less vitriolic. A newer, shinier target shuffles into their sight lines. Which should be better, right? Except in that relative quiet, that's when the shame kicks in. When you're left with your intellect wondering what the hell just happened, while your nervous system, your subconscious, your deepest, darkest, most hidden parts are going: *but of course!* This is what I deserve. Because I am nothing. *That's* how getting trolled on the internet feels.

It took me months to pull myself out of the shame hole. It was only 2015, internet trolling was new, I was the first person I knew to have experienced anything like it. This only added to my loneliness, of course. When it happened to me, concepts such as "internet pile-ons" and "cancellation" hadn't been identified, let alone named. I had no lexicon or precedent for what was happening.

But, crucially, I got through it. Trust me: it can happen to any of us. It took me ten years to even be able to think about doing it again. And now I have a publication date of June, the fear of trolling is seeping in again.

Kate, you're wrong! Looking glamorous is your superpower

The Princess of Wales's office will no longer brief on her fashion choices. Where was the harm, asks **Daisy Goodwin**

The Princess of Wales rivals Queen Elizabeth II in her understanding of the power of image in the projection of royalty to the public, which is a pompous way of saying that she dresses beautifully and always looks fabulous. Even after the most gruelling year imaginable she is back on our front pages, smiling, glossy-haired and wearing clothes that manage to be both aspirational and relatable.

So it is surprising that she has let it be known that her office will no longer be briefing the details of her outfits. The idea is that she wants to be known for substance rather than style. This seems a bit like the chef of a three-star Michelin restaurant insisting that people should eat his dishes blindfolded so they are not distracted by the presentation.

Unlike some other royals whom it would be invidious to mention (I remember Sarah, Duchess of York in the 1980s) the princess's wardrobe never makes the headlines for the wrong reasons. She even manages to carry off the hats without looking as though she is in fancy dress. It's quite a feat; Penny Mordaunt briefly became a national treasure for looking stylish while carrying a sword at the coronation. The Princess of Wales looks terrific whether she is running through cornfields in rustic florals or wearing a black veil at a Remembrance Day service. I'd say that was a superpower, so why on earth would she want to distance herself from it?

I can only assume that she feels that the emphasis on her clothes undermines the serious nature of her work. That after a year of existential crisis, she's decided that there are more important things in life than being the most important person in British fashion. Perhaps it is even a feminist position of the "stop objectifying me" variety. I quite understand why an intelligent mother of three doesn't want to be reduced to a list of stockists. But I'd argue that the influence that her clothes wield is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact if I were a male member of the royal family I would be green with envy at the way that a princess can lift the nation's mood simply by wearing pink.

Royal dressing doesn't have to be glamorous or even fashionable — Queen Elizabeth was such an outlier that her off-duty tweeds and headscarf made her more of a fashion influencer than the carefully contemporary Princess of Wales will ever be. Done right, an outfit carries more weight than any amount of judiciously chosen words or carefully spun initiatives. For the famously discreet Queen Elizabeth

it was a way for her to express herself without words — the blue and yellow hat that she wore to the state opening of parliament right after the Brexit referendum being a case in point. Coincidence? Or a carefully thought-through riposte to attempts by some pro-Brexit politicians to "out" her as a sympathiser?

The closest that her son can get to that kind of sartorial political statement is to wear a tie in the colours of the Greek flag after Rishi Sunak snubbed the prime minister of Greece.

Look at the traditional balcony photos at the Trooping the Colour — the men are indistinguishable in their uniforms and morning suits; it's the women's clothes that tell you whether you're looking at a picture taken in 1955 or 2025. When Queen Elizabeth wore a skirt that hovered above the knee at the Prince of Wales's investiture in 1969 she effortlessly turned the cod-medieval ceremony into something contemporary. Prince Charles was trussed up in knee breeches and silk stockings, and his mother wore what for her was a miniskirt. The hemline was not just a detail, it was making the vital point that the monarchy is ancient and modern.

Does the Princess of Wales really imagine that people will stop noticing, writing and obsessing about her clothes because she isn't telling people where they come from? The fashion press will know anyway, and the rest of us don't care if her earrings came from Cartier or Claire's Accessories. My favourite theory is that she, like me, has become hooked on Vestiaire Collective/Vinted but doesn't want the world to know.

It can't be easy being one of the world's most scrutinised women, and if she wants to make the life of the scrutinisers a tad more difficult, who can blame her? But it would be a mistake if she thought that there was something trivial about being impeccably dressed. With her clothes, as with everything else she does, the least aristocratic person to marry an heir to the throne has shown that she is, like Mary Poppins, practically perfect in every way.

I can only imagine how nerve-racking it must have been to appear in public again after going through chemotherapy but she's wrong to think that being interested in her clothes means that we don't take her seriously. To paraphrase Queen Elizabeth, she has to be seen to be believed. Like it or not, the medium — whether it's a tailored coat dress or a Barbour jacket — is the message.

Daisy Goodwin's play *By Royal Appointment* opens at the Theatre Royal Bath on June 5; theatreroyal.org.uk



The Princess of Wales at the premiere of *No Time to Die* in London in 2021, top, and visiting the Ty Hafan hospice in Sully, Wales, last month

health

Prostate cancer: what all men need to know

Professor Hashim Ahmed is globally renowned for his research of the disease. He explains the latest advancements in treatment to **Anna Maxted**

Prostate cancer has overtaken breast cancer as the most common form of the disease in the UK: a record 55,000 men were diagnosed with it in 2023. These are frightening numbers.

Professor Hashim Ahmed, chair of urology at Imperial College London and an internationally renowned expert in prostate cancer diagnosis, says the “huge rise” is essentially a backlog. So few men were diagnosed during Covid, and post-pandemic that NHS England and Prostate Cancer UK launched a successful campaign “to find those missing men”. Several celebrities have also raised awareness of a disease that has affected them personally, including Chris Hoy.

Yet prostate cancer kills 12,000 men each year — despite being treatable and curable, especially if caught early. More accurate, early testing is needed and the £42 million Transform study, co-led by Ahmed, into how effective prompt diagnosis of prostate cancer can best be achieved is under way.

When asked about the biggest mistake men make regarding prostate cancer, Ahmed says there are two. “To not think about it, to ignore the whole debate. Or jump straight into a test without thinking about the pros and cons.” Men need to “proactively think about prostate cancer”, he says, and “then decide, is it worth me as an individual going to my GP and saying, ‘How do I get tested for prostate cancer?’” With that in mind, Ahmed explains what all men need to know.

What symptoms should I be looking for?

Prostate cancer doesn’t cause any symptoms in its early stages, Ahmed says. By the time it’s causing pain, blood in the urine or problems passing urine, it’s advanced. But issues with passing urine aren’t necessarily a cause for worry, Ahmed says. “Generally, problems passing urine, getting up at night or the flow being slow, or having to go frequently, are not symptoms of cancer. Those are symptoms of men ageing, and the prostate growing in a non-cancerous way and putting pressure on the water passage.

“In fact, there is no real correlation with symptoms,” he adds. It’s why campaigns now focus on, “Men, do you know that there’s a blood test that you can have to check for prostate cancer?” rather than symptoms.

What is the blood test?

The PSA (prostate-specific antigen). The prostate-specific antigen is a chemical secreted from the prostate, and if it’s above three nanograms per millilitre of blood — that’s the

threshold used in men between the ages of 50 and 75 — then the GP will refer you to hospital, Ahmed says, unless there are other causes for the PSA being raised, eg inflammation caused by a urinary infection, sexual activity, or heavy exercise in the 48 hours before the PSA test, such as cycling. However, the PSA has poor accuracy — 15 per cent of men with high-risk cancers have low PSA scores. And 75 per cent of men with a raised PSA score will not have cancer.

Why is there no screening programme?

GPs are advised against proactively offering the PSA test to any man without symptoms. “There is no letter through the post saying, ‘Come and have a test to check for prostate cancer,’” Ahmed says. Many find this outrageous, but he adds, “Of three big studies to look at whether screening improves survival of men compared with not screening, only one showed an increase in survival.”

Plus, he says, when you screen for prostate cancer, you find cancers in the prostate that don’t need to be treated. “A third of men above 50 have tiny bits of cancer in their prostate that they will never know about, that will never grow or spread, that will never cause them any problems in quality or quantity of life.” But if they’re found in screening, “A lot of men end up wanting to be treated because they get so anxious.” He emphasises that GPs aren’t “banned” from offering the PSA, and if a man feels certain he’d benefit “most GPs will say you can have it”.

Researchers are investigating the value of targeted screening of those men aged 45 to 50 who have a higher risk of prostate cancer, he adds. For men in their early forties, the cancer risk is “very, very low”, he says. Plus, “MRI scans in that group are known to be much less accurate, so we have to be very careful about calls to start screening men from the age of 40.”

If I’m a man approaching 50, should I get a PSA test anyway?

Surely Ahmed has had a PSA test? “I’m 48,” he says. “I don’t have a family history of it, I’m not black — which are the two additional risk factors — so, no.” Though if you have family members who’ve suffered from prostate cancer, breast and ovarian cancers, or are of black ethnic origin, a group whose risk of prostate cancer is twice that of other ethnicities, “We certainly think you should start to test your PSA at the age of 50. Some people think 45.” Why not earlier? At present, it’s not thought to be safe. “We could end up doing too many invasive biopsies.”



Professor Hashim Ahmed. Right: Chris Hoy

“A third of men above 50 have tiny bits of cancer in their prostate that they will never know about

Should I pay for a ‘second opinion’ screening?

The EpiSwitch prostate screening test (PSE), for example, is designed to work in conjunction with a PSA test. If your PSA is raised, this blood test costing £905 (originating from the US, where prostate cancer is diagnosed differently) is advertised as helping to provide a more accurate risk assessment — potentially avoiding the need for a biopsy.

Ahmed says it’s one of several tests that look at raised biomarkers — eg circulating tumour cells, broken bits of DNA, or raised levels of chemicals released into the blood by cancers generally — to help determine risk. But, he says, “There’s so much ‘noise’ in the blood it’s quite difficult to be accurate.” A promising approach but more research is needed, he says. In the private sector for prostate cancer screening “almost none of us are using additional biomarkers”.

What happens after a PSA test?

You should receive PSA test results within a fortnight. If you’re then referred for an MRI, you should get an appointment within two weeks. The standard NHS scan is a 40-minute multiparametric MRI (mpMRI) for prostate cancer.

“It has three elements,” Ahmed says. The first scans the anatomy, but does not show cancers clearly. “The second is looking at how densely packed cells are in the prostate. And cancers tend to be more densely packed. Those scans are very good at showing up cancers.” The third element involves contrast dye. “Cancers generally have

more blood supply, and if you inject dye into the vein those tumours light up like lightbulbs.”

Ahmed led the UK study in 2017 that showed this approach (PSA, then MRI, then biopsy if necessary) is much more accurate and safe than going straight from PSA to biopsy. However, he says an MRI might not be suitable for men with pacemakers, kidney problems or hip replacements. This group might simply be monitored, or go straight to a biopsy, or have an ultrasound scan.

What happens after the MRI?

If the MRI indicates that a biopsy is advisable, most men will have one under local anaesthetic. “It’s not a nice experience,” Ahmed admits. “You have to leave your dignity at the door — we place men in the gynaecological position that women are used to. It’s tolerable in the vast majority. In the right hands, it’s very straightforward.”

Previously, “We’d go straight to a biopsy,” he adds. “It was a horrendous test. The needles went through the rectum. They were dirty, caused lots of infections and they were random. You couldn’t see where the tumours were.” Since 2017 biopsies are transperineal — “they go through the skin rather than through the back passage. That



COVER: SHUTTERSTOCK, BELOW: GETTY IMAGES



has led to a huge drop in infection risk. It's much more accurate as well."

What happens if I have cancer?

If you have a confirmed diagnosis of cancer that is low risk, you should not have any treatment, Ahmed says. "Active surveillance" is what we would advise. We'll keep a careful eye on it. In the small percentage of men where it changes, we can step in and treat it."

This means, Ahmed says, "You've gone through a PSA, it's a little bit high, you've had an MRI scan that's shown something mildly or moderately suspicious, you've had a biopsy, and on that biopsy, when the pathologist looks under the microscope at the cancer cells, he gives the cancer cells a score — what we call a Gleason Score." The lowest score is 3+3=6 for a low-risk disease. (It goes up to 5+5=10.) If you have 3+3=6, the chance that cancer will become more significant over five to ten years is 5 per cent. "That means 95 per cent of men see no change in their cancer. That's why we shouldn't be treating these men, providing they're psychologically comfortable with it," Ahmed says.

These men should be monitored with PSA blood tests every three to six months. If the level starts to

consistently rise, they get another MRI scan and potentially another biopsy, he says. "It's really safe. Even if they're in that 1 in 20 where the cancer changes and needs to be treated, they don't lose that window of curability."

How about getting treatment?

Studies have shown that if you treat these low-risk cancers, treatment versus doing nothing offers no survival advantage, Ahmed says. For the vast majority diagnosed, "Your treatment options are surgery or radiotherapy. And surgery or radiotherapy can cause leakage of urine in up to a third of men. They have to wear pads for the rest of their life. At least 50 per cent will lose sexual function completely — even with Viagra. And 5-10 per cent, if they have radiotherapy, will have back passage problems — bleeding, diarrhoea, discomfort." There are reports of depression and divorce.

"It has a massive effect on men's quality of life," he says.

What if I'm diagnosed as medium risk?

The vast majority of men diagnosed are medium risk. In most NHS centres, they have a choice between a prostatectomy, surgery that removes the prostate, or radiotherapy, which irradiates the prostate, Ahmed says. These treatments are effective "but at a significant cost. The nerves that give rise to sexual function are wrapped around the prostate. So if you treat the whole prostate, those nerves get damaged."

Almost all prostate surgeries are robotically assisted, Ahmed says. "What that simply means is there are robotic arms placed inside the tummy of the man through 1cm incisions, and those arms mimic what the surgeon is doing at another station. It's fantastic technology in that it's led to less pain, less bleeding, quicker recovery. But, compared with open surgery, where you make a big cut, studies show it hasn't reduced the risk of erectile dysfunction or urine leakage."

The muscle that stops you from leaking urine is partly inside and partly outside the prostate. "Again, if you treat the whole prostate, the water passage and that muscle get damaged." The back passage and bladder are millimetres from the prostate.

"If you have radiation, unfortunately it's not that accurate even with modern technology, and can cause back passage symptoms — bleeding, diarrhoea, discomfort — or bladder symptoms — needing to rush to the toilet, not making it in time."

Ahmed notes that a minority of men with medium-risk disease — with a Gleason score of 7 — can also go under active surveillance "very safely". "They have a 1 in 5 chance that the cancer will change and grow," he says.

Ask for focal therapy

About half of men with medium-risk prostate cancer have just one tumour, occupying only 5 to 10 per cent of the prostate, Ahmed says. For this group, focal therapy — cryotherapy and HIFU (high-intensity focused ultrasound) — is a superior option to surgery or radiotherapy.

"Cryotherapy and HIFU are ways of destroying the cancer by freezing or heating. By treating just the tumour, the damage caused to the nerves, muscles, back passage and bladder are massively reduced." With surgery or

radiotherapy 50 per cent of men will lose erectile function. With HIFU and cryotherapy it's 5 to 10 per cent.

With a prostatectomy, a third of men will leak urine. "With HIFU and cryotherapy that goes down to 1 per cent. And back passage symptoms are very rare." Recurrence risks are similar, he adds (for 20 per cent, even with surgery or radiotherapy, cancer will recur). "The difference is, you can have HIFU and cryotherapy again." HIFU and cryotherapy have a survival rate of 99.9 per cent at 10 years. "So you don't compromise your survival or recurrence. And you have a vastly reduced side-effect profile."

Focal therapy costs £15,000 to £16,000 privately but five NHS centres, in London and the southeast, offer it. "Most men eligible for this — 10,000 to 12,000 every year — are not even told about it," Ahmed says.

What if it's high risk?

High-risk prostate cancer is when the cancer is quite big or spread beyond the prostate, Ahmed says. Then, "Men have to be treated quite aggressively with surgery, sometimes a combination of surgery and radiotherapy and chemotherapy drugs. They have most to lose in terms of survival if we don't treat aggressively."

And if the disease is advanced?

"Almost every two to three years a new drug comes along that shows an improvement in survival over the standard drugs," Ahmed says. And according to a recent study from UCL, "If you treat the prostate in men whose cancer has spread with radiotherapy, there seems to be an improvement in survival."

"If you then hit the areas of the cancer that has spread with some targeted, very precise radiotherapy, that also seems to improve survival, according to a number of studies." It's not a cure, he adds, but getting rid of as many cancer cells as possible seems to prevent these cancers from becoming resistant to drugs.

Can I protect my prostate by making lifestyle changes?

Ahmed recommends eating cooked tomatoes, pomegranate (fruit or juice), green tea (one cup a day), mixed nuts as they contain antioxidants that help to calm tissue down and lead to fewer mutations, and brassica vegetables, such as cauliflower and kale. It's not known whether "power foods" prevent cancer, he says, "but there's reasonable evidence that they are good for your prostate". And if you're on active surveillance, "There's really good evidence to show if you make those dietary changes it reduces the chance of the cancer getting worse."

Ahmed also recommends "aerobic exercise — swimming, jogging, cycling, brisk walking — for at least 20 to 30 minutes three times a week, so you get a bit breathless from it. That will help protect your prostate."

If I require surgery, how should I prepare?

As well as the dietary and exercise advice above, Ahmed recommends pelvic floor strengthening exercises to "help recover your urine control". (Try an app such as Squeezy for guidance.) This may also help with recovering erectile function, Ahmed says. He adds that regular sexual activity, alone or partnered, "is really important before and after to maximise the chances of erectile function recovery".

Midlife guys! It's time you tried Pilates

By Georgina Roberts

Think of Jeremy Clarkson and you'll probably picture him behind the wheel of a sports car or a tractor rather than working up a sweat in the gym. But now, aged 64, he's become a poster boy for Pilates. On Sunday, Clarkson revealed that a friend bought him "something called a Reformer [a Pilates machine], which is a sort of sex orgy dungeon table." His verdict? "Whisper this, I'm not unenjoying it ... I'm always surprised when I wake the morning after a session to find my legs are stiff, because it doesn't really feel like I've done very much at all."

Clarkson joins an A-list of paid-up male fans of Pilates, including David Beckham, 49, who said it has given him the best body of his life.

"A lot of NFL players do Pilates now, as well as a lot of footballers in the Premiership," says Max Lobatto, the Pilates trainer at PI Studios and KX, a private members' club in Chelsea, southwest London, where Hugh Grant, 64, is rumoured to be a

member. Lobatto's classes are now "pretty much 50-50 split in men and women", he says.

Gaby Noble, the founder of Exhale Pilates London, taught the exercises to the Manchester United footballer Christian Eriksen as well as Harry Styles during his One Direction tours. "Harry Styles had a gruelling workload," she says.

"Pilates kept him mobile and recovering quicker, the same as an athlete."

It's not just youngsters like Styles who can benefit — Lobatto has a 76-year-old male client. Pilates builds balance, which can help to prevent falls in later life, he says.

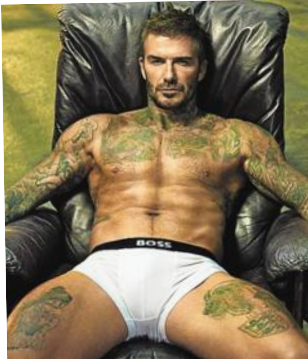
A lot of Lobatto's male clients come to him after hurting their back lifting weights that are too heavy. Pilates can help to prevent injury — and with recovery from injury, he explains. "What we're trying to do in Pilates is lengthen the muscles, strengthen the joints."

Lobatto spent five seasons working for Brighton and Hove Albion football team, doing Pilates with them. "When I was working for the football club they were in the gym a lot, then they had to go crazy on the field. That's when you pull a muscle or get a knee injury. Pilates really helps with injury prevention and longevity of playing."

That said, injuries in Pilates classes that use Reformer machines are becoming more common. "You can still hurt yourself doing Pilates if it's not taught properly," he says. "The thing that's important is that they are taught by someone who's actually qualified properly. This is the trouble nowadays — people can go and do a weekend course and suddenly they're trained to teach Reformer classes."

So be careful with that sex orgy dungeon table, Mr Clarkson.

TOM BARNES FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES; MERT AND MARCUS/BOSS



Jeremy Clarkson and David Beckham are Pilates fans

times2

The trouble with Lord Alli, the

In this exclusive extract from their new book, **Get In, Patrick Maguire and Gabriel Pogrund** reveal how the peer's generosity backfired on Keir Starmer

Keir Starmer never bridged the divide at the heart of No 10 between his political strategist Morgan McSweeney and his chief of staff Sue Gray. Some doubt he ever noticed it. That task fell instead to Waheed Alli, who bestrode the growing chasm at the heart of the Labour Party like nobody else. Baron Alli of Norbury — though to Labour people, it was always just Waheed — defied easy description, even by those who could not escape him. He was a self-made millionaire devoted to Labour politics; the son of a Guyanese car mechanic who had taken ermine and a seat in the Lords at 34; a conviction Blairite who believed in Keir Starmer's project. For decades he had lavished his wealth upon the Labour Party.

“When Keir needed new suits and spectacles, Alli bought them

Alli had made his fortune as a banker — a self-taught City boy. Then showbusiness became his business. *The Big Breakfast*, the estates of Agatha Christie, Enid Blyton and Beatrix Potter: at one time or another Waheed owned the rights to many of Britain's youthful memories.

New Labour went to his parties and planned their campaigns from his Kent mansion. But they never embraced Alli as anything more than a friendly millionaire. “Puffed up, peacockish, full of himself,” recalled one survivor of Blair's governments. “Skilful, sinuous ... prepared to throw his own money around. He never questions anything politically. No political views.”

Under Starmer that changed. In 2023 he made Alli his head of election fundraising. That title underplayed his influence. In Keir Starmer's Labour Party, Alli was everywhere, and everywhere was Alli. When circumstances demanded the leader address the nation — another outbreak of Covid in December 2021, the death of the Queen in September 2022 — he spoke from behind a desk in Alli's Covent Garden penthouse. When he needed new suits and spectacles, Alli bought them — at a cost of some £16,000. When McSweeney and his inner circle met to plan Labour's general election campaign, they did so at another of Alli's homes: a Soho townhouse at 21 Meard Street. When Sue Gray wanted

to dine with Tony Blair, and when Labour's donors wished to socialise in private, they did so behind the closed doors of Alli's empire.

With the chief of staff he advised on who Starmer might appoint to ministerial rank, the boards of government departments and other public offices. He drew up plans to supply the shadow cabinet with advisers without breaching the strict electoral law that restricted spending. Waheed had at last become indispensable to the leadership of the Labour Party even if — like so many others — he was privately critical of the leader himself. “He doesn't understand, command or control,” Alli complained to one friend in 2023. He sought to command and control the Labour Party himself. Those who worked with him watched him relish the new sensation of power, rather than mere proximity to it.

“There are four people in charge of everything,” Alli said to one junior official as he passed their desk in Labour HQ. “Morgan, Pat [McFadden, Labour's national campaign co-ordinator], Sue, and me.” Others believed he had designs on a ministerial role for himself, potentially a plum post in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Whatever his ambitions, Alli remained in charge of Labour's money. Starmer needed more of that than ever. Nothing rivalled Alli's proximity to power, or fundraising prowess. “It was like watching a hurricane happen,” said one Labour official. “I referred a donor who told me he wanted to give fifty or a hundred grand. I had a chat with Waheed, who said: ‘Well, I'll take him out for lunch.’ After that he spent a lot more than he was planning to give.” Alli had become the judge, jury and executioner of Labour's reputation. That same official recalls a man determined to avoid the rows over dodgy donors and political favours that proved part of Blair's undoing. “His threshold for scandal and what was permissible was just so much lower than anyone else's.”

As the rest of Starmer's advisers critiqued each other's decisions, at times Alli alone decided what was acceptable. After he took it upon himself to buy the leader a new wardrobe, it was suggested that he might instead donate his money to Labour HQ, which in turn could have bought Starmer his suits. He refused. “I'll do what I want with my money,” he snapped. “Waheed would not have allowed any other donor to give directly but made an exception for himself,” an adviser to the leadership said. “That was a mistake. Keir was advised against taking Waheed's money personally, but Waheed insisted. And Sue, because of her



Lord Alli

“Keir was advised against taking Waheed's money personally, but Waheed insisted

extremely close relationship with Waheed, went along with it.”

When his role was later the subject of media scrutiny, Labour insisted that Alli had never wielded any influence over policy. That was not true. In late 2023, Angela Rayner had planned to announce new measures to ban overseas cash finding its way into British politics. By Starmer's own logic it was an uncontroversial policy. Labour defined itself in opposition to Tory sleaze. On November 17 Rayner's adviser Kate Robson had emailed the leader's office to inform them of her intentions. “The strategic aim of the policy is to close loopholes in UK donation law which currently allow dodgy money to enter our politics — primarily through the Tory party — via shell companies or companies with no connection to the UK,” Robson wrote.

Here was a Rayner policy that none of Starmer's advisers could argue with. Starmer himself was committed to the concept: Rayner's team reported that it had originated in a “high-level meeting in March in which Keir and Angela agreed to a series of recommendations relating to elections”. Robson went on: “We are looking to announce this on Dec 14th in an event with Chatham House where Ange will make a speech. We want to speak about how a Labour government will protect democracy across the world, celebrate our strong rules on clean donations, and put forward a clean marker in the sand for the Conservatives to clean up their donations. To flag from the outset, Angela wants to do this event with Gordon Brown, and we have already been in touch with his office to secure the date.”

The leader's office did not object. Six days later, Robson confirmed that McSweeney was “happy, as long as we



don't come across as anti-donor. He says the message needs to be that people should be able to contribute, to give back. Any voter/anyone with a genuine connection to Britain has a democratic right to donate and engage in vibrant democracy — be that doctors, nurses, or businesspeople. This policy is about [preventing] people who don't have skin in the game from funnelling money in British democracy ...” Rayner's team knew, too, that Labour had itself turned down £2.7 million from foreign donors. Brown duly arranged his flights from Scotland to London.

Then even the deputy leader of the Labour Party and a former prime minister learnt they answered to Alli. “With a week to go,” claimed a party

man with the money

JASON ALDEN/EYEVINE; GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY



He made Tory donors seem so bigoted that the Labour Party would later quote his comments in emails soliciting donations.

Alli, aggrieved by the message he feared the exposé might send to Labour's own plutocrats, made his displeasure clear. He feared the story risked a journalistic open season on all donors, regardless of their party allegiance. That morning staff at HQ, nobody could find a single copy of *The Guardian*. Some swore they had seen a colleague hiding the paper away, to spare them Alli's wrath in case he saw it.

Labour's preparations for government gave every appearance of methodical planning and discipline. Starmer and Gray met the cabinet secretary at the London office of Waheed Alli and a property made available by David Sainsbury, another multimillionaire donor. Alli, despite the concerns of colleagues wary of the conflict of interests that might arise from his other role corralling corporate money behind the Labour Party, busied himself vetting appointees for ministerial

office and other government posts. He kept a chart with empty slots for every position in every government department. They called it Operation Integrity.

After the election, nobody knew why Waheed Alli had been given a pass to Downing Street. Not even Alli was sure. Unrestricted access to the corridors of power is usually given only to special advisers and civil servants. But Sue Gray made sure he could come and go as he pleased. Those who had already believed Alli blurred the lines between his role as Starmer's fundraiser-in-chief and political counsellor were uneasy. He had, after all, donated £500,000 to the prime minister personally. Absurd though it may have sounded to the leadership of the Labour Party — most of whom had known Alli for years — there was only one way in which his special treatment was likely to be perceived. Starmer, the man who had promised zero tolerance on any hint of impropriety, was vulnerable to accusations that he had given special favours to his most generous donor.

So it proved. The prime minister and

“Like so many others, he was privately critical of the leader

cabinet were deluged with accusations of cronyism as the scale of Alli's generosity attracted serious scrutiny for the first time. He had bought designer dresses for Victoria Starmer — the receipt of which was declared late by her husband. He had gifted Angela Rayner a free stay at his New York penthouse with her sometime partner, Sam Tarry, whose presence was not declared under parliament's stringent anti-sleaze rules either. Bridget Phillipson, the education secretary, had hosted a 40th birthday party funded by £10,000 of Alli's money, too.

In opposition, Alli had been advised against donating to the prime minister personally. When it came to the reputational damage other donors might inflict he was always fastidious. “I used to get quite pissed off with him,” said a Labour staffer entrusted with raising money from wealthy businesspeople. “We turned down multiple seven-figure donations. If he thought there was any whiff to the money he would not touch it.” Yet those who know Alli best concluded he longed to be indispensable to a Labour leader who paid him the respect his contemporaries never had. Said one veteran of the Blair and Brown governments of his treatment: “Waheed was used terribly.” But Starmer was always grateful, and Alli was only too happy to be useful.

© Patrick Maguire and Gabriel Pogrund 2025. Extracted from *Get In: The Inside Story of Labour Under Starmer* by Patrick Maguire and Gabriel Pogrund, to be published by Bodley Head on February 13, £25

Cambridge students ... do behave!

What's the worst thing you did at university? Go on, have a root around in the brain archives. Maybe it was cheating on your small-town girlfriend with the attractive history student you sat next to once. Maybe it was locking yourself in a professor's office the morning after a horrific night out and throwing up in their wastepaper bin. Or maybe it was eating a lukewarm doner kebab off the pavement, picking cigarette butts out of the garlic sauce.

All students dabble in debauchery of some kind, but according to a report yesterday, students at the University of Cambridge have been behaving particularly badly. Undergraduates at Corpus Christi College have been banned from attending formal dinners — three-course meals at which gowns must be worn and Latin recited before sitting down to eat — as punishment. “Two toilets had large amounts of vomit on the floor and in the shower, one had faeces on the floor and in the bin,” the dean of the college wrote.

It's no surprise that Cambridge students get a bad reputation with behaviour like that. But when I was at Cambridge I witnessed something entirely different. I belonged to an undoubtedly well-behaved college. It had the highest state school acceptance rate and, in my humble opinion, the politest pupils.

Formal dinners were civilised affairs. Parents regularly attended as guests. We befriended the young catering staff. The only time anything had to be explicitly forbidden was a ban on pennyng: a game that involved prompting someone to finish their drink by dropping copper coins into their wine glass. On one occasion a couple of generally well-mannered girls danced too vigorously on a table and snapped its legs, but they fulfilled the community service they received as punishment, spending a week or two serving drinks at college events. We never vomited on the street or emptied our bowels into communal bins. The only misplaced bodily fluids were those of the brave boys who'd break into King's College after dark and urinate merrily on the walls of the famous 15th century chapel.

Even the drinking societies, in relative terms, were quite polite. There was a policy that if you were avoiding alcohol you could still sit in.

Bad behaviour, that really horrible *Riot Club* kind, was limited to the university sports clubs, and even then it was rare. The dean of Corpus Christi's admitted that the ban was down to the “stupid actions” of a handful of individuals. That's the truth: not every undergraduate is causing drunken chaos without remorse.

Troublemaking is what happens when young adults get together. I've heard stories of far worse behaviour from friends who ended up at Birmingham or Bristol. Those Corpus Christi students messed up, but at least if the partying ban serves its purpose they will have learnt their lesson.

Ceci Browning

official privy to the fraught discussions, “Morgan pulled [the policy] ... it turned out Waheed told Morgan to pull it, and so he did.” The reason for the intervention by Alli, who himself had interests in the Cayman Islands, was never made clear.

On other occasions it seemed as if Alli took a closer interest in what the Labour Party said and did than its own leader. Three months on from the speech Rayner never gave, on March 11, 2024, *The Guardian* reported that Frank Hester — the Conservative Party's biggest individual donor — had told colleagues at his healthcare technology company that the sight of Diane Abbott on television made him want “to hate all black women”. Hester went on: “I think she should be shot.”

Sir Keir and Victoria Starmer entering 10 Downing Street for the first time after Labour won the election in July. Above right: Bridget Phillipson, top, and Angela Rayner

MICHAEL BUCKNER/WWD VIA GETTY IMAGES; JOHNS PLO/SPLASH NEWS

'You will look amazing!' Inside the A-list feud that keeps on giving

Before their trial, Justin Baldoni has posted all his messages with Blake Lively online. By **Stuart Heritage**



First the good news: the ugly public spat between Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni over the production of last year's film *It Ends with Us* finally has an endpoint. The bad news is that it is over a year away. Last Monday a New York judge said that the flurry of lawsuits would go to trial in March 2026.

There is a problem with that. Ever since *It Ends with Us* was released in August, the velocity and aggression of the feud has grown exponentially. What began as a quiet online buzz wondering why the film's star Lively wasn't posing at the premiere with her co-star and director Baldoni has erupted into one of the ugliest bouts of mud-slinging witnessed in Hollywood.

This week Baldoni published a website called The Lawsuit Info, containing both his full 224-page complaint about Lively, and an additional 168-page timeline of their argument, stretching from Baldoni's first interaction with Colleen Hoover (the author of *It Ends with Us*) about a film adaptation all the way to last month, when Lively attempted to serve one of Baldoni's team with legal papers as they were in the middle of trying to evacuate their family home to escape the LA wildfires.

It is a long and mortifying read, not least for the pages and pages of toe-curling text message screenshots, where everyone involved drips with insincerity. If you're at all upset by repeatedly reading phrases like "I hear you" and "I appreciate your empathy", this is not a suitable way for you to spend several hours of your day. In one message, Lively couches her desire to look sexy in the film with the phrase "As woke as we both are and work to be, this movie requires a certain aesthetic". In another, Baldoni

sends Lively a text offering to connect her with his "medical intuitive", someone who he claims can "see what's going on in your body just by talking to you". Lively later claimed that the person in question was a "weight-loss specialist". The whole thing is awful. Nobody comes out of it looking remotely good.

After ploughing through it all, you're left with two competing reactions. The first is, wow, Blake Lively must be an intensely difficult person to steal the film away from Justin Baldoni. The second is, wow, how spiteful must Justin Baldoni be to publish an entire website about how much he dislikes Blake Lively? Perhaps you are not one of the online sleuths who have chosen to dedicate every waking hour to parsing the nuances of the spat. In which case, here's a recap.

It Ends with Us was an incredibly popular book about domestic violence, written by Hoover. Baldoni, and his studio Wayfarer, bought the movie rights to the book in 2022. Baldoni cast himself as Ryle Kincaid, the violent lead, and hired Lively to star opposite. But the pair fell out during production. A December article in The New York Times claimed that Baldoni had been sexually inappropriate towards Lively, and had masterminded a smear campaign against her to get ahead of it. Ten days later, Baldoni sued Lively and her husband, Ryan Reynolds, claiming that the real story was how Lively had used a barrage of threats and complaints — not to mention the heft of her husband — to shut Baldoni out of his own movie.

Since then, Baldoni and his people have made it their mission

Above: Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni. Below: Ryan Reynolds



to show every scrap of evidence they have with the wider world.

Last month a piece of filming footage was released online of an *It Ends with Us* scene showing Lively and Baldoni canoodling. Even this proved to be something of a Rorschach test for viewers. In her lawsuit, Lively claimed that during this scene Baldoni had made her feel uncomfortable as he "leaned forward and slowly dragged his lips from her ear and down her neck as he said, 'It smells so good'". The footage seems to show that this was a lighthearted moment, made after Lively had worried that she stank of fake tan. But at the same time an intimacy co-ordinator independently watching the footage pointed out that Lively looked highly uncomfortable throughout the scene. It's this sort of thing, the he-said-she-said of it, the fact that both of them come out of it so badly, that it's hard to pick a side, that has kept this story so red hot.

The problem with the website is that it all seems to be out there now. Baldoni has made public 400 pages of his argument — every message, every last document that he hopes will tar Lively as a villain — that he has essentially run out of road.

There is such a voracious hunger for details about this on social media (last week TikTok basically burst into flames at the news that Taylor Swift — whom Lively refers to as her "dragon" in one mortifying thread — might not want to be friends with Lively any more) that it has basically become unsustainable.

Baldoni's decision to data-dump everything at once means that he can no longer drip-feed the media with his side of the story. And remember, the lawsuits aren't going to trial for another 13 months.

Where did it go wrong? Blake and Justin's texts

Feb 17, 2023 Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni discuss the shoot for *It Ends with Us*

Lively As woke as we both are and work to be, this movie requires a certain aesthetic ... it's the assignment. Like when someone is about to start an athletic event. It's their job to be in top shape ... I just need as much time as possible. I just had my 4th baby ... so having your understanding and support to help me pull this off is critical. We are going to kill it. But it's still a ton of work with not a ton of time. What's the chance we can do the body scenes at the end of the schedule?

Baldoni Honestly there's 1 billion moving parts to schedule right now ... so to be really honest I have no clue. I want you to know you will look amazing. Anything you are insecure about we will talk through and get creative together and make sure you are comfortable. I just don't want you to stress about your body. It's the last thing you need.

Feb 28, 2023 Baldoni and Ryan Reynolds make friends

Baldoni I have wanted to text you for a while now, but my good ol' nerves got the best of me ... Emily and I have a very small circle. We live out in the country in [sic] and pretty much just hang out with each other. I don't really have any close female friends that my wife isn't also friends with, let alone married ones. And so I guess this is just an awkward text to say I'd like to be friends.

Reynolds What a loving and generous message. Thank you. We're also big fans over here. Since before we met, and more-so after. You've been a

wonderful collaborator with [sic], and that meant a great deal — to both of us. Being a stand-up person is everything, and you've been just that since day one.

I speak from a deep wellspring of experience here, having her in your court behind the scenes as a creative is invaluable. I'm excited for you to work together. I'm excited for Blake to crack open her creative piggy bank with someone as dynamic as you. This is gonna be INCREDIBLE ... I happen to adore you, Justin.

April 7-8, 2023 Lively to Baldoni, on rewriting the 'rooftop' scene

Lively The meet-cute scene is, to me, the most important scene in the movie. You OK if I play around with the dialogue to give her a bit more agency and fun and send to you? I think we'll be cookin' w gas, right?

If you knew me (in person) longer you'd have a sense of how flirty and yummy the ball-busting will play. It's my love language. Spicy and playfully bold, never with teeth. And him serving it back to her is just as important. You don't usually see both the man AND the woman with such agency and humor.

Baldoni Sorry was just crying my eyes out as kids and family just left for another 5 weeks.

Lively So sorry to you all. But the love is gargantuan and apparent.

April 12, 2023

Baldoni meets Lively at her apartment in New York. He is greeted by Reynolds, who praises Lively's rewrites of the rooftop scene. Hours later, a mega celebrity friend [Taylor Swift] of Reynolds and Lively walks in and also begins praising Lively's script.

Lively Both X and X [Reynolds and Swift] have established themselves as absolute titans as writers and storytellers outside of their primary gig — just singing or just acting or just directing. I'm so lucky to have them as creative barometers ... if you ever get round to watching *Game of Thrones*, you'll appreciate that I'm Khaleesi, and like her, I happen to have a few dragons. Because my dragons also protect those I fight for. So really we all benefit from those gorgeous monsters of mine. You will too, I can promise you.

May 2023 Baldoni and Lively discuss the day's work

Lively It's such a good feeling to get work done that we're proud of. This is all storytelling. This is why we do it. **Baldoni** I like sentimental Blake.

Lively Never met her.

Baldoni I also like asshole Blake ... don't worry.

Lively I've met her. So have my suppositories.

August 25-31, 2023 Baldoni sends Lively scenes from the edit

Baldoni Happy birthday Blake! Coincidentally today is the last day of my edit ... It's been wildly successful and I'm so happy! You are so fantastic in this film. I'm sending you over one of my favourite sections ... I'm excited to show you more in person when we come back. Can't wait to hear what you think! Have an amazing day. **Xx Lively** Thank you so much for the matcha machine! That was very thoughtful.

What I learnt in my job serving plonk to wine snobs

Zak Asgard

I will let you in on a little secret: all modern wine bars are the same. They may tell you that they're different, but they're not. Don't let the peppy waiter with the mullet, tooth gem and nonprescription glasses fool you: the pét-nat and tinned sardines he's peddling taste the same in every bijou establishment.

But have you ever wondered what it's like to work in one of these places? Have you ever wondered what it's like to stand on the other side of the faux-marble bar and have an elderly gentleman from the home counties talk down to you about the tertiary notes of an aglianico? Have you ever wondered what it's like to sincerely describe a wine as "brave" and shudder at the thought of what you've become?

I don't have to wonder, for I have done all of those things. I have been the wine bar waiter with the dangly earring and no real understanding of wine. I have served a group of Americans and pretended to cackle along when one of them said, "What do you call a wine hangover? The grape depression!" I have loomed over countless tables and upsold the bogus small plates: "Have you ever tried sobrasada? No? It's like an avant-garde chorizo. It's going to go really well with that £6 basket of stale bread that you ordered. And you have to pair it with [insert wine that I've already opened by mistake and need to sell before my manager berates me outside by the bins]. Would you also like three tasteless gordal olives that I'm going to fish out of the jar with my bare hands? Awesome, awesome. Any allergies?" For those of you not aware of small plates — I can only assume that you've been in solitary confinement since 2010 — they are essentially starter-sized portions for main course prices; imagine having dinner at your friends' house if your friends were the Borrowers.

Having been on the inside, I can tell you that working in a wine bar isn't half as glamorous as the gilet-wearing, tote bag-yielding Instagram influencers-cum-bistro owners will have you believe. There is an idea of the wine bar drinker: a world-travelled and sophisticated member of the public who, unlike their pub-frequenting adversaries, tends not to urinate on the furniture and call the waitress "love". Unfortunately this wine bar drinker is in scarce supply. Instead, the modern wine bar is a smorgasbord of contradicting personalities. For those of you that have seen *Sideways*, wine bars have as many Thomas Haden Churches as they do Paul Giamattis.

The clientele of the modern wine bar can be broken down into rough categories. The first is the tentative novice who, in my opinion, is the best genre of customer. This person is sincere, curious and unlikely to spit the wine out and call you a philistine for describing it as "bold". I've always enjoyed this type of customer. They're inoffensive and easily impressed. They go with their instincts and will say things like, "I just drink what I enjoy



drinking," which, at its core, is how all people should approach wine. Then there is the self-taught expert. This customer is like that overbearing uncle who never allows you to finish a story without engaging in one-upmanship. I despise this customer. They almost always bring up their holidays in France and scoff at any suggestion of a new world wine. They also tend to overcompensate for their oenological shortcomings by stuffing their noses as far down the glass as they can and sniffing the liquid until it wets their brain: "This is a naughty little wine. I'm getting a sense of popcorn and petrol in this one. Yep, that's definitely a French riesling." For context, it was not a French riesling (but you already knew that).

As a wine bar waiter you'll also meet the new wave of winebibbers: people my age who never pay the service charge and have a penchant for outlandish wines. These newbies often waft over from areas of north and east London where the smaller, more chichi wine bars are located. These customers are easier to handle than the self-proclaimed connoisseurs. They'll say something like, "Can I get an orange wine, but can you make sure that it's extra funky? I want it to smell like someone has shoved a lump of roquefort into their sock and then run a marathon." And I'll reply, "But of course, I've got just the thing. We've got a bottle of cattarratto from a wine maker who presses the grapes with his feet — rumour has it that he's suffered from a medically resistant strain of athlete's foot since 1989!" So long as the wine smells like a damp, used towel — and it's natural — they're happy.

And then there are the rest: I have met the weekend hen-do crowds who only booked the venue because they

saw it on Instagram and refuse to drink anything other than sauvignon blanc and pinot grigio. These groups commandeer as much space as possible and drink faster than you can restock the fridge. I have encountered the boisterous "lads" — groups of men usually in the range of 30 to 50 years old — who couldn't care less about wine and are just happy that you haven't thrown them out like the pub next door did an hour ago. These "lads", though loud, abrasive and often rude, tend to tip well (I suppose in an attempt to make up for their less than salubrious behaviour). I have served the lonely men and the escorts that accompany them, and I have watched as their monologues about wine and the state of Britain fall on deaf ears. I have poured wine for celebrities and had my image of them crushed. I remember one comedian — I won't mention his name — who swanned into the bar, made a snooty comment about the wine, and then proceeded to call me an incel for saying that he deserved a larger following.

The biggest problem that the

modern wine bar faces, though, is the staff. Hospitality is a crippled industry. Staff are horribly trained and ill-motivated. And who can blame them? Most restaurants pay the minimum wage — which is not enough to survive on — and feebly bolster their staff's morale through the infamous and illusory service charge. But it's not enough. In the past wine bars were populated by sommeliers and a gaggle of talented waiters. Now it's full of part-timers who are either studying anthropology or singing in a post-post-punk

band in New Cross on weekends. Half of us made up the wine vocabulary as we went along — which, although amusing, is a little unfair when a glass of white rioja sets you back £20.

Wine bars will never die, and that's a good thing. I love wine and I love bars, but I've fallen out of love with the modern incarnation, and working in them has only furthered my disillusionment. This is not to say that we should return to the days of fusty old bistros with angry French sommeliers berating their customers for not knowing the difference between a cabernet franc and a cabernet sauvignon. But it is to say that a little more focus on the wine and a little less focus on how fast we can empty the pockets of our customers wouldn't go amiss. After all, wine is a subjective experience and it should be treated as such. And while these modern wine bars claim to be accessible and easygoing, their endeavour to stay in vogue has blinded their judgment and bred an abundance of empty vessels created under the guise of modernity. Then again, who am I to criticise? I'll still buy a bottle of Casillero del Diablo if it's on sale.



Zak Asgard

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles
Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

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

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

Suko

A 3x3 grid with a color gradient from light orange to dark orange. The grid contains the numbers 19, 15, 19, and 24 in white circles. Below the grid are three circles containing the numbers 13, 19, and 13, with the last one being dark orange.

Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

				6			3
				3	1		
	5	1					
			6				4
	2				6		

Sudoku fiendish

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




Killer tricky

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

18	15	11		13		20		
			22	10		14		
	12					8		7
	3			16	13	19		
20		19						20
			11		9		22	
7				23				
12	9		22	7				3
				9		11		

Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

	3	1	2	1	4	4	8	7	
									3
									3
									4
									2
									2
									5
									7
A									B

Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger ($>$) or smaller ($<$) than the number next to it.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
∇				
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	< <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	> <input type="text"/>
	∇	^		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
				∇
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.

	21	9	5	21	8	25	19		4	25	8	23
1		11				3		17		11		15
14	23	24	11	23	21	3		21	3	12	21	3
21		7		21		15		11		24		20
8	25	20	24	8		23	20	17	15	19	12	
21	E			21		20		8		7		26
14	2	1	24	14	5		22	21	26	24	11	21
14		19		9		8		18				14
	17	24	12	25	3	24		15	19	17	1	23
14		26		17		26		23		15		21
16	5	24	16	15		10	8	20	25	13	21	11
15		11		9		1				25		19
17	25	21	6		10	F	8	15	12	5	23	20

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

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

SUDOKU

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

KILLER

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

SUK

2	9	8
1	5	4
7	3	6

TRAIN TRACKS

FUTOSHIKI

$\begin{array}{ccccc} \boxed{3} & \boxed{4} & \boxed{1} & < & \boxed{5} & \boxed{2} \\ \downarrow & \downarrow & & & & \\ \boxed{2} & < & \boxed{3} & \boxed{5} & \boxed{4} & \boxed{1} \\ \\ \boxed{5} & \boxed{1} & \boxed{4} & \boxed{2} & \boxed{3} & \\ \\ \boxed{1} & \boxed{5} & \boxed{2} & \uparrow & \boxed{3} & < & \boxed{4} \\ & & \uparrow & & & \uparrow & \\ \boxed{4} & \boxed{2} & \boxed{3} & \boxed{1} & \boxed{5} & \end{array}$

CODEWORD

P	R	O	V	O	K	I	N	G	J	
U	A	N	O	T	O	F				
S	I	G	N	P	O	S	T	I		
N	N	Q	B	C	H	I	N	T		
B	E	A	U	B	H				E	
D		I	D	L	Y	S	E	R	V	
I		S	Y		O	I	X			
M	A	T	H	S		Q	U	I	T	S
P	O			C		T	E	N	V	
R	A	F	F	I	A	F	I	R	E	
I		F			M	U	L	T	I	P
N	E	E	D		E	O		O	T	
T		F			E	O	R	A	R	D

What was Channel 4 thinking with this show?

Carol Midgley TV review



Go Back to Where You Came From
Channel 4
★★★★☆

Where to start with *Go Back to Where You Came From*, a show that takes the desperate issue of illegal migrants in small-boat crossings then gives it the *Race Across the World* treatment with a naff dollop of *Benefits Street*? My toes curled like a pomeranian's tail.

Shall we begin with the dog-whistle title? Or the casting of people who advocate planting landmines on beaches to blow up migrants, or who make crass remarks about female genital mutilation ... while in Somalia?

Let's start with the obvious: what was Channel 4 thinking? I can see the idea was to educate people with, er, *unenlightened* views about the people who risk their lives to reach the UK. The show is based on an Australian series that was pretty successful. But this quickly descended into a coarse, polarised cringeathon, which I suspect was the intention. Nathan, from Barnsley, stood in an impoverished market street in Mogadishu and declared: "It's a shithole ... Not Benidorm, is it?" No, Nathan, it isn't.

Over in Syria, the Oxford-educated Chloe watched destitute children scavenging in filthy bins for bits of plastic and scrap metal for their father to sell at 20p a kilo and said: "I can see they enjoy it because they are getting an entrepreneurial kick out of it." Was this a Catherine Tate sketch?

We weren't overtroubled by statistics about illegal immigrants and the costs to the UK, but we did get a lot of sweaty soundbites. Dave from Nottingham said illegal immigrants were "like rats" and that "Winston bastard Churchill would be rolling in his f***ing grave".

To be fair, illegal immigration affected two of them directly. Nathan, who runs a haulage company, said he would be fined £10,000 per person if anyone is found hiding in his vehicles. Jess, who's from a village in Wales and confided that she gets called a "rug



Mathilda, Jess and Nathan in the coarse, polarised cringeathon

muncher" because she is gay, pointed at the hotel opposite her house that houses immigrants without passports. They could be "paedophiles or rapists" and no one would know, she said.

Mathilda, who once worked in refugee camps, was there as the well-spoken progressive educator. I'm guessing Nathan may include her in his category of "woke champagne socialists that are all left-wing do-gooders". There has been controversy over Bushra, a Muslim woman who has been accused of posting antisemitic and homophobic remarks. Is it cynical to suggest all these people were selected precisely because they may create a ruckus on social media?

Inevitably some of the group started to change their views when they saw the terrible living conditions people have to bear. These, though, are surely not people who would be able to afford to pay smugglers, so it felt a bit "poverty tourism". I'm sure the idea is that they will be so moved that some will have Damascene conversions, especially when they attempt a perilous journey in a dinghy.

But what about those in between the extremes, the shades of grey people who feel compassion but also concern about immigration? This is a very complex subject but, based on episode one, it is being treated with all the sophistication of a custard pie to the face.

Radio choice

Clair Woodward



Young Again
Radio 4, 9am

The super-podcaster Adam Buxton, above, is interviewed by Kirsty Young about the advice he would give his younger self. After initially saying, "Advice is a load of shit, isn't it?" he goes on to tell stories that listeners can really learn from, including how to deal with dying parents — there's a lovely moment when he talks about the time his terminally ill father called him a bully and how he rationalised it — and how he lost a sense of purpose when his long-term collaborator Joe Cornish decided to strike out solo as a film director. Buxton also reveals what happens when his podcast interviews go wrong.

OUR TV NEWSLETTER

Sign up to a weekly briefing of the only shows you need to watch thetimes.com/bulletins

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Rosie Wright with *Early Breakfast*
6.00am Kate McCann and Stig Abell with *Times Radio Breakfast* **10.00am** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** The Times at One with Andrew Neil. News and current affairs **2.00pm** Jane Mulkerrins and Fi Glover. Entertaining conversation **4.00pm** John Pienaar with *Times Radio Drive*. In-depth discussion of today's news **7.00pm** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay. Engaging evening conversation **10.00pm** Carole Walker. A review of the day's key events **1.00am** The Story **1.30am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Scott Mills Breakfast Show **9.30am** Vernon Kay. Kim Wilde performs in the Radio 2 Piano Room **12.00pm** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Trevor Nelson **4.00pm** Sara Cox **6.30pm** Sara Cox's Half Wower **7.30pm** Jo Whalley's Shiny Happy Playlist **7.30pm** Jo Whalley **8.45pm** Radio 2 Piano Room. Kim Wilde performs in the Radio 2 Piano Room **9.00pm** The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum. The pianist and songwriter plays classic tracks and new music **10.00pm** The Good Groove with DJ Spooky. A selection of soulful house, classic soul, disco, R'n'B, UK Garage, reggae, hip hop, doo-wop, funk, dance remixes and much more **12.00am** DJ Borg **3.00am** Pick of the Pops (r) **4.00am** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
Petroc Trelawny presents Radio 3's classical breakfast show. Including **7.00am**, **8.00am** News, **7.30am**, **8.30am** News headlines
9.30am Essential Classics
Ian Skelly plays the best in classical music **1.00pm** Classical Live
Tom McKinney introduces a Radio 3 New Generation Artist recital from Birmingham and a live concert with the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Corinna Niemeyer. Franck (Sonata in A for viola and piano); Nahre Sol (*Shadow Walkers* — World Premiere); GP Teleman (Concerto in A minor for Two Flutes and Violone, TWV 53:a1); Saint-Saëns (Piano Concerto No 2 in G minor, Op 22); JS Bach (*Es ist nicht gut, dass ich hingehe*, BWV 108); and Alice Mary Smith (Overture to the *Masque of Pandora*). Live concert with the BBC Philharmonic. Mozart (*The Magic Flute*; Overture); Strauss (*Four Last Songs*); and Respighi (*The Birds*)

4.00 Composer of the Week:

Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864)
Donald Macleod joins Giacomo Meyerbeer in his Italian adventure, a turning point in his music-making and in his identity. Meyerbeer (*Il nascere e il fiorire d'una rosa*; *Le Prophète*. Act I, No 1a: *Prélude et chœur pastoral*. "La brise est muette"; *Gli amori di Teolinda*. IV. Allegro moderato; *Romilda e Costanza*. Overture; *Emma di Resburgo*. Act I, Scene 1; "Sulla rupe triste, sola... Ah questo bacio" — Emma; *Il crociato in Egitto*. Act II, Scene 4: "Tutto è finito" — Adriano, Felicia, Knights; and "Suona funerea" — Adriano, Knights)
5.00pm In Tune

Featuring music from the kora player Seckou Keita, and the pianist James Rhodes
7.00pm Classical Mixtape

A selection of classical favourites mixed with jazz, folk and music from around the world. Featuring music by Francesca Caccini, Delibes, Verdi and Alexandre Desplat (r)
7.30pm Radio 3 in Concert

The BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jakub Hrusa in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 2 with soloist Jonathan Biss. Plus, Shostakovich's Symphony No 11, "The Year 1905". Recorded at the Barbican, Mark Forrest presents. Haas (Scherzo triste, Op 5); Beethoven (Piano Concerto No 2 in B flat); and Shostakovich (Symphony No 11 in G minor, "The Year 1905")

9.45pm The Essay: Musicians on the Couch
The writer Amanda Dalton explores the relationship between the mind and music

10.00pm Night Tracks

Sara Mohr-Pietsch with late-night music for and inspired by children (r)

11.30pm Round Midnight

Soweto Kinch is joined by the pianist Hiromi, who selects a piece to play from the US singer-songwriter Stefan Stevens. Plus, there is music by Michael Garrick, new trio Jaubi and Scotland's Ari Tsugi (r)
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz LW: 198kHz MW: 720 kHz
5.30am News Briefing
5.43pm Prayer for the Day
5.45pm Farming Today
6.00pm Today
With Emma Barnett and Amol Rajan
9.00pm Young Again
The actor and comedian Adam Buxton shares the advice he would give to his younger self. See *radio choice* (6/6)
9.30pm Inside Health
Quest to demystify health issues (4/11)

10.00 Woman's Hour

Nuala McGovern presents the magazine
11.00pm Screenshot
Taking a look at the history of crime cinema's enigmatic icon — the hitman (4/6) (r)

11.45pm Book of the Week:

Maurice and Maralyn

By Sophie Elmhirst. Maurice and Maralyn are living their dream on the high seas, but disaster strikes. Read by Dorothy Atkinson and abridged by Richard Hamilton (2/5)

12.04pm Call You and Yours

1.00pm The World at One

1.45pm At Your Own Peril

How different people perceive risk (2/5)

2.00pm The Archers (r)

2.15pm Drama: This Thing of Darkness

By Frances Poot. Drama about Dr Alex Bridges, asking how convicted perpetrators come to terms with their own capacity for violence. Stars Lolita Chakrabarti, Lorn Macdonald and Reuben Joseph (4/5) (r)

3.00pm The Gift

Extraordinary truths that emerge when people take at-home DNA tests, including how one man's determination to find his mum revealed an unbearable secret (4/6) (r)

3.30pm Thinking Allowed

Laurie Taylor asks how the meaning of touch has changed over the centuries (3/10)
4.00pm Moving Pictures

Cathy FitzGerald takes a detailed look at the War of Troy tapestry (2/3)

4.30pm When It Hits the Fan

The world of crisis management

5.00pm PM

6.00pm Six O'Clock News

6.30pm Alexei Sayle's

Imaginary Sandwich Bar

Alexei details his seven stages of grief post the 2019 general election (1/4) (r)

7.00pm The Archers

Alice plays gooseberry. Meanwhile, Robert has a painful experience

7.15pm Front Row

News, reviews and interviews from the worlds of art, literature, film and music

8.00pm The Today Debate

Nick Robinson presents topical discussion

8.40pm In Touch

News for people who are blind or partially sighted, presented by Peter White

9.00pm World of Secrets: The Bad Guru

Nick Robinson explains how she found herself at a free yoga festival in Romania (2/8)

9.30pm The Bottom Line

Evan Davis explores the future of food delivery (4/9) (r)

10.00pm The World Tonight

With James Coomarasamy

10.45 Book at Bedtime:

Raiders of the Lost Cask
By Abir Mukherjee. Sunita's peaceful life in the Scottish Highlands is about to be shattered when she disturbs an intruder in her shop. Read by Sudha Bhuchar (2/5)
11.00pm Uncanny

A young woman is heartbroken when her best friend dies and comes back (4/15) (r)

11.30pm Today in Parliament

News, views and analysis of the day's business in Westminster

12.00pm News and Weather

12.30am Book of the Week:

Maurice and Maralyn (2/5) (r)

12.48pm Shipping Forecast

1.00am As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only
8.00am Dr Phil's Bedside Manner **8.30pm** Ripley's Game **8.45pm** Eleanor Rising **9.00pm** Jeremy Vine **9.30pm** A History of the Infinite **9.45pm** Daily Service **10.00pm** A Good Read **10.30pm** Fantasy Festival **11.00pm** Paul Temple and the Madison Mystery **11.30pm** The Rivals **12.00pm** Spangles 'n' Tights **12.30pm** The Goon Show **1.00pm** Dr Phil's Bedside Manner **1.30pm** Ripley's Game **1.45pm** Eleanor Rising **2.00pm** Act Your Age **2.30pm** Cabin Pressure **3.00pm** The Performer **3.45pm** Solitaire **4.00pm** A Good Read **4.30pm** Fantasy Festival **5.00pm** Paul Temple and the Madison Mystery **5.30pm** The Rivals. *The Clue of the Silver Spoons* by Robert Barr **6.00pm** Spangles 'n' Tights. The struggles of a Dublin theatrical costumers **6.30pm** The Goon Show. Neddie Seagoon has a 60-foot caber hidden under his kilt **7.00pm** Dr Phil's Bedside Manner. Dr Phil Hammond visits Worcestershire Royal Hospital. Last in the series **7.30pm** Ripley's Game. By Patricia Highsmith **7.45pm** Eleanor Rising. The king betrays Eleanor to his son **8.00pm** Act Your Age. With Mike Woziak, Robin Ince and Ted Robbins **8.30pm** Cabin Pressure. A passenger makes the crew act very oddly **9.00pm** The Performer. By William Humble **9.45pm** Solitaire. By Julia Stoneham **10.00pm** Comedy Club: Alison Spittle — Petty Please. Alison revisits the injustice of never being chosen for a duet at Barrioke **10.30pm** The Consultants. Comedy sketches **11.00pm** Clare in the Community. Clare and Brian have couples counselling **11.30pm** The Curried Goat Show. Comedy sketches with Will Ing

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909
5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00pm** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00pm** Nicky Campbell

11.00pm Naga Munchetty **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00pm** Live Drive **7.00pm** 5 Live Sport **8.00pm** 5 Live Boxing. Including a look ahead to February's bouts **9.00pm** 5 Live Sport: The Euro Leagues Podcast **10.00pm** F1: Back at Base **10.30pm** Tony Livesey **1.00am** Johnny Van'Anson

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00pm** talkSPORT Breakfast with Jeff Stelling **10.00pm** White & Jordan with Martin Keown **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Baker **4.00pm** talkSPORT Drive with Andy Goldstein and Darren Bent **7.00pm** Kick Off **10.00pm** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only
6.00am Morning Glory with Mike Graham **10.00pm** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00pm** Jeremy Kyle **7.00pm** Kevin O'Sullivan **10.00pm** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only
5.00am Chris Hawkins. With Symren Ghariar from Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster **7.30pm** Nemone **10.30pm** Mary Anne Hobbs **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00pm** Huw Stephens **7.00pm** New Music Fix Daily **9.00pm** Riley & Coe. With Du Blonde **11.00pm** Song Explorer. Kae Tempest, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and Pan! at the Disco **12.00pm** 6 Music's Indie Forever **1.00am** Paperback Writers (r) **3.00pm** 6 Music Live Hour (r) **4.00pm** The 6 Music Playlist

Virgin Radio

Digital only
6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with The National Lottery **10.00pm** The Ryan Tubridy Show **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00pm** Leigh Francis **7.00pm** Graeme Smith **10.00pm** Olivia Jones **1.00am** Sean Goldsmith **4.00pm** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz
6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00pm** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker **10.00pm** Alexander Armstrong **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00pm** Margherita Taylor **7.00pm** Relaxing Evenings. Presented by Zeb Soanes **9.00pm** Calm Classics. With Ritula Shah **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00pm** Early Breakfast

television & radio

Picks of the day

Mussolini: Son of the Century
Sky Atlantic/Now, 9pm

“I’m like an animal,” says Luca Marinelli’s Benito Mussolini. “I can smell the time ahead — and it is my time.” This eight-part adaptation of Antonio Scurati’s bestselling novel *M Son of the Century*, directed by the British film-maker Joe Wright, chronicles the rise to power of the fascist dictator in the early 1920s.

Marinelli has an animalistic quality that makes him easy to despise, but it also makes the viewing experience eerily seductive as we are swept along in a story where the contemporary parallels are all too obvious.

Black Box Diaries — Storyville
BBC4, 10pm

When Shiori Ito was a young journalist in 2015, she had turned up for what she thought would be

a helpful career chat with Noriyuki Yamaguchi, a powerful TV news executive. Given Japanese strictures on politeness, she was unable to express her alarm that he chose to meet her in a bar. She then claims she became drunk and came to in a hotel room to find Yamaguchi raping her, allegations he denies. It is not the only shocking story that follows her quest for justice. While someone in her position might expect to find sympathy and support, she

encountered hostility and obfuscation at almost every turn, her quest for justice not helped by her alleged attacker’s many powerful friends.

David Mitchell’s Outsiders
BBC2, 9pm

A second series of the Dave comedy, now acquired by the BBC, in which David Mitchell challenges his fellow comics to live in a tent for a week, competing in pairs on missions. Initially

designed as a replacement for Dave’s mega-hit *Taskmaster* (which Channel 4 snaffled), this has some diverting moments even if it’s not quite as good as the Greg Davies-fronted masterclass. Competitors for this series include Jessica Hynes, Phil Wang and Joe Wilkinson.

Top Guns: Inside the RAF
Channel 4, 9pm

A second series of this diverting portrait of the UK’s air aces

	BBC1	BBC2	ITV1	Channel 4	Channel 5
Early	6.00am Breakfast 9.30 Morning Live 10.45 Expert Witness. An expert witness helps link a drug gang to the death of a Vietnamese man in Wales (r) 11.15 Homes Under the Hammer. Featuring properties in Norwich, Cardiff and Dover (AD) 12.15pm Bargain Hunt. Christina Trevanion hosts the show from Shrewsbury (r) (AD) 1.00 BBC News at One; Weather 1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather 1.45 BBC News at One; Weather 2.00 The Big Idea Works. A wife comes up with a solution to block out her husband’s snoring (AD) 2.30 Rick Stein’s Food Stories. In Argyll Rick meets a foraging chef and catches langoustine with a fisherwoman (r) (AD) 3.00 Escape to the Country. Nicki Chapman helps a couple of Londoners who are looking to move to the countryside of east Devon 3.45 The Travelling Auctioneers. Izzie Balmer and JJ Chalmers help sisters clear out their childhood home and raise money for a bench in their parents’ memory. Last in the series 4.30 The Repair Shop on the Road. The experts lend their skills to a community project, and hear the story behind a new treasure to be repaired (AD) 5.15 Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong 6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather 6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather	6.30am The Travelling Auctioneers (r) 7.15 The Repair Shop on the Road (r) (AD) 8.00 Sign Zone: Digging for Britain (r) (AD, SL) 9.00 BBC News 12.15pm Politics Live 1.00 Impossible. Rick Edwards hosts the quiz (r) 1.45 The Edge. Game show hosted by Mark Benton (r) 2.30 The Boss. Quiz hosted by Susan Calman in which one contestant becomes the Boss and has to use judgment and tactics to decide which player is best suited to answer questions (r) 3.15 Thailand: Earth’s Tropical Paradise. Exploring the wildlife and culture of the South East Asian nation. The first episode examines the south of the country and the role of spirituality in daily life (r) (AD) 4.15 World’s Weirdest Events. Chris Packham presents more amazing stories, unearthing a whirlwind wedding ceremony, exploding rocks and a woman with a twin inside her brain (r) (AD) 5.15 Flog It! At Culzean Castle, Ayrshire, experts Anita Manning and Natasha Raskin Sharp find a local watercolour and a handwoven blanket (r) 6.00 Richard Osman’s House of Games. With Karen Hauer, Storm Huntley, Joe Marler and Tom Read Wilson 6.30 Alison Hammond’s Florida Unpacked. Alison and Aidan Hammond catch the Miami Dolphins in action (AD)	6.00am Good Morning Britain. News, current affairs and lifestyle features 9.00 Lorraine. Entertainment, current affairs and fashion news, as well as showbiz stories and celebrity gossip. Presented by Lorraine Kelly 10.00 This Morning. A mix of celebrity chat, lifestyle features, advice and competitions 12.30pm Loose Women. More celebrity interviews and topical debate from a female perspective 1.30 ITV News; Weather 1.55 Regional News; Weather 2.00 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals. Compilation of some of the show’s most dramatic endgames (r) 2.30 Pictionary. Angela Scanlon and Brian Conley lead contestants on a mission to draw images that match a word or phrase from a specific category. Game show hosted by Mel Giedroyc 3.00 Lingo. Crossing words with the reigning champions this time are sisters and a couple. Adil Ray hosts 4.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize 5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as contestants from Ormskirk, Leicester, Bicester and Nottingham take on one of the Chasers 6.00 Regional News; Weather 6.30 ITV News; Weather	6.25am Cheers (r) 7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) 9.10 Frasier (r) (AD) 11.10 Ramsay’s Kitchen Nightmares US. The chef visits a Japanese restaurant in California (r) 12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary 12.10 Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (r) 1.10 Sun, Sea and Selling Houses. A couple search for a home that could also serve as a bed-and-breakfast (r) 2.10 Countdown. Linda Barker is in Dictionary Corner 3.00 A Place in the Sun. Leah Charles-King helps a woman from Chingford, east London, buy a property in San Antonio on the Balearic island of Ibiza (r) 4.00 A New Life in the Sun. A father-and-son duo set out to turn a barn into an outdoor entertainment space in Bulgaria 5.00 Four in a Bed. The second visit of the week is at The Royal Oak in Hawkhurst, Kent where moods are high after a visit to a microbrewery but some are left disappointed 5.30 Come Dine with Me. The second night in Glasgow, with the host serving up a vegan Asian menu. There’s still bad blood but the dessert leaves the group in hysterics 6.00 A Place in the Sun. Jean Johansson helps house hunters from Shropshire who are looking for a holiday home in Languedoc, France, to enjoy their retirement in with a budget of £150,000	6.00am Milkshake! 9.15 Jeremy Vine. The broadcaster and guests discuss the issues of the day with co-host Storm Huntley joining him for phone-ins and reading out viewers’ correspondence 11.30 Storm Huntley. Debate on the day’s talking points continues with the host taking viewers’ calls on the biggest stories 12.45pm Friends. Ross tries to make Rachel jealous (r) 1.10 Friends. Joey and Phoebe play Cupid for Rachel and Ross (r) 1.40 5 News at Lunchtime 1.45 Home and Away. Tane goes after Kaia, who is devastated after being rejected by Perri again. Levi follows up on his planned meeting with Tim and the councilor is keen to address his concerns (r) (AD) 2.15 FILM: <i>Mystery Island</i> (PG, TVM, 2023) Dr Emilia Priestly goes to a murder-mystery-themed resort, but as the game begins, the resort’s reclusive founder is murdered. Mystery starring Elizabeth Henstridge 4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. A man and his partner prepare to shut down their poolside bar in Torremolinos for the winter (AD) 5.00 5 News at 5 6.00 Our Great Yorkshire Life. Cannon Hall’s Rob and Dave Nicholson travel to the southern Pennines, where a passion project is bearing fruit (r) 6.55 5 News Update

The Times at One with Andrew Neil

Listen for free Monday to Thursday, 1-2pm

7PM	7.00 The One Show Presented by Alex Jones and Lauren Laverne	7.00 Villages by the Sea Ben Robinson discovers the impressive lime kilns in Solva, Wales (5/10) (r)	7.00 Emmerdale A flashback reveals missing April’s story (AD)	7.00 Channel 4 News	7.00 Alan Titchmarsh’s Underdog to Superdog New series. The presenter follows the journeys of dogs who are being given a new purpose in life, training with experts to do important jobs. Here, the broadcaster meets an energetic sprocker spaniel (1/4)
	7.30 EastEnders Harry makes a shocking discovery at the Arches, while Denise has a romantic dilemma (AD)	7.30 Nadiya’s Fast Flavours Nadiya Hussain’s recipes include banana thyme loaf, a nutty burger (5/6) (r) (AD)	7.30 Supermarkets: How to Save on Your Shop — Tonight Kate Quilton reports on how supermarkets dominate the groceries market		7.55 5 News Update
8PM	8.00 Inside the Factory Paddy McGuinness visits a factory in Northern Ireland producing half a million sausage rolls every day and Cherry Healey finds out what goes into black puddings. Last in the series (AD)	8.00 Great British Menu Four chefs from the south-west of England prepare canapés, starters and fish dishes celebrating great Britons of the past for a banquet at Blenheim Palace. The food is judged by the Michelin-starred Michael Caines and include a sourdough crumpet with seaweed	8.00 Coronation Street Max and Toyah’s lives hang in the balance as David and Leanne both deny starting the fire, and Kevin fears the worst when Abi does a disappearing act (AD)	8.00 The Fear Clinic: Face Your Phobia An 18-year-old woman, a factory worker and a man check into the fear clinic to treat their phobias of sheep, moths and sausage dogs (3/6) (AD)	8.00 Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly Graeme Hall meets a Frenchie who is preventing the owner from making progress in his love life. A mum of three is struggling with her needy cockerpool, and an owner is falling short of a picky pooch’s expectations
9PM	9.00 Silent Witness Nikki and Harriet make an interesting discovery while examining Doug’s brain and another gruesome murder leads the team closer to discovering the identity of the shooter. Last in the series (AD)	9.00 David Mitchell’s Outsiders Maisie Adam, Fatiha El-Ghorri, Darren Harriott, Jessica Hynes, Phil Wang and Joe Wilkinson take on their first set of three challenges. <i>See picks of the day</i> (1/6) (r) (AD)	9.00 Tracking a Serial Killer: True Crime Presents A dangerous killer is on the loose and detectives need to act fast when the bodies of two men are found stabbed to death in neighbouring flats in Derby (AD)	9.00 Top Guns: Inside the RAF New series. Following key characters in the air and on the ground at the RAF’s busiest operational airbases in the UK and abroad as tensions rise in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. <i>See picks of the day</i> (1/6) (AD)	9.00 Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild Ben ventures deep into the Sturt Desert to Fort Grey to meet one of the most remote families he has ever encountered. He discovers that the academics and married couple are not only raising a young family, but also managing a demanding workload
		9.45 Live at the Apollo Tim Renkow welcomes comedians Janine Harouni and Stuart Goldsmith to perform their stand-up routines on London’s Hammersmith Apollo stage (7/7)			
10PM	10.00 BBC News at Ten	10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis	10.00 ITV News at Ten	10.00 Alone USA New series. Ten lone survivalists endure the remote Canadian wilderness where they must make quick decisions in the face of the changing weather. One participant finds creative ways to make a home, while another faces pressure as a predator encircles their camp (1/11)	10.00 A Killer Makes a Call New series. Veteran British Airways pilot Robert Brown’s call to the police about a serious domestic incident with his ex-wife, Joanna, is used as the starting point in investigating her murder. This episode explores the discovery that officers made at her cottage, Brown’s arrest and a comparison between his confession and the far more sinister truth of what really happened (1/6)
	10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather 10.40 Boaders Carol raises the stakes for the students when she announces she’s stripping away two of the five scholarships. Jaheim must deliver at school, but also faces trouble at home. Omar is distracted by secrets, and Leah meets a new student (1/6) (r) (AD)	11.05 Murder Trial: Girl in the River The murder of Caroline Glachan. Three suspects stood accused of killing the 14-year-old, whose body was found in the River Leven, Dunbartonshire. Featuring interviews with Caroline’s mother, the SIO on the case and the victim’s friends (1/2) (r) (AD)	10.30 Regional News 10.45 The 1% Club Quiz game show hosted by Lee Mack in which the questions are all about logic and common sense with 100 contestants having a chance of winning up to £100,000 (r) (AD)		
11PM	11.30 Boaders Jaheim urgently tries to make money, but it ends in disaster, while his secret visitor causes mayhem. Devonyé throws a giant sleepover (2/6) (r) (AD)		11.45 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Anton Du Beke and Fred Sirieix compete on the quiz (r)	11.25 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy quiz with Jon Richardson and Amy Gledhill taking on Richard Ayoade and Guz Khan (r)	11.30 Killer at the Crime Scene After a murdered oil rig worker is found in a burnt-out car, a quiet Scottish town soon becomes inflamed with rumours and fear (8/12) (r)
Late	12.15am The Traitors US The game is turned on its head by the arrival of three new players and the Traitors commit their inaugural murder. One player is banished (r) 1.20 Pointless Celebrities . Contestants include Charlene White, Fern Britton, Chloe Madeley, Crystelle Pereira and James Haskell (r) 2.10-6.00 BBC News	12.05am Sign Zone: Dragons’ Den Fashion expert, television presenter and entrepreneur Trimmy Woodall joins regular Dragons Peter Jones, Deborah Meaden, Toulker Suleyman, Sara Davies and Steven Bartlett (r) (AD, SL) 1.05-2.05 This Farming Life . Nick prepares to take over the family farm from dad Derek (r) (SL)	12.35am Shop on TV 3.00 Lingo. Word game hosted by Adil Ray (r) (SL) 3.50 Unwind with ITV . Daily escape 5.05-6.00 Deal or No Deal . Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (SL)	12.25am Ramsay’s Hotel Hell Murphy’s Historic Hotel near Sacramento in California (r) (AD, SL) 1.15 The Last Leg . With the actor Brian Cox (r) (SL) 2.10 Travel Man : 48 Hours in Malmo (r) (AD, SL) 2.35 The Great Pottery Throw Down (r) (AD, SL) 3.45 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r) 4.05 Frasier (r) (AD) 5.45-6.25 Countdown (r)	12.30am Car Pound Cops A recovery driver returns from an early call-out (r) 1.00 PlayOJ Live Casino Show 3.00 Hotel Chocolat: Unwrapped (r) 3.50 Happy Campers : The Caravan Park (r) 4.40 House Busters (r) (SL) 5.05 Wildlife SOS (r) (SL) 5.35 Entertainment News on 5 5.40 Paw Patrol (r) (SL) 5.50-6.00 Pip and Posy (r) (SL)

television & radio

benefits a great deal from cameras inside cockpits that take you to the heart of the action. Whether it is secret spy missions over Syria, precision strikes in Yemen or the interception of Iranian drones threatening Israel, skill and courage are brought to the fore. The drama is especially intense when a rookie pilot gathering intelligence on Russian military activity faces a threat that could escalate quite seriously. **Ben Dowell**

Streaming choice

Manhunt Channel 4

The ready availability of phone and bodycam footage has made real-time police investigations gripping TV staples of recent years, though you often need a strong stomach to watch them. That is the case here as Greater Manchester police's serious and organised crime group receive a call from a concerned citizen reporting a man



Shiori Ito (Storyville, BBC4, 10pm)

being forced into a car in Wigan. The story of the violence and cruelty experienced by the 37-year-old Christopher Hughes in a misplaced act of retribution is truly shocking. As is the ruthlessness and cunning of his attackers. **BD**

Film choice

A Good Year (12, 2006) Film4, 6.40pm

Reuniting Russell Crowe with the *Gladiator* director Ridley Scott,

this is Scott's only real comedy. He came up with the basic story, and the screenplay was written by Peter Mayle of *A Year in Provence* fame. Crowe stars as Max Skinner, an uptight British investment banker who rediscovers his long-lost soul — plus the inevitable romance — after he inherits his uncle's chateau and vineyard in the south of France. Future stars of British drama, including Tom Hollander, Rafe Spall and Daniel Mays, make up the supporting cast. (118min) **Joe Clay**

Sky Max

6.00am S.W.A.T. (r) (AD) **8.00** Supergirl (r) **9.00** Stargate SG-1 (r) **11.00** Manifest (r) (AD) **12.00** Supergirl (r) **1.00pm** S.W.A.T. (r) (AD) **3.00** NCIS: New Orleans (r) **4.00** MacGyver (r) **5.00** Manifest. Drama series (r) (AD) **6.00** Stargate SG-1. Doctors discover a Goa'uld larva has attached itself to Kawalsky's brain (r) **7.00** Stargate SG-1. Samantha visits a planet where women are treated as possessions (r) **8.00** Rob & Roshes vs Andy Murray. Rob Beckett and Roshes Ranganathan meet the tennis star, before they are pushed to their limits in a training session (r) (AD) **9.00** From. Jade follows a trail in the forest **10.00** From. Victor struggles to recover memories about the town's past **11.00** Brassic. Erin's brother Ronnie turns up on the run from prison (r) (AD) **12.00** A League of Their Own (r) (AD) **1.00am** Brit Cops: Law & Disorder (r) (AD) **2.00** Road Wars (r) (AD) **3.00** NCIS: New Orleans (r) **4.00** MacGyver (r) **5.00** Highway Patrol (r)

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** The Sopranos (r) (AD) **10.10** Billions (r) (AD) **12.20pm** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **1.25** Big Love (r) **3.35** The Sopranos (r) (AD) **5.45** Billions (r) (AD) **7.55** Game of Thrones. Margarya and her grandmother encourage Sansa to speak freely about Joffrey. Jaime finds a way to pass the time, and Arya encounters outlaw group the Brotherhood Without Banners (r) (AD) **9.00** Mussolini: Son of the Century. Drama chronicling the birth of fascism in Italy and Benito Mussolini's rise to power. In Italian with subtitles. *See picks of the day* (1/8) **10.15** Lockebie: A Search for Truth. Jim is left at a loss when Megrahi gives up his appeal and wonders if he will ever know the truth. Colin Firth and Catherine McCormack star (r) (AD) **11.15** Riviera. Daphne returns to Georgina how worthless Nico makes her feel (r) (AD) **12.05am** Riviera. Georgina seeks revenge (r) (AD) **1.00** The Wire (r) **2.00** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **3.05** Gomorrah (r) **4.00** Fish Town (r)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am The Story of Late Night (r) **7.00** Discovering: Jason Robards (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) **9.00** The Eighties (r) (AD) **9.55** Edge of the Earth (r) (AD) **11.00** The Lady and the Dale (r) **12.00** FILM: I Am Jackie O (12, 2020) Profile of Jackie Kennedy Onassis (AD) **1.45pm** My Icon: Jeanette Kwakye (r) (AD) **2.00** Football Bomber: The Dortmund Bus Attack (r) **4.00** The Directors. Ridley Scott (r) **5.00** Discovering: Jason Robards (r) (AD) **6.00** The Eighties. The impact of Aids (r) (AD) **7.00** Young Guns: The New Tennis Titans. A look at the new generation of tennis stars (r) (AD) **8.00** Bowie: The Man Who Changed the World. The life and career of the musician (r) **10.00** Boyzone: No Matter What (1/3) (r) (AD) **11.00** Blur: To the End. Documentary (r) **1.00am** FILM: Wig (15, 2019) Exploring the history and influence of the Wigstock drag festival **2.50** Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music (r) **4.50** My Icon: Pam Cooky (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Jason Robards (r) (AD)

Sky Arts

6.00am Anne-Sophie Mutter, John Williams & Friends: A Celebration **8.10** The Joy of Painting (AD) **9.10** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Ryan Gosling **12.00** Portrait Artist of the Year **2020** **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** Landscape Artist of the Year **2025** (AD) **3.00** Discovering: John Mills **4.00** Classic Albums **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year **2020** **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour (b/w) **8.00** The Michelangelo Code: Secrets of the Sistine Chapel. With Waldemar Januszczak **10.15** A Midsummer Night's Dream. John Neumeier's production of the ballet **12.25am** Les Misérables and Victor Hugo **1.35** Inside Art: Van Gogh at the Courtauld Gallery (AD) **2.00** Landscape Artist of the Year. From Bristol's iconic Clifton Suspension Bridge (AD) **3.00** Miyazaki: Spirit of Nature. The animator Hayao Miyazaki **4.35** The Art of Australia **5.50** Sky Arts Ambassador Bursary Shorts

Sky Main Event

6.00am Sky Sports News **7.00** Live Tennis: The WTA Abu Dhabi Open. Coverage of day two of the WTA 500 event at Zayed Sports City International Tennis Centre **9.00** Live Tennis. Coverage from the WTA and/or ATP Tours **1.00pm** Good Morning Football **3.00** Live SA20. Coverage of the first qualifier in the T20 cricket competition in South Africa **7.30** Live Tennis. Action from the WTA and/or ATP Tours, featuring the WTA Abu Dhabi Open, ATP Rotterdam Open, and ATP Dallas Open **8.00** Live Tennis: The ATP Rotterdam Open and ATP Dallas Open. Coverage of day two of the ATP 500 events at Rotterdam Ahoy in The Netherlands and Stylinger/Altec Tennis Complex in Dallas, Texas **10.30** Live Tennis: The ATP Dallas Open. Coverage of day two of the ATP 500 event at Stylinger/Altec Tennis Complex in Dallas, Texas **12.00** Sky Sports News **12.30am** Back Pages Tonight **1.00** Live Tennis. The ATP Dallas Open **5.00** Sky Sports News **5.30** Back Pages Tonight

Variations

BBC1 Scotland
As BBC1 except: **12.15am** Scotcast. Discussion on Scotland's biggest news stories (r) **12.45** The Traitors US. Three new players arrive (r) **1.50** Pointless Celebrities. Contestants include Charlene White, Fern Britton and James Haskell, (r) **2.35** Weather for the Week Ahead **2.40-6.00** BBC News
BBC1 Wales
As BBC1 except: **10.40pm** Legends of Welsh Sport: Nicky Grist. A profile of Welsh rally co-driver Nicky Grist **11.10** Boarders. Carol announces she's stopping two scholarships (r) (AD) **12.00** Boarders. Jaime's secret visitor causes mayhem (r) (AD) **12.45am** Have I Got News for You (r) **1.15-6.00** BBC News
BBC2 Wales
As BBC2 except: **1.45pm** First Minister's Questions. The First Minister answers questions from the Senedd **2.45** The Edge. Game show hosted by Mark Benton (r) **3.30** The Boss. Quiz hosted by Susan Calman (r) **4.15-5.15** Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise. The wildlife and culture of the nation (r) (AD)

ITV1 Wales
As ITV1 except: **10.45pm-11.45** Sharp End. Rob Osborne presents political discussion
STV
As ITV1 except: **10.30pm** STV News **10.40** Scotland Tonight. Current affairs show **11.05** Fred and Rose West: Reopened. Part two of two. Police take over the search (r) **12.00-3.00am** Shop on TV **3.50-5.05** Unwind with STV. Daily escape designed to calm the mind and encourage relaxation and reflection



BBC3

7.00pm Top Gear. Matt LeBlanc and Chris Harris review the Bentley Continental GT **8.00** Celebrity Race Across the World. The teams journey from Lençóis to São Paulo (AD) **9.00** Life and Death Row. Following as Ramiro Gonzales desperately tries to have his execution overturned. Last in the series (AD) **9.50** Body on the Beach: What Happened to Annie? Hazel Martin investigates the death of Annie Bjorjesson (1/4) (AD) **10.20** Body on the Beach: What Happened to Annie? Hazel Martin pieces together Annie Bjorjesson's final hours (2/4) (AD) **11.00** Man Like Mobeen. An anti-Islam march comes to Mobeen's neighbourhood (AD) **11.10** Man Like Mobeen. It is the night of Ak's prom, but Mobeen must decide whether to let her go, following rumours about the debauchery at previous proms (AD) **11.35** Man Like Mobeen. Ak's breaks her shoulder and the authorities get suspicious (AD) **12.00** Such Brave Girls (AD) **12.50am** Life and Death Row (AD) **1.40** Squad Goals: Dorking 'Til I Die (AD) **2.40** My Mate's a Bad Date **3.05-3.55** Life and Death Row (AD, SL)

BBC4

7.00pm The Architecture the Railways Built. Tim Dunn explores the disused Tube station Down Street in Mayfair (1/10) (AD) **7.45** The Flying Gardener. A look at examples of vertical gardening found in the Cotswolds **8.00** Going Straight. Fletcher's plans to retrieve a buried nest egg do not run smoothly **8.30** As Time Goes By. Lionel becomes suspicious of Alistair's enthusiasm for his novel **9.00** Charles I: Downfall of a King. Lisa Hilton relates how Charles I plotted to arrest John Pym and his colleagues. Last in the series (AD) **10.00** Black Box Diaries — Storyville. Journalist Shiori Ito investigates her own sexual assault, seeking to prosecute the high-profile offender and expose Japan's outdated judicial and societal systems. *See picks of the day* **11.30** The Cult Next Door. The story of a pseudo-religious cult that came to light in 2013, when three women emerged from a small flat in Brighton after decades in captivity (AD) **12.30am** 70 Million Animal Mummies: Egypt's Dark Secret (AD) **1.30** Tutankhamun's Egypt **2.30** The Flying Gardener **2.45-3.45** Charles I: Downfall of a King (AD, SL)

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Love From A Stranger (PG, 1937) **7.45** FILM: The Breaking Point (U, 1961) (b/w) **8.55** FILM: The Spare Tyres (U, 1967) **9.30** FILM: Captain Pirate (U, 1952) **11.15** What's On TP? with Noel **11.25** FILM: Gallant Journey (U, 1946) (b/w) **1.10pm** Look at Life **1.20** FILM: The Crowded Day (12, 1954) Drama (b/w) **3.00** FILM: Up in the World (U, 1956) Comedy starring Norman Wisdom (b/w) **4.45** Churchill's Secret Army **5.20** The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre **6.30** Colonel March of Scotland Yard (b/w) **7.05** Batman. King Tut kidnaps Batman **7.35** Beau Geste. A plot to steal the Blue Water **8.05** Rumpole of the Bailey (6/6) **9.15** FILM: Castaway (15, 1986) Fact-based drama with Oliver Reed and Amanda Donohoe **11.35** Cellular Club with Caroline Munro **11.40** FILM: The Stepfather (18, 1987) Thriller starring Terry O'Quinn and Jill Schoelen **1.25am** Cellular Club with Caroline Munro **1.30** FILM: Captain Dweller (18, 1987) **3.05** Cellular Club with Caroline Munro **3.10** FILM: Great Day in the Morning (U, 1956) **5.00** Four Star Theatre (b/w) **5.30** The Beverly Hillsbills (b/w)

Film4

11.00am 7th Cavalry (U, 1956) Western with Randolph Scott **12.35pm** The Quiet Man (U, 1952) Romantic comedy drama with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara **3.10** Earth vs the Flying Saucers (U, 1956) Sci-fi drama with Hugh Marlowe (b/w) **4.50** 40 Guns to Apache Pass (PG, 1967) Western with Audie Murphy **6.40** A Good Year (12, 2006) A city trader reassesses his life after inheriting a vineyard in France. Ridley Scott's comedy drama with Russell Crowe. *See film choice* **9.00** Transporter 2 (15, 2005) A politician's chauffeur sets out to rescue his employer's kidnapped son from Russian criminals. Action thriller sequel with Jason Statham, Alessandro Gassman and Amber Valletta **10.45** AI: Artificial Intelligence (12, 2001) A robot boy programmed to see his owner as a parent tries to become human, so the "mother" who rejected him will love him. Sci-fi drama starring Haley Joel Osment and Jude Law **1.35am** 302 Stage Mother (15, 2020) A conservative church choir director discovers she is heir to her son's business, an ailing drag club. Comedy drama starring Jacki Weaver

More4

8.55am Kirstie's Vintage Gems **9.15** A Place in the Sun **10.05** A New Life in the Sun **11.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **1.05pm** Car SOS (AD) **2.05** Four in a Bed **4.50** Chuzzle DIY (AD) **5.50** Car SOS. The boys head to Essex to secretly fix a '70s supercar (AD) **6.55** Car SOS. Tim and Fuzz take on a 1973 Hillman Imp (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Steph Wilson and her husband Alex build a contemporary, cantilevered farmhouse on farmlands once owned by her grandfather in Herefordshire (4/7) (AD) **9.00** PopMaster TV. Ken Bruce hosts the fourth heat of Britain's toughest music quiz, as more contestants see if they really know the charts **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 32-year-old man is brought to resus with a head injury after having an epileptic seizure, while a porter who has been part of the department for 25 years shares his insights into the job (3/5) (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A 14-year-old is rushed in after falling from a swing and fracturing his ankle, while a 62-year-old is treated having broken her wrist at a family party (1/5) (AD) **12.10am** PopMaster TV **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25-3.55** Food Unwrapped (AD)

ITV2

6.00am CITV **9.00** World's Funniest Videos **9.55** Secret Crush (SL) **12.00** Dinner Date (AD) **1.00pm** Supermarket Sweep **2.00** Family Fortunes **3.00** Charmed **4.00** Gilmore Girls **5.00** Dinner Date (AD) **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** Family Fortunes. Game show **8.00** Gordon Ramsay's Favourite Kitchen Gadgets **9.00** Love Island: All Stars. The temperature keeps on rising with every passing day **10.05** The Sex Lives of College Girls. New series. US comedy following four roommates navigating through their newly-found freedom on a prestigious campus of Essex College **10.50** The Sex Lives of College Girls. Now that they're reunited, Kimberly tries to get the girls out of their brian **11.40** Family Guy. Meg, Brian and Stewie go to Russia to avenge a computer hacking (AD) **12.05am** Family Guy. Animated sitcom (AD) **12.35** American Dad! (AD) **1.30** Bob's Burgers (AD) **2.25** The Stand Up Sketch Show **2.55** Unwind with ITV **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3

6.00am Classic Emmerdale (AD) **7.00** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **8.10** A Touch of Frost (AD) **10.35** The Royal (AD) **11.40** Heartbeat (AD) **1.40pm** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **2.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **3.40** A Touch of Frost (AD) **5.55** Heartbeat. Hippies colonise Lawson's holiday cottages (AD) **6.55** Heartbeat. A salmonella epidemic grips the village, while Vernon decides the time is right to expand Bernie's funeral empire (AD) **8.00** Vera. The detective investigates the murder of a young physiotherapist at a luxury country retreat. Crime drama starring Brenda Blethyn and David Leon (1/4) (AD) **10.00** Endeavour. Morse meets his intellectual match when a serial killer haunting the streets of Oxford keeps himself one step ahead of the law and leaves cryptic messages to goad the police. Starring Shaun Evans (2/4) (AD) **12.00** Trial & Retribution. Part one of two. A massive police search leads to the body of a missing five-year-old. Crime drama by Lynda La Plante starring David Hayman **2.05am** Unwind with ITV. Daily escape **2.50** Teleshopping

ITV4

6.00am Minder (AD, SL) **7.00** The Professionals (AD, SL) **8.05** The Return of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **9.20** Magnum, PI **10.20** Kojak **11.25** BattleBots **12.30pm** The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **1.35** Magnum, PI **2.40** Kojak **3.45** Minder (AD) **4.50** The Professionals (AD) **6.00** BattleBots. It's all on the line for eight killer bots as the Round of 32 continues **7.00** The Motorbike Show. Henry Cole discovers the delights of riding in Cornwall **8.00** Monster Carp. The concluding leg of their tour of France sees the boys head to Dijon (AD) **9.00** Giant Lobster Hunters. Myles and Timmy's relationship is at breaking point. Myles makes the decision to employ another deckhand, but needs to break the news to an emotional Timmy **10.00** FILM: Rambo III (18, 1988) Vietnam veteran John Rambo heads for Afghanistan on a quest to rescue his old boss Colonel Trautman from prison. Action adventure sequel with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crona (AD) **12.05am** Ligue 1 Highlights **12.35** On the Road (AD) **1.30** The Return of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **2.30** Motorsport Mundial **3.00** Teleshopping

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.10** All Creatures Great and Small **8.00** Doctors **9.15** Holly City **10.35** Classic Casualty **11.40** The Bill **12.30pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Eldorado **3.20** Bergerac **4.25** All Creatures Great and Small **5.25** The Upper Hand. Comedy starring Joe McGann **6.00** As Time Goes By **6.40** Last of the Summer Wine **7.20** Last of the Summer Wine. Compo, Clegg and Truly come across a couple, and discover the wife has alarming mystical powers **8.00** Jonathan Creek. When fashion designer Marco Bergman commits suicide, his son sets out to take revenge on the writer who savaged him in print — by appearing to change identity before her eyes. Bill Bailey guest stars (AD) **9.20** New Tricks. Gerry and the team agree to help a man who believes his wife is still alive, even though she seems to have died 18 months earlier in a car accident (3/8) (AD) **10.40** New Tricks. The squad re-examines the disappearance of an actress (4/8) (AD) **12.00** Bergerac **1.00am** Lovejoy **2.20** The Upper Hand **2.50** Holly City **4.00** Teleshopping

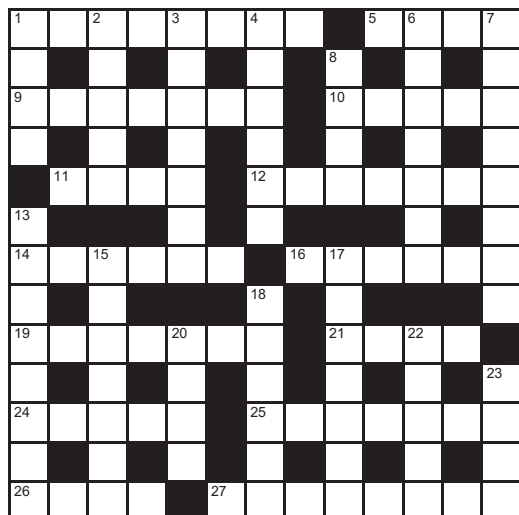
U&Yesterday

6.10am Antiques Roadshow **8.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** Nazi Hunters **12.00** Joanna Lumley **1.00am** Antiques Roadshow **2.00** Bangers & Cash **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases. Germany's preparations for WWII began years before 1939 **5.00** Nazi Hunters. Capturing Joachim Peiper **6.00** Antiques Roadshow. The nona Bruce presents the show from Minshead Railway Station **7.00** Guy's Garage. Transforming a Volvo estate for the Swedish sport of folk racing (1/4) **8.00** Speed with Guy Martin. An attempt to build the world's fastest soapbox racer **9.00** Bangers & Cash. Derek's grandchildren, Jack and Annie, travel to the north-east of England to pick up some charming old bikes (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. The team choose one of the simplest cars ever built, the VW Beetle, to make a profit (AD) **11.00** Abandoned Engineering. Featuring Italian ruins immortalised by Hollywood (8/12) (AD) **12.00** Joanna Lumley's India. Joanna Lumley travels back to the country of her birth **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **3.00** Teleshopping

S4C

6.00am Cyw: Brethyn a Fflwff (r) **6.05** Cymylauychain (r) **6.15** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **6.30** Sam Tan (r) **6.40** Cawacwnni (r) **6.55** Fferm Fach (r) **7.10** Caru Canu (r) **7.15** Dreigiau Cadi (r) **7.30** Anifelliaid Bach y Byd (r) **7.40** Delian a Loli **8.00** Y Tralalas (r) **8.05** Twit (r) **8.20** Dathlu 'Da Dona (r) **8.35** Octonots (r) **8.45** Caru Canu a Stori (r) **8.55** Odol (r) **9.05** Sion y Cheff (r) **9.15** Byd Tad-Cu (r) **9.30** Patrol Pawennau (r) **9.45** Sigldigwt (r) **10.00** Brethyn a Fflwff (r) **10.05** Ffymylauychain (r) **10.15** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **10.30** Sam Tan (r) **10.40** Cawacwnni (r) **10.55** Fferm Fach (r) **11.10** Caru Canu (r) **11.15** Dreigiau Cadi (r) **11.30** Anifelliaid Bach y Byd (r) **11.40** Delian a Loli (r) **12.00** News: Weather **12.05pm** Codi Pac (r) **12.10** Heno (r) **1.00** Colleen Rannys: Bywyd a Bywyd (r) **1.30** Ffermio (r) **2.00** News: Weather **2.05** Prynhaidd Da **3.00** News: Weather **3.05** Priodas Pum Mil (r) **4.00** Awr Fawr: Y Tralalas (r) **4.05** Fferm Fach (r) **4.20** Odol (r) **4.30** Dreigiau Cadi (r) **4.45** Delian a Loli (r) **5.00** Stwnsh: Larfa (r) **5.05** Cath-od (r) **5.20** Partí (r) **5.40** Lego DREAMzzz **6.00** Pobol y Rhondda (r) **6.30** Sgorio (r) **6.57** News **7.00** Heno **7.30** News: Weather **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. Ffion is determined to win the campaign (AD) **8.25** Rownd a Rownd. Erin makes Sian an interesting offer (AD) **8.55** News: Weather **9.00** Ity Ffit **10.00** Gwladfa: Gwilym Bowen Rhys (r) **10.10-11.35** Radio Fa'ma (r) (AD)

times2 Crossword No 9758



Across

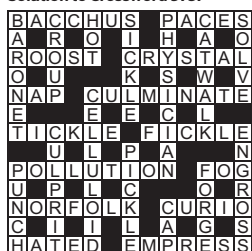
- 1 Puzzling, confusing (8)
5 Existence; vitality (4)
9 Bring to light, reveal (7)
10 Plentiful (5)
11 Celestial body such as Ganymede or Titan (4)
12 Sidelong, obliquely (7)
14 Rough (6)
16 Pressing (6)

- 19 Glass tube with a tap at one end for use in a laboratory (7)
21 --- boom, birth rate surge (4)
24 Softly radiant (5)
25 Woodwind instrument (7)
26 To a lower position (4)
27 Munitions (8)

Down

- 1 Primary colour (4)
2 Stereotypically masculine (5)
3 Money in the bank (7)
4 Everyday, routine (6)
6 Have an effect (on) (7)
7 --- hour, latest moment (8)
8 Recreation area (4)
13 Sword or dagger sheath (8)
15 Movement of atmospheric currents (7)
17 Point of no return (7)
18 Condiment (6)
20 Urban settlement (4)
22 Labour prime minister (5)
23 Score of zero in tennis (4)

Solution to Crossword 9757



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Good defence is all about picturing declarer's hand. Start during the auction, guessing declarer's shape. I loved the defence of Soner Cubukcu, West on today's deal from the Istanbul Winter Open Team Finals. I think you will too.

West knew from the bidding that South was 5♠-6♥ (what his 1♠-then-4♥ route systemically showed). West realised the need to attack in case there were quick discards, so led the jack of diamonds. The jack of diamonds held the first trick, East (Soner's twin brother Ilker) ducking (a decision in itself). West continued with a low diamond to East's ace, and East led a third diamond, declarer ruffing.

At trick four, unable to reach dummy to finesse, declarer cashed the ace of spades. He then led a low spade. West visualised East's ♥Kxx heart holding (the only scenario where West's defence mattered). He rose with the king of spades (he needed to be the defender to win this trick and it could have been the case that East began with ♠QJx, in which case his play of the ten would not have won). Can you see why West needed to be the defender to win this second spade?

It was because West could now lead the king of diamonds, enabling his partner to get rid of his third spade. Declarer could not now reach dummy to pick up East's ♥Kxx (by running the jack). Instead, when he ruffed that third spade (with the jack), East could overruff with the king. One down. What a pretty defence that was — perhaps even prettier if East

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

Teams

♠64
♥J72
♦Q643
♣A1082

♠K105
♥3
♦KJ107
♣QJ654

♠J93
♥K86
♦A82
♣K973

♠AQ872
♥AQ10954
♦5
♣5

S W(S. Cubukcu) N E(I. Cubukcu)
1♠(1) Pass INT Pass
4♥(2) End

(1) I must say, I would have opened 1♥ (I like opening my longest suit), acknowledging that I may have a rebid problem. Actually, I don't think the rebid is such a problem: I'll relatively happily choose 2♠. This hand is surely worth at least the 16 points of a traditional reverse. I'll bid 3♠ next time, too, thereby showing my five-six shape. Will I get too high when the deal is a complete misfit? Sometimes, yeah — s'life. But "Six-five, come alive."

(2) This big rebid systemically showed a 5♠-6♥ shape. It's not a bad way to play, although (because I open 1♥ with 5♠-6♥), for me, South's sequence is a self-agreeing splinter, something like ♠AKJxxx, ♥-♦KJx, ♣AQx (a rather different hand-type and a partnership mis-understanding would be unfortunate ...).

Contract: 4♥, Opening Lead: ♦J

had held ♠QJx in that West's rising of the king of spades would have been necessary. For me, though, the actuality was third pretty as it was clear West saw the position. From trick one onwards, that defence was cubukcutastic. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

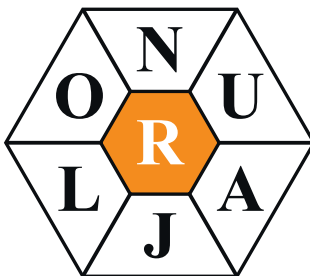
Brain Trainer

EASY 67 + 5 ÷ 2 - 4 x 3 + 8 ^{3/4} OF IT + 7 ÷ 5 + 9 **ANSWER**

MEDIUM 99 + 79 x 3 - 58 ^{+1/2} OF IT + 78 ^{+1/2} OF IT - 84 ^{75%} OF IT - 99 **ANSWER**

HARDER 248 + 877 ^{+1/5} OF IT x 3 + 687 x 2 - 894 ^{90%} OF IT + 872 ^{50%} OF IT **ANSWER**

Polygon

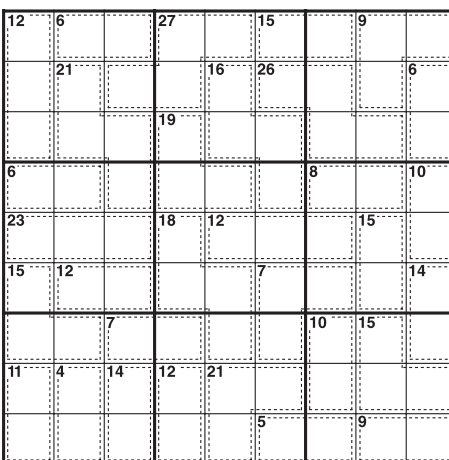


From these letters, make words of **three** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 8 words, average; 11, good; 14, very good; 18, excellent

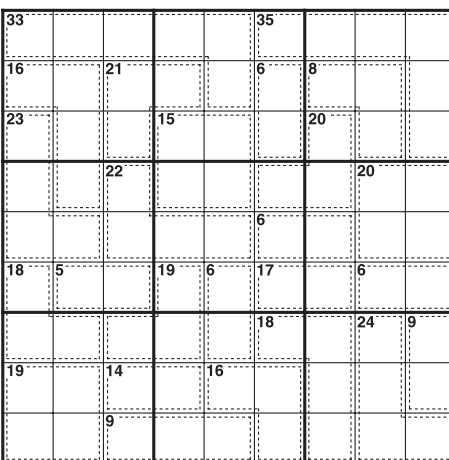
Yesterday's answers

else, erst, est, ester, lest, reset, rest, see, seel, seem, seer, seme, sere, set, sleet, smelt, **smelter**, steel, steer, stele, stem, stere, streel, teres, terse

Killer Moderate No 9922



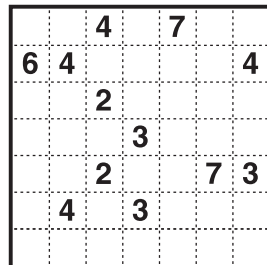
Killer Tough No 9923



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5325



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 3944

4 x + = 36
x - + = 135
x - x = 4
= 216 = 2 = 13

Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 2902

FOLD RECITAL
O E B O O R A
L I V E R P O O L I A N S
L I O T I E L V I T
O T I E Y E
W R A T H D E M D R O P
U T I E O S E
P R O G R A M B R E V I E
Z I N A L B D A
E A S Y L I S T E N I N G
U E A E S N E
S C R A W L S M E W S

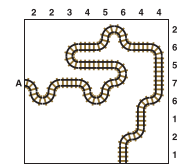
Codeword 5441

UPWARD TICK
A I L A E L A
B I N G O W A X W I N G
A K K O D T M R
S K I N F U L I M B U E
E S S E L L E
S H U S H J E M M Y
S O O C O J
C O Y P U O R G A N Z A
O I I M F E S D
O V E R D U C K O
T E L G A K K O D
E D G Y T H O R N Y

Kakuro 3940

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

Train Tracks 2466



Sudoku 15,591

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

Sudoku 15,592

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

Sudoku 15,593

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

Killer 9920

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

Killer 9921

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

Cell Blocks 5324

3	4	6
3	3	4
3	6	8
2	4	2

Set Square 3943

7	x	1	+ 9
-	x	x	x
2	+ 8	- 6	
÷	-	x	x
5	+ 3	x	4

Lexica 7939

M	A	Y	A
S	E	E	N
A	Y		
N	E	W	T

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram

- 1 Party
2 Bitter
3 Scrape
4 Jotter
5 Showpiece

Cryptic Quintagram

- 1 Maid
2 Sling
3 Robust
4 Richest
5 Eisenhower

Suko 4343

1	4	6
7	3	5
2	9	8

Brain Trainer

- Easy 26
Medium 729
Harder 4,297

Word watch

Algerians (c) An abusive lampoon or satire (Collins)

Obambulation (b) Wandering here and there (OED)

Cub (c) A cattle pen (Chambers)

Chess - Winning Move After 1... Qxg2! Black will emerge a piece ahead following either 2 Kxg2 Rxg7 3 Qxg7+ Kxg7 or 2 Qxg2 Rel+ 3 Qgl Rxgl+ 4 Kxgl Kxg7

Quiz 1 Roman emperors 2 Public schools 3 Fawley Towers 4 Harrods, it is named after founder Charles Henry Harrod 5 Baltic Sea 6 Maryland, as in Maryland Cookies 7 Sinn Féin, which won seven seats 8 Watercolour 9 Missy Elliott 10 Adelaide 11 Grief 12 Dik-dik 13 Mia Goth 14 Howard Wilkinson, who remains the last English manager to win the top-flight title in England 15 Medici

MindGames

Word watch

David Parfitt

Pasquinade

- a** A courtly dance in triple time
- b** A volley of five gunshots
- c** An abusive lampoon or satire

Obambulation

a The act of stretcher bearing
b Wandering here and there
c Inspirational oratory

Cub

a A male swan
b An ancient unit of length
c A cattle pen

Answers on page 15

Sudoku Mild No 15,594

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

Difficult No 15,595

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

Super fiendish No 15,596

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

PUZZLER NAME

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz Olav Bjortomt

I The Praetorian Guard were the household troops of which ancient rulers?

2 The Eton Group and Rugby Group are associations of which institutions?

3 Andrew Sachs played the Spanish waiter Manuel in which BBC sitcom?

4 Which London department store released a 175th anniversary teddy bear named Henry?

5 The Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland are arms of which sea?

6 First baked in 1956, the UK's "favourite



cookie brand" is named after which US state?

7 What became Northern Ireland's largest Westminster party in the 2024 UK general election?

8 Which method of painting is also known as aquarelle?

9 Who is the first female rapper to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?

10 Colonel William Light (1786-1839) chose the site of which Australian state capital?

11 According to the title of Max Porter's 2015 debut novel, what is *the Thing with Feathers*?

12 Kirk's is the largest species of which small African antelope?

13 Which English actress played Pearl Douglas and Maxine Minx in Ti West's *X* film trilogy?

14 Which Englishman managed Leeds United to the First Division title in 1992?

15 Which Italian political dynasty's coat of arms is pictured?
Answers on page 15

Suko No 4343

A 3x3 grid with numbers in circles. The grid is colored in three shades of orange. The numbers are: 15 (light orange), 18 (medium orange), 21 (dark orange), and 25 (dark orange). Below the grid is a color key with three circles: 14 (light orange), 13 (medium orange), and 18 (dark orange).

Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

**For interactive puzzles visit
thetimes.com**

The Times Quick Cryptic No 2903 by Joker

[illegible]

Across

3 Hairy getting ship initially into
UN harbour (8)
7 Exists on old fruit (6)
8 Medicine re-ordered with
pressure for new widespread
disease (8)
9 Manage to go round one
dilatated historic site (4)
10 What might make you choke
— but not quietly (3)
11 Too similar to sage (8)
13 Facilitate rental agreement,
knocking off pounds (4)
15 Wasted item's not good (4)
17 Small lawsuit involving
introduction of needless
penalty (8)
19 Violent whirlwind has ripped
off flap (3)
22 Spy undercover in Smolensk (4)
23 Arrogantly order excavation
replacing centre of Dover (8)
24 Question tea party organiser
when three characters go
missing? (6)
25 Can tyres get shredded in
race? (8)

Down

- 1 With what mill produces, is
hard to thrive (8)
- 2 Road event may take place
here? (6)
- 3 Employed in university post
vacated by Newton (4)
- 4 Very little boy trapping insect
(8)
- 5 Hostile state evacuated square
(6)
- 6 English eleven with time to go
out (4)
- 12 Fresh shoe insert needs
trimming to begin with (8)
- 14 Burn slowly and decompose
after seconds (8)
- 16 Local inhabitant innocent
about beginning of troubles (6)
- 18 Drum mostly filled with a fruit
(6)
- 20 Seemingly only off in the
middle of the day (4)
- 21 Soldiers being silly going
topless (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15



TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

**WHEREVER AND
WHENEVER, TRUST
TRAILFINDERS TO
TAKE CARE OF YOU...**

★ Trustpilot ★★★★★

No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

Local to You

46 high street Travel Centres staffed with expert Consultants across the UK & Ireland

Independent Trusted Travel Advice

On hand 365/24/7, we offer wholly impartial advice alongside an extensive range of hand-picked quality product

Unrivalled Care & Protection

Unique ATOL approved Trust Account

No Surcharges or Hidden Extras

With Trailfinders the price you see is the price you pay



**ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE**

Call **TRAILFINDERS** on **020 7368 1364**,
or visit your local Trailfinders Travel Centre



TF TRUST



**CYBER ESSENTIALS
CERTIFIED**



IATA

ATOL LICENCE: 1458

caa.co.uk

Explore The Best of Europe

New lower prices
on selected departures†

Enhance your holiday
with small group
Signature Tours



With us, you're covered

- Which? Recommended Provider for 12 years
- Unbeatable value, protected by our Quality Promise



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

Discover your new favourite destination

At Riviera Travel, we do the hard work to deliver adventures effortlessly and our magnificent European escorted tours collection has something for everyone, whatever your taste and budget.

If you've joined one of our holidays before, you know just how great they are and how much is included in the price. If you've yet to join us, you're in for a treat...

Travel from your local airport at no extra cost

Choose from the widest selection of dates and regional departures options and start your holiday the way you want to, at no extra cost.

New lower prices on selected departures*

Enhance your holiday with small group Signature Tours

Discover our new collection of Signature Tours on our European itineraries. They're an upgraded range of small group tours of 25 or fewer guests with up to three enhanced Signature experiences added, to make your holiday truly exceptional.



New lower prices on selected departures*

Madrid, Salamanca and Toledo

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



NEW LOWER PRICES ON SELECTED SIGNATURE DEPARTURES*

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM £1,559 PER PERSON

SEVEN DAYS FROM £1,329 PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Six nights in three-star superior to four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast

Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Three guided tours including Salamanca, Toledo and Madrid

Three visits including Segovia, El Escorial and Chinchon

SIGNATURE TOURS

Visit the Prado Museum, with fast track entry to avoid the queues, and an included audio guide so you can explore at your own pace whilst learning more about the masterpieces on display

Dine on authentic tapas dishes at one of Madrid's most popular restaurants amongst the locals

Sip on an aperitif with views of the Plaza Mayor square from the terrace of your restaurant

Berlin, Dresden, Meissen & Colditz

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



SIGNATURE TOURS FROM £1,449 PER PERSON

FIVE DAYS FROM £969 PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Four nights in four-star superior accommodation, with daily breakfast

Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Two guided tours including Berlin, Dresden

Visits to medieval Meissen and tour the world-famous porcelain studio and Colditz Castle

SIGNATURE TOURS

Dinner at the top of the Reichstag Building - the only public restaurant in a parliament building in the world - while admiring beautiful views of the city

On this intriguingly varied tour, we visit two of Europe's great cultural centres: Berlin, once the East-West flashpoint, now reborn as a lively and dynamic city and Dresden, newly restored and possibly Germany's most beautiful city once again. Combine this with stunning Meissen porcelain and the infamous Colditz Castle - probably the world's most famous Prisoner of War camp and you have a varied and fascinating tour.

Departures April to November 2025

To book, visit [thetimes.com/rtravel-bd](https://www.thetimes.com/rtravel-bd)



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 [thetimes.com/rtravel](https://www.thetimes.com/rtravel)

TIMES Travel Partner

New lower prices on selected departures†

Malta Uncovered

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£1,759
PER PERSON

FROM
£1,199
PER PERSON

NEW LOWER PRICES
ON SELECTED DEPARTURES*

EIGHT DAYS

DEPARTURES APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from a selection of regional airports with hotel transfers
- Seven nights in four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast and dinner
- Services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

Your Included Experiences

- Three guided tours including Valletta, Gozo and Città Vittoriosa
- Six visits including the Malta Experience, Ggantija, Hagar Qim, Mdina, Rabat and Marsaxlokk
- Enjoy a tasting of Maltese wines at a prestigious local vineyard

Your Signature Experiences

- Indulge in an evening drink at the hotel's rooftop bar
- Enjoy afternoon tea amidst the Italian gardens of an 18th-century Palazzo
- Elevate your wine tasting with a light lunch that complements the intricate flavour profiles of the wine

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-tl

Stockholm & Copenhagen

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



SEVEN DAYS FROM
£1,589
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

- Return flights with hotel transfers
- Six nights in four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast
- Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Four guided tours including Stockholm, Sweden's Royal Palace, the Vasa Museum and Copenhagen
- Three visits including Roskilde and its stunning Cathedral, the Viking Museum and Fredericksborg Palace and gardens

Think of Sweden and Denmark and a host of unique images immediately spring to your mind. Quaint, historic capitals rich with the architectural legacies of the Hanseatic League; pristine streets, wide-open spaces; a love of nature and respect for the environment; home of the Vikings, modern monarchies; peace-loving and some of the most pleasant people you will ever meet.

Departures June to September 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-sd

Florence & Tuscany

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



NEW LOWER PRICES
ON SELECTED DEPARTURES*

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,549
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

- Return flights with hotel transfers
- Seven nights in three-star superior to four-star accommodation inclusive of all local taxes with breakfast, four dinners, plus one lunch

The services of our experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Two guided tours including Florence and Siena

- Five visits including San Gimignano, Pisa, Lucca, Volterra and a timed visit to the Uffizi

Enjoy Tuscan food at a rural Italian farmhouse

Tuscany embodies much that Italy is famous for, possessing more historical monuments than any other country on earth. Its cities, Florence, Siena and Pisa, together with smaller towns and medieval villages like Lucca and San Gimignano, house some of the world's finest artistic treasures.

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-ft



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

New lower prices on selected departures†

Signature Tour:
Dordogne, Albi
& Carcassonne

TOUR

RETURN FLIGHTS OR EUROSTAR,[†]
PLUS TRANSFERSNEW
LOWER
PRICES
ON SELECTED
DEPARTURES*

Immerse yourself in deepest France and a hauntingly beautiful landscape, slashed by deep, twisting gorges, lined by craggy cliffs filled with sparklingly pure rivers and studded with wonderfully unchanged medieval, honey-coloured villages. Blend this with Toulouse-Lautrec's Albi and the 13th-century fortress town of Carcassonne and the result is breath taking.

EIGHT DAYS
FROM
£2,059
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights from a selection of regional airports or Eurostar and Intercités train, plus hotel transfers

Seven nights in four-star and three-star superior accommodation, with daily breakfast & two dinners, one in a local restaurant
Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Three Guided tours including Sarlat, Albi and Carcassonne

Relax on a trip along the Dordogne River on flat-bottomed boat

Seven visits including Cahors, Domme and the International Centre for Cave Art at Lascaux

Tour the cellars of the 17th-century family-owned Chateau de Pennautier

Dine in style with an exceptional gourmet meal at the Michelin star restaurant, La Barbacane

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-do6Madeira, the Pearl
of the Atlantic

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION
OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERSNEW
LOWER
PRICES
ON SELECTED
SIGNATURE
DEPARTURES*SIGNATURE
TOURS FROM
£1,929
PER PERSON

The 'Pearl of the Atlantic', Madeira is a subtropical gardener's paradise, blessed with a mild climate all year round, making this 'island of eternal spring' a superb destination. Our tour begins in the picturesque capital, Funchal, in the sunny south. We also discover many of the island's gems including beautiful gardens and the hidden Valley of the Nuns.

EIGHT DAYS
FROM
£1,509
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Seven nights in four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast and seven dinners

Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Two guided tours to Funchal and Monte Palace Tropical Gardens

Enjoy the world-famous Madeira wines

Six visits including the Palheiro Gardens, Câmara de Lobos, Santana and Ribeiro Frio National Park

SIGNATURE TOURS

Enjoy an aperitif and canapés as you soak up the superb views of the Atlantic Ocean

Explore vineyards and taste a selection of wines at a renowned island winery followed by lunch

Experience the luxury of Reid's Palace Hotel and enjoy an afternoon tea

Departures March to November 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-md

Slovenia & Lake Bled

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF
REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERSNEW
LOWER
PRICES
ON SELECTED
SIGNATURE
DEPARTURES*SIGNATURE
TOURS FROM
£1,369
PER PERSON

It might be one of the smallest countries in Central Europe, but Slovenia boasts an incredible diversity just waiting to be discovered during this cross-country six-day tour. Nestled between Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary, at the very top of the Balkan Peninsula, its unique position showcases an exceptionally green and pleasant land.

SIX DAYS
FROM
£1,119
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Five nights in four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast

Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Three guided tours including Ljubljana, Lipica Classical Riding School and Maribor

Visit a local winery and enjoy a tasting

Watch a performance by Lipizzaner horses

Three visits including Piran, Ptuj and Lake Bled with boat trip

SIGNATURE TOURS

Tuck into a traditional Slovenian meal at a local restaurant

Visit the birthplace of the famous bled cake to sample this local delicacy

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-svLakes & Mountains
of Austria

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF
REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERSEIGHT DAYS
FROM
£1,719
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Seven nights in four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast and four dinners

The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES
Two guided tours including Salzburg and Hellbrunn Palace

Four visits including the Salzkammergut, St Wolfgang, the Krimml Waterfalls and the Grossglockner

Austria is as close to perfection as you can get: the mighty snow-capped alpine peaks tower above lush green pastures, nourished by crystal clear melt-water streams and dotted with historic wooden farmhouses – whilst the air hangs heavy with the sweet scent of newly mown hay. The magnificent Austrian Alps, the awesomely beautiful Lake District of Salzkammergut, plus astonishingly beautiful Baroque Salzburg – home of Mozart and the great composers, all quite literally take your breath away!

Departures May to September 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-au

Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single rooms are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE4 1SP. Visit the website for full T&Cs. *The saving value has already been applied as a price reduction to the advertised price. Limited availability, available on a first come first served basis. Riviera Travel reserves the right to remove departures from the offer at any time.

New lower prices on selected departures†

Montenegro- Budva, Cetinje & the Bay of Kotor

TOUR

RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS WITH HOTEL TRANSFERS

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£1,769
PER PERSON

FROM
£1,399
PER PERSON



EIGHT DAYS

DEPARTURES APRIL TO OCTOBER 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from a selection of regional airports with hotel transfers
- Seven nights in four-star accommodation with daily breakfast and four dinners
- Services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

Your Included Experiences

- Four guided tours including Budva, Kotor, Shkodër and King Nikola's palace
- Boat trip on beautiful Lake Skadar
- Five visits including Perast, Ostrog Monastery, Stari Bar, Njeguši and Cetinje
- Tour and tasting at one of Montenegro's most unusual wine cellars

Your Signature Experiences

- Sit down to lunch and a tasting at one of Montenegro's most unusual wineries, housed in an underground aircraft hangar
- Take a cable car up Lovćen mountain for lunch while admiring the beautiful views of the Bay of Kotor and Kotor Town

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-mn

Dubrovnik & the Dalmatian Coast

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

EIGHT DAYS FROM

£1,839
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Seven nights' four-star hotel accommodation, with daily breakfast and dinner

The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Two guided tours to Dubrovnik and Split

Five visits including Krka National Park, Trogir, Mali Ston, a traditional water mill with a tasting and Cavtat

SIGNATURE TOURS

Enjoy a cable car ride from Dubrovnik and gaze in wonder at the breathtaking views of the Dalmatian coastline

Experience a slice of rural life on a traditional family farm and dine on typical Croatian dishes prepared by your welcoming hosts with ingredients grown on the farm

EIGHT DAYS FROM

£1,699
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights from a selection of regional airports with hotel transfers

Seven nights in four-star accommodation with daily breakfast and three dinners

Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Seven visits including the mountainside site reputed to be the house of the Virgin Mary, Troy, Gallipoli, Hagia Sophia and Anzac Cove

Four guided tours including Pergamon, Ephesus, Istanbul and Topkapi Palace

Cross the Straits of the Dardanelles

SIGNATURE TOURS

Drift past the magnificent palaces and mosques that line the shore of the mighty Bosphorus on a privately chartered boat

Celebrate your time in Turkey with a traditional evening meal in Istanbul

Istanbul, Ephesus & Troy

TOUR

RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS WITH HOTEL TRANSFERS

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£2,459
PER PERSON

Turkey is an intriguing country with a unique identity straddling both Europe and Asia. In a place where familiarity merges with the exotic, we find a magical blend of the ancient, Christian and Ottoman worlds with thousands of years of history and an atmosphere which links the mysterious east and modern west.

Departures March to November 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-ty

George Bernard Shaw thought Dubrovnik was 'Paradise on Earth' and Lord Byron named it the 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. When you take this tour, you'll find that you can only agree, whether you are witnessing the majesty of Diocletian's Palace in Split or gazing at the tumbling waterfalls in Krka National Park. These landscapes cry out to be explored, offering visitors a blend of compelling scenery and engrossing places on a journey back in time.

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-cd



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

New lower prices on selected departures*

Umbria, Perugia & Assisi

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

NEW LOWER PRICES
ON SELECTED DEPARTURES*

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£1,849
PER PERSON

Journey to the green heart of Italy to discover the unspoilt region of Umbria. This tour will take you through endless rolling countryside, up soaring hills topped with time-warped towns, down into the magical Frasassi Caves and onto the sparkling waters of Lake Trasimeno.

Departures May to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-um

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,429
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers
Seven nights in four-star accommodation, with daily breakfast and one lunch
Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Four guided tours to Perugia, Assisi, Spoleto and the Frasassi Caves
Three visits including Cortona, Lake Trasimeno and Orvieto

Taste traditional fare at a rural restaurant and sample Sagrantino di Montefalco wine

SIGNATURE TOURS

Upgrade your wine tasting experience in Umbria with a selection of local meats and cheeses

Visit an olive mill to discover their olive oil-making process complete with tasting

Dine in a family-run restaurant specialising in a local delicacy, truffle

Classical Italy

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£2,249
PER PERSON

Italy is home to a number of fascinating historical cities and this tour takes in four of the best. Visit Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance; Siena, famous for its Piazza del Campo; Assisi with its renowned basilica; and unmissable Rome, home to the Vatican City. With these cities and the Tuscan countryside never too far away, this really is an unbeatable destination for a tour.

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-it

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,629
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Seven nights in a choice four-star superior accommodation inclusive of all local taxes, with breakfast* and dinner on night five

The services of our experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Four guided tours including Rome, Florence, Siena and Arezzo

Two visits to Assisi and timed entry to the Uffizi

Choose an included visit to Hadrian's Villa, or Villa d'Este

SIGNATURE TOURS

Enjoy a visit to Castel Sant'Angelo

Enjoy a tour and enhanced winetasting with local delicacies at the historic Villa La Ripa, a magnificent Tuscan renaissance villa

Relax and unwind whilst savouring the spectacular views of Siena, a Unesco World Heritage site, over a refreshing typical aperitivo

Western Sicily, Palermo & Aeolian Islands

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

NEW LOWER PRICES
ON SELECTED DEPARTURES*

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£2,014
PER PERSON

Explore the little-known cultural legacies and natural beauty of Western Sicily, visiting prehistoric cave dwellings, Greek ruins, bustling Palermo and beachfront Cefalù. Take three fascinating tours through Erice, Segesta and Palermo as well as visits to Madonie Regional Natural Park, Castelbuono and Lipari.

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-st

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,594
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers
Seven nights in three-star accommodation, with daily breakfast and four dinners
Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Three guided tours to Erice, Segesta and Palermo
Four visits to Palermo's Norman Palace, Madonie Regional Natural Park, Castelbuono and Lipari
Cruise the Aeolian Islands

Enjoy a tasting of Marsala and learn about the ancient craft of salt-panning

SIGNATURE TOURS

Taste some of Trapani's excellent cuisine in an authentic Sicilian restaurant

Refine your palates with an upgraded wine tasting experience in Marsala and enjoy a light lunch

Tour an 18th century aristocratic palazzo, with drinks and canapes

Lake Como, St Moritz & the Bernina Express

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

NEW LOWER PRICES
ON SELECTED DEPARTURES*

SIGNATURE TOURS FROM
£2,218
PER PERSON

Stunning Lake Como is the base for this wonderful tour, which explores the jewels of northern Italy and Switzerland. Explore the amazing lakes of Maggiore and Lugano, see the majestic Alps surrounding the chic mountain resort of St Moritz and experience an unforgettable journey on the iconic Bernina Express train. You'll also visit the picturesque lakeside village of Bellagio. Described by Wordsworth as 'a treasure whom the earth keeps to herself', Lake Como and this enchanting region will captivate you.

Departures April to October 2025

To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-co

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,784
PER PERSON

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers

Seven nights in three-star accommodation, with daily breakfast and dinner

Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Guided tour of Isola Bella and Villa del Balbianello

Four visits including Bellagio, Stresa on Lake Maggiore, St Moritz and Lugano

Journey on the Bernina Express

SIGNATURE TOURS

Sip a refreshing local aperitif in the charming ambience of a historic 'café italiano' and drink in the views of Lake Como

Stroll amongst Villa Carlotta's beautiful gardens, with entrance to view its magnificent private art collection

Marvel at the jaw-dropping vistas as you ride the Bernina Express



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

New lower prices on selected departures†

Lake Garda, Venice & Verona

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



FROM
£1,249
PER PERSON

SIGNATURE
TOURS FROM
£1,659
PER PERSON

**EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES APRIL TO OCTOBER 2025**

Price Includes

- Return flights with hotel transfers
- Seven nights in a choice of three-star to four-star superior accommodation inclusive of all local taxes, with breakfast and dinner*
- Services of an experienced tour manager

Your Included Experiences

- Guided tours of Venice and Verona
- Visits to a selection of villages on Lake Garda, the Dolomites and a tour of a local vineyard with a tasting

Your Signature Experiences

- Enjoy a wine tasting experience with additional wines and a rustic lunch with local ingredients in an authentic restaurant
- Absorb Verona's atmosphere over an aperitivo, against a backdrop of its amphitheatre
- Cruise Venice's iconic canals aboard a traditional gondola



To book, visit [thetimes.com/rtravel-vv](https://www.thetimes.com/rtravel-vv)

Sicily

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



**NEW
LOWER
PRICES**
ON SELECTED
DEPARTURES†

SIGNATURE
TOURS FROM
£1,999
PER PERSON

**EIGHT DAYS
FROM
£1,579
PER PERSON**

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers
Seven nights in four-star accommodation inclusive of all local taxes, with breakfast and dinner, plus one lunch in a restaurant
Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Three guided tours including the Valley of the Temples and the Roman Villa in Piazza Armerina
Visits, including Siracusa
Food authentic Sicilian food at a local restaurant

SIGNATURE TOURS

Sample the wines of Mount Etna and lunch amidst the surroundings of a historic winery

Relax and unwind whilst soaking up the views of Taormina over an aperitivo

Enjoy a boat trip to explore the caves of Syracuse and admire beautiful Ortigia from a different perspective

Lucca, Portofino & the Cinque Terre

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS



SIGNATURE
TOURS FROM
£2,199
PER PERSON

**EIGHT DAYS
FROM
£1,859
PER PERSON**

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights with hotel transfers
Seven nights in four-star superior accommodation, with daily breakfast, one lunch and three dinners
Services of an experienced tour manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Three guided tours to Lucca, Pisa and Genoa
Visits to Porto Venere, Portofino and the Cinque Terre

Private boat cruise along the Cinque Terre and sail to Portofino

SIGNATURE TOURS

Enhanced dining experience at one of Lucca's restaurants

Discover traditional pesto making in Genoa where Genovese basil has been cultivated for centuries

Enjoy harbour views an Italian aperitivo in the ambience of Portofino's exclusive Piazzetta

No distance at all separates Lucca and Pisa from Portofino, the Cinque Terre & Genoa, but the treasures they offer make for a diverse experience. In Pisa's Square of the Miracles there's the Leaning Tower, cathedral and baptistry, but much less well known are the colourful villages that cling to the Ligurian coastline.

Departures May to October 2025

To book, visit [thetimes.com/rtravel-lp](https://www.thetimes.com/rtravel-lp)



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 [thetimes.com/rtravel](https://www.thetimes.com/rtravel)

TIMES Travel Partner

European Grand Tours collection | New lower prices on selected departures*

Grand Tour of Spain's Andalucia: Seville, Granada and Malaga

TOUR

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

FROM
£1,949
PER PERSON

**NEW
LOWER
PRICES**
ON SELECTED
DEPARTURES*

TEN DAYS

DEPARTURES APRIL TO OCTOBER 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from a selection of regional airports with hotel transfers
- Nine nights in three- to four-star accommodation with daily breakfast
- Services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

Your Included Experiences

- Four guided tours including Seville, the Mezquita, Cordoba, the Alhambra Palace and Malaga
- Tastings of tapas in Seville and Malaga
- Experience the majesty of the Alcázar Palace, one of the oldest palaces in Europe
- Soak up views of Seville as you relax with an aperitif and selection of tapas
- Enjoy an intoxicating flamenco performance
- Savour locally produced wines in Competa with a wine tasting



To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-csm6

NINE DAYS

DEPARTURES MAY TO OCTOBER 2025

Price Includes

- Return seats on the Eurostar from London St Pancras, plus transfers
- Eight nights in hand-picked four-star hotels with daily breakfast and one lunch
- Services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

Your Included Experiences

- Four guided tours, including Bordeaux, a winery in Saint-Émilion, Paris by day and Paris by night
- Three visits, including Montmartre, the City of Wine and Les Cordeliers with crémant tasting
- Enjoy lunch at a chateau in the Saint-Émilion region
- Visit Bassin des Lumières, a fascinating art exhibit in an ex-submarine base
- Taste the future of winemaking on a visit to an organic, biodynamic winery
- Step back through five centuries of history at the Palace of Versailles



To book, visit thetimes.com/rtravel-bxp6

Grand Tour of Paris, Bordeaux & Saint-Émilion

TOUR

RETURN SEATS ON THE EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS, PLUS TRANSFERS

FROM
£2,079
PER PERSON

**NEW
LOWER
PRICES**
ON SELECTED
SIGNATURE
DEPARTURES*



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-0402

0808 258 6001 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single rooms are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE4 1SP. Visit the website for full T&Cs. *The saving value has already been applied as a price reduction to the advertised price. Limited availability, available on a first come first served basis. Riviera Travel reserves the right to remove departures from the offer at any time.