

Wednesday May 10 2023 | [thetimes.co.uk](https://www.thetimes.co.uk) | No 74092

2G £2.50 £2.00 to subscribers
(based on 7 Day Print Pack)



What I've learnt from watching porn

INSIDE
TIMES2



Power hoops, comfy shoes

The style set's new hot buys

Don't defy will of the people on migration bill, peers warned

Matt Dathan

Suella Braverman and Alex Chalk have warned the House of Lords not to defy the "will of the British people" by blocking the government's radical immigration plans.

The Illegal Migration Bill will be debated for the first time in the upper chamber today and the government is

bracing itself for opposition from across the political spectrum.

Ministers fear that peers will significantly water down key measures in the bill that are seen as vital to achieve Rishi Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats", including new powers to detain all illegal migrants and ignore rulings by the European Court of Human Rights.

Peers are also expected to table a raft

of amendments, including a greater commitment to open safe and legal routes for refugees fleeing war-torn countries such as Sudan.

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is expected to lead the criticism in today's debate by questioning the morality of the bill. Last year he described the policy to send migrants to Rwanda as "ungodly". Yesterday it was

claimed that Boris Johnson confronted the future King after The Times revealed that Charles had privately branded the Rwanda policy "appalling".

In an article for Times Red Box pre-empting the opposition, Braverman, the home secretary, and Chalk, the justice secretary, warn that the public's support for "legitimate" refugees is in danger of being eroded by

"uncontrolled and illegal migration". It comes as The Times can reveal that the prime minister's pledge to clear the backlog of asylum claims is in disarray after a scheme to fast-track applications from war-torn countries floundered. In February, Sunak announced that 12,000 claims from five countries — Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Eritrea

Continued on page 2



Russia's Victory Day parades marking the end of the Second World War, including one featuring police cadets in St Petersburg, were much smaller this year than usual

Britain set to blacklist Russia's Wagner group

Mercenaries will be given same status as Isis and al-Qaeda

Steven Swinford Political Editor
Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor
George Grylls Defence Reporter

Britain is poised to formally proscribe the Wagner group of mercenaries as a terrorist organisation to increase pressure on Russia.

The group has played a central role in President Putin's invasion of Ukraine and is leading attempts to take the eastern town of Bakhmut, which has become a focus of the war for both sides.

A government source said that, after

two months of building a legal case, proscription of the group was "imminent" and likely to be enacted within weeks.

Proscription would make it a criminal offence to belong to Wagner, attend its meetings, encourage support for it or carry its logo in public, putting it on the same footing as groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaeda.

It would also impose financial sanctions, which would be significant because the group and all its members would be barred from using UK courts

to silence journalists and campaigners. Officials said it would have implications for Wagner's ability to raise money if any funds went through British financial institutions.

Yesterday Putin launched a fresh tirade against the West during a scaled-back Victory Day parade in Moscow to commemorate the end of the Second World War. He accused the West of "unleashing war against Russia" and said supporters of Ukraine included "neo-Nazi scum".

There were signs, however, of the toll

the Ukraine war has taken on the Russian army. In Moscow just one solitary tank took part in the parade on Red Square — a Second World War-era Soviet T-34 — and planned celebrations in at least 21 Russian cities were cancelled altogether.

Wagner, often referred to as a private military company, is a group of mercenaries accused of human rights abuses that came to international attention after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. It is led by Yevgeny Prigozhin,

Continued on page 2

"There is nothing he can do, nothing, that would shake the core of Maga, which is 25-30 per cent of the Republican Party who vote in primaries," said Larry Sabato, politics professor at the University of Virginia. "They don't care. They think it's all cooked up." Amy Tarkanian, a Republican strategist in Nevada, agreed, adding: "If he says he didn't do it, then [his fans] believe him."

Trump abused accuser, page 31

Court orders Trump to pay rape accuser \$5m damages

Will Pavia New York
David Charter, **Hugh Tomlinson**
Washington

Donald Trump sexually abused and defamed a journalist and has been ordered to pay her nearly \$5 million in damages after a New York civil trial.

The verdict was a victory for E Jean Carroll, a former magazine columnist who said that Trump raped her in a New York department store in 1996.

The unprecedented verdict against a former US president may not deter Trump's loyal Republican supporters but is likely to hamper his chances of winning crucial independent female voters in the 2024 White House race.

Carroll, 79, smiled as she left court in Manhattan but did not speak to reporters. In a statement later released through her lawyer she claimed: "Today the world finally knows the truth." She had told the court in detail how Trump forced her into a changing room in the lingerie section of Bergdorf Goodman and attacked her.

The jury did not accept that Trump committed rape, agreeing unanimously on the lesser assault of sexual battery. He will not be registered as a sex offender because this was a civil, not criminal, case, with the burden of proof not "beyond reasonable doubt" but on "a preponderance of evidence".

Trump, 76, who declined to appear in court or offer any witnesses, is to appeal against the verdict. The frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination next year has so far convinced his Make America Great Again (Maga) fans that all the legal problems he faces are part of a conspiracy against him and, by extension, against them.

"There is nothing he can do, nothing, that would shake the core of Maga, which is 25-30 per cent of the Republican Party who vote in primaries," said Larry Sabato, politics professor at the University of Virginia. "They don't care. They think it's all cooked up." Amy Tarkanian, a Republican strategist in Nevada, agreed, adding: "If he says he didn't do it, then [his fans] believe him."

News

Today's highlights

7.20
12pmChief inspector of prisons, Charlie Taylor
PMQs Unpacked: Matt Chorley and Tim Shipman
pause the action as Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer go head to head in the Commons

2pm

The environmentalist Ben Goldsmith on
dealing with grief after his daughter's death

Jane Garvey and Fi Glover speak to

3.35pm

Joanne Harris, right, about her new novel,
Broken Light

8.35pm

Kait Borsay looks at how to shrink the
knowledge gap in women's health

TIMES RADIO

DAB RADIO • ONLINE • SMART SPEAKER • APP



TODAY'S EDITION

Tesco chairman in grope claims

The chairman of Tesco and former president of the CBI is facing claims of inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour. John Allan, 74, allegedly touched the bottoms of colleagues at a Tesco meeting last year and at a CBI dinner in 2019. **Page 5**

Trauma support for gender talk

The Oxford Union will provide "welfare resources" to help students who might be upset by a talk by Professor Kathleen Stock later this month. The academic's gender-critical views have led some groups to accuse her of transphobia. **Page 9**

'Three-parent' babies born

Britain's first "three-parent babies" have been born. Doctors in Newcastle were given permission to use an IVF procedure which involves the creation of children with DNA from three adults, to prevent rare genetic conditions being passed on. **Page 16**

COMMENT

Nothing demonstrates the pointlessness of the Lib Dems more than their own success

DANIEL FINKELSTEIN, PAGE 23

Sudan palace blown to bits

An airstrike has destroyed Sudan's presidential palace, which was at the centre of fierce fighting between the country's military leaders. The Rapid Support Forces, which held the site, pledged "an appropriate response". **Page 32**

Ryanair to buy 300 new jets

Ryanair has placed the biggest aircraft order in its 30-year history as it revealed plans to carry 300 million passengers a year within a decade. Europe's largest carrier signed a deal with Boeing to buy 150 aircraft, with options for 150 more. **Page 33**

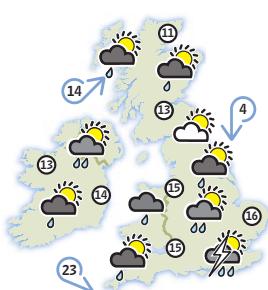
City fight for draw in Madrid

A superb second-half strike by Kevin De Bruyne secured a 1-1 draw for Manchester City against Real Madrid in Spain, giving the Premiership side a slight edge going into the second leg of the Champions League semi-final next week. **Pages 64-68**

OFFER
Save more than 50% with a subscription to The Times and The Sunday Times

THETIMES.CO.UK/SUBSCRIBE

THE WEATHER



Sunny spells, but showers will spread eastwards, heavy in places
Full forecast, page 55

© TIMES MEDIA LIMITED, 2023.
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 (Broxbourne) Ltd, Great Cambridge Rd, Waltham Cross, EN8 8DY; Newsprinters (Knowsley) Ltd, Kitling Rd, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 9HN; Newsprinters (Eurocentral) Ltd, Byramsmuir Road, Holytown, Motherwell, ML1 1NP; Associated Printing (Carr) Ltd, Morton 2 Esky Drive, Carr Industrial Estate, Portadown, BT63 5YY; 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 Newspaper Licensing Agency at PO Box 101, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1WX, tel 01892 525274, email copy@nla.co.uk. For all other reproduction and licensing inquiries contact Licensing Department, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF, telephone 020 7711 7888, e-mail enquiries@newslicensing.co.uk

Netflix subscription could be key to buying your first home

Andrew Ellison
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Some older homeowners have long blamed the profligate tastes of young people for their failure to get on the property ladder. But now a £30-a-month Pret a Manger coffee subscription or £10.99-a-month Netflix plan could actually help "Generation Rent" secure their first home.

A tie-up between Leeds Building Society and the credit reference agency Experian will allow extra evidence of a prospective borrower's financial history to be factored into mortgage lending decisions.

Under the partnership the previous 12 months of an applicant's regular debit payments, such as council tax and subscriptions to digital entertainment services, will improve their credit score. The idea is that these payments show that the prospective borrower can handle monthly payments.

Leeds said that, during testing, 7.5 per cent of mortgage applicants would have gained an improvement in their credit rating with the new system,

which is called Experian Boost. Richard Fearon, chief executive of the building society, said the scheme would "particularly help younger borrowers, first-time buyers and anyone on lower incomes".

He added: "Often, through no fault of their own, these groups can struggle to build a good credit score because they need to spend most of their earnings on rent and other regular payments."

Under the scheme a good credit score alone will not be enough to secure a mortgage. The lender will still consider income, employment status and overall financial stability.

Nonetheless, Experian said it would provide an extra layer of information that could tip the scales in favour of a borrower who might otherwise have been rejected.

Sigga Sigurdardottir, from the credit agency, said: "As many people across the UK face barriers to home ownership, we're delighted that Boost users can now use their boosted scores to help them get on the ladder, making that dream of home ownership more accessible."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Wagner blacklisted

an ex-convict and former hotdog seller known as "Putin's chef".

Prigozhin, 61, used the British courts to bring a libel case against Eliot Higgins, a British journalist, over revelations by his website Bellingcat about the group's shadowy operations. The case collapsed in March 2022 after the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the imposition of personal sanctions on Prigozhin, but government sources said it was an example of how proscription could curb Wagner's influence and operations in the UK.

For many years the Wagner group was closely linked with the Kremlin, but the invasion of Ukraine has led to strains in the relationship between Prigozhin and Putin. In an expletive-strewn outburst last week, Prigozhin said "scumbag" Russian generals were responsible for the deaths of Wagner fighters. He accused them of depriving his fighters of ammunition in the nine-month battle for Bakhmut.

The Bakhmut offensive has cost Moscow thousands of casualties, with Wagner, which is using prisoners alongside its professional recruits, sustaining many of the losses.

As well as the war in Ukraine, the group has been involved in conflicts across Africa and the Middle East — fighting for control of lucrative gold-mines in the Central African Republic and helping to prop up President

Assad's regime in Syria. More recently there have been fears the group could try to expand its presence in Sudan as the country slides towards civil war.

There is no evidence that Wagner or individuals linked to it have been operating in the UK since the war in Ukraine started, and proscription is seen as a largely symbolic move.

However, a government source said there had been "suspicions" that the group had helped launder money out of the UK along with organised crime groups after financial sanctions were imposed on Russian oligarchs and Putin allies.

To proscribe the group, the Home Office would need to build a case explaining why the legal step was required, which could include references to classified intelligence.

Some Whitehall sources expressed scepticism about the proscription, given Wagner's minimal operations in the UK. One said: "I don't suppose anyone walks around London saying, 'I'm a member of the Wagner group.' This sounds more like someone in government itching to find something else to punish Putin with."

David Lammy, the shadow foreign secretary, said: "It is only right that the government appears to be finally listening to Labour's calls for its proscription as a terrorist organisation."

Putin raises spectre of forever war, Roger Boyes, page 24
Scaled-back parade hints at Russia's failure, leading article, page 27

The scheme is already being used by lenders considering other forms of credit, but this is the first time it is being applied to mortgage applications.

Experian is in negotiations with other lenders about expanding use of the scheme.

The Experian scheme takes advantage of open banking technology, which allows people's information to be shared securely, meaning the borrower's current account payments can be linked to their credit score.

Leeds Building Society has more than 800,000 customers and helped 18,000 people onto the housing ladder last year. It lends up to 95 per cent of the value of a home for standard purchases and shared ownership schemes. Applicants for both types of loan will be eligible for the new system.

Skipton Building Society has launched a 100 per cent mortgage aimed at "trapped renters" who have a track record of making payments but cannot save enough for a deposit.

Last year Leeds stopped lending on residential second homes to focus on first-time buyers.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Migrant bill opposition

and Libya — would be streamlined by removing the need for a face-to-face interview. Instead, they were sent a ten-page questionnaire asking for evidence to support their asylum application. Asylum claims from these countries have a success rate of over 95 per cent.

While three quarters of the forms have been returned, only 10 per cent had been completed properly. This has meant that the Home Office is having to carry out interviews in the normal way, effectively making the fast-track scheme redundant.

A government source blamed the failure on lawyers, although the Home Office has not provided evidence to back up the claims. The source said: "We're aware of lawyers actively briefing migrants to fill in the forms incorrectly so they can make sure there's a longer process with more interviews and they get paid for that work."

In their article, Braverman and Chalk, who replaced Dominic Raab as justice secretary last month, say: "We urge the House of Lords to look at the Illegal Migration Bill carefully, remember it is designed to meet the will of the British people in a humane and fair way and back the bill."

Home Office figures revealed that 411 migrants crossed the Channel over the coronation bank holiday weekend, taking this year's total to 6,691. **Politics, pages 12-13**

Railways shunt engineering works to midweek

The dreaded weekend engineering works could become a thing of the past on some lines as Network Rail experiments with midweek maintenance in response to shifting travel patterns.

Midweek services on one of the country's busiest rail routes will be reduced while vital maintenance work is carried out. Network Rail, which manages rail infrastructure, said it would work on the east coast main line connecting London and Edinburgh on Tuesday and Wednesday next week.

Work is typically carried out overnight when lines are closed or at weekends and on bank holidays, historically the quietest time on the network. But the advent of working from home, as

well as an increased demand for leisure travel since the end of pandemic lockdowns has rewritten demand on the railways.

Data from the main operator of the east coast main line, London North Eastern Railway, indicates that Fridays and Sundays are now the most popular days to travel. That tallies with research by the Great British Railways transition team, which found that the number of weekend rail journeys nationally in February was 21 per cent higher than before the pandemic.

A source at Network Rail said the weekday engineering trial was being closely watched by other operators on long-distance routes.

Passenger figures across the network are up to 80 per cent lower on some days, especially Mondays, than before the pandemic. But on weekends numbers exceed pre-pandemic levels. Fridays are an anomaly, with numbers dramatically lower on peak services but higher on later, off-peak services as people depart for weekend breaks or nights out in cities.

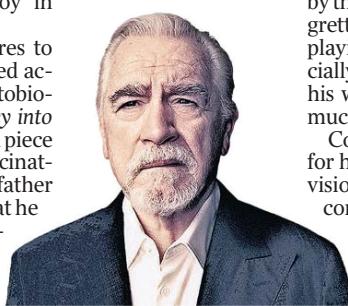
Paul Rutter, the east coast route director for Network Rail, said: "We know that passenger travel patterns have changed post-pandemic, with higher demand for travel on weekends to and from London King's Cross, so carrying out the work midweek will mean fewer travellers are impacted."

Constance Kampfner

Brian Cox has said that he hopes he will not be defined by his performance as the media mogul Logan Roy in *Succession*.

He was speaking as he prepares to portray James Tyrone, a frustrated actor, in Eugene O'Neill's semi-autobiographical play *Long Day's Journey into Night* in the West End next year, a piece that the actor said had "always fascinated" him. Tyrone, the 65-year-old father in a dysfunctional family, feels that he has squandered his talent by performing the same role for years.

The character is based on the playwright's father, James, who

Brian Cox says his starring role as Logan Roy has cost him his anonymity

played the Count of Monte Cristo more than 6,000 times.

Cox, 76, said that the play "rings so many bells" for actors. "I was fascinated by the fact that he was this actor who regretted selling his soul. He ended up playing one role, which was commercially very successful, but it also clipped his wings. His career could have been much broader," he said.

Cox, a Shakespearean actor known for his work on stage, cinema and television, said that he was nevertheless conscious that "there's always going to be that role that tries to define you".

He said: "Having played Logan Roy, I resent the fact, or I'm sad

about the fact, that I've lost my anonymity, which was one of the things that served me well."

"It's one of the great roles and there's nothing I can do about it. You get hoisted by your own petard. Hopefully I'm not going to be defined by it, but we'll see."

The Scottish actor also said that his desire to move on from *Succession*, which is in its fourth and final series, was one of the reasons that he wanted to return to theatre. "I keep going back because that's the real test of your mettle," he said.

Tickets for *Long Day's Journey into Night*, which opens for previews in March, go on sale tomorrow



Christie's island to make a killing

Carol Lewis Property Editor

And Then There Were None is the ominous title of one of Agatha Christie's most celebrated novels, inspired by Burgh Island, off South Devon.

Eight guests arrive to find they and their caretakers are murder targets. As suggested, no one leaves alive.

The island makes a murderous return in her Hercule Poirot novel *Evil Under the Sun*.

Burgh Island Limited is hoping this fictional history does not deter potential buyers as it puts the 21-acre property with hotel, pub and beach house on the market for £15 million.

The sale includes Agatha's Beach House, a writer's retreat built for Christie on the cliff edge. Guests can sit at a large wooden table with old typewriter and imagine the author's plotting and scheming while gazing over the sea towards the mainland.

It is hard to see why Christie had thoughts of death in this idyllic spot near the village of Bigbury-on-Sea. At high tide the island is cut off from the mainland and guests arrive on a sea tractor. When the tide is low the island is accessible on a sand strip packed with holidaymakers.

The island is dominated by the 25-suite, grade II listed white art-deco hotel built in 1929. The highlight is the restored Palm Court with a circular glass skylight. There are guest rooms too in the beach house and above the Pilchard Inn pub as well as a tennis court, helipad, a spa and a mermaid

You too can have a land to call your own

- Barlocco Island, Dumfries and Galloway, £150,000. Enjoy solitude on this 25-acre deserted island. There are no buildings, though, so you will want to pack a tent.
- Inis Saimer Island, Co Donegal, Ireland, £397,986. A private retreat without any of the hardship (it's a two-minute boat ride from the town Ballyshannon). It has a three-bedroom house and a garden.
- Los Conejos Island, Patagonia, Chile, opening bid

£4.26 million. Skinny dipping is probably not advisable from this 23.6-acre island in the middle of a glacier lake so sit back and enjoy the views. There are a couple of log cabins to get cosy in, too.

● Little Pipe Cay in the Bahamas, £79 million. A chance to own 38 acres of Caribbean paradise with a 5,000 sq ft main house plus four guest cottages. There's a deep water dock to park your superyacht, plus a helipad, Olympic length infinity pool and spa.

Dame Agatha Christie wrote two novels inspired by Burgh Island, where a feature of its art deco hotel is the glass skylight on Palm Court

pool — a natural sea water basin. Two small holiday cottages and a wartime bunker will remain under separate ownership.

Knight Frank, the estate agency selling the island, says: "It's rumoured that President Eisenhower and Winston Churchill met at the hotel before D-Day, while the Duke of Windsor and Wallace Simpson reported-



edly visited. The Beatles stayed in the hotel before playing a concert in Plymouth."

The house has featured in TV programmes including the 2002 adaptation of *Evil Under the Sun*. In 1965 it featured in the film *Catch Us If You Can*.

The island and hotel were bought in 2001 for £2 million before the estate agents Savills valued the property at £8.65 million in January 2018. It was then sold for an undisclosed sum to Burgh Island Limited which is registered in Corby, Northamptonshire. The company is ultimately owned by Office Space in Town Limited.

Giles Fuchs, one of the company directors, said: "It has been a true privilege to restore and enhance Burgh Island Hotel over the past few years.

"I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved with this art deco icon. Following the recent renovation and the planning decision for the further extension and development of the building, the time is right to offer this stunning property to a new owner, who can continue its legacy and take it to even greater heights."

In December last year, the island received planning approval for a four-storey "Titanic" style hotel extension to create an extra 12 guest suites and two staff rooms, the construction of a single storey building for an additional 11 en suite staff bedrooms, and extensions to The Pilchard Inn and Nettlefold restaurant.

"I SAW @MINCEMEATLIVE THIS WEEK AND WAS BLOWN AWAY BY IT. LAUGHED & CRIED. DO ANYTHING YOU CAN TO GET A TICKET."

@DOLLYALDERTON



OPERATION MINCEMEAT
A NEW MUSICAL

LONDON'S FORTUNE THEATRE - TIL AUG 19
OPERATIONMINCEMEAT.COM



War horses The Azerbaijan Land of Fire display team, Royal Horse Artillery and Household Cavalry will all feature at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in Berkshire, which begins tomorrow and runs until Sunday

Truss set to rile Beijing by giving a speech in Taiwan

George Grylls Defence Correspondent

Liz Truss will become the most prominent British politician to travel to Taiwan in decades in a visit that is likely to antagonise Beijing.

The former prime minister will give a speech in Taipei next week in a show of "solidarity" with the Taiwanese people as anger grows among Tory MPs over Rishi Sunak's smoothing of diplomatic relations with China.

Truss said the island nation, which China has vowed to reclaim, was facing "increasingly aggressive behaviour and rhetoric from the regime in Beijing". "Taiwan is a beacon of freedom and democracy," she said.

Truss will be the most notable politician to visit Taiwan since Margaret Thatcher in 1992 and 1996, and comes following recent trips by a junior trade minister and MPs from the foreign affairs committee.

A visit last year by Nancy Pelosi, while she was speaker of the US House of Representatives, prompted Beijing to conduct a series of military drills that effectively blockaded the island.

The visit is likely to undermine Sunak's efforts to re-engage with China

after a period of strained relations. Lord Johnson, a trade minister, visited Hong Kong this week to boost financial ties with the former British territory, while President Xi said Beijing was ready to "enhance the friendship" with the UK after sending Han Zheng, the Chinese vice-president, to the coronation.

"There is a Treasury and Foreign Office orthodoxy that Liz tried to resist when she was in government but seems to have re-established itself since she left," an ally of the former prime minister said.

The decision to welcome Han to the coronation was controversial with some Tory MPs, who have accused the official of masterminding the crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong.

Han was afforded a meeting with James Cleverly, the foreign secretary, while he was in London last week.

Cleverly has consistently argued in favour of maintaining diplomatic relations with China and in a lengthy speech last month he said the UK had an "obligation to future generations" to engage with Beijing on issues such as climate change, healthcare and trade, while acknowledging their "profound disagreements". A government source

said Cleverly would "consider" any invitation to visit Beijing on a state visit.

Iain Duncan Smith, the former Tory party leader, said recent attempts to improve relations with China were "embarrassing" and criticised the Hong Kong trip. "It's embarrassing that we're sending someone to talk business as if nothing else matters. This is project kowtow in full prostration," he said.

But while visiting the US yesterday, Cleverly said Beijing aspired to be the "dominant global power". He said: "We can't pretend that is not the case. We do absolutely have to engage with China."

Cleverly also appeared to warn the US about the dangers of protectionism amid concerns over President Biden's multibillion-dollar Inflation Reduction Act. He said western countries should "put our arms around each other" like in a rugby scrum to combat economic, military and digital threats.

Neil O'Brien, a health minister and noted critic of Beijing, said that it was important to maintain diplomatic ties with China while remaining wary.

"I'm comfortable with us always talking to them. Just as we did when the Soviet Union existed, we've got to carry on talking to them," he told LBC.

Doctors 'deserted boy, 3, for more money'

Kat Lay Health Editor

Junior doctors have been accused of potentially causing the death of a three-year-old boy in "walking away from patients for more money".

At a hearing of the health and social care select committee, looking into action by nurses and junior doctors, Caroline Johnson raised the case of Oscar, a three-year-old who needed a scan to see whether his cancer had returned. Johnson, a Conservative MP and doctor, said: "The operation to

explore whether the cancer had come back was due for April 11, and it was postponed solely because of the junior doctors strike until April 27, more than two weeks' delay. We know as medical professionals [...] that if you delay treatment of cancer, it can lead to death."

Johnson told a British Medical Association representative at the committee that she "just cannot physically understand how someone could walk away from a three-year-old with cancer to try and obtain themselves more money".

Emma Runswick, of the BMA, said

that she was "really sorry to Oscar's family and to all patients who had their operations postponed or rescheduled as no doctor wants to be on strike".

Runswick said she was "cautiously optimistic" about the direction of fresh talks with the government, but said they were progressing slowly.

The Department of Health has acknowledged that the pay deal agreed with other NHS staff would mean it exceeded its annual budget, suggesting funding discussions with the treasury are yet to be fully resolved.

Medics call to halt research into AI 'threat'

Emma Yeomans

Types of AI pose an "existential threat to humanity", and research should be halted until it has been regulated, doctors and researchers have said.

An opinion article in the journal BMJ Global Health warned AI could be used to manipulate behaviour and subvert elections; conduct elaborate oppression; and even to kill, through the rise of autonomous lethal weapons.

The article, by a group including Dr Frederik Federspiel, a lecturer at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Ruth Mitchell, a neurosurgeon and Nobel peace prize winner, says AI has the potential to transform society and medicine for the better, but needs regulation to prevent the emergence of serious threats.

"When combined with the ... ability to distort or misrepresent reality with deep fakes, AI-driven information systems may further undermine democracy by causing a general breakdown in trust, or by driving social division and conflict," it says.

The paper also highlights the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems, which are capable of selecting, locating and killing human targets without the need for human supervision. US law requires that such systems "allow commanders and operators to exercise appropriate levels of human judgment over the use of force". The UK's policy is that it will not develop them. But there is no international law governing their creation or use.

With the rapid rise of AI such systems could be mass produced, attached to drones and set up to kill "at an industrial scale", warn the authors.

"We are now seeking to create machines that are vastly more intelligent and powerful than ourselves. The potential for such machines to apply this intelligence and power — whether deliberately or not in ways that could harm or subjugate humans — is real."

Quintagram® No 1624

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Male duck (5)

2 Happen (5)

3 Sturdy shoe (6)

4 Pig's foot (7)

5 One gaining power via wealth (9)

A	A	B	C	C	C	D	E
E	E	G	K	L	O	O	O
O	P	R	R	R	R	R	R
T	T	T	T	T	U	U	U

Solutions MindGames in Times2
Cryptic clues every day online

Where there's muck...

A company is selling tiny 1.5kg bags of compost for £20 each. The Land Gardeners says the packets, about the size of a supermarket bag of flour, contain "high-quality humified compost". Its "specialist" ingredients come from the childhood home of Diana, Princess of Wales, Althorp Estate near Northampton, and include cowpats, horse manure and clay. Garden centres sell 50kg bags of compost for under £10.

Child shooting charges

A man has been charged with attempted murder after two children were shot. Kian Durnin, 22, from Wolverhampton, will appear at Birmingham magistrates' court today. A boy of 15 and a girl of 11 were both shot in the leg in Bushbury on May 1. They are expected to make a full recovery. Durnin was also charged with possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life and aggravated vehicle-taking.

Payout for worker sacked without warning after cancer treatment

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A construction company must pay more than £30,000 in damages to an employee who was sacked without warning by her bosses because they had not wanted to raise concerns about her work while she was being treated for cancer.

Lucy Lyddall was said to have been underperforming in her marketing role during her treatment for breast cancer, but managers did not talk to her about it, an employment tribunal was told. Instead Lyddall, 50, was given

"positive reinforcement" because her bosses at the Wooldridge Partnership in Surrey did not want to increase her stress levels.

However, when Lyddall returned from sick leave, she was "completely shocked" to be sacked by a consultant who told her that "your vision it not their vision". Charlie Wooldridge, the company's director, later acknowledged that managers had not wanted to "send her negative feedback".

Lyddall has successfully sued the construction company — which has annual revenues of about £45 million

— for disability discrimination. She was awarded £32,351 by a judge at Reading employment tribunal, who criticised the business for firing her "at a point of exceptional vulnerability".

Lyddall celebrated her victory by buying a Porsche car and spoke of how she made the "daunting" decision to bring the claim against the company.

Earlier, the tribunal was told that Lyddall began working for Wooldridge in 2021 and that two months later she was diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer. She took sick leave for hospital treatment and then time off for her

wedding to her husband, Chris, a 37-year-old plumber. Lyddall was sacked when she returned to work after a short honeymoon.

She told the tribunal that "at no time did anyone talk to me about my performance. In fact all I received was positive reinforcement."

In his ruling, the judge, Andrew Gumbiti-Zimuto, said that Lyddall's managers had her "disability in mind" when they decided not to give negative feedback about her performance.

"There was no signposting that this was in the offing for her, nothing to

warn her that her dismissal might be imminent or was likely if her performance did not improve," the judge said.

Lyddall said she had decided to put her compensation towards buying her dream car — a Porsche Cayman S — after her husband told her: "Just get it: life is short." She said she had been in marketing for 30 years but would never return to it.

After ten days of intensive radiotherapy Lyddall has been taking daily medication for the past two years to treat her condition. She described herself as "fighting fit".

DUNCAN McGLYNN

More women accuse former CBI president

Alex Ralph, Isabella Fish

The Tesco chairman, a former president of the CBI, is facing further claims of inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour.

John Allan, a veteran City figure who is also chairman of Barratt Developments, the housebuilder, allegedly touched the bottom of a senior Tesco employee in June last year at the retailer's annual general meeting, according to The Guardian.

Allan, 74, is also alleged to have touched the bottom of a colleague at the annual dinner of the CBI in May 2019 when he was the president of the troubled business lobby group.

The Times reported last month that Allan was the subject of a complaint by a female colleague at the CBI over a "wholly inappropriate, demeaning and objectifying" comment. Allan had allegedly told a mid-ranking CBI manager at the CBI's annual conference in November 2019, "that dress really suits your figure".

Allan denies all the allegations except the comment made at the CBI conference.

He was president of the CBI between 2018 and 2020 and then vice-president until October 2021.

The 58-year-old lobby group is in crisis after the government and some of Britain's biggest compa-



John Allan has chaired Tesco since 2015

nies cut ties last month in the wake of separate, more serious, allegations by members of staff of sexual misconduct and rape.

A spokesman for Allan said that he "was mortified after making the comment in 2019 and immediately apologised. The person concerned agreed the matter was closed and no further action was taken. Regarding the other claims, they are simply untrue."

He added: "Even so, Mr Allan requested that Tesco and [the law firm] Fox Williams — who were instructed by the CBI to conduct an investigation following various allegations — investigate them. Fox Williams decided not to, and Tesco are not aware of and have not received any complaints about Mr Allan's conduct either at the 2022 AGM or over the eight years that he has been chair of Tesco."

Fox Williams responded that Allan had been "provided with the opportunity to give an account to the CBI via Fox Williams which, as far as we are aware, he has chosen not to do".

However, Allan's spokesman said his lawyers had confirmed that he wanted Fox Williams to investigate and was available for an interview. He said that instead Fox Williams had offered to forward a statement from Allan to the CBI and said that its investigation had concluded.

Tesco, where Allan has been chairman since 2015, said his conduct "has never been the subject of a complaint during his tenure as chair of Tesco".



Light touch Fine Art Restoration Company, Carlisle, works on Adoration of the Magi by followers of the Renaissance artist Raphael

Law firm partner fined £45,000 for lewd song about female trainee

Jonathan Ames

A law firm partner must pay £45,000 in fines and costs after he sang a "degrading" song to a junior colleague while making obscene gestures at a Christmas party.

The woman, who had joined the practice in London as a trainee solicitor only three months before the lunch, told a disciplinary tribunal the male partner sang that her "vagina is lovely".

Neither the partner nor the woman can be named. The tribunal granted an

unusual application from the partner and imposed an anonymity order on the grounds of his health.

The tribunal was told that the firm had its Christmas lunch in 2017 before moving to a pub.

Despite claims to the contrary from the woman, who was referred to as Person A, the tribunal found that the partner had responded to encouragement from her to "say something outrageous". The tribunal was told that the partner responded by making up a song that referred to her genitalia and other

parts of her body. It was also accepted in evidence that while singing the partner "moved his right fist upwards at the start of the song and subsequently cupped his right hand and moved it twice in front of his genitals".

Person A told the hearing that she was "shocked and humiliated to be spoken to in such a degrading fashion".

The partner said he was "extremely embarrassed" by the incident, which was filmed, and that he "recognised his behaviour was vulgar". He told the tribunal that he had apologised to Person

A and emphasised that his behaviour "was deliberately outrageous in response to the events that preceded it".

The tribunal noted that the woman did not make a formal complaint about the partner until 18 months later, after she was overlooked for the role of newly qualified solicitor. Person A explained that she had delayed reporting the incident because she was "vulnerable" as a trainee.

The tribunal was told that after the party, the trainee engaged in jokey emails with the partner and sent him

"drunk emails" inviting him for work drinks. Regardless, it fined the partner £23,000 for misconduct and ordered him to pay £22,800 in costs.

It ruled that the partner had been motivated to behave in an obscene manner "following an express invitation from Person A". But it went on to find that "the words used, the gestures that he elected to deploy, the fact that he was a partner, at a work event, with colleagues present and in a public setting represented a grave breach of his position of trust".

News Politics

Charles does spadework for a

Valentine Low

The King has said Britain's aviation industry is critical in the fight to save the planet from "increasing catastrophe".

Charles was speaking during a visit to mark the building of a new laboratory that aims to speed up the development of net-zero aviation. During his first official engagement since the coronation he went to the aid of a dignitary whose high heel became stuck in the ground.

He had just broken ground at the site in Cambridge when one of Dame Polly Courtice's shoes sank into the grass, leaving her momentarily stranded.

The King noticed her predicament and went to support her while she freed herself, to laughter and applause from the watching crowd.

Courtice, 70, emeritus director of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, said the grass had been "very soft". She added: "He was very kind... and he gallantly supported me."

After his tour of Cambridge University's Whittle Laboratory, which has secured £58 million funding for the development, the King expressed his "enormous admiration" for the scientists.

The new laboratory is designed to become the global centre for innovation in net zero aviation and energy, bringing together experts from research and industry. It aims to halve the time it takes to develop key technologies for commercial use, which can typically take six to eight years.

Trials have indicated that breaking down the barriers between academia and industry could bring discoveries into the marketplace more quickly.

The King, who arrived in a Bentley, met leaders from the aviation industry and government, including Grant Shapps, the energy secretary, and George Freeman, the science minister.

Charles attended a roundtable meeting to discuss ways to achieve a sustainable aviation industry.

As he walked to the ceremonial breaking of the ground, a lump of mud was already visible on the grass. "It's very unfair," he said with a smile. "I was rather looking forward to doing a bit of gardening."

The King said in his speech: "I really wanted to express my enormous admiration of what Rob Miller [director of the Whittle Laboratory] is doing here with his remarkable team.

"And of course the key exercise of all

Prince Philip's awards booming

Jack Malvern

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has flourished since Prince Philip's death with the charity announcing the highest take-up rate since its foundation in 1956.

Prince Edward, who inherited the dukedom and succeeded his father as patron of the charity, is celebrating after more than 320,000 young people started working towards an award in 2022-23.

The award, which is split into gold, silver and bronze levels, involves voluntary work, physical exercise and learning new skills. To achieve a gold participants must go on a three-night expedition, volunteer for a year and take part in a five-day joint activity with strangers away from home.

Figures released

yesterday showed that 537,759 people were working towards an award, up 11 per cent from 2021-22.

The charity said that the 323,676 people who started this year were proof that it was on its way to a target of reaching a million young people in 2026 after expanding to marginalised groups.

In the past year 262 secondary schools offered pupils the chance to take part for the first time, including 98 in the most deprived areas of England. The scheme has expanded from 60 to 79 secure units, including prisons, young offender institutions, secure units and youth offending teams.

Habeeba Nasir, 18, from Rochdale, Greater Manchester, said that she was doing a gold award to set herself up for later life.

She said: "I think it's especially important, as a young Muslim woman, for the people of my community to understand DofE is not just for people of other cultures, that we can get involved as well."

Ruth Marvel, chief executive for the awards, suggested that the newfound popularity came from young people trying to gain independence and a valuable qualification in an insecure world. She said: "Young people need our support more than ever if they're going to have the same chances previous generations had, which is why we're determined to keep breaking down barriers to participation and reaching as many young people as possible."

Edward gained a gold award in his youth.



this is to keep the team in being and expand it... to help lead what we need so badly and so urgently in order to save this planet from increasing catastrophe. And of course the aviation sector is critical in all this."

The laboratory was opened in 1973 by Sir Frank Whittle, who founded the company that invented the jet engine while an undergraduate at Cambridge.

Over the past 50 years the laboratory has helped shape the propulsion and power sectors through industry partnerships with Rolls-Royce, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Siemens.

The King and Queen were expected to be returning to Sandringham, his Norfolk estate, after the long weekend of celebrations.

It was like a panto on steroids,
Matthew Parris, page 24



The King broke new ground at the Whittle Laboratory, where he also rescued

Jellybeans and stopwatches: royal photographer's sweet success

Valentine Low

Which members of the royal family were bribed with jelly beans during the coronation photoshoot? Which is King Charles's good side? And which members of the royal household stood in for the King and Queen during rehearsals for Hugo Burnand's official portraits of the couple?

Burnand, who has been taking photographs of Charles and Camilla for more than 20 years, is too discreet to give detailed responses to such questions. But we can say with some confidence that the answers are: 1. Some of them; 2. He definitely has one; and 3. Without naming names, we can say it is the, er, "craggier" ones.

Four pictures were released by the palace from the hour-long photoshoot: one of the King in regalia in the throne room, one of the Queen in the green drawing room, one of them together and one of all the working members of the royal family together.

In an exclusive interview with The Times, Burnand, 59, described how he tried to capture the "authentic"

Charles, and how his picture of the King was influenced by both Cecil Beaton and the Victorian court artist Franz Xaver Winterhalter.

The way the King is leaning slightly forward so that we can see the red of the throne is an echo of Winterhalter's 1846 portrait of Victoria and Albert and their family. "You could photograph them straight on, sitting on the throne. But to me, this references Winterhalter... you see the throne. It makes the picture. Coming in at a slight angle helps humanise it. It makes you feel, 'we were there'."

The fact that the King's head is at a slight angle "shows you the man... that you are still talking to an individual".

While the portrait of the Queen is a "much sunnier picture", Burnand deliberately used less light for the King's picture: "We could have thrown a lot more light into the picture, but I

wanted him to pop out. It's him. He is of his age. With that comes wisdom and experience and all those things. It's good to have the real man there. There is an honesty there. We could have enhanced it in so many different ways. But that is our King."

The picture has obvious echoes of Beaton's 1953 coronation picture of Elizabeth II — they are both seated on thrones, holding the orb and sceptre — but with one crucial difference: Charles is facing the opposite way to his mother.

It is not so much because that is the King's good side — Burnand will only say that "everyone in the world has a good side" — but a reference to what happens on coins.

Each monarch's profile on coins

Burnand's work was influenced by older portraits



faces the opposite way to their predecessor's. Burnand (an old Harrovian, like Beaton) wanted to do the same.

As he has photographed Charles and Camilla so many times — at their wedding and Charles's 60th birthday, as well as private commissions — he has a good feel for what they want. "He trusts me. A few short conversations, and we are on the same page."

"I love working with them, because we work well together. As well as the line, the colour, the lighting, the composition, to a degree you are photographing emotion. And that is what I am bringing to the picture above everything else. And I suppose that comes because of my 20 years' experience."

Burnand keeps his operation as green as possible: when not ferrying huge piles of kit into the palace, he and his team (six in all) cycle from his studio in west London to the palace.

Once set up in the palace, as well as the cameras and lights and all, Burnand has two key pieces of kit: stopwatches to time the rehearsals, and jelly beans.

With three dress rehearsals, members of Burnand's team and various pal-

ace officials took turns to act as stand-ins: the older, the better. "If you put a really good-looking young person in any situation and take a photograph, you will go 'Oh that's easy' and move on. You actually have to put a few craggy people in there as well so you really understand what the lighting is doing."

All that preparation removes any pre-shoot nerves. By the time it comes for the real thing, "You're literally excited for what is about to happen."

On the day, there was a "joyous, celebratory mood" he said. "It was a hubbub of people coming in and out. We've got jellybeans, partly because it is a tradition. I had an enormous vase of them. It helps. You tell people, 'These are for when you've done the job!'"

And what about afterwards? How did he feel when it was over? At that point Burnand, normally so full of chat, is lost for words. He looks a little teary, and pauses. "Oh... emotional. I wish I could not cry. But at the end of the day I took the picture for them. And I felt afterwards that I had done everything possible." And yes: "I know they are happy." Letters, page 26

laboratory to save the planet



Dame Polly Courtice when one of her shoes got stuck, far left. The Princess of Wales attended a garden party at the palace

Quentin Letts Rowley under attack again in staged riot

Political Sketch



Poor Sir Mark Rowley. Two weeks ago the head of the Metropolitan Police was spanked by the home affairs select committee for being too wet with Just Stop Oil troublemakers. Now his force was castigated for arresting six anti-royal protesters at the coronation. You can't win.

During a pre-meditated riot in the Commons, the police were all

but accused of institutional monarchism. London was as bad, cried one Scots Nat, as Putin's Moscow. No, thundered another, we were turning into Turkey or Hungary. Left-wing MPs clutched their chests. Yet another detected a plot involving our "unelected head of state" to force the public order bill through parliament. A Mr Charles Rex is helping detectives with their inquiries.

Joanna Cherry (SNP, Edinburgh South West), wearing one of Sir Edward Leigh's old pinstripe suits, was granted an urgent question about the arrests. Suella Braverman, home secretary, was not available to reply. Braverman's office only has to

murmur "Cherry has a question for you in the Commons, minister" for her to be hurried to the nearest nuclear shelter until the "all clear" sounds.

The session was handled instead by that wonderful bluffer Chris Philp, minister of state. Imagine the most honeyed, languid, pukka schmooser and you have the direct opposite of Philp. His vocal delivery is that of Tim McInnerny's Captain Darling in *Blackadder*. His eyes blink like a humming bird's wings. Oddly for a police minister, he looks perpetually guilty and his nervous energy could power Basingstoke. To get him to sleep at night, Mrs Philp must have to cut the power to his mainframe and wait hours before his central core cools.

The coronation, he screeched, shoulders twitching and his breath sipped in gasps, had been "a once in a generation moment, a moment of national pride, with roots over a millennium old". Huw Edwards would marble such words with grandeur. Philp made them sound like a short-order chef's instructions. The police "foiled

Women's safety team released without any charge after 14 hours

Fiona Hamilton
Crime and Security Editor

Women's safety volunteers arrested while carrying rape alarms before the coronation were released without charge last night, just hours after the Metropolitan Police commissioner robustly defended the force's security operation.

The three, who were held for 14 hours on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance, have been told they will face no further action, Westminster city council announced.

They had been carrying rape alarms to hand out to vulnerable women when they were arrested at about 2am on Saturday in Soho. The Met defended their detention, claiming activists planned to throw rape alarms at horses.

Adam Hug, the council's leader, has requested that the Met apologise to the three Night Star volunteers.

The force had already expressed regret for detaining anti-monarchy demonstrators from Republic, who had already contacted Met officers and been told their plans were lawful.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Met commissioner, defended the arrests.

He hit out at "ill-informed commentary" and said the Met had been responding to a "criminal network" of protesters. Some, posing as stewards, had intended to throw paint at the procession, he claimed, and others wanted to use rape alarms and loudhailers to disrupt horses, imperilling public safety. He insisted there was also intelligence about plots to vandalise monuments.

Rowley, writing in the London Evening Standard, appeared to suggest the police response was legitimised by the reaction of members of the public.

"Officers have told me how the celebrating crowds applauded and cheered as they made 17 arrests in The

Mall area close to the processional route and imminent to the start of the procession," he wrote.

Rowley said he backed the officers who arrested the six members of Republic on suspicion of carrying "lock-on devices". The group is considering legal action after the Met said no charges would be brought. Rowley said it was "unfortunate" they were blocked from protesting but he supported police activity in a "unique fast-moving operational context".

Civil liberty groups have accused the Met of heavy-handedness, and Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, has demanded an explanation of its strategy. The force made 64 arrests on Saturday, 52 of them related to allegations that people planned to disrupt the coronation. Rowley said the Met had to balance the right to protest with the right to participate in the coronation.

Sam Grant, advocacy director at the human rights charity Liberty, called for the repeal of the Public Order Act. "This embarrassing episode demonstrates the dangers of handing broad and poorly defined powers to the police — who we know by now are all too happy to use and abuse those powers," he said.

David Davis, a former Conservative cabinet minister and a campaigner on civil liberties, blamed the "wrongful arrests" on new powers being rushed through after the passing of the Public Order Act last week.

Davis said that parliament's home affairs committee should review the new powers and make recommendations on how to change the guidelines.

Yesterday the prime minister defended the new powers of arrest. "Of course people have the right to protest freely but peacefully," Rishi Sunak said, "but it is also right that people have the ability to go about their day-to-day lives without facing serious disruption."

and Labour's frontbencher Sarah Jones were among those running amok. There was a "chilling effect" on freedom and public consent for policing was at risk, etc. John McDonnell (Lab, Hayes & Harlington) defended the press. Equally amazingly, we learnt that the protest group Republic has a "chief executive". How very hierarchical of him.

Sir Desmond Swayne (C, New Forest West) inquired why the coronation turkeys were caged for 16 hours before being released. Philp: "The police had a lot going on."

Other Tories were a great deal happier with Rowley. Michael Ellis (Northampton North), whose knighthood is only a matter of time, rumbled and rasped approvingly. Tom Hunt (Ipswich) said that any inquiry would be "a waste of time". Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) was "getting pretty fed-up, actually, with police apologising all the time". Philp thanked Rowley for "delivering a successful coronation". Everything is delivered these days.

News

Paperwork errors and 'greedy lawyers' gum up fast-track asylum process

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Rishi Sunak's pledge to clear a backlog of 92,000 asylum claims by the end of the year is in disarray after a scheme to fast-track thousands of applications from war-torn countries failed.

In February the prime minister announced that 12,000 claims from five countries — Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Eritrea and Libya — would be streamlined using a ten-page questionnaire, removing the requirement for a

face-to-face interview. Asylum claims from these countries have a success rate of more than 95 per cent.

While three quarters of the forms have been returned, only 10 per cent have been completed properly, forcing the Home Office to do interviews anyway. An insider said this had slowed the process of clearing the backlog, adding: "It's a complete mess."

A government source blamed it on money-chasing lawyers, although the Home Office has not given evidence to

back up the claim. The source said: "We're aware of lawyers actively briefing migrants to fill in the forms incorrectly so they can make sure there's a longer process with more interviews and they get paid for that work."

Figures published last month revealed that only 12,000 asylum claims have been processed since Sunak's pledge in December to clear a backlog of 92,000 "legacy" asylum applications by the end of this year. It means the Home Office must assess

nearly 10,000 asylum claims a month to meet the prime minister's goal.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said that future refugees from Afghanistan and Yemen faced being kicked out due to the government's Illegal Migration Bill. He said: "The people asking for our help are refugees: vulnerable men, women and children from places like Sudan and Afghanistan whose lives have been torn apart through no fault of their own. Instead of laws to lock them up

and kick them out of our country, the government should be... [trying] to find ways of supporting refugees and giving them a fair hearing on UK soil."

The Home Office said: "We do not recognise the figures around the number of streamlined asylum questionnaires that have been completed correctly." It added that the questionnaires could cut "months or years" from the wait for a decision, and interviews as a result of incomplete forms were "far shorter" than in traditional claims.

MATT KEEBLE/PA

Barge docks for refit to house 500 migrants

A barge that will accommodate 500 asylum seekers has arrived in the UK where it will be refurbished before it starts hosting people from next month (Laurence Sleator writes).

The Bibby Stockholm docked at Falmouth in Cornwall at about 8am yesterday after being towed over from Italy. It will remain at the port while safety checks are carried out and its capacity is increased.

It will be moved to Portland, Dorset, where it is expected to remain for about 18 months as part of Rishi Sunak's plan to stop illegal Channel crossings.

The scheme is opposed by Dorset council and Richard Drax, the local Conservative MP, who said that he feared it could be "in place for years to come".

It will house single male asylum seekers as



The Bibby Stockholm is towed into Falmouth, where it will undergo refurbishment to expand its capacity. The 500 asylum seekers it will house will have access to a bar and gym

they wait for their claims to be processed, helping to cut the estimated £6 million a day the government is spending on keeping arrivals in hotels. Last

year 45,755 migrants crossed the Channel in small boats and more than 6,000 have arrived so far this year.

The barge, operated by the Liverpool-based

company Bibby Marine, has housed asylum seekers all over Europe. It has a gym, communal dining room, bar and more than 220 en suite bedrooms split over

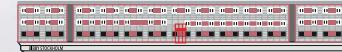
three decks, according to the Home Office.

The barge is one of three sites which will accommodate about 5,400 asylum seekers. Up to 2,000 will be

placed at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire; 1,700 at the Ministry of Defence site of Wethersfield in Braintree, Essex; and 1,200 on the site of an old prison at Northgate, near Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex, by the end of the year.

All the local councils are considering legal action to prevent the sites being used.

How the barge measures up



Length 93.44m
Width 27.43m
Depth 6.1m
Height* 17.1m
Gross tonnage 10,659 tons
Net tonnage 3,197 tons
Guests 500
En suite bedrooms 220
*Bottom of keel to highest point

Johnson confronted Charles over Rwanda

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Boris Johnson confronted the future King after he privately branded the government's Rwanda deportation scheme "appalling", an aide to the former prime minister has claimed.

Guto Harri, Johnson's director of communications in Downing Street, said that the pair had a "showdown" at last year's Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Kigali after the King's views on the Rwanda policy were reported in The Times.

Harri also revealed that Sue Gray, the former civil servant who investigated lockdown parties in Downing Street, was referred to as "psycho Sue" and said that Johnson had been planning to get rid of Rishi Sunak as chancellor before he was ousted by Tory MPs.

The claims were made by Harri before the release of a podcast about his time in Downing Street during the dying days of the Johnson administration. "They did have a bit of a showdown," he told LBC, "for the reason that the man who is now King criticised what was an extremely popular [and] a very central



Charles and Boris Johnson in Kigali last June at a conference hosted by President Kagame. The Times reported that Johnson publicly criticised the future King's stance on deportation

government policy on the eve of the two of them going to the very place of the heart of the story: Rwanda.

"It wasn't a fight. But Boris rightly challenged the unelected royal at the time. What was it for him to sort of go calling a key government policy 'appalling'?" Harri said that Charles appeared to deny making the remarks, leading Johnson to suggest that if the report

was untrue, Buckingham Palace could have denied it — which it chose not to do. "The impression I got is that Prince Charles was squirming trying to deny he'd said this. If you are the prince you've got an army of people who can go out there and ring newspaper editors and say, 'This is not true. Take it down.' And they will if it's not true. So the fact that the story was allowed to stand and

Charles should keep open mind on Rwanda, says PM

Johnson and prince to meet amid aides' frustration at migrant policy overshadowing royal visit

could not be denied meant that he had actually described government policies as "appalling".

Harri said that the podcast would also cover the prime minister's views on Gray, who Johnson perceived as biased against him. "Psycho Sue" Gray would be part of it, Harri said. "There was a sense that she lacked perspective as to what [Johnson] had done. [Johnson] had respected her a lot but by the time I got there, I think he was understandably getting suspicious. And by the end we were all extremely suspicious of this woman. She was meant to be doing an inquiry that was reporting to the prime minister and it was meant to be completely unbiased.

"Turned out she was advised by a card-carrying Labour barrister who was on social media recruiting people

to the Labour Party, as he was advising her what to do."

Harri also claimed that Johnson and Sunak, then chancellor, had a long-standing dispute about tax and spending policy. "There was a fundamental disagreement of policy between the two of them," Harri said. "There was a limited amount of money left because [of] Covid. And so what do you do with the money that's left?

"There is a lot of pressure in the party to cut taxes. There was a lot of pressure from Boris to build nuclear power stations and offshore wind farms. And Rishi was stubbornly sticking to the idea that the most important thing to do with tens of billions of pounds was to cushion the impact of people's bills today. Valid point of view, but the tension between them was building. So, frankly... if things hadn't turned out as they did last July, I think, over the summer we'd have had a reshuffle and Rishi would have been offered a different job, shall we say?"

A spokesman for Buckingham Palace declined to comment on the claims. Gray was approached for comment.

Oxford offers trauma advice for trans talk

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor
Anvee Bhutani

The Oxford Union will provide "welfare resources" to help students cope with a talk by Professor Kathleen Stock this month.

The academic, who quit her job at Sussex University after accusations of transphobia over her gender-critical views, is due to speak at the union at the end of this month, but some groups are campaigning for the invitation to be rescinded or have pledged to protest outside the event.

The development comes days after an adult entertainment star spoke to a packed event at the union and some students said no support was put in place for anyone upset by that booking.

The Oxford Union has announced that it will provide "welfare resources" when the philosophy professor speaks, due to "the sensitive nature of the themes discussed at this event".

The university's LGBTQ+ society has released a statement condemning the union for the invitation, accusing Stock of being a "transphobic and trans-exclusionary speaker" and the union of ignoring the welfare of the society's members under the guise of free speech.

Stock said on social media that the society's statement contained several falsehoods and was "probably defamatory" as well as making it look "utterly ridiculous".

Several college common rooms, which represent students, have also passed motions against the union, including at Christ Church and Mansfield College.

On the day of the speaker event, the union has committed to providing extra welfare resources including a non-student support team that will remain in a separate welfare space to offer counselling and advice in

Kathleen Stock's gender-critical views have upset students



addition to the student welfare officers. Students will also be allowed to ask questions anonymously, via a link.

Stock resigned from Sussex University in 2021 after facing hostility from trans rights activists. This was because of her view that womanhood and manhood reflected biological sex, not gender or gender identity. Stock believes that the slogan "transwomen are women" is a fiction, and argues that women-only spaces should remain "genuinely single-sex".

Alfie Davis, the Oxford Union LGBTQ+ society's welfare secretary, said: "Every day, an ongoing choice is made by the president and librarian of the union to not disinvite Stock, and they must be held accountable for the consequences of spreading her misinformation and hatred. Trans rights are far from a trivial issue, and as a community, we're tired of having to fight and argue for our right to exist. We're tired of the union platforming divisive speakers to generate controversy, and we're tired of their refusal to listen to the communities they hurt by doing so."

Matthew Dick, the president of the Oxford Union, confirmed that he was not going "to rescind the invitation".

The union said in a statement: "Attendees can use this opportunity to respectfully engage with and challenge Professor Stock's views... This format is designed to uphold the union's founding principle of freedom of expression for both our members and our guest speakers."

Last week, students at Cambridge protested at a speech by Simon Fanshawe, the co-founder of Stonewall, over his gender-critical views. According to reports, as he started speaking some of the audience walked out, draped in transgender flags. They joined a crowd of students protesting outside, who were rattling the doors to the auditorium, banging drums and shouting.



The Goodfather: De Niro is a dad for 7th time at 79

Robert De Niro has revealed that he recently became a father for the seventh time (Keiran Southern writes).

The Oscar-winning actor, 79, said in a television interview that "I just had a baby", though the identity of the mother as well as the gender of the child were

unclear. De Niro has been romantically linked to Tiffany Chen, a martial arts instructor, and she was spotted with a baby bump while leaving a restaurant in March. They worked together on his 2015 film *The Intern*. A representative for De Niro, one of the most acclaimed actors of his generation, confirmed

Tiffany Chen, a martial arts instructor, has been linked to Robert De Niro, who struggled with a baby in the 2009 film *Everybody's Fine*

the news, which means there is a gap of five decades between his eldest and youngest children.

De Niro has two children with his ex-wife Diahnne Abbott, 78 — Drena, 51, and Raphael, 46 — as well as twin sons, 27, with his former partner Toukie Smith, a 70-year-old actress and model. From his marriage to the socialite Grace Hightower, De Niro has a son, Elliot, 25, and an 11-year-old daughter, Helen. De Niro and Hightower, 68, filed for divorce in 2018 after more than 20 years together.

Speaking to *ET Canada*, De Niro, who was promoting his latest film *About My Father*, admitted that he sometimes had to be "stern about stuff" with his children. "I mean, there's no way around it with kids. I don't like to have to lay down the law and stuff like that. But [sometimes] you just have no choice," he said. "And any parent, I think, would say the same thing. You always want to do the right thing by the children and give them the benefit of the doubt but sometimes you can't."

Other celebrities to welcome children later in life include Mick Jagger, whose eighth child was born in 2016, when he was 73, and George Lucas, who became a father in 2013 at 69.

Universities face regulator's inquiry into glut of first-class degrees

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

Universities face investigations into grade inflation, with one in three students awarded a first class degree, the student watchdog's head has suggested.

Lord Wharton of Yarm told a parliamentary committee yesterday that too many students were achieving firsts.

According to figures from the Office for Students (OfS), the proportion of students achieving first-class degrees in England increased from 15.7 per cent in 2011 to 37.9 per cent in 2021, when universities were encouraged to be generous because of the damage Covid-19 had on the education system.

Last year that fell to 32 per cent, according to separate figures, but was still higher than the 30 per cent figure of

2019. Universities have said they intend to rein in the number of firsts and return them to pre-pandemic levels.

Wharton, chairman of the Office for Students (OfS), said grade inflation continued to be a problem.

"There's a significant amount of grade inflation and more and more people are getting firsts. There's a risk that if everyone gets a first, no one gets a first," he told the Lords' industry and regulators committee, which has been hearing evidence about the OfS, a regulator that was set up five years ago.

"One of the challenges with the sector has been, if I'm truthful, that obvious problems — which have been raised with it over a long period of time — haven't been addressed. To give you an example, grade inflation.

"Students quite like getting firsts ... but it may well not be in their interest in the long term if it undermines the value of the thing that they have earned and worked so hard for."

Wharton said the sector had taken "insufficient action over a very long period of time" and the OfS was "looking at what we can do to take action in that space, including investigations".

It will require universities to retain an "appropriate selection" of graded work from students so that they can provide evidence to any investigation into how it had decided to award degrees.

Members of the committee said universities were unhappy at the prospect of storing years' worth of previous work, but Wharton said that only some would need to be retained.

The Tory peer, a former campaign manager for Boris Johnson, defended retaining his political affiliation.

He said he made it clear in the selection process that he would not relinquish this when taking on the role of chairman of the OfS, a body supposed to be independent from government.

He was accused of being "specious" by one peer, for likening his position with the OfS to the chairing of a Commons or Lords committee by a Labour or Tory MP or peer. But Wharton said: "It isn't a statutory requirement that the chair resign any political affiliation."

Universities have complained to the Lords committee about the extra bureaucracy created by the regulator.

Wharton said the OfS had spent several years establishing itself and was

now moving into the phase of using its regulatory powers. He said he was not "deaf" to complaints, but added: "While there will be elements of complaint, we are undertaking a significantly increased number of investigations and there will be institutions who don't get results that they like."

Professor Steve West, president of Universities UK, which represents vice-chancellors, said: "Universities remain committed to addressing grade inflation. Our recent publication outlines steps that universities have taken — including reviewing the degree classification system and the way final grades are calculated — and explains the impact the pandemic had on the progress made, since many universities needed to change their assessment policies."

News

Inquiry ordered into bonuses at Post Office

Tom Witherow

A Post Office executive bonus was wrongly signed off by a civil servant and a director overseeing the response to the Horizon accounting scandal.

Ministers ordered an internal investigation into the error last night, which will report to Kemi Badenoch, the business secretary.

The review, to be led by Amanda Burton, who joined the board as a non-executive director last month, will ensure that the executive pay policy is "consistent with corporate governance best practice".

The directors on the remuneration

committee who approved the bonus were Tom Cooper, a civil servant who was the government's representative on the Post Office Board, Ben Tidswell, who also chaired the committee with oversight of the compensation scheme for Horizon victims, and Tim Parker, board chairman from 2015 to last year.

Lisa Harrington, a government adviser, was chairwoman of the pay committee. She gave an "unreserved apology for the mistake". Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom, a Tory peer and campaigner, called for resignations.

The row broke out on Friday when Nick Read, the company's chief executive, gave up part of his £455,000 bonus

and apologised after admitting that false claims had been used to assess his reward. The board had wrongly signed off a target which said the company had helped the inquiry into the IT scandal to "finish in line with expectations" and that this had been signed off by Sir Wyn Williams, its chairman.

Williams never gave such confirmation, however, and the inquiry was not expected to finish until next year. The board is now reviewing the bonuses of 50 executives and senior managers who received payouts.

Kevin Hollinrake, the postal affairs minister, said he was kept in the dark about the error until Friday, despite the

Post Office admitting its mistake on April 6. He said: "We are extremely concerned at the situation."

The taxpayer-owned company was already under pressure over its failure to pay full compensation to postmasters wrongly prosecuted for stealing from their own tills.

Between 1999 and 2015, hundreds were wrongly convicted of crimes, including fraud and theft. Years later only four have received full payouts.

The bonus target, which appeared in the annual report for 2021/22, read: "All required evidence and information supplied on time." This was marked as "achieved" in the annual accounts filed

to Companies House and parliament. A quarter of the bonus was paid for targets related to the public inquiry.

This helped Read to double his pay packet to £870,000, while Alisdair Cameron, the chief financial officer, who has not yet handed anything back, was awarded a £310,000 bonus. In total 50 senior staff benefited.

Campaigners accused directors of failing to read the report before signing it off and called for resignations.

Kevan Jones, a Labour MP, said: "The Post Office is 100 per cent owned by the government. Its representative on the board, Tom Cooper, needs to explain why he agreed these bonuses."

I didn't go to Specsavers. They came to me

Eddi, writer and Home Visits customer

Like Eddi, if you or someone you know can't get to a store unaccompanied, you could be entitled to a home visit instead.

Find out about eligibility online at [specsavers.co.uk/homevisits](https://www.specsavers.co.uk/homevisits) or call 0800 198 1138

Specsavers



Big wheel Tom Clowes tests his penny farthing in Rogate, West Sussex, before he embarks on a 300-mile trip along the Hebridean Way for the Stroke Association

Union leader pays damages for calling tweeter 'creepy'

The leader of a universities union has agreed to pay "substantial damages" to a former firefighter after publishing tweets he claimed falsely portrayed him as "a misogynist, a pervert and a liar", the High Court has been told.

Paul Embrey, a writer and trade union activist, launched a libel claim against Dr Jo Grady, the general secretary of the University and College Union, over her response to him highlighting the antisocial behaviour of a group of train passengers on Twitter.

At a hearing in London yesterday, Judge Jaron Lewis was told that Embrey was "prepared to let the matter rest" after Grady agreed to pay damages and legal costs, and not to repeat her allegations. Speaking to journalists afterwards, Embrey claimed that he would receive just under £10,000 in damages, with Grady having to pay more than £12,000 in costs.

Tom Double, representing Embrey, told the court the former firefighter had been travelling with his children from London to Norwich in August 2022. A group of women sitting directly behind them "were consuming alcohol and

behaving in a loud and obnoxious manner". One woman in particular was "repeatedly using sexually explicit profanities". Embrey intervened and politely asked the women to refrain from swearing. Double said. His request was met with "hostility and abuse".

Embrey filmed the group on his phone, and tweeted a photo of them to the train operator Greater Anglia in the hope it would take action against the women. The tweet went viral and was seen by more than a million people, Double said. During the next two days, Grady published several tweets, including one that said: "It's creepy to record young women on the train, share that video and lie about them on social media for clout."

Double claimed the tweets portrayed Embrey as a misogynist, a pervert and a liar, when he was simply seeking to defend himself, his children and fellow passengers from rowdy and threatening behaviour on public transport.

Double added: "His tweet highlighted a very real problem that ordinary, decent passengers face every day on public transport."

Listed status for north's Ukrainian churches

It may not have been paid much heed until last year, but the north of England is awash with Ukrainian heritage (Jack Blackburn writes).

Now, in the run-up to the Eurovision Song Contest and in solidarity with the war-torn country, Historic England has listed several Ukrainian landmarks in England, protecting them for years to come.

The sites are all in the north, with a high concentration around Manchester, a centre of the Ukrainian diaspora.

Churches in Salford and Oldham have been given grade II listed status, as has a community memorial in Bradford. Three other churches in Manchester and Bradford have had their listings updated to include their history.

"We are turning the spotlight on places which tell the story of Ukrainian life and traditions," said Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England. "These places were established as safe spaces, over decades, by people who wanted to keep Ukraine in their hearts and their heritage alive."

The first wave of Ukrainians came to Britain in the late 19th century, many of them settling in Manchester. There was also a boom in immigration

from eastern Europe after the Second World War, when the European Volunteer Workers Scheme was created to tackle shortages in agriculture and other parts of the labour market. It is thought 35,000 Ukrainians came to the UK, many finding work in Lancashire's cotton mills and in West Yorkshire's wool industry.

The memorial at North Bierley cemetery, Bradford, overlooks the graves of many people of Ukrainian heritage and celebrates 1,000 years of Ukrainian Christianity, as well as those who gave their lives for their country.

Some sites are blends of British and Ukrainian. The church in Salford was a Victorian Sunday school, bought by the Ukrainian community in 1954.

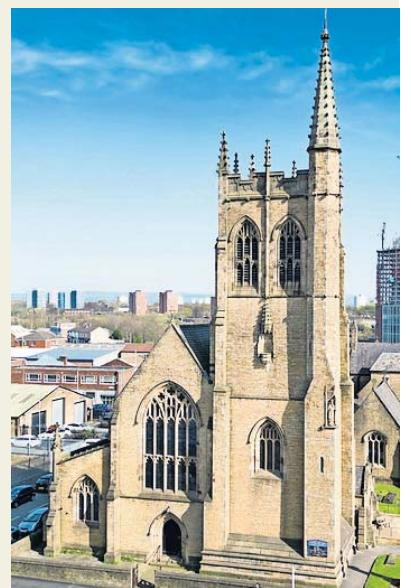
The church in Oldham looks like the Anglican church it was when built in 1889. Inside, though, it has a screen of icons in the eastern European style, and a baldacchino, a metal canopy over the altar.

The amended listings include a Catholic church that served Ukrainians from the 1920s to the 1950s, a Victorian church adopted by Orthodox worshippers and a Georgian villa that became the Huddersfield Ukrainian Club.

Putin uses victory parade to rail against West, page 28



Peter and Paul and All Saints Church in Oldham; St Mary in Bradford, above; and St Chad's in Manchester, below, are listed



Ukraine's Eurovision duo sing for 'stolen children'

Tom Ball Northern Correspondent

While no doubt all the contestants at this year's Eurovision Song Contest will have shed sweat and tears to represent their homeland, few will have struggled in quite the same way as Tvorchi, Ukraine's entry.

While recording their song, *Heart of Steel*, Andrii Hutsuliak and Jimoh Augustus Kehinde had to contend with blackouts and air raid sirens interrupting their work.

"If it wasn't a power outage, then it was an air raid coming over forcing us into the shelter," said Kehinde, 25, better known by his stage name Jeffery Kenny. "It was almost impossible to get stuff done, but we got there in the end."

Such are the travails of an artist in wartime, and for the past 14 months it is war that has preoccupied their songwriting and performances. Instead of summer music festivals, the duo, who have scored four No 1 hits in Ukraine, play at military camps on the back of armoured vehicles.

Though the organisers of Eurovision have long sought — unsuccessfully — to eschew geopolitical encroachment on the songwriting competition, *Heart of Steel* is a rallying cry to the people of Ukraine, and is dedicated to the soldiers held at the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol for three months last year.

"Despite all the pain, I continue my fight," Kehinde sings in Ukrainian, over

Hutsuliak's synthesiser. "The guys were surrounded, and when we saw those videos recorded by commanders inside we were so inspired by how strong and brave they were," Hutsuliak, 27, said.

"But this song is also for the soldiers who are taken prisoner currently, as well as the many children who have been kidnapped and are in Russia. It's about giving them hope and strength."

The pair were speaking at their hotel in Liverpool, the host city of this year's Eurovision. The first semi-final was held last night in the city's M&S Bank Arena, where 15 countries competed for ten places in Saturday night's grand final.

Ukraine and Britain automatically qualify.

The countries knocked out were Ireland, Malta, Azerbaijan, Latvia and the Netherlands. Ireland has participated in Eurovision more than 50 times and has a record seven wins but has failed to

Tvorchi have scored four No 1 hits in Ukraine

qualify for the final since 2018. Although Conor O'Donohoe, the singer in the Dublin band Wild Youth, wore a green shamrock necklace last night, it did not bring them luck. The countries that qualified for the grand final were Croatia, Moldova, Switzerland, Finland, the Czech Republic, Israel, Portugal, Sweden, Serbia and Norway.

Had it not been for music, Kehinde, who is originally from Nigeria, might have ended up in Liverpool already. He had been due to move there to live with an aunt after his degree at Ternopil University, where Hutsuliak was also a student.

Since arriving in Liverpool last week, after a 30-hour journey from Ukraine by train, Tvorchi have been discovering fish and chips and plan to take a selfie with the statue of the Beatles.

But they know there is much more at stake than just the music. "Being here, we feel we are united in fighting against evil," Hutsuliak said. "Unlike the terrorists, we don't destroy. We create."

Eurovision deserves a lasting legacy, Sandie Shaw, page 24



Public pick folky rave and a sauna shouter: it's heating up

Television Will Hodgkinson

Eurovision

BBC1

★★★★★

Liverpool's M&S Bank Arena was packed to the rafters last night for the first of two semi-finals for Eurovision 2023. The levels of glitter reached asphyxiating levels and 15 countries gave it their all in the hope of being one of the ten chosen to go through.

There was the usual Eurovision mix of heartfelt balladry and utter silliness, this time with some themes emerging: war (not surprising), spirituality (the shallow version) and pilates (lots of dance routines). There were also some stunning upsets.

How on earth did the public, voting in the semi-finals without the judges' contributions for the first time, not go for Azerbaijan? Not only was *Tell Me More* a pretty good tune but singing twins TuralTurax looked, with their curly hair and resolute expressions, uncannily like Pippin and Merry, the hobbits from *The Lord of the Rings*.

That alone should have seen them through. And how did Switzerland's Remo Forrer make it with *Watergun*, which had as much charm as a wet T-shirt? "I don't wanna be a soldier," he moaned, which, given his country's history of neutrality, is unnecessary. Elsewhere, the right ones were

chosen. Ireland got deservedly knocked out for Wild Youth's sub-Coldplay anthem *We Are One* while Malta's awful *Dance (Our Own Party)* by The Busker was a good argument for giving up on socialising. What remained were the kind of performances that, oblivious of outside considerations like changing tastes and fashions, only operate in Eurovision. Where else would you find the folky rave anthem *Soarele si Luna* by Moldova's Pasha Parfeni, who looked like an unusually sinister wellness guru with a flute-playing dwarf? Then there was Croatia's *Mama SC!* by Let 3, who continued the war theme by dressing like fascist dictators singing about armageddon grannies and alligator psychopaths — lyrics that could only have come from an over-reliance on Google Translate.

Some clear frontrunners emerged. Sweden's Loreen, who won Eurovision in 2012, belted out the power ballad *Tattoo* with the high drama of Celine Dion, while Finland's Käärjä stuck his head out from a sauna, and shouted his way through the electro banger *Cha Cha Cha* in a fluorescent green bolero — the stuff of which Eurovision legends are made.

Special mention must go to Norway's Allesandra, whose *Queen of Kings* not only eulogised an ancient royal with raven hair as dark as night and icy eyes that were outta sight, but also included a crazy high note. The heat is now on — Saturday's final will be intense.

News Politics

Starmer refuses to rule out deal with Liberal Democrats

Henry Zeffman Associate Political Editor

Sir Keir Starmer has repeatedly refused to rule out making a deal with the Liberal Democrats if Labour does not win a majority at the general election.

The Labour leader insisted he was "going for an outright majority" but on several occasions avoided the question of whether he would come to an agreement with Sir Ed Davey.

Starmer has repeatedly argued that the results of the local elections have put the country on course for a Labour majority, although some forecasters suggested it would fall just short. Labour gained more than 500 councillors, many of them pro-Brexit, in territory the party had lost in recent years.

The results raise the possibility of Starmer seeking an agreement with the Lib Dems to get key legislation through. The Lib Dems gained just over 400 councillors in the elections.

Asked by Sky News if he would strike a deal with the Lib Dems, Starmer said: "I'm not answering hypotheticals, but we are aiming for a majority and that's what we are confident about."

However, Starmer directly ruled out an agreement with the Scottish National Party. He said that there was a fundamental difference between Labour and the SNP, adding: "I do not believe in the break-up and separation of the United Kingdom, I do not believe that our future will be better if we put a border between Scotland and England, so there's no basis for an agreement."

Nevertheless, Stephen Flynn, the SNP's Westminster leader, claimed that Starmer would not walk away from becoming prime minister if he required the backing of the SNP. "Keir Starmer is a man who has broken many of his pledges, not just to the Labour Party but to the wider British public in order to try and become prime minister," Flynn told

Questions dodged

Questions by Beth Rigby of Sky News, answers by Sir Keir Starmer:

Q1: You sat next to Ed Davey at the coronation on Saturday – is he a man you could do business with?

A1: Look, I'm going for an outright majority. I'm often asked, will you do a deal with the SNP, and I've been absolutely clear, there are no terms on which we would do a deal with the SNP.

Q2: What about the Lib Dems?

A2: I'm not answering hypotheticals, but we are aiming for a Labour

majority.

Q3: You are ruling out a deal with the SNP on any terms, but you are not ruling out a deal with the Lib Dems

A3: With the SNP, it's a fundamental difference: I do not believe in the break-up and separation of the United Kingdom.

Q4: Just to be clear, you're ruling out any sort of arrangement with the SNP and you are not doing that with the Liberal Democrats?

A4: I want a Labour

majority government.

Q5: Last year you said you would not go into

coalition with anyone, including the Lib Dems

A5: I've said throughout ... I want to go for a Labour majority government.

Q6: Last year you said you wouldn't have any formal arrangement with the Liberal Democrats ... you're not saying that today

A6: I want a clear majority Labour government.

Q7: You haven't answered my question

A7: Beth, you can ask me as many times as you like ... I'm pressing on for a Labour majority.

the BBC's *Good Morning Scotland*. He said that the SNP would insist that a Labour-led government should "deliver the powers to Holyrood to hold an independence referendum".

Sir Tony Blair, Labour's last election winner, said today that the party should not be complacent about the general election, but praised Starmer's progress towards government. He told Bloomberg TV that Starmer had done "a pretty good job pulling the Labour Party back from where it was".

Blair said Labour must use the coming months to forge a "modern agenda" to give voters optimism. He added: "One of the biggest problems for Britain at the moment is the sense that we don't have that strong forward momentum behind a plan for the country's future."

Meanwhile, Starmer suggested that Sunak's wealth meant that he had diffi-

culty understanding the cost of living struggles experienced by Britons.

"If you compare the prime minister and me: when I was growing up we couldn't pay our bills and our phone was cut off ... I know the anxiety and the shame it has for families, so I know what people are going through," Starmer said. He added that Sunak was "a wealthy man — that's good, I don't knock that. But it means that he doesn't understand, he doesn't know the anxiety that people are going through."

Addressing Labour's newly elected council leaders yesterday, Starmer told them that they had been handed a "mandate to deal with the cost of living" and that delivering on the issue at a local level would act as a blueprint for a Labour government.

Lib Dems' success shows their party is pointless, Danny Finkelstein, page 23



Pharmacists such as Peter Baillie, taking Rishi Sunak's blood pressure, are being

Get more for less. Simple.

£26 a month

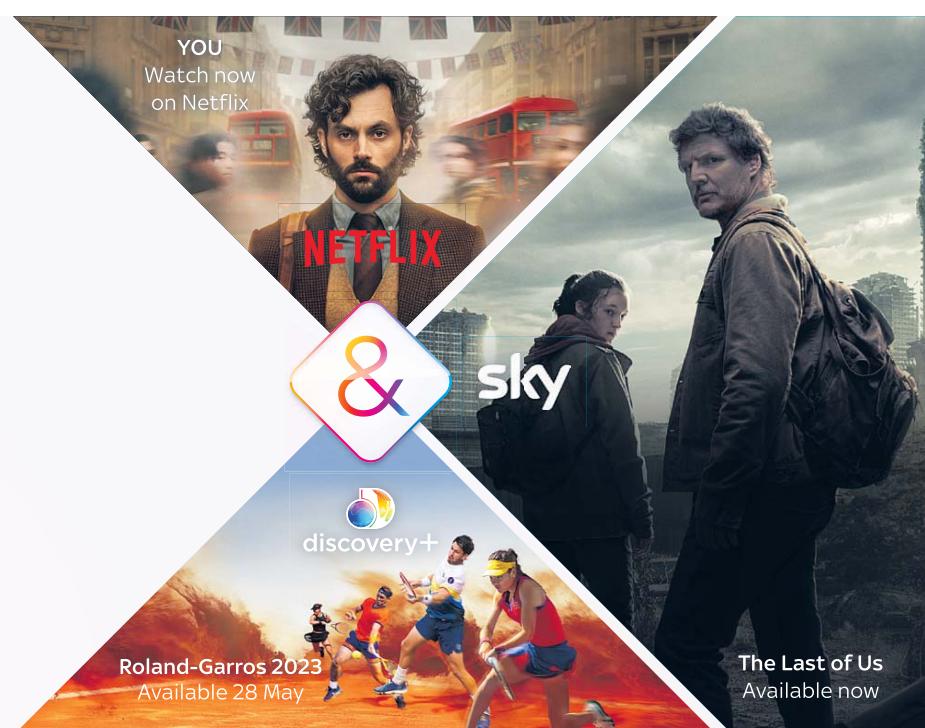
for 18 months

No upfront fee & next day delivery



sky.com 0800 759 1636 Visit a Sky store

Requires Sky Ultimate TV £26pm on 18 month minimum term, £29pm after. Price and services may change. Upfront fee £0 (usually £20). Requires TV with HDMI port and broadband minimum speed 10Mbps. Order by 9pm [Mon-Fri] or 3pm [Sunday] for next day delivery. Excludes Bank Holidays. 18+, UK, CI, IoM residential customers only. Sky Stream Pucks are loaned to you at no cost and must be returned when they are no longer registered on your account.





asked to play a bigger role in tackling the NHS backlog; the prime minister took a helicopter to his Southampton appointment

Stop jailing petty criminals, says Major

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Britain imprisons too many “low-level” criminals and should make use of alternative measures such as community sentences, rehabilitation and medical programmes, Sir John Major has said.

In a speech criticising the state of the country’s prisons, the former prime minister said a focus was needed on the rehabilitation of offenders.

He said that punishing low-level drug offenders such as street dealers with a short sentence was pointless because they were likely to be of “limited intelligence as well as being addicts themselves”.

In a speech on penal reform at the Old Bailey last night Major said it would be more appropriate to give them a community sentence: “To be blunt, my suspicion is that many short sentences are pointless and that a non-custodial sentence would be more effective and perhaps more fair.”

The comments, Major’s first big intervention on prisons since he left government in 1997, had already raised eyebrows last night. Critics pointed

out that Major was prime minister when Michael Howard made his “Prison works” speech as home secretary in the 1990s.

In his speech Major said too many vulnerable people were being jailed. Mentally ill people who pose a danger to the public should be treated in secure wings of mental hospitals, Major said.

He also recommended shifting responsibility for non-violent mentally ill prisoners from the Ministry of Justice to the Department of Health and Social Care. “I appreciate such a move would not be welcomed by the health department, but the government’s responsibility is to provide the most effective and humane punishment.

“Imprisoning people who may be incapable of self-control is simply wrong. They require care, not incarceration.”

“Of course, mentally ill prisoners who are dangerous or violent must be held securely to protect the public,” he added, “but they too require care as well as custody.”

“Many prisoners — far too many, I believe — are sentenced to short-term imprisonment when other sentences

would be preferable. In some cases care and medical attention are called for rather than prison.”

Major criticised the government’s plans to give ministers the power to block the release of prisoners. The Victims and Prisoners Bill, going through parliament now, will give ministers a veto over parole board decisions on the release of terrorists, murderers and rapists.

The former prime minister cited statistics showing that only a quarter of prisoners considered for release by the parole board were successful and only one in 200 of those released went on to reoffend within three years.

In a tacit criticism of Dominic Raab, the former justice secretary who championed plans to introduce a ministerial veto, Major said: “This would suggest that the parole board is not a bunch of gullible softies.”

The former prime minister took aim at the state of prisons in England and Wales, saying recent reports by the prisons watchdog did “not make for happy reading” and many jails were “intolerable”.

Pharmacists and retired GPs called on to free up surgeries

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

Kat Lay Health Editor

The vast majority of patients must be able to use the NHS app within a year to see their test results, order prescriptions and book appointments, a GP recovery plan has ordered.

Retired GPs working from home will be used to staff the NHS 111 helpline under plans published to ease pressure on family doctors.

Rishi Sunak insisted that “not everyone needs to see a GP” as he set out the plans for far more patients to be treated by pharmacists, physios and other staff to free up doctors’ appointments.

However, in a blow to the prime minister’s pledge to cut waiting lists, Steve Barclay, the health secretary, admitted the NHS had missed a key target to eliminate waits of more than 18 months for routine operations by last month.

There still are thought to be about 10,000 patients who have waited longer but Barclay insisted the number was down “by over 90 per cent” since 2021.

NHS chiefs hope to drive the figure closer to zero this summer, blaming strikes for pushing back the deadline.

Sunak sought to move on from his party’s drubbing at last week’s local elections by launching a £645 million GP recovery plan that will allow patients with common conditions such as sore throats and earache to get prescriptions from high street pharmacists.

Pharmacies will also be able to prescribe contraceptive pills and carry out blood pressure checks.

Sunak, who visited a surgery in Southampton to launch the plan, said his family background had convinced him it could work.

“My dad was a GP, my mum was a pharmacist. I grew up working for my mum — I worked in her pharmacy for years. And so I saw first-hand how powerful the connection that she had with her patients was, how much they trusted her but more generally how much people trust their local pharmacist,” he told the Daily Mail.

He was criticised for travelling to his home town by helicopter rather than train, a journey of just over an hour

from Waterloo. His spokesman said he wanted to make best use of his time.

But doctors said the plan did not deal with the underlying problem of stagnating GP numbers. Ministers have acknowledged that a pledge to recruit 6,000 more GPs by next year will be missed but Sunak said that the government was “massively expanding the number of people working in primary care” so patients can see other staff.

An NHS workforce plan due by the end of June will pledge an increase in GP numbers, with training places as much as doubling, but publication has been held up by wrangling with the Treasury over numbers.

As The Times revealed earlier this year, it will also set out plans for apprentice doctors and nurses who do not go through traditional full-time university degrees. Amanda Pritchard, NHS chief executive, said: “This radical new approach could see tens of thousands of school-leavers becoming doctors and nurses, or other key healthcare roles, after being trained on the job”.

The new plan called for more use of the NHS app. Although more than 30 million people have downloaded it, use of the app has been stagnating since the pandemic. Currently only about 20 per cent of surgeries allow patients to see test results and records online.

This must increase to “over 90 per cent” by March, with patients able to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and message surgeries.

Local health chiefs have also been told to ensure that councils build enough GP surgeries when new housing estates are planned, using an infrastructure levy imposed on developers.

Kieran Sharrock, acting chairman of the British Medical Association’s GP committee, said while using pharmacists for more treatment was “probably a good thing”, the plan was little more than a “sticking plaster”. He told Times Radio: “This plan is really just scratching the surface. The eight o’clock rush is something that I can’t see changing.”

**Plan is still needed to fix NHS staff shortages, leading article, page 27
Everything you need to know about booking a private GP, Times2, page 8**

Prisons reviewed as courts found to have unsafe roofs

Henry Zeffman

Associate Political Editor

The government has ordered an urgent survey of the prison estate after finding a material that can cause roofs to collapse in six buildings in the court system.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) said that it was “working rapidly” to see if there were any prisons constructed with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), which is prone to crumbling.

The material was used in construction from the 1950s to the 1990s. There is concern about the integrity of dozens of schools and hospitals, while The Times revealed last week that the Ministry of Defence was examining hundreds of barracks and training facilities for RAAC.

The MoJ had initially told parliament that answering whether prisons or buildings used for courts and tribunals might be affected by RAAC would

come at a “disproportionate cost”. However, after inquiries by The Times, the government said that His Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals (HMCTS), the agency responsible for courts, had conducted a survey in 2021/22 and identified six buildings of concern.

Damian Hinds, the prisons minister, then submitted a written answer in parliament saying that the government was “working rapidly to identify any instances where RAAC may be in place across the prison estate and any remedial action needed”.

Emily Thornberry, the shadow attorney-general, said: “Welcome as it is that the Ministry of Justice is now ordering an urgent survey of the prison estate, it is staggering that it took the scrutiny of MPs and the media to force them into doing so.”

In 2018 the roof of a primary school in Stevenage collapsed due to the use of RAAC, and NHS officials have discussed how to protect patients should the same happen in their buildings.



All hands on deckchairs Martin Parr, at his solo show at Somerset House, has been named Photo London's Master of Photography. Beach culture is a favourite subject

Third water chief waives her bonus

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

The boss of Yorkshire Water has become the sector's third chief executive to forgo a bonus amid a wave of concern over pollution in rivers.

Campaigners and politicians are calling for the heads of the six other main sewage companies to follow suit.

Nicola Shaw, who took over from Liz Barber last May as chief executive of Yorkshire Water, is paid a base salary of £574,000. Her bonus for the past financial year is not known but Barber received £679,000 the previous year.

Shaw said she understood the

strength of feeling about the health of rivers "which is why I've decided that this year I won't be accepting a bonus".

Yorkshire Water was the second worst of nine main sewage companies in England for untreated sewage discharges last year, with more than 54,000 spillages. Shaw said she was "committed" to improving Yorkshire Water's performance and that the company was preparing for its "biggest environmental programme since privatisation".

Earlier this week the chief executives of South West Water and Thames

Water said they were waiving their bonuses. Only United Utilities, which serves the northwest, had a worse record than Yorkshire Water with 69,000 sewage spills last year.

Matt Staniak, of the Save Windermere campaign group, said: "It is right that water chiefs are... forgoing bonuses. I would hope Louise Beardmore at United Utilities follows suit. It is outrageous that sewage is entering

Nicola Shaw is paid a base salary of £574,000

our waterways. Last year alone, the Windermere catchment saw 5,900 hours of sewage spilled into it, all of which ended up in Windermere." Beardmore's predecessor took £727,000 in his last bonus.

Ed Acteson, of SOS Whitstable, a community action group, condemned Southern Water for its 17,000 spills last year, adding that it would be an "insult" if Lawrence Gosden, the chief executive, took his bonus this year.

Tim Farron, environment spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, said water chiefs had a duty to ditch their bonuses and "invest in keeping our water clean".

The government said its plan to cut storm spillages would be extended to all coastal waters. However, it is unclear whether companies will have to spend more than the £56 billion expected under the plan published last year.

Oftel, the water sector regulator, said that from 2025 it would set targets for curbing storm overflow releases and that companies would be fined for missing them.



Play, stream, connect and win at staying in.

Superfast Fibre
£26.99/month

No upfront costs. 24 months. Annual price changes and terms apply.

Hurry, offer ends 25 May
bt.com | 0800 121 4471 | In-store

The monthly price shown will increase from March every year by the Consumer Price Index rate of inflation published in January that year plus 3.9%. See bt.com/prices for details. Fibre Essential: New customers. 95% UK coverage. Price from month 25 currently £31.99 a month. Compatible line required otherwise £49.99 connection charge may apply. BT retains ownership of all equipment. Payment is by Direct Debit. Subject to availability. Terms apply.

Get Offer

+

Machete killer had been caught three times with ‘zombie’ knives

David Woode Crime Correspondent

A teenager who murdered a 14-year-old boy with a machete during “a senseless attack of extreme ferocity” has been detained for life with a minimum term of 19 years.

Marques Walker, then 16, stabbed Jermaine Cools seven times during a “tussle” near West Croydon train station, south London, on November 18, 2021. Jermaine, who “did not stand a chance”, died an hour later in hospital.

Walker, of Bromley, southeast London, who was on bail at the time of the killing, pleaded guilty to murder, possession of a knife and causing grievous bodily harm at a hearing in January.



Marques Walker
was arrested with
a zombie knife in
south London



He was named when a judge lifted an anonymity order after a legal challenge led by The Times. The court was told Walker, now 17, was “embedded in gang culture and county lines” drug dealing. Yesterday he became the first child killer to be sentenced live on television.

Lorraine Dudek, Jermaine’s mother, said her son was her “soulmate... the closest person to me”. She told the court in a victim impact statement: “When [Walker] took Jermaine he took our lives, the lives of his brothers and our whole family. We don’t live any more. We exist in pain.”

Julius Cools, Jermaine’s father, said:

“I don’t know what I’m living for. He had his whole life ahead of him. I wish it was me and not him.”

Judge Sarah Munro KC told Walker he posed a “significant risk of serious harm to the public”. She said: “This is yet another case involving the senseless murder of a young teenager committed for reasons that no adult can fathom.”

“Nothing seems to deter the likes of you from going on to the streets of London and elsewhere armed with lethal knives, easily acquired on the internet, intent upon serious violence.”

It can now be disclosed that Walker was caught three times with “zombie-style” knives and large blades.

He was cautioned in January 2020 after police found him with a ten-inch knife at school. In April 2021 he was charged with possession of a nine-inch hunting knife, criminal property and crack cocaine with intent to supply following a stop and search in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.

Walker wasn’t prosecuted because he was found to be a victim of modern slavery, the court was told.

In October 2021, Walker was caught with a 20-inch “Rambo knife” tucked into his waistband when he was arrested on a bus in south London for breaching his bail conditions.

After the stabbing the following month, Walker fled with the knife in his hand, according to CCTV shown in court. Detectives quickly identified Walker but he went to ground and was given advice on how to evade capture.

He was found six weeks after the murder, hiding at a house in Upper Norwood, south London.

David Nathan KC, said in mitigation that Walker’s actions were “not pre-meditated” because he did not start the fight. The court was told Walker was a “vulnerable young man” who suffered significant childhood trauma.



Ex-convict ‘confesses to murder of boy, 16’

A British teenager found dead in a forest in Thailand was murdered by a former convict during an alleged drug deal, local police have claimed (Mario Ledwith writes).

Woramet Ben Taota, 16, was found dead with head wounds after going missing from his home town of Lampang in

northern Thailand on Saturday.

Officers said that Chaiwat Boonkarin, 44, who had connections to the local drug trade, had confessed to killing the dual national, known to his family as Ben. He was arrested after Ben’s body was found on Sunday.

The force said that Chaiwat, who was released from prison eight months ago after being convicted of sex

crimes, had been known to the victim for a long time.

Ben’s British father, Steven Graham, 60, who owns a thatched roof insurance company, has travelled to Thailand to assist with the investigation.

Ben, an avid motocross rider, told his mother, Ooy Taota, he was going out with friends and left on her blue scooter. CCTV footage showed him with a girl thought to be Suraphitchaya Khamsa, 16, riding pillion.

Police are still searching for Suraphitchaya,

CCTV shows Woramet Ben Taota on his mother’s scooter. Suraphitchaya Khamsa, below left, may have been his passenger

who is said by officers to have been romantically involved with Ben. His girlfriend, known as Yam, has been tracked down by police after suggestions she might have been involved.

Officers claim to have detected Chaiwat travelling on a black Honda motorbike on Saturday night with a woman they believe may have been Suraphitchaya. The bike was parked at a relative’s house.

A post-mortem examination on Ben is due to be conducted.

Woman paralysed in botched kidnapping signs her love

Matilda Davies

A woman who was left unable to speak, eat or walk after falling from a moving vehicle during an attempted kidnap by her ex-boyfriend told her mother she loves her in sign language in footage captured for a new documentary.

The film tells Angel Lynn’s story from when she was kidnapped at the age of 19 in September 2020. She was bundled into a van but then fell out while it was travelling at 60mph, landing on her head and sustaining life-changing brain injuries.

Lynn, now 22, tells her mother she loves her by pointing to her eye, then her heart, then her mother’s face in emotional scenes from the documentary *The Kidnap of Angel Lynn*, which aired on Channel 4 yesterday.

Nikki, 48, and Patrick Lynn, 53, were told their daughter would not survive



Angel Lynn tells her mother she loves her in Channel 4’s documentary. She suffered serious brain injuries when she was abducted three years ago by a former boyfriend, left

her injuries, but Angel has continued to go through rehabilitative treatment which has helped her regain some function on her left side and learn how to swallow again.

Lynn’s ex-boyfriend Chay Bowskill was caught on security footage forcing her into a van with his accomplice, Rocco Sansome, in Rothley, Leicestershire. It is still unknown

what happened in the van that led to her falling out, as Lynn has not been able to communicate this to her family. She still cannot speak, instead relying on sign language or writing on a tablet.

After falling from the vehicle, which Sansome was driving, she was discovered by members of the public.

Her parents, who run a cleaning business, told the Daily Mail that they hope to raise awareness of coercive control in romantic relationships. “It can happen to anyone. It doesn’t matter how strong

you are,” said her mother. “[We’re] just absolutely devastated that we didn’t spot it because we wouldn’t be here today had we spotted it earlier.”

Before the incident, Lynn was a college student who dreamt of becoming a forensic scientist.

Bowskill, now 21, was convicted in January last year of kidnapping, coercive and controlling behaviour, and perverting the course of justice. He was initially sentenced to seven and a half years in jail, before the Court of Appeal deemed it “unduly lenient” and increased the sentence to 12 years.

In March last year, Bowskill also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit burglaries, as he was identified as a member of a gang which burgled 41 homes and stole 51 cars in Loughborough and wider Leicestershire. At Leicester crown court, four years were added to his sentence for the burglary conspiracy, meaning that he faces at least ten years in prison before being eligible for release.

Sansome, also found guilty of kidnap, was sentenced to 21 months in prison.

Newlywed died after carbon monoxide leak

Isobel Frodsham, Gerard Couzens

A British man has died and his new wife has been left in a serious condition after a suspected carbon monoxide leak in the Majorcan holiday home they were staying in during their honeymoon.

Jaime Carsi, 40, and Mary Somerville, 39, were found unconscious in each other’s arms in the property on Saturday. Emergency services were called to the scene after the couple failed to turn up for a boat trip, the newspaper Ultima Hora reported.

Somerville, a former Lloyds bank worker who taught yoga and meditation, is in an intensive care unit at Manacor hospital in Majorca. Carsi, an investment risk analyst with Baillie Gifford, had been travelling on a British passport. An autopsy carried out on Monday concluded that Carsi had died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

News

Red and white bull puts others in the shade

A red and white bull bought by the National Trust could point the way to how Britain's cattle cope with climate change (Adam Vaughan writes).

Unlike the mainly black and white herd he is joining in a Gloucestershire project, Charlie has a lighter-coloured coat.

The idea of buying a lighter Belted Galloway came to Matthew Watts, farm manager at the trust's Ebworth Centre near Stroud, after working in Australia, where red cattle are the norm. The final trigger was the record 40C heatwave that hit the UK last year.

"The lighter-coloured cattle were out grazing and the dark cattle were stuck in the shade, getting attacked by flies," Watts said. "I thought, actually I can do something a little bit



NATIONAL TRUST/JAMES DOBSON

Charlie, the lighter Belted Galloway, meets the National Trust farmers and the rest of the herd in a climate change project at Ebworth Centre near Stroud, Gloucestershire

about this in the future. If you were going out in 40C heat, would you wear a big, thick black coat? Probably not."

Watts conceded that the change was based more on intuition than science. The predominance of black and white Belted Galloways is a result of Victorian bias — they tried but failed to breed out the red ones.

Watts said the black and white cattle faced risks in heat over 40C.

Because of climate change, the Met Office is expecting days of 40C every three to four years by the end of the century.

Watts said it would probably take about three generations — ten to 15 years — to breed a predominantly lighter herd. But there was a downside. A local red bull was twice the price of a black and white one. He added: "I ended up driving to the other end of the country to find one that I wanted."

UK's first three-parent babies born after groundbreaking IVF procedure

Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

Britain's first "three-parent babies" have been born after doctors in Newcastle were given permission to use the procedure to help women at risk of passing on rare genetic conditions.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) approved the use of mitochondrial donation therapy (MDT) — which creates children with DNA from three adults — for at least two women in 2018.

However, it was only revealed yesterday that the technique has led to successful births in the UK.

In response to a freedom of information request by The Guardian, the HFEA confirmed that a small number of babies have been born in Britain following MDT.

The regulator told the newspaper there had been "less than five" births after the technique was used at the

Newcastle Fertility Centre, which has pioneered MDT. It declined to give a precise figure, saying that doing so "could lead to the identification of a person to whom the HFEA owes a duty of confidentiality". No further details of the babies or their families were provided.

MDT involves several steps. First, sperm from the father is used to fertilise two eggs — one from the affected mother and a donor egg from a second woman. The genetic material found in the nucleus of the donor egg is removed and replaced with that from the couple's fertilised egg.

The egg still has the donor's mitochondria — thousands of tiny organ-like structures found inside human cells that produce the body's energy.

While the 20,000-odd genes that determine most of our genetic identity are found in the nucleus of a cell, the mitochondria have 37 genes of their

own, which can only be inherited from a child's mother.

Mitochondrial DNA is separate from core DNA in cells and most researchers believe that it has no effect on personality or how people look.

However, mutations in mitochondrial DNA genes can cause rare diseases, with about one in 6,000 babies affected by mitochondrial disorders.

Parliament changed the law in 2015 to allow MDT. In 2018, the Newcastle clinic was given permission to treat two women with myoclonic epilepsy with ragged red fibres, a mitochondrial syndrome that can lead to dementia, muscle weakness, epilepsy, hearing loss and premature death.

It is not known whether these women went on to have children. However, in considering whether to allow the women to be treated, the HFEA noted the terrible dilemma they faced in getting pregnant naturally. "It is

likely that any child conceived ... may be affected with this serious multi-systemic and progressive disease which severely impacts on affected individuals' quality of life, often resulting in high morbidity and early death," officials wrote in minutes of the deliberations.

The first three-parent baby was made at a fertility clinic in Mexico in 2016. The UK fertility regulator approved the technique in 2017, after more than a decade of debate over its safety and ethical implications. The decision opened the way for some 2,500 young women with mitochondrial disorders to be able to apply individually for permission to have the operation carried out on their eggs in the Newcastle Fertility Centre.

Only a small minority were expected to choose the procedure. Would-be mothers have several options, including donor eggs, adoption and genetic screening to find the embryos with the best odds of being disease-free.

Dementia 'needs cash like cancer'

Kat Lay Health Editor

Dementia experts say the condition must receive the same priority funding as cancer and mental health if the UK is to capitalise on new treatments.

In a letter to The Times today academics say that the slow path patients follow to receive a diagnosis is "wholly unsatisfactory".

They represent a group of 27 dementia experts who have signed a consensus statement calling for better funded and evidence-based routes for people with the condition. They write: "To achieve this, and to improve dementia diagnosis rates across the board, dementia must be given the same priority funding as other conditions such as cancer and mental ill-health."

The experts want a focus on staff recruitment and retention, new ways of working, including remote appointments, and faster access to diagnosis and new treatments. The letter's signatories include Fiona Carragher of the Alzheimer's Society, Dr Jen Roberts of Bangor University and Dame Louise Robinson of Newcastle University.

Kate Lee, chief executive of the Alzheimer's Society, said: "We cannot maintain the status quo in dementia diagnosis — where your postcode determines your chance of diagnosis."

The Department of Health and Social Care said it was planning to double the funding for dementia research to £160 million a year by next year. It is due to publish a strategy on tackling the six conditions that most affect the population shortly.

Extra funding will be worth every penny, Alice Thomson, page 25
Dementia petition, letters, page 26

Infected blood scandal compensation bill could be £10bn

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

The compensation bill for victims of the infected blood scandal and their relatives could reach £10 billion, it was claimed last night.

Ministers accept that there is a "moral case" for paying compensation to those affected by the worst treatment disaster in NHS history, which left thousands of people infected with HIV and hepatitis C through contaminated blood products and transfusions.

At least £400 million of interim pay-

ments have already been paid out by the government. Des Collins, a lawyer representing 1,500 families, told The Times last month that the final bill was likely to run "to billions" after an inquiry recommended extending the group of people who should be eligible. A senior government official has now estimated that the payout could be between £5 billion and £10 billion, the Financial Times reported. The government has declined to comment.

The unnamed source told the news-

paper that the government was "work-

ing through the options" while another, quoted as a government insider, said: "People are very worried about the cost." Between 1970 and 1991, more than 1,300 people were infected with HIV through contaminated haemophilia treatments and blood transfusions and almost 27,000 people were infected with hepatitis C. More than 3,000 people died as a result. The Infected Blood Inquiry's final report is due this autumn. An interim report, published last month, said the compensation system should draw

inspiration from the \$7 billion scheme set up for the victims and families of those killed and injured in the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001. That scheme took just three months to set up and proved a "notable success", it noted.

A government spokesman said: "The infected blood scandal should never have happened. [The] interim report will help the UK government and devolved administrations to meet our shared objective to be able to respond quickly when the inquiry's final report is published in the autumn."

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Castle socialist defends royals

As a one-time Bennite, you might expect Chris Mullin to be opposed to monarchy but the former Labour MP is happy with the royals. "We'd only get President Johnson," he told the Oldie literary lunch. However, Boris might not get a clear run. The King once told Mullin that he had seen a protester with a placard saying "Abolish the monarchy" and confided that he was tempted to walk over and say: "Absolutely. I'll run as an independent."

Mullin gets on with people of all political persuasions. One was Sir Humphry Wakefield, from whom Mullin used to rent an apartment at Chillingham Castle. "What's a socialist doing staying in a place like this?" Wakefield, the father-in-law of Dominic Cummings, asked him. "It's awfully underpriced," Mullin replied. His host laughed — and the next year rates went up 50 per cent.

Lady Glenconner is one of the few who attended Saturday's coronation and the one in 1953. The author, above, who was Princess Margaret's lady-in-waiting, revealed at the same lunch that when the King entered the abbey she had a sudden flashback to



what she heard him say to his grandmother 70 years earlier: "What are they doing to Mummy now?"

TALES FROM THE THRONE

Prince Harry's ghostwriter, JR Moehringer, says the worst sort of client is one who thinks they are an author. "He may have the literary self-confidence of Saul Bellow," he writes in *The New Yorker*, "and good luck telling Saul Bellow that he absolutely may not describe an interesting bowel movement he experienced years ago, as I once had to tell an author." The key to a successful project, he says, is when the ghost feels they can control what goes in. "Always remember," he warns, "that if push comes to shove, no one will have your back."

HUNGER FOR CRITICISM

The former food tsar Henry Dimbleby was given some help writing his latest book, *Ravenous*, by

his wife, Jemima Lewis, after she found his draft "serviceable". Her editing was severe and she loved the task so much she wondered if she should ghostwrite for others. "But then I realised," she says, "that you can't be nearly as mean to someone who's paying you."

Penny Mordaunt grabbed the eye at Westminster Abbey with her outfit, first reported here two weeks ago. As the lord president of the council held her sword, Peter Smith observed on Twitter that this was a novel sight after recent events. "Blimey," he said. "A Tory who still leads a council."

HARD TRUTHS FOR TRUST

Investigative reporters will today attend the inaugural Harry Evans global summit on "truth-telling". One discussion is on how digging costs money, something one of the panellists, the *Guardian* editor Katharine Viner, knows full well. Three years ago, the Scott Trust, which owns the paper, ordered research into its links with slavery. Its recent findings led to a £10 million pledge of "restorative justice". Perhaps some can come from savings made after female journalists left *The Guardian* because it wouldn't let them investigate gender self-identification.

PATRICK KIDD

Call time on boozy parties, bosses told

Andrew Ellson

Company bosses have been urged to limit access to alcoholic drinks at work events to prevent staff acting inappropriately.

The Chartered Management Institute said businesses have a responsibility to protect their staff after conducting a survey of managers that found one in three had witnessed harassment or inappropriate behaviour at parties.

Ann Francke, chief executive of the institute, said that socialising with colleagues represents "a great team-building opportunity". But she added that businesses must take steps to keep unacceptable behaviour in check.

"That might mean adding additional activities alongside alcohol, limiting the amount of drinks available per person or ensuring that people who are drinking too much are prevented from acting inappropriately towards others," Francke told the BBC.

The institute, a professional body focused on leadership, last month surveyed more than a thousand managers. Female bosses were more likely than male bosses to have noticed problems at work parties. More than two in five managers said work events should be organised around activities that did not involve alcohol, a view most common among younger managers.

The survey comes after a number of businesses withdrew from the Confederation of British Industry or suspend-

ed their membership after allegations that a rape took place at one of its summer parties in 2019, plus other claims of sexual misconduct at the lobby group. A second allegation of rape emerged and police are investigating both.

Last year a survey of companies found more than a third were abandoning or scaling back work Christmas parties. The same survey suggested most employees would not mind the end of the tradition — if employers spent their party budget on staff bonuses instead.

Alison Loveday, an employment lawyer and business consultant, said: "Boozy work parties are the exception rather than the rule today. There is a realisation that alcohol and lots of people doesn't necessarily go well together."

Yet those that had Christmas parties last year sank more alcohol than ever, according to the retailer Majestic Wine. In December it reported that sales of mulled wine and champagne were up 140 and 28 per cent respectively. The bounce in demand partly reflects the lack of events in previous years because of pandemic restrictions.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, a professional body for the human resource industry, predicts that social events for staff may become more important than ever because of the rise of hybrid working — although it noted that events need not involve alcohol. It warned that managers "must not neglect their legal and ethical responsibilities to keep employees safe".

B R I N G Y O U R V I S I O N T O L I F E

Create connections around the globe, with tailored advice and specialists from across the Barclays Group, and make your vision for your business a reality.

Influence tomorrow

BARCLAYS | Private Bank

iPhone 14

In full bloom.

Save £144

SALE



From
£38pm*
+ £19 upfront

Ends 01.06



vodafone

Representation Example	Duration of Credit Agreement	Device Monthly Repayment	Credit Amount	Upfront Cost of Device	Total Amount Payable	Interest rate	Representative APR	Device Cost (cash price)	Airtime Plan	Monthly Cost of Airtime Plan	Length of Airtime Plan
iPhone 14	36 months	x £21	= £756	+ £19	= £775	0%	0%	(This means interest free credit)	£775	8GB + 2 Benefits	£17

*Each April, the monthly price shown plus out of bundle charges will increase by the CPI rate published in Jan of that year + 3.9%. This will not affect your monthly Device Plan payments: vodafone.co.uk/CPI. Minimum term agreement, eligibility, credit check, 25GB roaming fair use & terms apply. Vodafone EVO means a monthly Device Plan Credit Agreement (over 3-36m) with an Airtime Plan. The device price will be the same whatever you choose. You can pay off your Device Plan early, and if you do, you can keep your Airtime Plan on a 30-day contract or leave. If your Airtime Plan ends, the Device Plan is still payable (either in full or monthly). Terms: vodafone.co.uk/terms. Roaming: using your home plan to roam in Zone A is included in all of our Pay Monthly plans. For roaming in other destinations, charges will apply depending on which plan you are on. See vodafone.co.uk/roamingupdate22 for charges, destinations & terms. Savings offer on an Airtime Plan: Ends 01/06. £144 saving: Airtime Plan was £23 (£23pm x 24m) until 04/05, now £17pm (£17pm x 24m), hence £552 - £408 = £144. Reliable, award-winning network: The UK relies on Vodafone as a network provider as it: i) powers critical national infrastructure and 77% of emergency services, ii) has coverage in 99% of UK homes, iii) covers 96% of the UK and iv) has won numerous awards. See full details and awards on our Network page. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct debit required. Credit provided by Vodafone Limited. FCA Number: 712210, Vodafone House, The Connection, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2FN

News

Wood stove fumes linked to arthritis

Kat Lay Health Editor

Exposure to chemicals released by wood-burning stoves may raise the risk of arthritis, a new study suggests.

Researchers found a group of chemicals formed by burning wood, fossil fuels or tobacco or when grilling meat and other foods was "strongly linked" to the development of rheumatoid arthritis. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) also appear to account for most of smoking's impact on the risk of developing the disease, they said.

They said: "While PAH levels tend to be higher in adults who smoke... other sources of PAH exposure include indoor environments, vehicle exhaust, natural gas, smoke from wood or coal fires, fumes from asphalt roads, and consuming grilled or charred foods."

"This is pertinent as households of lower socioeconomic status generally experience poorer indoor air quality and may reside in urban areas next to major roadways or in high traffic areas."

Dr Caroline Aylott, head of research delivery at the charity Versus Arthritis, said: "Quitting smoking is the most important way to cut your risk of rheumatoid arthritis, as smoking tobacco increases the risk by up to 50 per cent, makes the condition worse for those living with it, and results in a poorer response to treatment than ex-smokers or those who have never smoked."

"This research suggests much of the risk from smoking is from PAH in cigarettes, and with public health budgets and resources currently stretched, we must ensure stop-smoking services are in place for those with arthritis."

80 per cent more likely to develop rheumatoid arthritis than those in the quarter with the lowest levels, irrespective of whether they were current or former smokers.

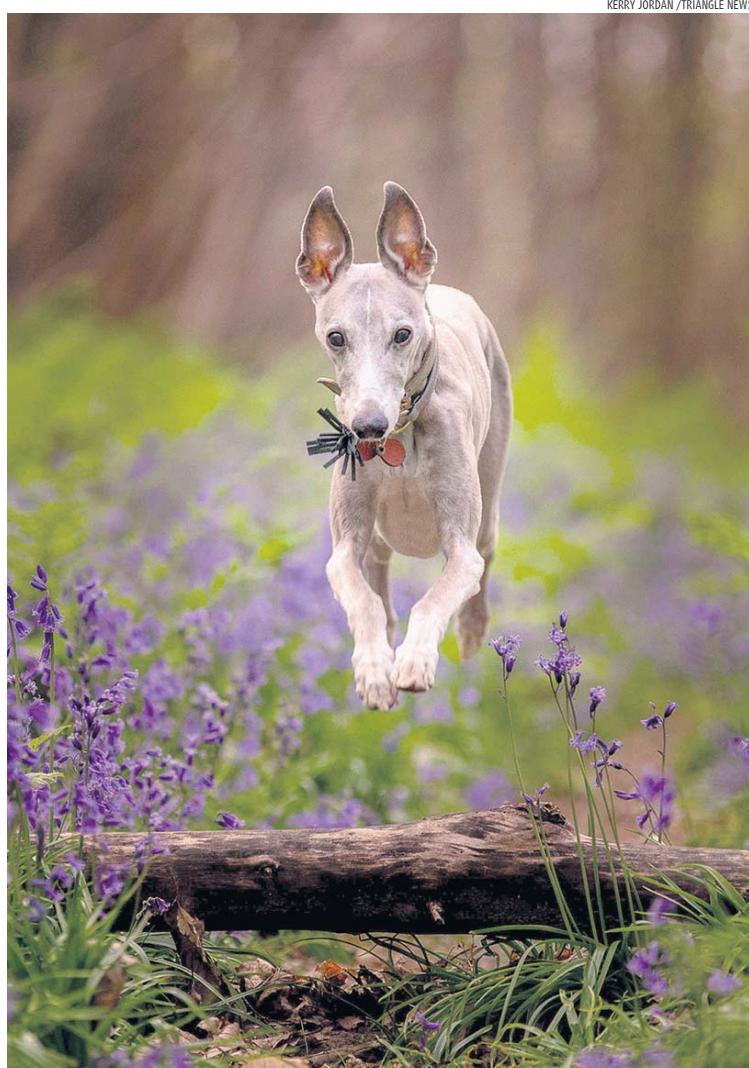
Smoking is a known risk factor for arthritis but the researchers found that this was not the case if they first accounted for PAH levels in the body — suggesting that the chemicals underlie most of that relationship.

They said: "While PAH levels tend to be higher in adults who smoke... other sources of PAH exposure include indoor environments, vehicle exhaust, natural gas, smoke from wood or coal fires, fumes from asphalt roads, and consuming grilled or charred foods."

"This is pertinent as households of lower socioeconomic status generally experience poorer indoor air quality and may reside in urban areas next to major roadways or in high traffic areas."

Dr Caroline Aylott, head of research delivery at the charity Versus Arthritis, said: "Quitting smoking is the most important way to cut your risk of rheumatoid arthritis, as smoking tobacco increases the risk by up to 50 per cent, makes the condition worse for those living with it, and results in a poorer response to treatment than ex-smokers or those who have never smoked."

"This research suggests much of the risk from smoking is from PAH in cigarettes, and with public health budgets and resources currently stretched, we must ensure stop-smoking services are in place for those with arthritis."



Whip it up! Kerry Jordan captures her pet whippet Scout in Midhurst, West Sussex

John Lewis urges end of diesel lorries

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

John Lewis and other big companies are urging the government to speed up the phasing out of diesel-fuelled lorries in an effort to clean up city air.

A report found that electric-powered lorries would be ready to start replacing diesel ones for many uses later this decade, earlier than thought. Ministers promised at the Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow in 2021 to end the sale of new diesel HGVs by 2040.

However, companies and campaigners believe policies to shift road transport away from polluting diesel trucks are lacking. The sector is the biggest greenhouse gas emitter in the UK and a significant cause of the air pollution that The Times' Clean Air for All campaign wants to bring to an end.

The UK Platform for Battery Electric Trucking, a group whose members include the John Lewis Partnership, Logistics UK, Scania and National Grid, has endorsed a call for "zero-emissions vehicles mandates" for lorries.

Transport and Environment, which convened the electric trucking panel, said: "The government has set its target dates for trucks. But the key thing we need is policies to get to those phase-out dates, and it's still not clear how we're going to do so."

John Lewis said: "We've committed to ending the use of fossil fuels in our transport operations by 2030."

The government was contacted for comment.

Drunken rage of village housewife who became 'besotted' with builder

Will Humphries
Southwest Correspondent

A housewife who became "besotted" with a builder working at one of her country properties turned up at his address and attacked his partner on the doorstep.

Alison Moore, who lives with her husband in a £1 million farmhouse in the affluent village of Damerham, Hampshire, had drunk a bottle of wine, taken cocaine and visited the village inn before carrying out the attack.

A court was told that Moore, 59, knocked on the door of Aimee Burnett, 42, at 11pm on April 6 last year, and claimed that Gary House, Burnett's partner of 11 years, was trying to have sex with her.

Burnett was aware that the two had exchanged messages but told Moore to leave. Moore then threw an object at Burnett's front window. When Burnett opened the door again to confront her attacker, Moore tried to barge her way through the front door.

Southampton magistrates' court was told that one of Burnett's sons had to intervene to get Moore out of



Alison Moore, left, who lives in a farmhouse in Hampshire, told Aimee Burnett that her partner, Gary House, wanted sex with her

the property. Varun Chuni, for the prosecution, said: "[Moore] grabbed the hair of the complainant, causing her immediate pain by violently pulling down." He added that Moore pulled a "large clump" of hair from Burnett's scalp.

The women were

eventually separated but Burnett said that she was left "shaking" and in "complete shock". The episode lasted about an hour before Moore returned to her own home, only 300 yards away. The farmhouse she shares with her husband dates to the 1600s and has an orchard.

Moore was arrested and charged with using violence to secure entry to a premises and assault by beating. She denied both charges but was found guilty at Southampton magistrates'

court. She was handed a one-year restraining order and ordered to pay Burnett £500 compensation, £620 in legal fees and a £95 victim surcharge. Moore was also sentenced to a 12-month community order consisting of 12 rehabilitation requirement days and 100 hours of unpaid work.

Speaking after the court case, House, who is no longer in a relationship with Burnett, said that he had been carrying out building work for Moore at a property she owned in the nearby town of Fordingbridge when she became "besotted". Burnett said that she had seen messages between House and Moore and, although her attacker claimed he was trying to sleep with her, Burnett said: "It looked very much the other way around."

In a victim impact statement read to the court, Burnett said she could no longer answer the door unless she was expecting someone and that she suffered from nightmares about the incident. She also suffers from panic attacks.

David Storry, defending Moore, told the court that she had a "lot to deal with" after the breakdown of a previous marriage with an "abusive" former husband. "She went to the pub, had a bottle of wine and snorted a line of cocaine," he said. "This offence was very much out of character ... She should never have done what she did and she very much regrets it."

Police face no action in Bulley case

Tom Ball Northern Correspondent

Lancashire police will not face any action over its handling of the disappearance of Nicola Bulley after being cleared by two watchdogs.

Bulley, 45 a mother of two girls, was reported missing on January 27 at St Michael's on Wyre.

The force came under heavy criticism after her body was pulled from the River Wyre on February 19, more than three weeks after she was last seen.

MPs and campaign groups were critical when police decided to release details of her private life during the search – including her struggles with alcohol and the perimenopause.

But the Information Commissioner's Office says it will not be taking any action over these disclosures. Emily Keaney, the ICO's deputy commissioner for regulatory policy, said: "We wanted to reassure the public that there are rules in place to protect how personal information is used and shared."

The Independent Office for Police Conduct has cleared the force of any wrongdoing but identified two "areas of learning" over an officer's contact with Bulley before her disappearance.

Andrew Snowden, the county police and crime commissioner, said a review by the College of Policing into the force's handling of the case was under way, with findings and recommendations due to be published in the autumn.

The phone you want at the price you choose

Get ultimate flexibility with Vodafone EVO

Flexible Phone Contracts

From 3-36 months interest free



Trade-in Guarantee

On eligible devices using our Trade-in Tool



Now available on refurbished phones

With 2 year warranty included as standard



vodafone

Discover Apple Music Classical with three months of Free Apple Music

Explore the world's largest classical music catalogue.
Enjoy three free months of Apple Music and
Apple Music Classical with a Times Subscription.

**To claim the offer,
visit thetimes.co.uk/classical
or scan the QR code today**

**3 MONTHS
FREE
APPLE MUSIC**

Download
Apple Music Classical

Victorian church torn down to stop vandalism

The demolition of a 179-year-old church because of fears it could attract antisocial behaviour is a "shocking" act that sets a bad example, according to a heritage society (Peter Chappell writes).

St John's Church in Werneth, Greater Manchester, was ordered to be demolished by Oldham council, which cited concerns that it could become a target for vandalism and be a "blight" on the area.

The Victorian Society, a heritage group, criticised the "wasteful" decision and said it feared that historic



St John's Church in Werneth, Greater Manchester, was demolished amid fears it could become a target. The building was not listed, so it could be torn down without planning permission



elements, such as the font and stained glass, had been lost for ever.

The church was built in 1844 and consecrated in 1845. It has been unused since the early 1980s but the society

claims it could have been repurposed rather than demolished.

James Hughes, a senior conservation adviser at the society, said: "This is a local council that has made a

decision that sets a bad example for others — demolishing an unlisted heritage building rather than reusing it sensitively." In 2021, 350 Church of England churches were reported

to be at risk of being closed or demolished before 2026, according to the National Churches Trust charity.

In its consideration of alternative options, Oldham council said not

appointing a contractor to knock down St John's would leave it responsible for the "holding costs associated with a derelict and structurally unsafe property".

Council officers said: "An empty building could also attract antisocial behaviour and increase the risk of vandalism and . . . cause the building to become an eyesore."

Road-rage driver used car as 'lethal weapon' to ram cyclist

David Brown

A cyclist seriously injured in a road rage attack yesterday warned that motorists who lose their temper control a "lethal weapon" after his attacker admitted dangerous driving.

Richard Caseby had asked Marios Georgiou to be careful of cyclists after he almost hit him on a roundabout. Georgiou then chased after him and Caseby ended up on his bonnet.

Georgiou, 52, of Sidcup, Kent, admitted dangerous driving and maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm shortly after the start of his trial at Woolwich crown court yesterday.

He had been driving a Vauxhall Corsa on the Sun in the Sands roundabout on the A2 in Blackheath, southeast London, when he almost hit Caseby in January last year.

Caseby, 62, is a former managing editor of The Sunday Times and The Sun who now runs his own communications company. He said outside court that the attack occurred while he was cycling home from a lido at

9.30am on a Saturday. After almost being hit on the roundabout, he drew level with Georgiou at traffic lights.

"I politely asked him to keep an eye open for cyclists as I'd had a narrow escape," he recalled. "He swore at me and said he'd '**** me'. Once we set off, he was true to his word."

Caseby, of Blackheath, said he was

who used to cycle "everywhere", said: "Drivers are in a lethal weapon and if they lose their temper for a moment, they can kill you."

"I knew when I was clinging to the bonnet that if I let go, I would fall under the wheels and be killed."

Mandeep Sehmi, for the defence, said that Georgiou admitted the offences on the basis that he did not intend to injure Caseby at all.

In a statement, Georgiou said: "I chased after him to take issue with him but turned too quickly. I did not think it would be a serious injury. I did not use my car as a weapon."

Georgiou expressed regret for injuring Caseby.

Judge Philip Shorrock disqualified Georgiou from driving and ordered a pre-sentence report. The judge said he will consider a jail sentence when Georgiou returns to court on June 20.

Official statistics show the number of cyclists killed between 2004 and 2021 fell from 134 to 111, but the number seriously injured rose 27 per cent. Cycle traffic grew by 62 per cent.



Richard Caseby was chased and knocked off his bike

carried along on the bonnet of Georgiou's car, which hit the kerb, throwing him against a brick wall. He suffered three serious fractures to his left leg and ankle and a damaged shoulder.

"I spent months on crutches and have had to learn to walk again," he said. "A year later, I still suffer pain, limp and walk with a stick." Caseby,

I've already lost work, actor tells assault trial

David Brown

The actor Stephen Tompkinson told a court he had work "taken away" after he was charged with punching a man who suffered a traumatic brain injury outside his home.

Tompkinson said that his father had told him to treat the public with respect because he had been invited into "people's living rooms" by the millions of viewers who watched him in *Ballykissangel*, the BBC drama.

Tompkinson, 57, who is best known for playing the title role in the crime drama *DCI Banks*, said it would be "career suicide" for him to assault someone. While legal proceedings continued, "any association with me is put on hold", he told Newcastle

crown court. He denies causing grievous bodily harm.

A neighbour told the court she saw Tompkinson slap and punch Karl Poole in Whitley Bay, North Tyneside, in May 2021. Tompkinson told the court that at the time of the alleged assault he was living in Whitley Bay with his partner and her seven-year-old son.

He came out of his house at about 5.30am to challenge Poole and his friend, Andrew Hall, who were both "heavily intoxicated". When asked

Accused: Stephen Tompkinson

why he did not immediately tell police the details of the confrontation, Tompkinson said: "I've been involved in enough police procedures to know there are initial interviews then . . . another set of interviews. I was waiting to get the chance to fully explain."

Tompkinson said he was not responsible for the double skull fracture Poole sustained when his head hit the pavement. He said he put his hand out to stop Poole from coming towards him and made contact with his face but that it "wasn't enough to knock a sober man off his feet".

The trial continues.

TEDDINGTON
RIVERSIDE

*The natural flow of
LONDON RIVERSIDE LIVING*



An exquisite collection of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments and 4 bedroom townhouses – all of which are ready to move into now.

Embrace the riverside views whilst exploring the beautifully landscaped gardens.

-  24/7 security and concierge
-  Teddington Village 5 mins walk
-  Secure underground parking
-  30 mins to Central London

MARKETING SUITE OPEN DAILY

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT TODAY

020 7349 0091

WWW.TEDDINGTONRIVERSIDE.CO.UK

Hamptons

THE HOME EXPERTS



News



CHRIS KAPOLKA

Back on track Sir Nigel Gresley, named after the man who designed it and its sister locomotive Mallard, streaks through Cheshire. Today it will pull the Welsh Marches Express, its first mainline excursion since undergoing a six-year overhaul

THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

Breakfast Business Briefing: Disrupting for Better

Driving change in an era of division

Thursday, May 11, 2023

Sponsored by



PHILIP MORRIS
INTERNATIONAL

Scan the QR code to
register your interest



Teacher unable to remember burying 'abusive' partner

Ali Mitib

A primary school teacher on trial for stabbing her partner and burying his body in their back garden has told a court that her only memories of the events are "a dragging sensation" and "seeing what would have been the body wrapped in the dining room".

Fiona Beal, 49, is alleged to have concealed a knife in her dressing gown and stabbed Nicholas Billingham, 42, in the neck in November 2021 after luring him to bed with the promise of sex and blindfolding him.

Northampton crown court heard earlier that his remains were found wrapped in plastic bags underneath wooden beams, vinyl flooring and bark chips in March last year.

Beal denies murdering Billingham and claims the act was manslaughter because his coercive control over her had left her mentally "broken".

When asked if she had any memory of how her partner came to be found buried in the garden of their Northampton home, she said: "I remember... that I was dragging something. I remember seeing what would have been the body wrapped in the dining room... but after that, no." Beal said she could not recall anything about stabbing her partner, adding: "I thought that I had hit him over the head and that it happened in the bath."

When asked by her barrister, Andrew Wheeler KC, what her next memory was, she replied: "That I was sat by the back door wrapped in a blanket and I had a cut on my head." She had no idea how long she had been sitting by the door, she claimed. "I think it was for longer than a day. There had been a day and a night. I am not sure." She said she could not remember much about the months after the killing, either.

The teacher alleged she had felt "at risk of physical sexual harm" after Billingham forced her into a sexual act in October 2021. She said her partner, a

builder, became more "angry and aggressive" during lockdown and that she feared things could "get physical" after he was furloughed.

Asked to give details about the period in 2018 after she found out Billingham was having an affair, Beal said she had decided to let him move back in with her in early 2019 after he promised to "go legit" and made a marriage proposal. "He really made an effort," Beal said. "I genuinely thought this could be the turning point."

The couple bought a house in Northampton and moved in together in February 2020. "When we first moved in, things were OK, and then it quickly deteriorated," Beal said.



Nick Billingham's body was wrapped in bags and buried

Her partner "could say things to make her feel inferior" and her self-esteem "hit rock bottom". She said she had contacted her doctor to ask for an increase in her antidepressant drugs. "I am not exactly sure when that was," Beal told the jury. "I was finding it more and more difficult."

"Because the schools were still open I was still going into school. If I wore make-up, he would question who I was wearing it for, and if I didn't, then I was looking old and frumpy."

She added: "The pandemic started in the March, and I believe he got furloughed by June — it was around that time that things became more difficult. He became angry and aggressive. He had gone back to his fixations with things." She alleged that Billingham would shout about crumbs in the kitchen, adding: "He would have a go at me. I would stay quiet."

The trial continues.

IN THE TIMES TOMORROW



THE TABLE

KITCHEN SUPPERS

What the chefs eat when they're at home

PULLOUT



SPORT

MIKE ATHERTON

The importance of the draw in the Bazball era

MAIN BOOK



BUSINESS

RYAN BOURNE

Neither workers nor profits cause inflation

MAIN BOOK

COMMENT

James Marriott

Cancel culture is burning itself out

MAIN BOOK

Pallid Putin raises spectre of a forever war

Roger Boyes
Page 24



Comment

Is all that Lib Dem success for nothing?

Ed Davey has ruled out co-operation with Tories, but in doing so he has deprived his party of influence over Labour

Daniel Finkelstein



@DANNYTHEFINK

The Liberal Democrats did impressively well in the local elections. As the results came in, Friday became one of the party's best days in a decade. Over the weekend that followed, their opinion poll rating surged. There is every chance that the next general election will see a similar surge in the size of their parliamentary party.

And nothing demonstrates their pointlessness more than all of this success.

On the morning of Saturday March 2, 1974 Jeremy Thorpe, leader of the Liberal Party, left his Devon cottage by the back door, so as not to be spotted, and crossed a muddy field to a lane where a car waited to start him on a journey to London. He was off to meet Ted Heath, who had just lost his majority at the general election, to see whether the Liberals and Conservatives could do a deal.

The whole thing ended up being something between a muddle and a farce. Liberal MPs hadn't been told what Thorpe was up to; Heath and his colleagues weren't prepared to offer the sort of deal the Liberals might be interested in, and the whole thing soon collapsed.

After the next election the Liberal Democrats may look back at this incident with nostalgia. Because at least Thorpe had approached the negotiation from a position of equidistance between Labour and the Tories. He was, he felt, in a position to allow the Tories to

continue or to bring them down. It was only equidistance that gave him any leverage. And now Sir Ed Davey, the current Liberal Democrat leader, has abandoned it.

It is worth emphasising that this decision was understandable. Apart from any decision made by the Lib Dems themselves, the Tories have made a relationship with them completely impossible. But however understandable it may be, it renders the maintenance of an independent Liberal Democrat party, with all the costs and infrastructure involved, without point.

What Davey is acknowledging is that his party is now a solidly centre-left one. This is not an attack or an arch comment, just an observation. There are good arguments for being on the centre left, and good reasons why such a position is popular with many voters right now.

However, it is simply a fact that the politics of members of the Liberal

The moving force in politics is disaffection with the Conservatives

Democrats and those of members of the Labour Party are now indistinguishable. There is not one political stance that Liberal Democrat members have, or the party has nationally, that couldn't be comfortably held by a Labour member — indeed not one that isn't comfortably held by a substantial number of Labour members.

Of course not every Liberal Democrat policy is official Labour policy. That's because, on a few matters of detail, they've engaged in their own policy development and have reached very slightly different conclusions. But these aren't things

Labour passionately opposes. The Liberal Democrats could quite happily merge with Labour without anyone in either party having to abandon their position on anything.

I apologise to Liberal Democrats who find this irritating, because it is not meant to be. I respect many Liberal Democrats and respect, too, their independent spirit and the effort that they are expending on staying outside Labour. I'm just questioning whether it is a sensible strategy.

My interpretation of the local election results was different to that of many others. I thought them sufficiently catastrophic for the Conservatives that it makes a substantial Labour majority really quite likely. Power would then pass from the Tories to Labour without Lib Dem involvement at all. Maintaining a separate Liberal Democrat parliamentary party would exclude every member of it, each of them a mainstream centre-left MP, from participation or influence on a mainstream centre-left government. Completely unnecessarily.

But let's say the next election produces a hung parliament, also a very possible outcome. What then?

By announcing that the Liberal Democrats are an anti-Tory party, Davey is responding rationally to the instincts of his voters. The moving force in politics at the moment is disaffection with the Conservatives and his candidates will be relying on it to get elected. So his position is unavoidable.

However, it does mean that in a hung parliament he would have to let Sir Keir Starmer become prime minister. And he wouldn't be able to extract any concessions in return.

Indeed, Starmer might well decide he doesn't even need to talk to the



Equidistance between the Tories and Labour gave Jeremy Thorpe leverage

Lib Dems, just propose a King's Speech — perhaps including in it new environmental policies and the abolition of the House of Lords — and challenge Davey to vote it down. What would Davey do then?

This, of course, assumes that the Liberal Democrats have any concessions they actually want; perhaps only to revisit the Brexit deal and introduce proportional representation. Both these things Starmer probably agrees with anyway, but if he judges them too difficult to do for now, it isn't likely he will be enticed to do so by the limited advantages of Lib Dem co-operation.

Having allowed Labour to form a minority government, it is true that a party holding the balance can make itself a bit of a nuisance. It can vote down government measures from

time to time. But the Lib Dems would only be able to do this when in agreement with the Tories on some detail.

In other words, they will be able to make their influence felt in the same way that a Tory parliamentary pressure group does now. So why not just join up with Labour, form a Liberal Research Group, or whatever, and have done with it?

The best they can achieve with their current strategy — the best in the best circumstances — is to make the first centre-left government in 15 years seem weak and unstable. Is this really what they've pounded all those pavements to achieve?

There is, I would acknowledge, one good argument for a separate Liberal Democrat party. There are some former Tories who might vote Lib Dem who wouldn't vote Labour. So the existence of a separate party expands the overall centre-left vote a little. And this is certainly true. But it doesn't remotely compensate for the harm done to the centre left by having its vote split between two parties.

Even the best tactical voting we've ever had (and I suspect we will have a lot next time) won't completely cancel out the effect of having two parties. So the one good argument for a separate Liberal Democrat party isn't a very good argument after all.

I am not suggesting that liberalism or democracy, or liberal democracy, or the centre or the left or the centre left is pointless. I am merely questioning the need to maintain a separate political party to advance ideas and people that are essentially the same as Labour. And I think that this moment of Liberal Democrat success is the right moment to ask.

daniel.finkelstein@thetimes.co.uk

PMQs Unpacked with Matt Chorley

Join Matt Chorley and guests as they analyse PMQs live from the chamber.
Listen for free today from 12pm.

TIMES RADIO

INTELLIGENT RADIO FROM THE TIMES

DAB RADIO | ONLINE | SMART SPEAKER | APP



Comment

Pallid Putin raises spectre of a forever war

Lacklustre Victory Day parade suggests hostilities are slipping away from Kremlin's control

**Roger
Boyes**



@ROGERBOYES

Victory parades in Moscow are intended to be a celebration of military might and political resolve, a moment when Russia pays respect to those who fought on the battlefield. This time around it was a nervously abbreviated spectacle, presided over by a joyless retired KGB officer who seemed less concerned with polished swagger than with the need to conceal the depleted state of his nation's armed forces and the Kremlin's internal divisions.

Surface-to-air missiles were rolled out yesterday in Red Square and there was plenty of goose stepping — but no sign of modern tanks, no flypast by advanced fighter jets, which are being kitted out with extended range glide bombs. No Pantsir air defence systems. It's not just that the kit is deployed elsewhere, in preparation for the well advertised Ukrainian counter-offensive, but also because Putin doesn't want to surrender intelligence to the West.

Russia, he said, was in a real war, a civilisational one. Even the march of the immortal regiment, a traditional ceremony allowing Russians to hold up pictures of dead Second World War relatives, was cancelled. The reason: fear that Russians who have lost their sons in the past 14 months

of the Ukraine invasion would turn it into an anti-war protest.

The Kremlin leader's paranoia about the battles of the coming months has become the determining factor in Europe's most important hot war in 80 years. If the Ukrainians were indeed responsible for the recent drone attack on the Kremlin then Putin's angst would perhaps be justified. More plausibly, it could have been a Putin-engineered test to check Moscow's dense air defence system ahead of yesterday's parade. The fact that it ended up as a bit of a cock-up will merely add to Putin's sense that the war is slipping out of his control.

The victory parade, big in Cold

The promise of victory made to the Russian people looks hollow

War days and revived by Putin, was supposed to support a national cult of victory against fascism. Known as "pobedobesie" in Russian, this fetishised fascist-crushing permeates the state narrative and has found a way into primary school curricula.

But to apply the supposed lessons of the Great Patriotic War to the current war against Ukraine you would have to believe that a big, bloody, successful battle, a 21st-century Stalingrad, would lead to a turning point — 2023 would have to mimic 1943 when Stalin's armies started to notch up a string of successes. Stalingrad was followed by successful offensives against the German forces in Kursk, Kharkov

(now Kharkiv) and liberating Kiev (now Kyiv). Military breakthroughs led to a string of strategic triumphs for Stalin.

But there is to be no Putingrad to match Stalingrad. The Kremlin seemed to have granted Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine that symbolic significance and it looked as if it could fall as early as last January.

The Ukrainians have hung on, however, and kept their supply chains open. Knowing the importance to Putin of a victory there, the gangsterish head of the Wagner mercenary corps, Yevgeny Prigozhin, has threatened to withdraw his men from the firefight unless Moscow immediately sends more ammo. Some is on the way, so the ruthless Wagnerians may carry on shooting.

The promise of victory made by Putin to the Russian people looks hollow. It seems he cannot produce a knockout blow on the battlefield and he was unable to engineer a change of government in Kyiv (he called the Zelensky leadership a "military regime" yesterday). There could be a strategic victory whereby he convinces the global south he has the guts to take on the West, its guns and values. But this is going to make life complicated for China, which Putin needs to keep on side. And the Russians themselves show no great interest in global leadership.

Then there's the "victory" of a peace deal perpetuating Putin's control over Crimea and greater autonomy for the eastern Ukrainian provinces. Even that cannot be sold as victory because it means tension with what has become a heavily

armed Ukraine. Enforcing Ukrainian neutrality is now impossible.

On offer, then, is only a forever war. There is still no general conscription, but digital call-up has complicated draft-dodging. Army recruiters have been trawling mosques and migration offices in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, offering sign-up bonuses and fast-track citizenship for those who serve six months. The aim: to drum up 400,000 new volunteers to fight in Ukraine.

Victory eludes Putin, though not so much because of low recruitment numbers as because of the absence of clear, declared goals. Is Ukraine to be partitioned or occupied as a whole? The Kremlin dithers, makes meaningless rotation of generals.

Igor Girkin, a shadowy former FSB officer and now a military blogger, reckons too much has already been messed up for Russia to emerge victorious. "Now we have to think about how to preserve the state, the community and the people in a situation of impending military defeat," he says in his latest post.

Ukraine's hope is that this kind of defeatism is spreading among squabbling factions, both nationalists and liberals, who are losing faith in Putin's pallid leadership. The war can be won, Kyiv believes, by nudging Putin into reckless decisions that disconcert his generals and his oligarchs. Soon he will be looking for scapegoats for his unwon war. He may believe 2023 is indeed 1943: hard but successful, culminating in strategic triumph. In fact it might be more like 1937, Stalin's year of purges, a year of bad dreams.



Eurovision Song Contest deserves a lasting legacy

Sandie Shaw

This week, more than 160 million people around the world will tune in to the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest. I know the contest in Liverpool will take me back to that magical Vienna evening in 1967 when I represented the UK. From the beginning I recorded and performed my songs in five languages because I wanted to create connections across borders. This meant that every country in western Europe regarded me as their own because of those strong bonds.

We had an amazing landslide victory with *Puppet on a String*. It was the first time the UK had won Eurovision. Back then most of eastern Europe was part of the Soviet Union. They listened to British music on pirate radio and on bootlegs. We represented so much for the young people of those countries. Because Vienna was so close, those eastern European nations could illegally pick up the contest on their TVs for the first time. Eurovision felt like a catalyst for change. That is why today I feel a particular affiliation with the 2022 winners, Ukraine.

This year's United by Music theme reflects our determination both to support Ukraine and to show how music can be a force for good. However, once the winner is crowned we must not let that love for music and communal spirit fade away.

We know the crucial role music played during the pandemic in supporting us through isolation, uncertainty, loneliness and loss. Some 59 per cent of people said music helped their mental health and wellbeing during lockdowns, according to research by UK Music, the collective voice of the music industry, with which I work closely.

Last year, UK Music and Music for Dementia released their Power of Music report, which set out a vision of how to harness music to improve health and wellbeing. Research has shown how music therapy can help cut the need for anti-psychotic medication in 67 per cent of people living with dementia, reduce stress for patients undergoing surgery and increase our dopamine levels when we are listening to music that we like.

The report calls for a new Power of Music commissioner to champion the benefits of music for health and to co-ordinate work between the government, health and social care sectors and the music industry. We need the government to seize on the joy of Eurovision to create that new role to help make us all healthier and happier.

That would ensure the contest has an enduring legacy, and will provide a fitting tribute to the people of Ukraine and a testament to the power of music.

Sandie Shaw won the Eurovision Song Contest in 1967

Matthew Parris Notebook

It was like a panto on steroids, and I loved it

Having limited tolerance for dressing up, prancing around, ceremonials, displays, fiestas, flypasts, uniforms, medals, dancing, synchronised swimming, any kind of knees-up etc, I hadn't intended to watch the whole coronation — but I confess that once I started I was gripped. Moved, too, unexpectedly. Though I must say the wilder excesses of the costumery put me in mind of our local Youlgreave pantomime on steroids. Grown men really shouldn't dress in carpets, and some of the decorative effects made me think of those pizzas you can order where, for extra toppings, you tick as many boxes as you wish: olives, pineapple, extra cheese, shrimps, chilli peppers, anchovies, heraldic lions ...

But I much admired Penny Mordaunt's Scandinavian airline air-hostess outfit, while the King in that extraordinary gold-thread tunic looked like a wearily benign warlord

in a sci-fi movie. And didn't the arrival of the mobile mounted curtains for the anointing remind you of the approach of the screens for a bed-wash in an NHS general ward?

Ah well, I dare say this is my last coronation (I do remember Queen Elizabeth's because we kiddies got special mugs and free nuts) so I just sat back with a glass of English fizz and enjoyed the extravaganza.

March of AI

On the road we discussed artificial intelligence, the rise of the chatbot and the question of whether this technology could and should be banned or at least held back. I took an absolutist position: that in the end humans will do everything it proves possible to do, and Canute-like attempts to restrict invention may distort but will never stop the march of science. But one of us mentioned Japan, where, in the late 16th century, the imperial government banned outright the possession of guns, because firearms would give individuals of lower social status the power to kill higher-ranking individuals. The ban held for more than a century. Even today, gun ownership is impossible for

most people in Japan, and gun crime is very, very low. But the flip side of a not-quite-total ban is the enormous power this gives those people (or nations — China?) who take no notice. In essence, I suppose, that's the American argument for every citizen's right to bear arms. Instinctively I prefer the Japanese approach. But if we do try to throttle the development of AI, we'd better be damn sure it applies universally or we'll be sitting ducks.

That sinking feeling

Returning from Andalusia for the coronation we crossed a vast area of badlands: a Martian landscape of dry earth and clay; ravines, gorges and crumbling little peaks and ridges like a whipped ochre meringue. When it rains in this semi-desert the whole topography melts just a little and the rivers run red with what must amount to millions of tons of soil, river estuaries presumably extending their shallows a bit further out into the ocean. A thought struck me, similar to what struck me on a slow boat up the Amazon, chugging between low earth banks in a state of continuous crumble into the river during every flood, to be

swept finally into the Atlantic.

The thought was this: is the gradual erosion of soil, everywhere apparent, not simply a fast-forwarding version of what's happening far more slowly to the rock that forms our mountains? Erosion and geomorphic forces mean some land is sinking, while colliding tectonic plates are pushing other mountain ranges upward. Continents are tilting. Glaciers, meanwhile, are melting because of global warming, which also expands the volume of water. Sea level, properly understood, is the distance from the centre of the Earth to the surface of our oceans.

What's the net effect? Are we even capable of making these calculations and assessing their relative contributions? I've never doubted global warming but believe our calculations are probably way out.

Asylum qualms

Now comes a dreadful thought but one of which I cannot rid myself. I've heard people saying that the Sudan chaos, and the desperation of displaced people that this terrible collapse of civilised government is bound to create, demonstrates the need for safer and easier routes for asylum seekers to reach our own continent. But I'm afraid that — deny this though we solemnly will — it will secretly teach most European populations quite the opposite lesson.





Buy prints or signed copies of Times cartoons from our Print Gallery at timescartoons.co.uk or call 020 7711 7826

It's time to spend big on tackling dementia

Hope for new drugs must be backed by cash to relieve the huge emotional strain on families and cost to the public purse

Alice Thomson



@ALICETTIMES

The hardest part is not knowing when we said goodbye. Was it the last time he remembered my name, or smiled at the sound of my voice; was it 18 years ago when his mind first started slipping and sliding and he forgot how to start his mower, or in the hospital near the end when he clutched my arm and hummed to alleviate the pain?

My father died just before Christmas after nearly two decades of living with dementia. This time last year, he could still sit in his care home garden, basking in the sun after two years of being cooped up during the pandemic. But when he fell and broke his hip, aged 92, he couldn't describe his discomfort and at the end he had forgotten how to swallow.

Dementia is a cruel disease. My father was a Cambridge scholar, economist, diplomat and banker who loved history, architecture, poetry, boats, birds and tattoos, but his 14 grandchildren never benefited from his advice or his humour,

although they loved drawing and dancing with him.

For years I didn't think about what we had lost, I blocked it, wanting to enjoy him in the present, his gentle whistling, his continued appreciation of chocolate and wild flowers. We were lucky; he remained charming, thoughtful and courteous. But it wasn't until his funeral, when we reminisced with family and friends and sifted through old photographs, that I allowed myself to remember my childhood with him. It had felt macabre before; it's hard to grieve when the person you love is still alive.

My family is not alone. Nearly 950,000 people in this country are living with dementia; 42,000 are

It's hard to grieve when the person you love is still alive

under 65. According to Public Health England, 21 million people have a family member or a close friend who has the disease and there are 540,000 dementia carers who often give up their work or retirement plans to look after an increasingly discombobulated relative.

My mother found it exhausting and frightening when my father started wandering out of the house

or mistook the oven for the fridge. They had been inseparable since they were children. When finally he went into a home, just before their 60th wedding anniversary, she was bereft. When they were allowed a brief meeting during Covid, he patted her hand, knowing instinctively that they had an extraordinary bond. At her funeral, socially distanced during the pandemic, the vicar couldn't stop him singing her favourite hymns.

If he had known that he would have dementia so long, I suspect my father would have been horrified at becoming what he would have considered a burden. People are more frightened of an Alzheimer's diagnosis than many cancers because until now there has been no chance of a cure. It's worse for those who are diagnosed with an early onset of the disease. The emotional toll on families can be devastating, even more so if their relative becomes frustrated, depressed, angry, violent or abusive.

But the effect on the country is also horrendous. The economic burden of dementia in the UK is huge, with higher NHS health and social care costs (£14.2 billion) than both cancer (£12.3 billion) and coronary heart disease (£11.6 billion). More than half of all those in our overburdened care homes have dementia. In hospital, nearly a third

of beds are taken up with patients with neurological degenerative diseases who need constant attention. They frequently become disoriented and agitated, bewildered by what is going on around them and unable to eat without help.

Until now, there was little hope of a solution. People were thought to reduce their risks if they were fit, slim, did the crossword and didn't smoke. Yet my father could still play football with his grandchildren in his 80s.

Economic burden is higher than cancer and heart disease

But in the past few weeks there have been two breakthroughs in medications for the illness. Last week, the US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly published positive results from a drug called donanemab which appears to slow the progress of Alzheimer's by 35 per cent compared with a placebo during an 18-month period. This coincides with a new generation of blood tests which could offer early detection. Another drug, lecanemab, which was approved in America last year, slowed the rate of cognitive decline in patients by 27 per cent in trials.

Both drugs work by reducing the build-up of sticky amyloid plaques in

the brain, which many scientists think are a main cause of the disease, although they come with potentially dangerous side-effects. The Alzheimer's Association has welcomed this "inflection point" for treatment while stressing it is not a cure, and it also relies on early diagnosis, a weak point for the NHS.

There is still a long way to go to discover an effective drug that can halt or reverse decline, but it is a start. The benefits could be huge, especially for those with early onset dementia and no other illnesses.

Until recently, there has been less research into Alzheimer's than into cancer. Pfizer stopped its research programme five years ago, deeming it fruitless. There are currently 141 drugs for neuro-degeneration being tested in clinical trials; by contrast there are 2,300 ongoing oncology trials.

This is the time to double down. Last month, I ran a half marathon in Cambridge for Alzheimer's Research, with my daughter and dozens of other dementia families, but private donations need to be matched by greater government support.

In the short term, it will be costly, as it has been with cancer and Covid research. But in the long term, if a cure for Alzheimer's can be found, the rewards not just for patients and their families but for the NHS would be game-changing.

Letters to the Editor



Dementia petition

Sir, It is wholly unsatisfactory that people with dementia across the country do not have timely access to a dementia diagnosis. An early and accurate diagnosis not only helps to prepare families for the future but opens the door to treatments, care and support. We are part of a group of 27 dementia experts who have come together to sign a consensus statement calling for better funded and evidence-based dementia pathways to provide effective care, support, intervention and treatment. To achieve this, and to improve dementia diagnosis rates across the board, dementia must be given the same priority funding as other conditions such as cancer and mental ill-health. This parity will be crucial to ensure that people developing Alzheimer's are diagnosed quickly and can benefit from new disease-modifying treatments in the pipeline. And for those with other forms of dementia, speedy diagnosis will remain crucial to accessing care and support as early as possible.

Fiona Carragher, director of research and influencing, Alzheimer's Society; **Hugh McKenna**, emeritus professor, Ulster University; **Dr Jen Roberts**, research officer, Bangor University; **Dame Louise Robinson**, professor of primary care and ageing, Newcastle University

Colonial context

Sir, Your report "Revealed: Sunak's grandfather lived under brutal colonial rule in India" (May 9) said that in 1919 British security forces machine-gunned and bombed unarmed, peaceful civilians in the Punjab village of Gujranwala, from where Rishi Sunak's family originate. Your account of this alleged atrocity suggested it was entirely unprovoked and resulted in the deaths of an unspecified number of peaceful villagers. What you omitted to mention is that the Punjab was then experiencing a widespread, violent breakdown of order, including killing by bludgeoning and even the burning to death of several unarmed European civilians. In Gujranwala itself, well before any government repression (however excessive), the record shows that "angry protesters set fire to the local railway station, the telegraph office, the district court, a government rest house and a part of an Indian Christian church", all this before any police firing. Historical context matters.

Dr Zareer Masani
Author and historian, London N19

Corrections and clarifications

• An arrest photographed during the coronation was not that of Graham Smith, leader of the anti-monarchy group Republic, as our caption wrongly said (news, May 8).



We are committed to abiding by the Independent Press Standards Organisation rules and regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces. Requests for corrections or clarifications should be sent to feedback@thetimes.co.uk



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

Need for the Tories to speed up their reforms

Sir, William Hague's article ("Tories shouldn't panic — but must speed up", May 9) is desperately pertinent. The government appears to move at glacial speed, with decisions seemingly taking years instead of weeks. There are glaring examples of this: the NHS workforce plan is taking an indeterminate amount of time yet everyone knows we need more doctors and nurses. What is the delay? Similarly, the delays over HS2 are inexcusable. We should get on and build it: delay incurs cost, and no benefits are provided to the country.

I fear that the death-like grip of the Treasury is holding back all of these decisions when speed and agility are required to govern in the modern age and keep up with countries that are adapting far faster than us.

Justin Richards

Hitchin, Herts

Sir, William Hague is over-optimistic about the prospect for electoral recovery of his party for two reasons: first, although he is correct that Rishi Sunak has provided steady, competent leadership over the past six months, the dishonesty of Boris Johnson that led to his downfall and the havoc wreaked on mortgage holders by Liz

Truss have stained the reputation of the Tories and are unlikely to be erased from the public memory before the next election. Second, reform of the NHS, such as meaningful improvements in timely access to primary care and reductions in waiting times, are unlikely to be in place before the next election, leaving deep-seated structural deficits in organisation, staffing, training and remuneration unremedied. However, evidence of progress might be rewarded by reducing the scale of electoral defeat.

Professor Ian Kunkler

Edinburgh

Sir, William Hague raises the apparent horror of a government emerging without a clear majority "dependent on the whims of some combination of the SNP, Liberal Democrats and Labour's far left". His preference is for the alleged stability of single-party government. The UK has experienced single-party government for nearly eight years. We have survived four prime ministers, endless changes of ministerial posts, factional conflict led by a hard-right group on the back benches, expulsions of moderate MPs, multiple scandals and repeated changes in government policy. After

this chaos and confusion, a return to more stable coalition government, or a minority government that had to negotiate new initiatives with other parties, would be a blessing.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (Lib Dem)

London SW1

Sir, Those talking up the prospects for the Conservatives assume that the electorate has a very short memory. I shall certainly not forget or forgive the party that clung to the dishonest and reckless Johnson and then gave us the even more reckless Truss. Further, I see little in this country that is better, or even not much worse, than when the Conservatives attained power 13 years ago. A major reason for this is the lack of analysis and detailed planning for solving these problems. Instead we have had "mood music": promises made with absolutely no basis in implementation plans and ad hoc allocation of big sums of money to whichever disaster area is creating bad headlines for the government. The electorate must send the Conservatives into the wilderness to rethink their selection of MPs and the way they operate in government.

Nigel Orchard

Salisbury

Bogus companies

Sir, Further to Emma Yeomans's Thunderer "Companies House is so lax people are taking the mickey" (May 8; letter, May 9), I recently received a letter from Companies House congratulating me on becoming a director of an allotment company. I am not a director of an allotment company, or for that matter of a vineyard or high-end restaurant.

If Companies House had written to me at the time of the application this fraudulent process could have been stopped in its tracks. The adviser at Action Fraud told me that such fraudulent applications were quite common. Given the resources that such applications must tie up, not to mention the stress caused to victims, Companies House should devise more rigorous vetting procedures.

Michael Lott

Kenley, Croydon

Pharmacy boost

Sir, I am circumspect about allowing pharmacists to prescribe antibiotics for certain health conditions

("Pharmacists to write prescriptions and free up to 30,000 GP slots a day", May 9). I hope that, by increasing the number of players in this area, it will not exacerbate the rise in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Attempts to address this rise led to the Department of Health publishing, in 1998, "The Path of Least Resistance", imploring doctors to exercise restraint when prescribing antibiotics. Not all doctors complied with this advice and the incidence of bacteria resistant to these drugs has steadily grown, with some becoming almost untreatable with antibiotics.

I hope the pharmacy students I taught for 43 years will remember my lectures on this topic and use their new powers judiciously.

Dr Malcolm Andrew

Former principal lecturer in pharmaceutical microbiology; Loughborough, Leics

Ultra expensive

Sir, I found Dr Chris van Tulleken's advice on ultra-processed food (UPF) informative and helpful ("How much ultra-processed food is in your basket?", Times2, May 9). However, I

was struck by the higher prices of many of the recommended non-UPFs. When you can buy a family-sized sliced white loaf for £1.60 or less, many people on fixed budgets cannot consider buying a healthier sourdough for £4.15. Like many things today, the expensive healthy options can only be afforded by the reasonably well-off.

Carole Taylor

Gloucester

Worried wool

Sir, When I was vicar of a small town parish with a large churchyard in Kent I had to mow the grass. A local shepherd saw me struggling and offered to bring some sheep along to help me keep the grass short around the many headstones (letters, May 3, 4, 5 & 8). He also erected a fence to corral them safely. The sheep had other thoughts and several of them leapt the fence and set off down the high street, where they took refuge in the car park of the doctors' surgery.

Although the sheep caused chaos, I did not blame them for choosing life over death.

Canon Brian Stevenson

West Peckham, Kent

'HUMANISING' LIFE IN THE TEXTILE MILLS

FROM THE TIMES MAY 10, 1923

Many aspects of the present and future supply of juvenile labour in the textile industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire, also of the education and industrial training of the young worker, came under discussion at the spring meeting of the textile industry held in Manchester today. Mr A Pollitt, President of the British Association of Managers of Textile Works, dealt with "Why Mill Life is Unattractive" and Mr Ben Turner, MP (Batley), "How to Improve Factory Life". There was a large attendance, chiefly of members in proprietorial and managerial

positions, and the tone of discussion, as of the papers themselves, reflected the humanising of industrial relations so marked in the textile trades in recent years. Mr Pollitt expressed concern about the supply of labour for the mills, which is jeopardised, he said, by the uncertainty of continuous employment and consequent doubt about earning power in the minds of working-class parents. He suggested that if it were certain that wages would be forthcoming, operatives would come forward. Welfare work of both the educational and the moral kind, and the brightening of mill surroundings and interiors, were warmly commended by several speakers, and one mill manager quoted the results of a recent inquiry of female mill workers. In every one of eight cases the unprompted answer of women of many years' experience in the mills was that they had nothing against the life, and only in one case was an improvement suggested for

protection against a draught. Mr Ben Turner's suggestions included the cultivation by overlookers and foremen of warmer human interest in the boys and girls under them, the careful teaching of young workers in the details of their trade, the avoidance of piecework for the young, the observance of "safety first", the plentiful supply of facilities for sports in non-working hours near the mill, a 10 minutes' stoppage each forenoon and afternoon for rest, a weekly talk on mill dangers, and the introduction of "a motherly kind of person" in every room where girls are employed who would really "mother" the girls. The Chairman said that whilst Mr Turner's ideas would have been considered revolutionary 20 years ago, they would, he was confident, be a back number 20 years hence.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

Umbrellas at arms

Sir, Professor Tim Connell (letter, May 8) observes that standing orders for the army categorically state that "umbrellas will not be opened in the presence of the enemy". However, that did not deter Major Digby Tatham-Warter in the Second World War. He could not remember passwords but knew that it would be generally recognised that "only a bloody fool of an Englishman would carry an umbrella into battle". At Arnhem (he was later immortalised by Christopher Good in *A Bridge Too Far*) he immobilised a German armoured car by thrusting the ferrule of his umbrella into the eye of the driver. He subsequently led the chaplain to safety, saying: "Don't worry about the bullets, I've got an umbrella." So when one sees the cavalry and guards sporting their bowler hats and umbrellas on certain occasions, it is good to know that the umbrellas are not just for show.

Dr Julian Critchlow
Ditcham, Hants

Sir, When, in 1993, I was walking with the Crown Equerry as we followed the Garter procession down the hill attired in morning dress, black top hat and rolled umbrella, it started to rain quite heavily. I asked my companion if I could open my umbrella. "No," he said, "it's part of the uniform to be kept rolled."

We were both soaked.

John Briscoe
Apothecary to the Royal Household at Windsor 1986-97; Woodbridge, Suffolk

Coronation oath

Sir, Canon Elizabeth Fisher (letter, May 8) makes a timely and valid criticism regarding the King's coronation oath. At their ordinations, bishops, priests and deacons are required to make the Declaration of Assent, which refers to the Church of England as part of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. There is no mention of the word "Protestant" in Anglican formularies or the Liturgy. The church is the "Church of God".

The Rev Robert H Jennings
Aylesbury, Bucks

Kings of little brain

Sir, Charles III may not have been the first Prince of Wales to have gone to university (letter, May 9) but he is the first of our monarchs to have graduated with a degree: Edward VIII left Oxford after eight terms without one. Edward VII, despite studying at Edinburgh University, Christ Church, Oxford, and Trinity College, Cambridge, fared no better: Queen Victoria considered her son had "a small, empty brain".

Peter Saunders
Salisbury

Sir, Libby Purves's article "The reign of King Telly is coming to an end" (May 8) reminds me of watching the Queen's coronation in 1953 as a five-year-old. My father had nearly finished building a 12-inch telly, and all the neighbours were invited round. My main recollection was of the Queen going round and round, getting fatter then thinner, as my father sat behind the telly with his screwdriver, tweaking the valves.

Happy days.
Elaine Yeo
Enfield, Middx

Daily Universal Register

UK: The House of Commons science, innovation and technology committee hears evidence on the governance of artificial intelligence.

Nature notes



A raspy jingle-jangle of fast birdsong reeled out from the hawthorn snarl. It was a whitethroat. You know it is high

spring when you hear your first whitethroat of the year. A moment later, the little bird lifted out of the scrub and, still singing, it rose like a juggler's ball, before sinking back into a neighbouring oak. This was the famous flight-song of the whitethroat — one of the great sights and sounds of the hedgerow. No wonder, that when the poet Robert Browning was far from home, he chose a whitethroat for his poem *Home Thoughts, from Abroad*, as one of his emblems of all that is wonderful about Britain in May. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Linda Evangelista, pictured, supermodel, 58; Dennis Bergkamp, footballer, Holland (1990–2000) and Arsenal (1995–2006), 54; Bono, singer, U2, *The Joshua Tree* (1987), 63; Barbara

Taylor Bradford, author, *A Woman of Substance* (1979), 90; Sir Bill Cash, Conservative MP for Stone, shadow attorney-general (2001–03), 83; Donovan, singer-songwriter, *Mellow Yellow* (1966), 77; Jonathan Edwards, commentator, triple jump world record holder and Olympic gold medallist (2000), 57; Henry Fambrough, singer, the Detroit Spinners, *I'll Be Around* (1972), 85; John Fredriksen, oil tanker and shipping tycoon, 79; Diarmuid Gavin, garden designer, Chelsea Flower Show gold medal (2011), 59; Sir Christopher Gent, chief executive, Vodafone (1997–2003), chairman, GlaxoSmith-Kline (2005–15), 75; Lucinda Lambton, writer, *Palaces for Pigs* (2011), photographer and broadcaster, 80; Dame Maureen Lipman, actress, *Educating Rita* (1983), 77; Chloë McCardel, endurance swimmer, holder of the record for the number of cross-Channel crossings (44), 38; David Mackenzie, film director, *Perfect Sense* (2011), 57; Dave Mason, singer-songwriter and guitarist, Traffic, *Feelin' Alright* (1968), 77; Anna Maxwell Martin, actress, *Bleak House* (2005), 46; Al Murray, comedian, 55; Ellen Ochoa, astronaut, director of the Johnson Space Center (2013–18), 65; Prof Edward Peck, vice-chancellor and president, Nottingham Trent University, 64; Sally Phillips, actress, *Smack the Pony* (1999–2003), 53; Miuccia Prada, fashion designer, 74; Roberto Quarta, chairman, Smith & Nephew (medical technology company), WPP Group (advertising company), 74; Jon Ronson, journalist and author, *The Men Who Stare at Goats* (2004), 56; Venetia Williams, racehorse trainer, 63; Debbie Wiseman, film and TV composer and conductor, *Wolf Hall* (2015), composer for King Charles III's coronation, 60.

On this day

In 1869 the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the US was marked with a golden spike to join the rails at Promontory, Utah.

The last word

"Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value." Albert Einstein, physicist, quoted in *Einstein and the Poet: In Search of the Cosmic Man* by William Hermanns (1983)



Primary Carers

The government's plans for new technology and an increased role for pharmacists can free up GP appointments. But it needs a plan to fix NHS staff shortages

If there was something familiar sounding about the government's announcement yesterday that it would make it possible for pharmacies to carry out some of the functions of GPs, that's because it was. This sensible and practical proposal has been much discussed as a way of reducing the burden of patient appointments on GPs for several years. The same is true of the announcement of new technology to enable GPs better to triage patients in the mornings and thereby avoid the so-called 8am scramble. This idea has been knocking around in various forms since 2016. What is different this time is that both proposals now come with the promise of money attached, including up to £650 million of extra funding for pharmacies and £250 million for a new cloud-based telephone answering system for GP surgeries. This is welcome.

Nonetheless, important details remain to be worked out. Under the government's primary care recovery plan, pharmacists will be allowed to prescribe antibiotics and antivirals for seven common ailments. These include sore throats, ear infections, urinary tract infections, sinusitis, impetigo, shingles and infected insect bites. They will also be allowed to prescribe oral contraceptives and carry out blood pressure checks. Pharmacists in Scotland and Wales carry out many of these

functions already. Ministers hope that this will free up one million GP appointments a year.

One challenge will be to ensure that the new money is targeted in a way that encourages community pharmacists to provide these services. The new money is certainly needed. Funding for pharmacies has been frozen for the past five years, even as business costs have soared due to rising inflation. That has led to the closure of many community pharmacists, with qualified staff choosing to work elsewhere in the health system. But it is important that any new funding formula does not create perverse incentives for the over-prescription of antibiotics. That could lead to increased antimicrobial resistance, making infections harder to treat as drugs become ineffective.

The promise of £240 million to enable GP practices to upgrade their telephone systems is another important part of the jigsaw to address the crisis in primary care. It seems extraordinary that some surgeries should still be using analogue phones that confront patients with an engaged tone when they are trying to book appointments. Under the new GP contract for 2023–24, which has already been imposed, practices are required to provide access to patients "at first contact" so that regardless of whether they contacted the surgery

online or by phone, they will know that day how their query will be managed. That should include an appointment the same day if the need is urgent.

Yet the reality is that neither of these measures on their own are going to move the dial significantly in terms of improving access to GP services. At best, the new powers for pharmacists will free up just 3 per cent of the one million appointments GPs carry out every day. And better telephone systems will not speed up patient access to doctors unless there are sufficient doctors available to see them. What is missing from the government's GP recovery plan is any detail on how it plans to tackle primary care workforce shortages, including measures to increase the number of full-time GP equivalents through effective recruitment and retention schemes.

That will clearly have to await the long-promised and much-anticipated NHS workforce plan that health leaders have said is imminent. This appears to have been held up by the Treasury, which wants to see pay disputes with doctors and nurses resolved before the government commits to a plan whose credibility hinges on fixing the crisis in recruitment and retention but which could have long-term implications for the cost of NHS staffing. That plan cannot come soon enough.

Elusive Victory

A scaled-back military parade in Moscow hints at Russia's failure in Ukraine

In happier times, the annual Victory Day parade in Moscow was the highlight of Vladimir Putin's public relations calendar. A chance for the president of the Russian Federation to bathe in the reflected glories of the Great Patriotic War against Hitler, and a showcase for his country's military might. But yesterday's event, marking the 78th anniversary of the end of the conflict that cost more than 20 million Soviet lives, was lacking in triumphalism. The war raging 600 miles to the south has produced no Stalingrad or Kursk, only bloody impasse and humiliation.

So, in place of victory over Ukraine, President Putin presented his people with the consolation prize of victimhood. Russia, he said in a ten-minute speech, was the victim of a globalist elite who had destroyed the Soviet Union, of terrorism and of a "new cult" of Nazism. The tragedy is that this preposterous analysis is still shared by all too many of his countrymen.

But the reality of Russia's predicament in Ukraine was there in the parade for those prepared to see. A key element of Victory Day was missing. The Immortal Regiment, a procession of

people carrying portraits of relatives killed in the Second World War, was cancelled. The reason was not hard to find. Photographs of the dead of 1941–1945 might have been replaced by those killed in Ukraine. Such dispiriting images could not be allowed to ruin the day, so the dead were banished from the scene. Such is Mr Putin's regard for the fallen.

There were other changes suggesting that the grinding, 14-month conflict is sapping Russian resources. Modern T-90 tanks, of which hundreds have been lost in Ukraine, were absent, a vintage T-34, of the type that swamped the Germans on the eastern front, standing in for them. Gone also was the traditional flypast, a showcase for Russian airpower. However, these absences can be interpreted in another way. A brash military display could have been regarded as frivolous by the nationalists Putin is anxious to appease. A reduced parade could suggest seriousness of purpose.

Whatever the truth, there is no doubt that the tensions stoked by Russia's stalled invasion. Drone attacks on the supposedly impregnable Kremlin last week and assassination attempts against pro-

Putin figures have dented faith in Russia's invulnerability. Meanwhile, Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner mercenary group, which is central to Russian operations around Bakhmut, is lacerating in his criticism of the Russian army. Accusing it of incompetence and cowardice, he claimed that one unit had fled en masse during the battle for the devastated Ukrainian town. Prigozhin's increasingly insubordinate stance must, for the time being, be tolerated. He is a hero of hardliners. But he surely cannot be tolerated forever.

Yet Russia's war economy has proved resilient. It has plugged its shortage of smart weapons by turning "dumb" air-dropped bombs into winged, guided ones, and it is believed to have successfully jammed the GPS signals guiding the US HIMARS rocket system. Kyiv's vaunted offensive has yet to materialise and its limited force of western armour means that losses sustained during the storming of thickening Russian defences cannot be replaced. The risk is that the West has given Ukraine enough to fend off defeat but not to win. For Putin, too, a decisive outcome appears remote. More than a year on, and victory is as elusive as ever.

Grin And Bare It

After years of wearing masks, the Japanese are being taught how to smile

1. Open your mouth.
2. Woah, not that far. You'll drool.
3. Try putting your teeth together.
4. Go floss. Come back and we'll start again.
5. Raise your cheeks. That's better.
6. Point to remember: don't do this at dogs.
7. Okay, you've now been doing this for too long. Getting a bit fixed and weird. Stop and restart.
8. But much less suddenly next time. People will be really alarmed.
9. Now bring in the eyes. They need to smile, too.
10. Actually, I don't know how you make your eyes smile. It just sort of happens.
11. Attempt a twinkle.
12. Hang on, are you about to hit me?
13. It's just, you look like a murderer now.
14. Try thinking a happy thought. Think of lovely bunnies, playing in a field.
15. I'm sorry, but what exactly are you doing to these bunnies?
16. Also, you've got a twitch starting up. An eyelid flutter. Take a breather.
17. Now, remember what we've learned. Mouth, teeth, cheeks, eyes.
18. I'm sorry, but whatever you're thinking about, it still really won't do.
19. I'm just not getting an affection vibe. More hate. Like you want an anvil to fall on my head.
20. Wait. Hang on for a moment there. You totally had it.
21. Right, new strategy. Try laughing. I'm assuming you can manage that one?
22. Okay never do that again.
23. Especially not in a lift.
24. Look, don't beat yourself up about this. Smiling isn't for everyone. Maybe you should put your mask back on.
25. Me? How do I do it?
26. Easy. I just remember I'm getting paid.

World

Putin uses ‘cheap’ victory parade to rail against West

Russia

Maxim Tucker

President Putin railed against the West as he oversaw a muted Victory Day parade stripped of three essential ingredients: tanks, aircraft and Russian success in Ukraine.

He used the annual address marking the defeat of Nazi Germany to make a series of accusations against western powers, claiming they had provoked conflict, sown hatred and destroyed family values, as he sought to make the case for his faltering war.

Hours after launching a new barrage of cruise missiles at Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, Putin accused the West of “unleashing war against Russia” after “forgetting who defeated the Nazis” and “creating a new cult of Nazism” through the destruction of Soviet memorials in eastern Europe.

He accused “globalist elites” of making the Ukrainian people “hostages to a state coup”, fostering anti-Russian nationalism and seeking the “disintegration of our country”.

In past years the annual parade was attended by a host of foreign presidents but this time Putin was accompanied only by the leaders of central Asia, Belarus and Armenia. “Today civilisation is once again at a turning point,” he said. “We have repulsed international terrorism, we will protect the inhabitants of Donbas, we will ensure our security.”

Speaking for less than ten minutes, on a podium surrounded by decorated veterans from previous conflicts as well as the present one, he said that Russia was “proud of the participants of the special military operation” — despite their failure to take Bakhmut in time for the parade, and mounting evidence that his troops have tortured, raped and plundered their way through Ukraine.

Professor Mark Galeotti, of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at UCL, was dismissive of the event. “Putin didn’t say much because



President Putin was joined by fewer foreign leaders for this year's parade

he didn't have anything new to say,” he suggested. “Ordinary Russians saw a small, obviously cheapened parade with a single Second World War tank and no flypast. There was also much less of a crowd watching the parade pass by, perhaps knowing it could be their husband, brother or son they would be commemorating next year. He didn't give any reason for hope.”

Parades went ahead in both Moscow and St Petersburg but were cancelled in at least 21 other cities over security concerns. Taxi ride-hailing applications were banned in the centre of Moscow as GPS jammers were switched on.

During the 47-minute procession a solitary T-34 tank rolled through Red Square, followed by foot soldiers, infantry vehicles and missile launchers. No new armour was on display.

Russia has lost at least 2,000 tanks in Ukraine, according to open source intelligence analysts, but the true number is likely to be far higher and factories have struggled to replace them.

“This was half the size of the usual May Day parades, because those tanks are being used in Ukraine or have been destroyed,” said James Nixey, director of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House. “Russians are worried about the Ukrainian counteroffensive. They don't know when or where it's going to come and they don't have the manpower to take or hold territory.”

“Once you've hollowed out the rural communities, the reserves, the prisons, the immigrants, then you need to go for the metropolitan elite, with all the uproar that entails.”

Moscow has already been on heightened alert after a drone exploded over the Kremlin last week, purportedly targeting Putin. That came after a wave of other drone and sabotage strikes inside Russian territory, damaging infrastructure vital to the war effort and targeting vocal supporters of the war.

“The decisive battle for the fate of our motherland became domestic, popular and sacred,” Putin said, although he made no mention of the attacks, Russian setbacks in Ukraine or the expected counteroffensive.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner mercenary group, issued his own expletive-laden half-hour video address via Telegram while Putin was speaking, saying that Russia did not deserve to celebrate any recent victories, only historic ones. He appeared furious at the military hardware on display in Red Square while his troops continue to fight house-to-house with Ukrainian forces in Bakhmut.

“We have everything there on TV, but the Ukrainian offensive will be on the ground,” he said. “Happy Victory Day to our grandfathers, and how we celebrate it is a big question. You just need to remember about them and not f***ing about on Red Square.”

Pallid Putin raises spectre of a forever war, Roger Boyes, page 24
Scaled-back parade hints at Russia's failure, leading article, page 27



Troops paraded in Red Square to mark Victory Day, also celebrated in Vladivostok,



Biden warns of cuts to veterans' funding in standoff over debt

United States

David Charter Washington

President Biden is warning of cuts to veterans' funding and resources to fight drug smuggling as Republicans refuse to drop demands for budget cuts in exchange for raising the \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit.

As talks in Washington ended in stalemate Biden targeted his message of cuts to the Republican Party's most vulnerable elected members, so putting pressure on its nine-seat majority in the House of Representatives.

The annual vote to settle on higher borrowing to meet agreed commit-

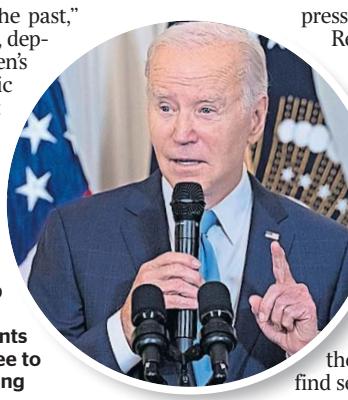
ments was once considered a formality but has been seized on by Republicans, who regained the majority in the House last November, as an opportunity to push for future budget cuts. The White House rejects this but has offered to discuss cuts in parallel with an unconditional rise in the borrowing limit.

It last went down to the wire in 2011 when a Republican-controlled House relented hours before President Obama faced defaulting on debt repayments in a battle that triggered a stock market panic and a rare US credit rating downgrade. “Our plan is for Congress to act to address the debt limit without conditions, just like they have

done 78 times in the past,” Bharat Ramamurti, deputy director of Biden's National Economic Council, said. “Just like they did three times under President Trump.”

Biden, 80, a veteran of the 2011 showdown when he was vice-president, is stepping up

President Biden wants Republicans to agree to lift the US debt ceiling



pressure on 18 swing-district Republicans to try to dissolve the majority backing Kevin McCarthy, the House Speaker. After they held their first face-to-face talks at the White House since February 1, McCarthy said: “Nothing has changed since then ... I ask the president this simple question: does he not believe there's no place we could find sensible savings?”

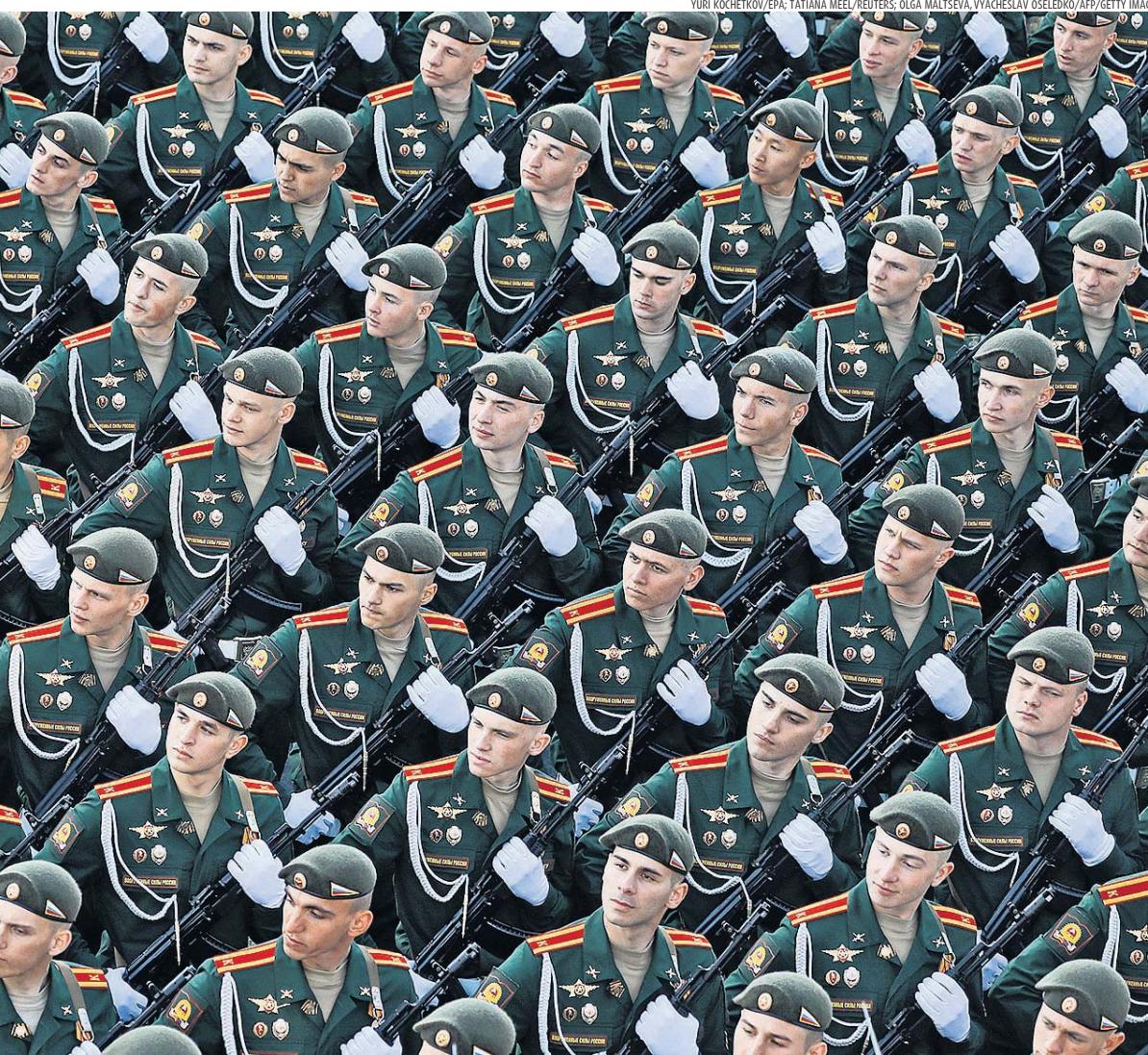
Biden is expected to highlight claims that the Republican cuts could mean 22 per cent less funding for veterans' benefits, and for fighting crime such as the fentanyl smuggling crisis, in a speech in the Hudson River Valley in New York state. Biden won the district in 2020 but it elected a Republican, Mike Lawler, to the House by less than one percentage point in November's midterm elections.

McCarthy, 58, said it was a “lie” that he would cut veterans' funding. He believes voters will reward the Republicans for trying to reduce the national deficit by \$4.8 trillion. His members passed a bill in the House last month to

Violent clashes after Imran Khan arrest
Page 30



China's secret spacecraft lands after nine months
Page 32



St Petersburg and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, but there were no displays of the modern weaponry required for the war in Ukraine

mountain

raise the debt limit by \$1.5 trillion while reducing funding for federal agencies to 2022 fiscal year levels and limiting growth in government spending to 1 per cent per year. "We're the only ones to pass a plan," McCarthy said.

Janet Yellen, the Treasury secretary, has said the US could start to miss bond repayments as soon as June 1. The Bipartisan Policy Center, a think tank, has put the "X-date" at between early June and early August. "If a solution is not reached before June, policymakers may be playing daily Russian roulette with the full faith and credit of the United States," Shai Akabas, BPC director of economic policy, said.

Japanese learn how to smile again as Covid era ends

Japan

Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo

Japanese people are taking lessons in smiling after losing the knack during the three-year pandemic in which most hid their faces behind surgical masks.

This week Japan finally declared an end to coronavirus restrictions — but most people are still covering their faces in public, even when outside. Having concealed their mouths for so long, some believe that they have lost the ability to smile convincingly and are turning to professionals for help.

"I've heard from people who say that even if they're able to remove their

masks, they don't want to show the bottom half of their faces, or that they don't know how to smile any more," said Miho Kitano, a "smile trainer" whose company, the Smile Facial Muscle Association, has enjoyed a surge in business.

"Some say that they see more wrinkles around their eyes after using them more to smile, or they feel like their face is drooping because they haven't been using it as much as before."

Kitano invites her students to perform exercises such as biting on a straw and elevating their cheek muscles to expose their upper teeth.

"I meet many people who say they

Militant leaders killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza

Israel

Anshel Pfeffer, Richard Spencer

Pre-dawn Israeli airstrikes on Gaza yesterday killed three leaders of the militant faction Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), their wives and children and other civilians.

The strikes, carried out by 40 jets over two hours, were described as "pre-emptive" — an unusual escalation by Israel, which normally prefers to attack in retaliation for rocket fire or other assaults on its territory. By mid-morning the number of dead stood at 13, including four children and at least four female civilians, according to Palestinian health officials in the territory.

The PIJ identified its dead as Jihad Ghannam, Khalil al-Bahtini and Tareq Izzeldeen and vowed to avenge them. Ghannam is thought to have been a senior military operative and secretary of the group's military council. Izzeldeen was the liaison between the group in Gaza and on the West Bank, while Bahtini led the faction in northern Gaza. The three men's wives and at least three of their children were believed to be among the dead, as well as Dr Jamal Khaswan, a hospital director in Gaza, and his wife and son. A further 20 people were injured.

Israel's military spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, said Izzeldeen had been working on transferring "improvised rocket capabilities to the West Bank".

According to military sources, the strikes were authorised by the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, on Friday and were carried out once the targets' positions were known and the weather permitted. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said 40 jets fired at targets in Gaza including "military compounds", ten weapons dumps and arms manufacturing sites. It acknowledged the possibility of "collateral damage".

At least two people were killed later in an Israeli drone strike on Khan Younis, Gaza.

Residents of southern Israel braced themselves for retaliatory attacks, and those within 25 miles of the Gaza border were advised to stay near bomb shelters. "The crime will not pass unpunished," the PIJ said. "The bom-

bardment will be met by bombardment."

Conflict has been running between Israel and the PIJ and associated groups all year, mainly on the West Bank. Raids on West Bank towns by the Israeli army have killed scores of militants but also a number of civilians; militant groups including Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon to the north have directed rocket attacks on Israeli towns and shot civilians, among them three members of a British-Israeli family, Lucy Dee, 48, and her daughters Maia, 20, and Rina, 15, last month.

The old city of Nablus has become a particular target for the IDF as the base of a PIJ offshoot called Lion's Den. Israeli forces conducted a raid on Nablus and other parts of the West Bank in the hours after the Gaza attacks. They said they had detained eight wanted men. A 14-year-old boy was shot in the leg as the troops reacted to local men throwing stones and explosives at them.

The raids followed the death of a PIJ political leader, Khader Adwan, after an 87-day hunger strike in an Israeli prison prompted a barrage of rocket fire from Gaza. Israeli officials emphasised that only PIJ members involved in recent attacks on Israel had been targeted in the latest attack and that Israel had not gone after members of Hamas, the group that controls Gaza. Two Hamas fighters who shot the Dees were killed in an Israeli raid on Nablus last week.

Pro-Hamas and PIJ activists accused Netanyahu of ordering the raids to distract attention from a political crisis spawned by his proposed reforms of the judiciary. These have been put on hold after widespread protests, with critics denouncing them as undemocratic.

Far-right members of Netanyahu's government mounted a boycott of cabinet meetings last week in protest against the "weak response" to rocket fire from Gaza. Itamar Ben-Gvir, the national security minister, said yesterday that he was dropping his boycott.

A total of 105 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in east Jerusalem and the West Bank this year, about half of them militants or alleged attackers, according to the Associated Press. At least 20 people have died in Palestinian attacks on Israel over the same period.

though, Japan had a distinct attitude towards smiling. In feudal times, shiny white teeth were regarded as disgusting and women used to blacken them to appear more attractive.

"Culturally, smiling and doing so with teeth hasn't always been appropriate in Japan, and you can speak Japanese without moving your mouth too much," said Keiko Kawano, a coach who has taught 4,000 people to smile and who runs the Smile Education Trainer Association. "Then, when the pandemic started, it felt as if smiling was just decreasing. There was just this feeling of disappointment."

Grin and bare it, leading article, page 27

World



Imran Khan loyalists clash with police after arrest

Pakistan

Charlie Faulkner

Violent protests broke out across Pakistan yesterday after Imran Khan, the former prime minister, was arrested by the military during a court appearance.

The arrest marks a dramatic escalation of political tensions that has pitted Khan, ousted after a no-confidence vote in April last year, against the country's powerful army.

At least one person was killed when protesters clashed with soldiers in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province. Dozens across the country were injured. Khan's party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), called for nationwide protests.

Supporters stormed a commander's residence in Lahore and the Pakistan Army headquarters in Rawalpindi.

"There are thousands and thousands of people," Munaza Hassan, 63, a PTI official, said. She added that the crowd had entered the commander's house,

despite a cordon being placed around the property. "There has been lots of tear gas used by the police despite many women and children being here," Hassan said. "We're not moving until Imran Khan is released."

At least 60 people were arrested in Islamabad, the capital city, while 23 were held in Karachi.

Video footage shared by the PTI showed protesters in Lahore smashing windows, furniture and a television set in the commander's house. Later footage circulated online showed the property on fire. Another video showed a Radio Pakistan building in Peshawar in flames.

Police were reported to be using live ammunition to disperse crowds in Rawalpindi, Peshawar and elsewhere.

In one video, protesters were shown dragging an unconscious man away from officers in Faisalabad as gun shots rang out. Other footage showed police swinging batons at demonstrators in the port city of Karachi. Tear gas was



Imran Khan's arrest in Islamabad led to his followers protesting in Lahore and Radio Pakistan offices in Peshawar going up in flames

fired to disperse hundreds of Khan's supporters who had blocked a key road.

Internet service was suspended in Islamabad and other cities, while access to social media was restricted.

Rana Sanaullah Khan, the interior minister, said: "Imran Khan has been arrested because he was being sought in a graft case."

He claimed that Khan had cost the treasury millions of dollars while in office through illegal land purchases from a business tycoon. Khan denies

the allegations and insists that the case against him is politically motivated.

He was taken to Rawalpindi, the garrison city near Islamabad, where he was to be questioned by the National Accountability Bureau, Pakistan's anti-corruption agency.

Raoof Hasan, a political strategist, told the Al Jazeera news agency that the arrest was "blatant interference in the judicial affairs by the powers that be". He added: "We are completely in

the dark. He was virtually abducted from the court of law."

Khan, the former Pakistan cricket captain who walks with a limp after being shot in an assassination attempt last year, was hustled into an armoured car by dozens of paramilitary rangers in the Islamabad High Court.

"They beat him and dragged him out," Ali Bukhari, a PTI lawyer, said. The Islamabad police denied using excessive force.

Khan's arrest came a day after he was warned against making "baseless allegations" when he again accused Major General Faisal Naseer, a special operations expert, of plotting to kill him.

Police tried to detain Khan at his home in Lahore, based on a court order in a different case. Dozens of people were injured in the subsequent clashes and he was not arrested.

Pakistan's military backed Khan's rise to power in 2018 but withdrew its support before a vote of confidence last year. Relations have continued to sour since.

PTI party officials yesterday released a pre-recorded video from last year in which Khan urged supporters to come out in support of "true freedom".

Zeeshan Salahuddin, a political analyst at the Tabadlab think tank, based in Islamabad, said that the arrest showed the desperation of the political and military elite in the face of Khan's rising popularity.

"Imran is for all intents and purposes the most popular leader this country has ever seen," Salahuddin said. "For a lot of people in the country, Imran being arrested is confirmation that he is speaking the truth, that he is on the right side of history. His popularity is going to soar and Imran and his team are smart enough to capitalise on that."

Khan, 70, has claimed that his removal from power last year was illegal and part of a western conspiracy. He has been demanding early elections while campaigning against the government of Shahbaz Sharif, his successor as prime minister.

Sharif, whose government is facing a spiraling economic downturn, is struggling to help his country recover from the devastating floods last year that killed hundreds and caused

\$30 billion in damages. He has criticised Khan for his attacks on the military. He tweeted after the arrest: "Let this be abundantly clear that you, as former prime minister, currently on trial for corruption, are claiming legitimacy to overturn the legal and political system."

Chinese diplomat expelled over 'threats'

Canada

Didi Tang Beijing

A Chinese diplomat has been expelled from Canada for trying to intimidate an MP critical of Beijing's treatment of Uighur Muslims.

Zhao Wei, based in Toronto, was declared persona non grata over allegations that he had threatened and gathered information on Michael Chong, a Conservative politician.

In a tit-for-tat response, China expelled a Canadian diplomat in Shanghai, Jennifer Lynn Lalonde, and accused Justin Trudeau's government of souring ties. A statement from the Chinese embassy in Canada accused Ottawa of "sabotaging" bilateral relations and called for it to "step back from the brink".

Mélanie Joly, Canada's foreign minis-

ter, had earlier condemned Zhao for gathering information about Chong and his extended family in Hong Kong, probably to "make an example" of him and deter others from criticising the Chinese government. "We will not tolerate any form of foreign interference in our internal affairs," Joly said. "Diplomats in Canada have been warned that if they engage in this type of behaviour, they will be sent home."

In its response, the Chinese embassy in Canada said the decision by Ottawa to expel Zhao was "based on rumours of the so-called China interference hyped up by some politicians and media".

"This has seriously violated international law, basic norms governing international relations and the related bilateral agreements, and sabotaged China-Canada relations," the embassy's statement read. "The Chinese side

strongly condemns and firmly opposes this and has lodged stern protest with the Canadian side."

The expulsion was confirmed after Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper, citing a 2021 intelligence report, revealed that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service had information that China was looking at ways to intimidate Chong. The MP had angered Beijing by sponsoring a parliamentary motion to declare China's treatment of the Uighur minority as genocide.

Diplomatic ties between Ottawa and Beijing have been strained since 2018 when Canada detained an executive of Huawei, the Chinese telecommunications giant, and China reacted by arresting two Canadians and charging them with spying. Both Canadians were released in 2021 when the Chinese executive was freed.

Generals kill 168 unarmed villagers with vacuum bomb

Myanmar

Richard Lloyd Parry Asia Editor

The Myanmar junta used a "vacuum bomb" on resistance fighters last month in a devastating attack denounced by human rights activists as a war crime.

At least 168 people, including children, were killed when fighter jets and helicopter gunships attacked a village in the Sagaing region, near Mandalay in central Myanmar, on April 11. Experts believe a thermobaric weapon was dropped. A helicopter gunship then flew overhead mowing down survivors.

The Myanmar military's use of a weapon designed to cause maximum deaths on an area crowded with civilians shows flagrant disregard for

human life," said Elaine Pearson, a spokeswoman for Human Rights Watch (HRW). "Foreign governments need to cut off the junta's funding, arms and jet fuel to deter further atrocities."

The attack on Kanbalu township is one of the deadliest incidents in the struggle between the junta and supporters of the democratically elected government it drove from power in a coup in 2021.

From photographs of the victims HRW has concluded that their injuries were caused by a thermobaric weapon, which creates an aerosol made up of fuel and tiny metal particles. A second explosion ignites that cloud, creating a fireball and an enormously powerful shockwave.

Trump ‘became a witness against himself’ during sexual abuse trial

United States

Will Pavia, David Charter

Donald Trump described a jury's verdict that he sexually abused the journalist E Jean Carroll as "a disgrace" and his campaign promised to launch an appeal.

The former president claimed that the outcome of a two-week trial in a federal courthouse in Manhattan was part of a "political endeavour" targeting him because he was "now an overwhelming frontrunner to be once again elected President of the United States."

He also claimed that he had "absolutely no idea who this woman is" in a post on his social media platform. He said the verdict was "a continuation of the greatest witch hunt of all time".

A spokesman for his campaign said that Trump would appeal against the jury's \$5 million award to Carroll. He will not have to pay as long as the appeal is in process.

For her part, Carroll, 79, said the verdict was a victory "not just for me but for every woman who has suffered because she was not believed" in a statement released a few hours after she emerged from the courtroom.

She had attended the trial every day and testified for three days, for two of which she was cross-examined by Trump's lawyer Joseph Tacopina, who sought to suggest that she had made up her claims based on the plot an episode of the television show *Law & Order*.

Her lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, said in a statement that her client "has never wavered in her strength, courage and determination to seek justice. Donald Trump, on the other hand, failed to even show up in court. This is a victory not only for E Jean Carroll but for democracy itself and for all survivors everywhere."

Carroll first went public with an allegation of rape against Trump in 2019, in an excerpt from a book she was publishing that was printed in New York Magazine. She appeared in a dark Donna Karan dress coat, her arms folded. "This is what I was wearing 23 years ago when Donald Trump attacked me in a Bergdorf Goodman dressing room," said the headline on the magazine's cover.

Carroll recalled bumping into Trump at the New York department store, in the spring of 1996. She said that what had begun as wonderful encounter, and



E Jean Carroll leaves court in New York after the jury's verdict. The deposition by Donald Trump, pictured with Carroll, left, in the 1980s, was described as "damaging"

a fabulous story to tell her friends, had turned violent when Trump forced her into a changing room in the lingerie section and raped her. She said that she fought him off and fled the store and told two friends about it at the time.

"Why haven't I 'come forward' before now?" she wrote. "Receiving death threats, being driven from my home, being dismissed, being dragged through the mud, and joining the 15 women who've come forward with credible stories about how the man grabbed, badgered, belittled, mauled, molested and assaulted them, only to see the man turn around, threaten and attack them, never sounded like much fun." She added: "Also, I am a coward."

Carroll said that she was persuaded to come forward by the #MeToo movement, which was triggered by allegations against the film producer Harvey Weinstein, and a broader reckoning that toppled a series of powerful men.

Trump had brushed off allegations from other women and even mocked them before crowds of jeering supporters. "I run the risk of making him more popular by revealing what he did," she wrote. "His admirers can't get enough of hearing that he's rich enough, lusty enough and powerful enough to be sued by and to pay off every splashy porn star or Playboy Playmate who comes forward."

In response to her allegations, Trump gave an interview from the Oval Office. "I'll say it with great respect: Number one, she's not my type," he said. "Number two, it never happened."

Carroll, a journalist and an advice columnist for Elle Magazine, sued Trump for defamation. That case was tied up on appeal. But last year she sued him again under a New York state law that gave victims of historical sexual abuse a window of time in which to seek redress through the courts. Her lawyers

took a deposition from Trump at his Mar-a-Lago home on October 14 last year, a month before he announced his renewed bid for the presidency.

In it Trump acknowledged claiming that her story was a hoax, but also using the same term to describe all manner of political investigations he had faced.

Shown a photograph of himself and his first wife Ivana meeting Carroll in 1987, Trump misidentified her as Marla Maples, the woman with whom he conducted a highly publicised affair and eventually married. "I take it the three women you married are all your type?" Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, asked. "Yeah," he replied.

Kaplan also made Trump listen to the infamous 2005 recording of him talking to the television presenter Billy Bush, saying that he often kissed or grabbed women by the crotch, adding: "When you're a star they let you do it." Asked about it, Trump said: "Histori-

cally, that's true, with stars. If you look over the last million years, I guess that's been largely true not always but largely true, unfortunately or fortunately."

Mitchell Epner, a lawyer with Rotenberg Lipman Rich, who has followed the case closely, said that the deposition was a disaster for Trump's prospects in court. "Donald Trump did infinitely more damage to himself in that deposition than Prince Andrew did in his interview by the BBC," he said.

Kaplan told jurors that Trump, in his deposition and in the recording, was in effect serving as a witness against himself.

In less than three hours, the jury returned with its verdict. Though they did not conclude that she had proven "by a preponderance of evidence" that Trump had raped her, they did believe that "Mr Trump sexually abused Ms Carroll" and found him liable for \$5 million in damages.

Our cider has come of age, say French

France

Adam Sage Paris

French connoisseurs have long dismissed cider as a downmarket drink that is to be knocked back without a second thought.

Lovers of fermented apple juice are being told now to age their best bottles, as they would a fine wine from Burgundy or Bordeaux. The advice comes as France's first vintage ciders are being sent to customers in a move that could revolutionise its image.

The ciders are made with apples picked in 2020 and aged for more than two years in the cellars of producers in the Cotentin area of Normandy.

Last year's vintage will be delivered in the spring of 2025, with prices ranging from €9.50 to €13.50 a bottle. While some buyers might consider 30 months

a long time to wait for a bottle of cider, the nine producers involved in the scheme say it is not long enough. They urge customers to keep their bottles for up to 20 years before opening them.

"They gain in depth and finesse," Dominique Hutin, a wine critic who lives in the Cotentin, said. He added that the "groundbreaking" scheme came as interest in craft ciders was rising. Even some winemakers were trying to ferment their apple juice. "But they are discovering it is a lot harder to make cider than wine," Hutin said.

In a sign of changing perceptions, France's finest sommeliers recently travelled to the Cotentin to try out some of the local ciders, he said.

Hutin added that the labels on cider bottles now resembled those on wine bottles, mentioning components such as the terroir and geology. Hutin, who

has 4,000 bottles of wine in his cellar and 450 bottles of cider, said that the finest Cotentin ciders went well with oysters, Normandy cheese, white meat and sushi. "But if they have aged for ten years, they go better with more refined dishes, like lobster," he added.

Some producers understood the potential of vintage cider, while others still had to be convinced. "I got one producer to taste some. He said: 'That's good, what is it?' I said: 'It's your own cider that I kept in my cellar for four years.'

The French initiative was met with scepticism, however, at Sheppy's, which makes craft ciders in Somerset. Matthew Hill, the marketing manager, said that old cider was "an acquired taste".

He added that Sheppy's had recently opened a 40-year-old bottle, which was drinkable but as dark as sherry.

Bear on death row 'proved innocent' by bite marks

Italy

Tom Kington Rome

The killing of a jogger in the Alps by a brown bear has turned into a murder mystery after an animal rights group claimed that authorities had captured the wrong culprit.

Maurizio Fugatti, president of the province of Trentino, is seeking to cull a female bear known as JJ4 after its DNA was found on the body of Andrea Papi, who was fatally mauled while jogging in Caldes last month.

Leal, the Italian animal rights association, said a post-mortem examination on Papi revealed teeth marks that could only have been left by a male bear. "Experts we appointed to study

the autopsy said the distance between the bear's canine teeth was 8cm to 8.5cm. That's like a fingerprint — it had to be a male since the distance is less for females," Aurora Loprete, a lawyer who is working with Leal, said.

Gian Marco Prampolini, the president of Leal, said: "An innocent bear faces a death sentence."

Leal claimed that since the bears in Trentino were all closely related, the DNA testing of saliva found on Papi's body could have confused one bear for another. But a source at the provincial authority in the city of Trento said the DNA test, conducted by a private laboratory, was correct. "There is no room for doubt, it's science." A court is set to rule on the fate of JJ4 this month.

World

China's secret spacecraft lands after nine months

China

Didi Tang Beijing

A Chinese spacecraft has returned to Earth after more than nine months in orbit, marking a breakthrough in the country's research into reusable technology, state media reports.

No footage has been released of the vehicle's landing or its launch last August from the Jiuquan satellite site in the Gobi desert. State media said only that it returned to its designated location. Scientists said the same spacecraft spent two days in orbit in September 2020.

Huang Zhicheng, an aerospace scientist, told *The Paper*, a state-run news site, that the 276-day mission was an experiment in which a reusable spacecraft spent the longest time in orbit, carried out the most complex tasks and had the highest technical difficulties.

Huang said that the experiments included shifting the vehicle's orbit, testing heat protection, telecommunications and navigation and operating with payloads.

It has been speculated that China may be developing an advanced

spacecraft similar to the X-37B, the US Space Force's reusable "space plane", which resembles a smaller unmanned version of the retired space shuttle.

China says that its space technology is aimed at providing a more convenient and economical way to carry out peaceful missions.

"This is another milestone in our country's space transportation system development," an unnamed expert told *The Paper*. "It shows that our country has preliminarily mastered the space technology that a very few countries in the world have. It will meet our country's strategic needs and its significance is huge."

China has been developing a manned reusable spacecraft. The one that returned on Monday is unlikely, however, to be able to carry a pilot or crew.

Space News, a website based in the United States, said that the Chinese spacecraft probably landed at the Lop Nur military base in the far west region of Xinjiang.

Though China is a newcomer in space exploration, it is planning a manned lunar landing by 2030.



Cover up Jane Fonda, 85, exhibited her playful side at the New York premiere of her new film *Book Club: The Next Chapter*

T TIMES Travel Offers

WALKING IN

Northern Cyprus

Times readers
save £100 on
any Exodus trip
using promo
code Times100*



North Cyprus remains a hidden gem of the Mediterranean, with an abundance of archaeological remains from many civilisations that inhabited the island over the centuries.

With superb walking through areas teeming with flowers and wildlife, and the relaxed local Turkish Cypriot culture, this is a walking and sightseeing tour not to be missed. Most days involve some driving and sightseeing in addition to the walks. The walking is seldom too demanding, although some of the terrain is a bit rocky underfoot. Some of the paths are quite narrow and undulating, and there are some sections which involve some scrambling over larger rocks and boulders. There are plenty of opportunities for exploration in and around some of the area's ruins and castles.

Our Trusted Partner

e exodus travels

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,079*
per person

Departures
May 2023 to
December 2024

Price Includes

- ✓ Seven nights four-star stay at the Hotel Pia Bella (or similar), all rooms en suite
- ✓ Five days centre-based walking
- ✓ All breakfasts, five lunches
- ✓ All accommodation
- ✓ All transport and listed activities
- ✓ Tour leader throughout
- ✓ Flights from London

CALL TODAY ON
0808 258 3864
QUOTE TIMES100
thetimes.co.uk/northcyprus

* Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Price is flight inclusive. Additional dates may be available; please call for details. Offer subject to availability and prices may fluctuate. Prices are correct at time of publication, and subject to confirmation at time of booking. *Quote TIMES100 to be eligible for the £100pp discount, included in the price above. 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



Travel with confidence

Sudan presidential palace blown up in military strike

Sudan

Fred Harter Port Sudan
Jane Flanagan

The presidential palace at the centre of fierce fighting between Sudan's warring military leaders has been destroyed in an airstrike, according to the country's paramilitary unit.

The Rapid Support Forces have held the compound since April 15, when tensions between the country's two most powerful figures exploded into warfare and turned the capital into a battleground.

In a statement last night the RSF said the colonial-era building — where the famed British Army officer Gordon of Khartoum was killed during the colonial era — had been devastated by missiles launched by air force fighter jets. They pledged an appropriate response".

Residents living near the sprawling complex, featured on stamps and bank notes, have been caught up in the clashes between forces loyal to General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Sudan's de-facto leader since a coup in 2019, and the RSF's warlord leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

The palace attack is expected to stall talks between their envoys, who are meeting in neighbouring Saudi



The presidential palace in Khartoum has been at the centre of the fight

Arabia to discuss a truce to allow humanitarian organisations to reach those in need.

Exact figures have been impossible to determine, but hundreds of people are believed to have been killed and thousands wounded since fighting broke out, with aid supplies disrupted and 115,000 refugees fleeing into neighbouring states.

Erladi Hamdan, 44, an architectural engineer from Edinburgh, told *The Times* that Foreign Office officials informed him he could only board an RAF plane in Port Sudan if he left behind his pregnant wife and five children, all of whom are Sudanese. "They

said, 'If you want to come alone there is no problem, but you cannot take anybody else, not even your child-

ren,'" Hamdan said. "They just took people with the British passport."

British government flights out of the country for UK passport holders ended last week. Saudi Arabia and other countries, including the United States, are still evacuating people from Port Sudan's dockside.

Hamdan's wife is recovering from breast cancer and his children are traumatised after being caught up in the fighting in Khartoum. As Hamdan spoke to *The Times*, his 10-year-old son could be heard crying out in the background. "He's talking about the war in his sleep," Hamdan said. "He heard a lot of gunshots and saw a lot of things a kid his age shouldn't see."

The family are camping in a half-built call centre owned by a friend. Before arriving in Port Sudan, they travelled twice to the Wadi Seidna airstrip, another site where the RAF had been staging evacuation flights.

On the second trip, Hamdan said he watched "five or six flights come and go" as officials refused to take his family. He returned to his home to find it had been looted.

"I don't know what to do," he said. "As a British citizen, I can go anywhere if there is a ticket. But I cannot leave my wife and children behind."

Kenyan cult victims had missing organs

Kenya

Jane Flanagan Africa Correspondent

Members of a religious cult who starved themselves to death could have been victims of an organ-trafficking ring, autopsies have indicated.

Police have recovered 112 bodies, most of them children, from 30 sites in Kenya since the arrest last month of a taxi driver-turned-pastor who is alleged to have incited his followers to fast "to meet Jesus".

Paul Nthunge Mackenzie, who set

up the Good News International Church in 2003, turned himself into police after the first bodies were unearthed in a remote forest 50 miles north of Malindi, a tourist town on the coast of the Indian Ocean.

"Post-mortem reports have established missing organs in some of the bodies of victims who have been exhumed," Martin Munene, a senior police inspector, said. "It is believed that trade on human body organs has been well co-ordinated, involving several players. It is suspected that

more bodies may be still buried in the expansive land covering more than 1,000 acres."

Police also arrested Ezekiel Odero, a televangelist, who is accused of receiving cash from Mackenzie's followers after they sold property at the cult leader's bidding. Mackenzie is facing charges that include terrorism and child trafficking. He and Odero have denied wrongdoing.

The World Health Organisation has estimated that about 10,000 organs are traded illegally every year.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
7,764.09 (-14.29) ▼

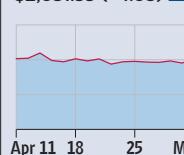


Dow Jones
33,561.81 (-56.88) ▼



COMMODITIES

Gold
\$2,031.39 (+4.05) ▲

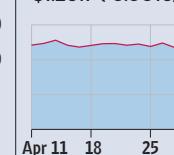


Brent crude (6pm)
\$75.86 (-0.96) ▼



CURRENCIES

£/\$
\$1.2617 (-0.0016) ▼



€/€
€1.1520 (+0.0057) ▲



Gas prices could treble by next winter, Goldman Sachs warns

Martin Strydom

European gas prices could rise in the second half of this year and nearly treble from current levels in the winter, according to Goldman Sachs.

Analysts at the US investment bank said that lower than expected prices in recent months following a mild winter could make European households more likely to increase their gas usage. Goldman expects a rebound

in demand as households respond to lower prices by using more gas.

This increase in usage, combined with greater demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG) elsewhere in the world and "winter weather risk", could push wholesale gas prices to above €100 per megawatt-hour.

Gas prices currently stand at about €36 per megawatt-hour. They have fallen sharply in recent months, leaving gas stocks in the European Union and

Britain at a high as the winter heating season comes to an end.

On March 1, stocks amounted to a seasonal record of 685 terawatt hours (TWh), and storage was almost 61 per cent full, data from Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) showed. Gas storage inventory is far above the 39 per cent seasonal average for the past decade.

April data showed lower than expected European gas demand in northwestern Europe was driven by

weak end-user demand and weak pipeline exports to southern Europe.

"While this lower than expected rebound in European gas demand buys Europe more time, it doesn't solve the market deficit we see lending support to prices next winter and in summer 2024," Goldman said.

"Even if industrial demand remains sluggish this summer, this is not a guarantee that storage will be comfortable throughout winter, as there is only

so much capacity to store gas ahead of heating season."

Higher gas prices would add to the pain for British and European households, which have suffered from a squeeze on living standards as a result of prices for energy and food. It would also have the effect of bolstering Russia's finances.

Russia supplied nearly a quarter of EU gas imports from January to November 2022, according to EU data.

Ryanair in \$40bn deal with Boeing

Airline to buy 300-strong fleet of Max-10s

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Ryanair has placed the biggest aircraft order in its 30-year history — up to 300 Boeing short-haul planes — as it revealed plans to carry 300 million passengers a year within a decade.

Europe's largest carrier signed a deal with the US aircraft manufacturer yesterday to take delivery of 150 Boeing 737 Max-10 aircraft, which can carry 228 passengers — a fifth more than the 737s that currently make up most of Ryanair's 540-strong fleet — and will operate with one-fifth lower fuel burn.

The Dublin-based airline has signed options to acquire another 150 and envisages that all 300 planes, which have yet to be certified by US authorities, will be delivered between 2027 and 2033.

Shares in the €18 billion airline rose 3.6 per cent to close at €15.66.

The order has a notional value of \$40 billion for the aircraft, which have a list price of about \$135 million or £105 million each.

However, Michael O'Leary, Ryanair's chief executive, indicated that he had won a discount from Boeing — unspecified although likely to be significant — as a result of the size of the order.

The announcement laid to rest speculation that relations between the carrier and the aircraft manufacturer have been strained, not least over the late delivery of 210 of the current generation of 197-seater Boeing 737 Max aircraft ordered by Ryanair.

Grounded by two fatal crashes and

blighted by regulatory and pandemic-related supply chain issues, the first 50 of those 737 Max aircraft, due four years ago, are entering service with Ryanair only this summer season, with a handful of those not due until July.

The new aircraft will take Ryanair's expected annual passenger volumes to 300 million by 2033-34 compared with the 185 million it expects to fly in its current financial year.

That will also see Ryanair's workforce increase by about 50 per cent given the need to recruit another 10,000 cabin crew, pilots, engineers and other airline workers.

The current delivery run of Max aircraft to Ryanair is due to end in 2025 and O'Leary said he envisages an 18-month hiatus before the Max-10s start arriving so the airline can harvest enough cash to ensure most of the new order is self-financed. About 150 older Boeing aircraft will be retired as the deliveries of the Max-10 start.

Dave Calhoun, chief executive of Boeing, admitted to "squabbles" over the years with O'Leary but called the relationship between the two companies "one of the most productive in commercial aviation history".

O'Leary said he expected that the job creation will come in the European territories where Ryanair already has a dominant position, which would include Britain and Ireland.

"These new larger, more efficient, greener aircraft will drive further unit cost savings which will be passed on to passengers in lower air fares," he said.



Note of discord Quarterly profits at Warner Music Group, whose artists include Ed Sheeran, fell 63 per cent to \$34 million, following charges linked to the layoff of about 270 workers. The shares closed down 9.6 per cent, or \$2.73, at \$25.76

Staff 'quit Asos in protest after inquiry'

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Several Asos employees allegedly quit the fashion firm after an investigation into workplace misconduct uncovered incidents that led to disciplinary action being taken against certain staff but "failed to properly reprimand bullying male managers".

In 2021, Asos launched an internal investigation, supported by the law firm Lewis Silkin, after a series of anonymous posts were published on Instagram in spring 2020 levelling allegations of sexual misconduct at senior staff within the retailer. It was accused of being a "boys' club" and allowing inappropriate sexual behaviour in the workplace.

The investigation, which has finished but was not published by Asos, found a

handful of "isolated" instances that resulted in disciplinary action against all the individuals concerned. Actions for this type of situation could include re-training and mediation, or more formal sanctions such as warnings, final warnings, demotions or dismissals. However, Asos did not want to comment on which had been taken or how many employees had been reprimanded.

Investigators found no evidence of sexual harassment or any proof there was a "boys' club" operating at Asos.

A number of employees were disappointed by the findings and claimed they had to quit as alleged "bullying" by some senior male staff continued after the inquiry finished. They alleged some managers "got off scot free" by being allowed to continue working at Asos.

"I was disappointed [by the findings] as my manager bullied me for my whole time there and was never properly reprimanded, despite the behaviour being witnessed by other staff members," one source said. "I felt I needed to leave because of how I was still being treated. I didn't want to, but felt forced to. My friends also left due to poor treatment."

She disputed the notion that there was no boys' club at Asos: "There is most definitely ... and there are a number of men involved. It is very cliquey and they seem untouchable. There is a culture at Asos where the men are at the top and the women seem more held back."

The inquiry into workplace misconduct at the firm ran from April to August 2021 and its staff of roughly 4,000 were

Continued on page 34

Business

Need to know

1 A £30-a-month Pret-a-Manger coffee subscription or £10.99-a-month Netflix plan could help "Generation Rent" secure their first home. A new tie-up between Leeds Building Society and the credit reference agency Experian will allow extra evidence of a prospective borrower's financial history to be factored into mortgage lending decisions. **Page 2**

2 Ryanair has placed the biggest aircraft order in its 30-year history for up to 300 Boeing short-haul aircraft as it revealed plans to carry 300 million passengers a year within a decade. At present, the Dublin-based airline, Europe's largest carrier, has a 540-strong fleet. **Page 33**

3 European gas prices could rise in the second half of this year and nearly treble from current levels in the winter, according to Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank. **Page 33**

4 Several Asos staff allegedly quit the fashion company after an investigation into workplace misconduct uncovered incidents that led to disciplinary action being taken against staff, but "failed to properly reprimand bullying male managers". **Page 33**

5 A sharp fall in business at Marshalls, indicating that fewer households are doing up their homes or laying patios and driveways, has knocked shares in the FTSE 250 company, which specialises in paving slabs.

6 Interest rates must continue to rise and the only question is by how much, according to The Times shadow monetary policy committee. The team, which includes former Bank of England rate-setters, City economists and academics, was unanimous in urging an interest rate rise tomorrow. **Page 36**

7 Saudi Aramco has cheered investors with the promise of extra dividends as its profits fell by almost a fifth on lower oil prices. The world's biggest oil company reported first-quarter net income of \$31.9 billion, down 19 per cent from the same period a year earlier, mainly due to the fall in crude prices and lower output. **Page 38**

8 The UK has "missed the boat" in the first wave of the electric battery revolution and will still be playing catch-up by 2030, industry leaders have warned. **Page 39**

9 JD Sports is seeking to bolster its European expansion plans through a €520 million acquisition of Groupe Courir in France. Courir, owned by Equistone Partners Europe, the London-based private equity firm, is a French sports clothing and footwear retailer with 313 stores across six countries. **Page 41**

10 The Hong Kong-based owner of Greene King, the pubs group, looks set to buy one of Britain's biggest providers of social housing in a £485 million deal. CK Asset Holdings, the vehicle controlled by Li Ka-shing, one of Asia's richest men, has offered 80p in cash for each share in Civitas Social Housing. **Page 43**

Investors told they'll get very little even if estate agent is sold

Tom Howard

Purplebricks has warned investors that they are likely to receive next to nothing even if bosses find a buyer, prompting shares at the troubled online estate agent to collapse by more than half.

The company has had the "for sale" sign up since the beginning of March but has yet to strike a deal, although it insists that it remains in talks with a "small number of parties".

However, even if one of those comes forward with a firm offer, Purplebricks expects that this would "deliver returns to shareholders materially below the company's current share price".

The shares, which had already lost two-thirds of their value since Helena Marston took over as chief executive last spring, fell on Tuesday by another 3½%, or 65.7 per cent, to just under 2p.

That has left Purplebricks, which at one point in 2017 had a stock market value of almost £1.5 billion, with a market capitalisation of about £6.3 million — considerably less than the five-bedroom penthouse currently up for sale for £11 million through the site in Vauxhall, south London.

The agency — with its cheap, fixed, upfront fee and no high street presence — was meant to change the way people bought and sold houses, according to the Bruce brothers, Michael and Kenny, who launched the business in 2014.

It won early financial backing from Neil Woodford and quickly gained market share. However, while traditional agents were making more money during the pandemic than they had done for years, Purplebricks somehow missed out. Its recent performance has been punctured by boardroom missteps, management upheaval and a string of profit warnings.

Another warning came on Tuesday. After sharply increasing its prices this year, the company has won fewer instructions than it was anticipating. Bosses expect this to set the business back during the current financial year, which runs until April, with revenue and profit likely to be lower than previously forecast.

At the time of her appointment, Marston, 41, promised that she would make the business profitable and a

'Ballsy moves' may have backfired on boss

Helena Marston's rise to the top of Purplebricks was rapid. Having started her career in recruitment, she later turned her hand to human resources and joined Purplebricks as its chief people officer in May 2020.

She was made chief operating officer in October 2021. Then within six months or so she was promoted again, taking over as chief executive from Vic Darvey, who stepped down suddenly citing personal reasons.

Marston's formal appointment took several weeks to be confirmed, though, because of what turned out to have been a personal bankruptcy in her past

when she was unable to keep up with her mortgage payments.

Given her background, she has had to contend with jibes about her suitability to run an estate agent — criticism she has repeatedly dismissed. "I fundamentally believe that the chief executive should not be the subject matter expert," Marston, below, said in an interview last year.

"Chief executives are the conductors of the systems, the processes and the people. If the subject matter expert is at the top of the organisation, who's going to challenge them?" She was brought in

by Paul Pindar, Purplebricks's chairman, to lead the turnaround of a business that had lost its way following a number of profit warnings and management mis-steps.

Marston, who loves "making ballsy moves and getting shit done", made her mark straight away, including by slashing costs and sacking agents who she felt were not up to scratch. But she admitted recently that her moves had been more disruptive to the business and staff morale than she had envisaged.

The share price, which had been on its way down before her arrival, has fallen even further on her watch. It is 90 per cent below where it was last spring.



return to cash generation was pencilled in for this summer. However, her moves to sack underperforming agents, get rid of a money-back guarantee and can the old management's advertising campaigns have backfired.

Marston, who was paid £280,000 in 2022, admitted this year that her changes had created "more short-term disruption" than anticipated. A recent round of cost-cutting and redundancies is thought to have dented staff morale.

Purplebricks now concedes that it is "unlikely" to return to cash generation soon and that it has only £9.1 million left in the bank. Despite Marston's assurance that she would bring the cash burn under control, since the end of October the agent has been getting through £850,000 a week.

The firm that processes upfront payments for Purplebricks has started to hold back some of the money it has

received from customers, and the lender that provides its "pay later" offer is also weighing up its options. That would eat further into cash reserves at Purplebricks if a new agreement cannot be reached.

Bosses have explored the possibility of raising money from investors, but with the share price where it is, they have decided that they would not be able to get the support needed.

"In light of the above, the board believes it is necessary to conclude the strategic review and the formal sale process promptly, and in a manner that provides more certainty around the group's future ownership [and] that provides the business with access to additional funding," Purplebricks said.

It claims that there are several interested parties but only one has been named: Strike, a rival online estate agent. Strike has until today to either

Rise and fall



make a formal offer or walk away from any deal.

Another party often mentioned in the press is Axel Springer, the German media and publishing house and Purplebricks's biggest shareholder. It set tongues wagging in March when it removed its representative, Ait Voncke, from the board.

The performance of the business, and the share price, over the past couple of years has angered a number of shareholders, including Lecram Holdings, which tried to oust Paul Pindar, Purplebricks's chairman, before Christmas.

"This is exactly what we feared would happen without a change in leadership," Adam Smith, a director of Lecram, said in response to the latest update. He added that Lecram, the company's sixth-largest shareholder, had not been approached about a possible equity raising.

House prices ease after April shower

Tom Howard

Annual house price inflation has slowed to its weakest level in more than a decade after prices dipped unexpectedly last month.

The average house price in Britain is now 0.1 per cent higher than at this time last year, having fallen by 0.3 per cent in April to £286,896, according to Halifax, the UK's largest mortgage lender.

Annual house price inflation, which peaked at 12.5 per cent last summer, has not been this low since December 2012, when the average UK house was worth less than £167,000.

April's price drop followed three successive months of increases. Economists had predicted a fourth rise in a row of about 0.2 per cent. Despite

the surprise fall, Halifax said the housing market was now "more stable" than it had been for some time. The gradual easing of mortgage rates in recent months had given "important certainty to would-be buyers", it said.

A typical property costs £7,000 less than it did last August at the market's peak. The average price is £28,000 above where it was two years ago.

"House price movements over recent months have largely mirrored the short-term volatility seen in borrowing costs," Kim Kinnaird, Halifax's director of mortgages, said. "The sharp fall in prices... after September's mini-budget preceded something of a rebound in the first quarter of this year as economic conditions improved. Alongside a market-wide uptick in mortgage

approvals, these latest figures may indicate a more steady environment."

Over the past year, house prices in the Midlands and the north have broadly outperformed those in the south, where properties generally are more expensive. New-build prices have risen by 3.5 per cent, while existing homes have dropped in value by 0.6 per cent.

Halifax suggested that rising rents were making home ownership "increasingly cost-effective".

"Cost of living concerns remain real for many households," Kinnaird added. "Combined with the impact of higher interest rates gradually feeding through to those remortgaging their current fixed-rate deals, we should expect some further downward pressure on house prices this year."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Asos workers say they quit

invited to participate on a confidential and anonymous basis if they had concerns. They were then interviewed by Lewis Silkin.

It is understood the review looked back over several years and was not just focused on 2020, when the allegations came out. Staff were updated on the outcome in September 2021.

Following the review, Asos is understood to have strengthened some of its processes, including setting out more clearly how and when people can report issues and through which channels, and the policy on relationships at work.

A company spokeswoman said that Asos expects everyone "to behave responsibly and respectfully at all times... Where behaviour falls short of the standards set, Asos takes it very seriously and acts accordingly."



No recovery in sight as value plunges

Emma Powell
Tempus Special

Purplebricks lists single homes worth more than investors are willing to value the company at. Another plunge in the estate agency's shares has left the group embattled property group with a market cap of around £6.3 million. For any remaining shareholders,

Purplebricks is a hopeless case. Thus far, a sales process active since March has produced no firm offers. Even if a buyer does materialise, any returns to shareholders are expected to be "materially below" the current share price, which has fallen to just under 2p from 5½p.

The estate agency is reaching for a dramatic turnaround at a time when a doubling in mortgage borrowing costs has caused the health of the housing market to deteriorate.

The recovery in instructions that management had been hoping would materialise at the start of this year has failed to appear, which will hinder revenue during the new financial year.

But Purplebricks's problems stretch far beyond macroeconomic challenges. The group's net cash balance stood at £9.1 million at the

end of April, down from £27 million at the end of October. It burned through £8.7 million in cash from keeping the business running during the six months to the end of October alone.

Alarming return to cash generation during the summer months is unlikely to come to fruition, which puts Purplebricks in a desperate position. The company is unlikely to garner sufficient support to tap equity markets for funds.

A switch in the status of its agents from self-employed to employed has fixed more of Purplebricks's cost base, which will make a downturn in the instructions more painful to the margin.

Analysts have forecast another loss this year, of £26.1 million, and no sight of a profit before 2026, at the very least. Purplebricks has been a lesson in value destruction.

Marshalls hit by decline in home form

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

A sharp fall in business at Marshalls, indicating that fewer households are doing up their homes or laying patios and driveways, has knocked shares in the FTSE 250 company.

Marshalls, a paving slabs specialist, was to update investors on trading at its annual meeting this week but brought forward the update and warned that it will miss City forecasts for the year.

The company reported a 14 per cent decline in like-for-like revenues in the first four months of the year.

Given that inflation in the construction materials sector is running at more than 10 per cent, some analysts believe Marshalls' volumes may have slumped by as much as 25 per cent. Shares in

Marshalls fell more than 15 per cent before recovering to end the day 6.9 per cent lower at 272p.

Following the boom in home improvement during the pandemic, the shares had been trading at over 800p. They hit a low point after the Trussell-Kwarteng mini-budget last autumn.

In its statement, Marshall said it had been hit by the housebuilding crisis, with construction starts down 22 per cent year on year, and "tough market conditions" around "the more discretionary elements of private housing repair maintenance and improvement".

It blamed "reduced demand in the wake of the mini-budget, the consequential sharp rise in mortgage rates, and the end of Help to Buy [the taxpayer-subsidised home buying scheme]."

The City had been expecting an 8 per cent fall in Marshalls profits for 2023 to about £83 million from £90 million last year. Peel Hunt, the stockbroker, reckons the year-on-year decline is now getting on for 20 per cent and is pencilling in profits of about £70 million.

Stephen Rawlinson, an independent analyst of the sector, said last year's £535 million acquisition of the Marley roof tiles company had left Marshalls with high levels of debt on the balance sheet at a time of falling profits.

In the four weeks to the end of April, Marshalls reported revenues of £227 million, up from £202 million but flattered by a first-time £61 million from Marley. Landscape products fell 21 per cent to £110 million with building products down 9 per cent to £55 million.

Time running out fast on batteries

BUSINESS COMMENTARY Tracey Boles



Some years ago, when covering the genesis of the Hinkley Point C nuclear plant in Somerset, I was stunned to learn of the scale of China's nuclear ambitions. It now has 55 reactors in operation and 23 under construction, according to the World Nuclear Association. Hinkley Point C is still being built amid an energy price crisis.

Just as startling is that China has more than 100 operational gigafactories, while the EU has 20 planned or under construction. The UK has only one small-scale battery plant, Envision AESC's, which supplies Nissan in Sunderland.

This is deeply concerning. Big battery plants that can produce hundreds of thousands of packs are needed to support the car industry as it goes electric. Graham Hoare, head of the Manufacturing Technology Centre, has said the UK will require four or five gigafactories by 2030. Without them, a battery supply crunch looms and jobs could be under threat.

Governments across the world are vying to attract battery manufacturing plants and materials as carmakers make that electric transition. Companies such as Volkswagen are choosing Canada, Spain, Poland, Belgium and even costly Germany before the UK. The American carmakers Rivian and Tesla have reportedly considered the UK for a gigafactory, but not gone through with commitments.

According to Adrian Hallmark, chairman and chief executive of Volkswagen-owned Bentley, that is because the incentives on offer are an "order of magnitude" more attractive than in the UK.

Speaking to the Financial Times, Hallmark said the UK government should offer "equivalent incentives" to really get the ball rolling on inward investment into the sector.

Encouragingly, there are some projects already in the works despite the failure in January of Britishvolt, the start-up that had planned a gigafactory in Northumberland. Envision is working on a larger battery plant for Sunderland. It is hoped that India's Tata will develop one for its UK marque, Jaguar Land Rover. Meanwhile, a site at Coventry airport could produce 60 gigawatt hours (GWh) of battery power, enough to supply one million cars. It has the backing of the city council but large-scale private funding has yet to be secured.

The solution cannot be left to imported batteries. Not only are they heavy and expensive to transport, but they are set to become more expensive. From next January, under the UK-EU trade deal, no more than 40 per cent of an electric car's battery components can be from third nations, or there will be a 10 per cent tariff.

The UK is currently one of the world's most competitive locations for advanced automotive manufacture, but it is losing ground as investment goes elsewhere. There is a narrow window of opportunity to respond as emissions targets for 2030 draw closer.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, the car industry body, is calling for a joined-

up government policy to cover all aspects of the transition to electric. It points out what we have to offer amid the scramble for finite funds: an established electric supply chain, world-class R&D and a low-carbon energy mix. It says a transformation strategy needs to cut investment risk, accelerate approvals and secure new trade deals and partnerships that give us greater access to essential raw materials. Yesterday, industry bosses told MPs that the country is a "bystander in a global battery materials arms race" (report, page 39).

This week's calls from Make UK, the manufacturing trade body, for an independent industrial strategy look increasingly compelling — automotive and critical minerals both have a big role to play in that. It's time for ministers and industry to put their feet on the gas, or the ramifications could be huge for an industry that employs 800,000 people directly and indirectly, as well as for Britain's net-zero goals.

Flying high

Michael O'Leary, the boss of Ryanair, has long called the 737 Max aircraft a "gamechanger" for its fuel efficiency and seat capacity. It turns out that it is also a gamechanger for growth and jobs. Yesterday the Irish airline signed a deal to buy up to 300 of the 737 Max-10 from the manufacturer Boeing (report, page 33), which will allow it to grow traffic by up to 80 per cent and create thousands of jobs. Ryanair's planes already dominate the tarmac at Stansted airport. Its post-Covid flight path opens up the possibility that it will dominate many more round Europe and beyond, such as in Israel and Egypt. It is also a remarkable vote of confidence in the 737 Max, which has been dogged by safety concerns since two fatal crashes.

Rocket science

Sir Richard Branson entitled his book on his business ethos *Screw It, Let's Do It*. Now he is taking that chutzpah into space. Just weeks on from the failed launch of his satellite firm Virgin Orbit, which triggered its bankruptcy, he is planning to take Virgin Galactic back to the final frontier.

On Monday the US-listed company, which aims to take tourists into orbit, announced plans for its first commercial flight next month.

Branson himself was on a test flight that flew to the edge of space two years ago. Since then the company has endured challenges such as supply-chain issues and the stock has come back down to earth with him.

Having fallen 90 per cent from their peaks, the shares have taken off again this week. However, given the nature of any activity in space, a bumpy ride may lie ahead. That's one to bear in mind for those investors who do not share Branson's appetite for risk.

tracey.boles@thetimes.co.uk
Alistair Osborne is away

Business

Inflation isn't beaten yet so rate must go up, Bank told

THE TIMES
SHADOW MPC



Arthi Nachiappan, Mehreen Khan

Interest rates must continue to rise and the only question is by how much, according to The Times shadow monetary policy committee.

The team of experts, which includes former Bank of England rate-setters, City economists and academics, were unanimous in their call for another interest rate increase tomorrow, differing only on the amount.

Members of the shadow panel voted 7-2 in favour of a rise of 0.25 percentage points — or 25 basis points — to 4.5 per cent, ahead of the Bank's monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting. Such an increase would be the 12th consecutive rise in borrowing costs since December 2021, when the base rate was at a historic low of 0.1 per cent. Two panellists called for the central bank to raise the base rate by half a percentage point, or 50 basis points, to 4.75 per cent.

Rates were last as high as 4.5 per cent in October 2008 during the global financial crisis, which ushered in a decade of near-zero interest rates.

On the shadow panel Charles Goodhart, a founding member of the MPC after the Bank was granted independence in 1997, voted for another 0.25 percentage point rise, saying that the UK is suffering "less than elsewhere ... from concerns about banking fragility, and its inflation status is worse than elsewhere".

Sir John Gieve, a former civil servant who was in charge of financial stability at the Bank, said that it should raise interest rates and avoid offering any reassurance to investors or the public that this is the end, or near the end, of the tightening cycle.

Rate increases are the Bank's main tool in tackling inflation, which hit a 41-year high of 11.1 per cent at its peak last October. It has since fallen to just over 10 per cent and is expected to at least

halve by the end of the year. However, inflation has remained higher than experts expected for two months in a row, with a surge in the price of food keeping the headline rate in double digits.

Sir Steve Robson, a former second permanent secretary at the Treasury, and Anne Sibert, an economist at Birkbeck, University of London, argued for a rise of half a percentage point.

Robson indicated that the tightness of the labour market is a key factor in keeping inflation high. Unemployment is at 3.8 per cent, close to a historic low, and the level of vacancies is still high. As a result, demand within the economy has remained resilient despite the cost of living crisis because workers are confident they will keep their jobs or be able to find a new one if they need to.

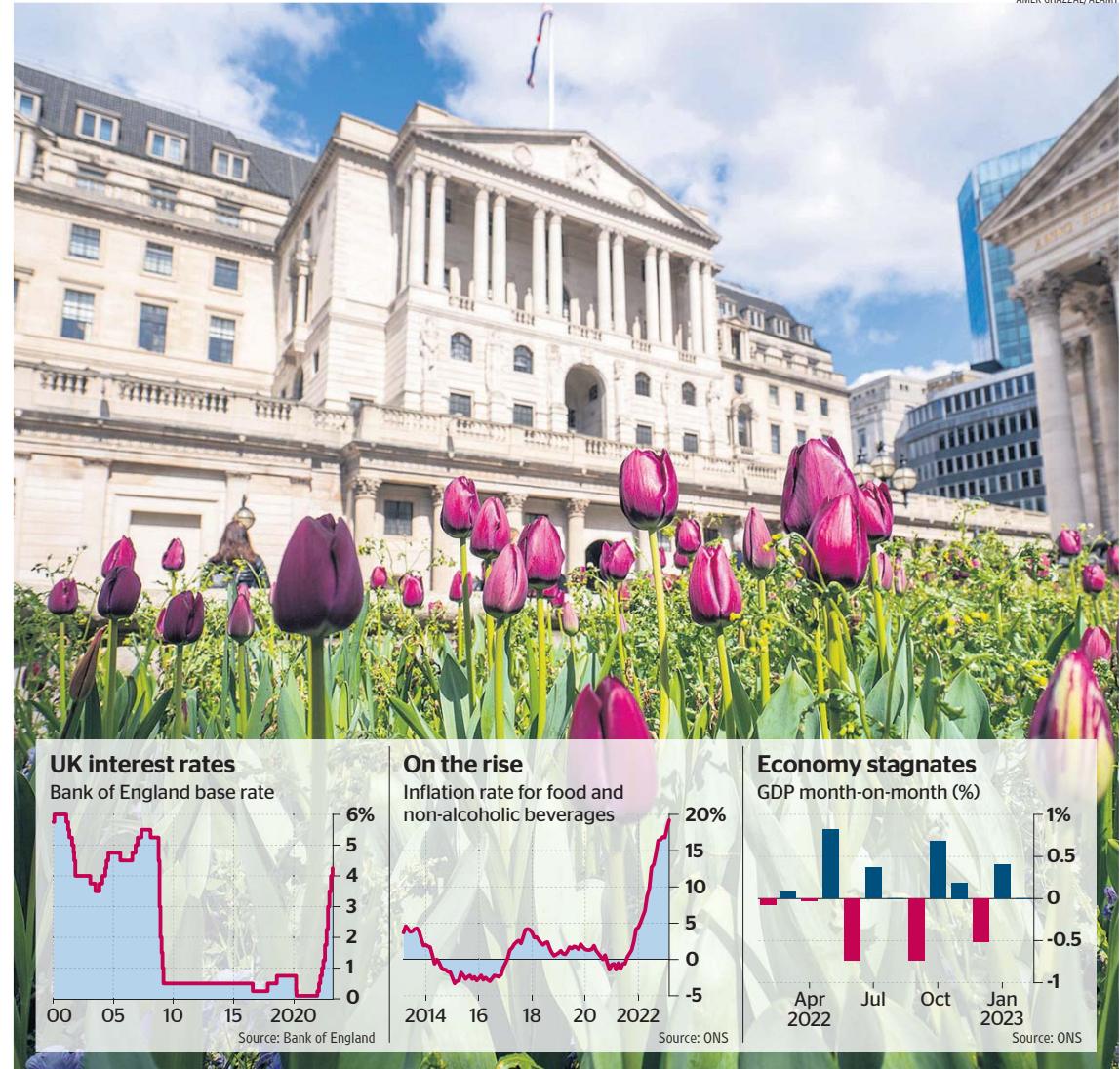
Andrew Sentance, a senior adviser at the consultancy Cambridge Econometrics and a former MPC member, said rates should rise by a quarter of a percentage point. He noted that UK inflation remains double the rate in the US and significantly above the euro area, with services inflation remaining "stubbornly high" at 6.6 per cent.

"Private sector wage inflation is around 7 per cent, which is a crucial input into future services sector inflation," he said. "So when the recent surge in goods price inflation subsides, we are still going to be stuck with above-target inflation."

The financial markets expect a 0.25 percentage point increase tomorrow and further rises in the coming months.

Other central banks have indicated that rate rises will either slow down or come to a conclusion. The US Federal Reserve signalled the end of its tightening campaign last week after raising its benchmark rate by 0.25 percentage points but dropping the statement that it "anticipates" further rate increases.

The European Central Bank has also slowed the pace of its rises in the cost of borrowing, raising its benchmark deposit rate by a quarter of a percentage point to 3.25 per cent last week. That was a step back from the three increases of half a percentage point carried out so far this year.



CHARLES GOODHART

25 BASIS POINTS

"Given the considerable uncertainty about future economic and political developments, the Bank is in no condition to give any guidance on the future path of interest rates. It should be, now and normally, data-dependent. Neither economic models, nor various means of extrapolating the past into the future, have been notably successful recently."

SIR STEVE ROBSON

25 BASIS POINTS

"Who can expect negative real interest rates and expansionary fiscal policy to bear down on inflation when unemployment is close to a historic low? Raise by 50 basis points."

KAREN WARD

25 BASIS POINTS

"Sadly, the Bank was more hesitant to tighten in lockstep with its peers earlier, which leaves it potentially being out of the pack through [the second half of the year]."

ANDREW SENTANCE

25 BASIS POINTS

"The labour market remains resilient,

with employment increasing, unemployment low [sub-4 per cent] and vacancies above one million. Other real economy indicators [monthly gross domestic product and retail sales] show a flat or slightly growing economy. Fears that we would be plunged into recession have proved unfounded. All this points to a further rise in interest rates, but there is no need to create a negative economic shock by delivering beyond market expectations."

MARTIN WEALE

25 BASIS POINTS

"Wage inflation is still quite incompatible with the inflation target and the labour market remains very tight. I voted against forward guidance in 2013 and, seeing what has happened since, I am quite clear that the MPC should not offer forward guidance again. The public want to know what will happen with interest rates, but that does not mean they should be told by a body which cannot know the answer."

SIR JOHN GIEVE

25 BASIS POINTS

"Rates have been raised quite a lot and their full effect is not yet apparent. But

they remain below not just the headline rate of inflation but core inflation and wage growth. Ben Broadbent [deputy governor at the Bank] has pointed out that the key comparison is with inflation over the next year rather than the last, but it is not clear yet that underlying inflation is on course to go below 4.5 per cent by the end of the year. Until that is clear, I think they have to press on and take the risk of overdoing it."

ANNE SIBERT

50 BASIS POINTS

"Raise 50 basis points. No forward guidance — it won't be credible."

BRONWYN CURTIS

25 BASIS POINTS

"A 25 basis-point hike, even though they have now done quite a lot already. No forward guidance."

KITTY USSHER

25 BASIS POINTS

"There has been significantly more demand in the private sector than previously expected. Inflation expectations are not coming down nearly fast enough to change price-setting behaviour."

Firms hedge bets by hiring temps instead of permanent staff

Arthi Nachiappan
Economics Correspondent

The number of people hired for full-time jobs contracted at the fastest rate in over two years in April, while temporary recruits continued to rise as firms hedged against economic uncertainty.

Temporary placements grew at their fastest rate in seven months, according to the latest monthly poll by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and KPMG, the professional services firm.

Meanwhile, the supply of candidates who said they were looking for new jobs improved for the second month in a

row, the survey found. The latest rise was partly because some workers were made redundant, while others were seeking higher-paid roles as inflation eroded the value of their earnings.

Starting pay for both temporary and permanent workers increased last month, according to the poll of 400 recruiters — compiled for the REC and KPMG by S&P Global, the marketing intelligence company. Respondents said that companies were raising pay in an effort to attract staff with the right skills.

Claire Warnes, partner in skills and productivity at KPMG UK, said: "The preference for hiring short-term staff continued unabated into April. Busi-

nesses remain cautious about committing to permanent hires in the face of ongoing economic uncertainty, which led to the quickest increase in temporary billings for seven months."

Warnes continued: "Permanent staff appointments are contracting at the fastest rate in two years."

Skills shortages remain and have not improved, she said, adding that the government and businesses must do more to avert a "skills crisis".

Unemployment is close to a historic low at 3.8 per cent. But the employment rate remains below pre-Covid levels and job vacancies — though lower than the record levels recorded last spring —

are still high. This is mainly because supply in the labour market shrank after the exodus of about half a million workers during the pandemic due to early retirement, long-term sickness and an ageing population.

Real pay is falling amid inflation in double digits but private sector pay growth is remaining strong at nearly 7 per cent, according to the latest Office for National Statistics figures.

Neil Carberry, the REC's chief executive, said: "This data shows how uncertain many employers are feeling right now. The good news is that they still need to hire, as growing vacancies show. But firms are hedging their bets.

After a better month in March, in April we saw permanent hiring fall back quickly and businesses turn to temps to help them through. London had a particularly difficult month.

He added: "The picture varies for temp recruitment, with REC members reporting weaker demand in some sectors than others, as sectors like logistics, driving and food are heavily affected by changing consumer behaviour. Taken together, however, there is still plenty of opportunity for jobseekers. Wages are rising strongly for both temps and new permanent hires in the face of inflation, even though candidate availability is finally starting to improve."

David Smith

Interest rates are rising but the real question is how soon they'll be cut

“Tomorrow at noon, barring accidents, the Bank of England will raise the official UK interest rate from 4.25 to 4.5 per cent. If so, it will demonstrate, not for the first time, that these things come in threes, following hard on the heels of similar quarter-point hikes by America's Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank.

In doing so, it will take Bank rate a little further away from the 4 per cent I thought would be all that was necessary, until a couple of bad inflation figures and more signs of life in the economy intervened. As it is, City economists are split between those who think this week's rise will be the last and those who think the Bank has a couple more shots in the locker.

All will be cautious about interpreting comments from Andrew Bailey, the governor. In February, he highlighted signs that inflation had "turned the corner" and the Bank changed its language away from the presumption of further rate rises. But those who interpreted that as a sign that a peak had been reached were wrong.

Now, however, a different question is emerging and is occupying financial markets. Though central banks are still raising rates, this is the question of when they will "pivot" to cutting them. The pivot story runs most strongly in America, amid expectations that the Federal Reserve could shift to cutting rates in the second half of the year. Recent weaker US data and banking difficulties have reinforced that view but markets have had little encouragement in it from Jerome Powell, the Federal Reserve chairman.

You might think it a bit daft to be talking about rate cuts when it is still not clear that central banks have yet reached their interest rate peak, or that inflation has

been beaten, despite the helpful effect of lower energy prices. These should have pushed down UK inflation significantly last month and we will know when the figures are released on May 24.

But the question is worth asking. In the 26 years since the Bank was granted operational independence, there have been four interest rate cycles. In two of them, the gap between the final increase and the first cut was short: just four months in 1998 and five months in 2007. In the others, in 2000-01 and 2018-20, it was a year and 19 months respectively, though the later episode was in the long period between the financial crisis and the pandemic, when interest rates changed infrequently.

What will it be this time? Having been caught out so badly by inflation, central banks — perhaps particularly the Bank of England — will be reluctant to drop their guard, which could argue for a long period in which rates remain at their new peaks. This would be the equivalent, but in a different way, of the period after the global financial crisis, when central banks were fearful of moving from near-zero interest rates for years.

Bank Rate in the UK stayed at 0.5 per cent for more than seven years, from March 2009 to August 2016, and some members of its monetary policy committee (MPC) served six years on it without even being involved in a change in interest rates. Could 4.5 per cent be the new 0.5 per cent?

Perhaps not.

Silvana Tenreyro, one of two members of the MPC who has voted against recent rate hikes, has used the analogy of the "fool in the shower" who keeps turning the temperature up only to find that it is scalding and must be turned down again rapidly. We have all done it, particularly in hotel rooms, where working out how the shower and TV work is stressful.

Applying the analogy to interest rates, she argues that hiking too rapidly and by too much means the Bank will need to cut

again relatively quickly. "With Bank rate moving further into restrictive territory ... I expect that the high current level of Bank rate will require an earlier and faster reversal, to avoid a significant inflation undershoot," she said in a speech last month.

There are other circumstances in which central banks could be pushed into rate cuts, most notably if the tightening of monetary conditions because of recent bank failures, mainly in America, begins to push down on economic activity.

Either way, markets and economic analysts are looking for a pivot and they do not think that we will have to wait years for it. Paul Dales, chief UK economist at Capital Economics, thinks next year will be one of falling interest rates in this country — perhaps music to the ears of a beleaguered Conservative government seeking re-election, though not for the pensioner vote.

Capital predicts that rate cuts will start next year, taking Bank rate down from a likely peak of 4.5 per cent this year to 3 per cent by the end of 2024. In America, it thinks the official Fed Funds rate has already peaked at the new target range of 5 to 5.25 per cent and that the first cut will come earlier, this September, eventually taking it all the way down to between 2.5 and 2.75 per cent by the end of next year.

For the European Central Bank, the forecast is that there are a couple more rate hikes to come, from 3.25 to 3.75 per cent, but that next year will see a reduction to 2.75 per cent and eventually to just 2 per cent.

All forecasts are based on assumptions and as Dales says: "Our assumption is that there will be enough economic weakness in the UK, the US and the eurozone this year to mean that central banks can be more confident that wage growth and core inflation is heading back to levels consistent with 2 per cent inflation targets."

Falling interest rates are thus not unalloyed good news. They would not happen if the economy was bounding ahead. But rates will fall from their peaks, they always do — the question is when.

”

David Smith is Economics Editor of The Sunday Times
david.smith@sunday-times.co.uk



Silvana Tenreyro said the MPC's job was like adjusting a hotel shower temperature



Katie Prescott

Our appetite for data increases the risk of being held to ransom

Last week may have heralded the first bit of good news for quite a while for Capita, one of the UK's largest outsourcers. Sensitive information belonging to its clients' customers was no longer being touted for sale by Russian cybercriminals on the internet. As a result, there is speculation among cybersecurity experts that Capita might have made a payment to the hackers or even be in negotiations with them after a cyberattack on its business.

In many instances paying is seen as the only way of recovering information and making cyberattackers go away. Yet in doing so, it spurs them to do it again.

As Toby Lewis, global head of threat analysis at Darktrace, notes, there are common misconceptions: "Paying the ransom doesn't get your files back; you're buying a decryption tool and you've still got to go round and decrypt them all by hand. And the only lever you have is trust. You are trusting the criminal gang not to release your files and honour the ransom payment."

According to research published today by Sophos, the average bill incurred by UK organisations to recover from a ransomware attack is \$2.09 million. More worryingly, it found that 48 per cent of those that had their data held to ransom in the UK paid the required sum to get it back, up from last year's 40 per cent.

Guidance on such payments from the UK government has so far said companies should be careful about giving in to hackers' financial demands but stopped short of prohibiting it. It also warned that paying a ransom to a sanctioned individual or group could open companies up "to liability for civil and criminal penalties".

Lewis concludes: "Generally the cost of an incident is significantly larger than the ransom you pay, possibly up to ten times as much."

It is impossible to make such a black and white decision as to ban payments. While it might feel counterintuitive, the best thing companies can do when it comes to data handling is be transparent and work with others by sharing advice.

As we grapple with a future of geophytes, that is only fair to the people who've had information stolen and to those who may be similarly affected in future.

Katie Prescott is Technology Business Editor of The Times

Expert business analysis straight to your inbox

For the latest financial and economic news from our business editors, subscribers can sign up for the business newsletter at thetimes.co.uk/newsletters

Try a digital subscription free for one month at thetimes.co.uk/trial or scan the QR code



DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION

SUBSCRIBE TODAY



THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES
Know your times

Business

Aramco sweetens its profit slide with dividend pledge

Emily Gosden

Saudi Aramco has cheered investors with the promise of additional dividends even as its profits fell by almost a fifth on lower oil prices.

The world's biggest oil company reported first-quarter net income of \$31.9 billion, down 19 per cent from

\$39.5 billion in the same period a year earlier, primarily driven by the fall in crude prices and lower output.

Despite the drop, it maintained a quarterly dividend of \$19.5 billion — the same as in the fourth quarter — and said it planned to start paying additional "performance-linked dividends", sending its shares up by about 3 per cent.

Aramco is based in Dhahran and has exclusive rights to produce Saudi Arabia's vast oil reserves. It listed on Saudi Arabia's Tadawul stock exchange in 2019, selling 1.5 per cent of its shares, and is valued at just under \$2 trillion.

Last year Aramco reported a record annual profit of \$161.1 billion. Oil and gas production accounts for most of its

income, though it is working to expand its refining and chemicals business.

About 90 per cent of the company is owned by the Saudi government while 8 per cent is owned by the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund. Oil and gas production accounted for 32.7 per cent of Saudi Arabia's gross domestic product last year, with refining contributing a further 6 per cent.

Oil prices surged in the first quarter of last year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine but then fell back, as supply fears gave way to concerns about weakening demand because of a global economic slowdown.

Brent crude, the global benchmark price, averaged \$81 per barrel in the first quarter of this year, down from \$102 a barrel in the same period a year earlier.

"Lower global demand growth for petroleum products in the first quarter of 2023 resulted in lower prices for hydrocarbons and continued pressure on chemical margins, compared with the same period in 2022," Aramco said.

The company pumped the equivalent of 12.8 million barrels of oil per day in the first quarter of 2023, down from 13 million in the same period last year.

Last month Saudi Arabia and other members of the Opec cartel of major producers agreed to cut output from May in an effort to bolster prices.

Amin Nasser, Aramco chief executive, said: "[We are] announcing our intention to introduce a mechanism for performance-linked dividends in addition to the base dividend the company currently distributes."

Biraj Borkhataria, of RBC Capital Markets, said of the results: "The key development is on the shareholder returns front, with Aramco unveiling its version of a variable payout policy". He saw the potential for it to pay an extra \$12 billion to \$18 billion of incremental distributions next year "which would bump up the company's dividend yield to 4.4-4.2 per cent (from 3.5 per cent)".

Aramco said the performance-linked dividends would be "in the amount of 50 to 70 per cent of the group's annual free cashflow, net of the base dividend and other amounts including external investments, to be determined with the annual results".

Water worlds



Two-for-one cinema tickets at Everyman

Each Wednesday, Times+ members can enjoy a trip to Everyman with a friend. This month, why not watch *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, starring Academy Award winner Jim Broadbent and Penelope Wilton.

Visit [mytimesplus.co.uk](https://www.mytimesplus.co.uk)

T **TIMES+** | **EVERYMAN**
OFFERS | COMPETITIONS | EVENTS

T&Cs apply. Wednesdays only. © Pilgrimage Films Limited and the British Film Institute 2022

We must pump more cash into hydro-electric, say developers

Call of Duty for Johnson's lawyer in watchdog fight

Robert Miller

Activision Blizzard, the video games company behind *Call Of Duty*, has hired Boris Johnson's former lawyer to represent it in a \$69 billion legal battle with the competition watchdog.

Lord Pannick KC, who represented the ex-prime minister at the partygate hearings, will represent the games group at a Competition Appeal Tribunal. Pannick declined to comment.

It comes after the Competition and Markets Authority blocked Microsoft's \$68.7 billion takeover of Activision Blizzard, the company which also owns *World Of Warcraft*, *Candy Crush* and *Guitar Hero*, among others.

The regulator said that such a deal would give Microsoft an unfair advantage in the cloud computer game market. The decision dealt a serious blow to the deal between the two American companies and sparked criticism

of the watchdog. Brad Smith, president of Microsoft, called the decision his company's "darkest day" in the UK.

"There's a clear message here. The European Union is a more attractive place to start a business if you want some day to sell it than the United Kingdom," he told BBC Radio 4 last month.

After the decision, Activision Blizzard said: "The CMA's report contradicts the ambitions of the UK to become an attractive country to build technology businesses. We will work aggressively with Microsoft to reverse this on appeal."

"The report's conclusions are a disservice to UK citizens, who face increasingly dire economic prospects."

The European Commission is due to make its ruling on the deal on May 22. The deadline to appeal against the UK regulator's decision to the competition tribunal falls two days later.



Six proposed pumped storage hydro-electric projects involving flooding valleys and hollowing out mountains in Scotland could create up to 15,000 jobs and entail up to £8 billion in investment, according to a new report (Emily Gosden writes). Developers including

SSE and Drax are lobbying the government for financial support to encourage investment in the projects, which would almost triple Britain's existing pumped storage capacity, through a "cap and floor" system that would guarantee minimum revenues, funded through levies on energy bills if required.

The developers funded the new report by Scottish Renewables and BiGGAR Economics into the potential economic benefits of their projects. Pumped storage hydro plants function like giant batteries. They pump water from a lower reservoir to an upper one when electricity supplies are plentiful, then let

One plan, put forward by SSE, is to flood a valley above Loch Lochy in the Highlands, left, with 26 million litres of water

water flow back down to turn turbines and generate electricity when supplies are scarce. The waterways and generation infrastructure are typically housed beneath the hillside.

Despite the growing need for storage as Britain builds more intermittent wind and solar power, no new projects have been commissioned since 1984. Andrew MacNish Porter of Scottish Renewables said: "We urgently need the government to clarify its support for pumped storage hydro and deliver the required policy support to unlock the huge value these projects promise to deliver."

SSE's Coire Glas project involves flooding a valley above Loch Lochy in the Highlands with 26 million litres of water — equivalent to 11,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Drax wants to expand its Cruachan "hollow mountain" plant at Loch Awe in Argyll and Bute with additional waterways between the upper and lower reservoirs and new caverns to house more turbines.

Intelligent Land Investments is proposing three projects involving creating new upper reservoirs, damming valleys above Loch Ericht in Perth & Kinross and Loch Awe, and creating a new upper reservoir from scratch above Loch Ness in the Highlands. Buckleuch Estates and Foresight plan to use a disused open-cast coal mine at Glenmuckloch in Dumfries & Galloway to form a lower reservoir and construct a new upper reservoir near by.

Goldman settles lawsuit with \$215m deal

Ben Martin Banking Editor

Goldman Sachs has agreed to pay \$215 million to settle claims by former female employees that the Wall Street bank had systematically underpaid women compared with men.

The agreement brings to an end the class action lawsuit that started in 2010 and involves about 2,800 female associates and vice-presidents of the bank who are covered by the settlement. It averts a trial that had been due to get under way in New York next month.

The lawsuit alleged that women at Goldman had faced widespread gender discrimination in pay, performance evaluation and promotion. The bank is one of the biggest names in global finance and a trial would have been likely to attract considerable attention in the industry.

Shanna Orlich, who was one of the original plaintiffs, said: "I have been proud to support this case without hesitation over the last nearly 13 years



David Solomon, Goldman Sachs CEO, said a resolution was "the best path"

and believe this settlement will help the women I had in mind when I filed the case."

David Solomon, chief executive of Goldman, told staff in a memo: "While the firm has consistently challenged the allegations and vigorously defended against the claims, both parties agreed that the decision to resolve the matter was the best path forward."

The settlement, which requires court

approval, applies to female associates and vice-presidents working at Goldman's investment banking, investment management and securities divisions in the United States between last July and late March this year.

As part of the agreement, Goldman will implement a number of measures over three years, including engaging "an independent expert to conduct an additional analysis on performance evaluation processes, as well as its process for promotion from vice-president to managing director, to ensure they generate accurate, reliable and non-biased outcomes," according to a joint statement issued by the bank and the plaintiffs.

Adam Klein, a lawyer for the claimants, said: "We are all delighted to support a robust settlement that offers meaningful relief to our clients and look forward to court approval."

It comes as companies across the financial industry face pressure to do more to improve equality and diversity in their ranks.

Battery failure 'may lead to car industry exodus'

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

The UK has "missed the boat" in the first wave of the electric battery revolution and will still be playing catch-up by 2030, industry leaders have warned.

The damning verdict comes from a panel of battery materials experts called before the House of Commons, who said that without the rapid creation of a supply chain Britain will lose its automotive industry.

MPs also heard criticism of the government's new "critical minerals strategy", which was dismissed as a "wishlist without substance" because "without the money backing it up it is just words".

In evidence to MPs on the business and trade select committee, Simon Moores, chief executive of Benchmark Mineral Intelligence, a consultant to the industry, said: "The UK is a bystander in a global battery materials arms race. The UK does not have a strategy so we don't have a runner in the race."

He added: "The UK missed the boat in the first round of the supply of these critical materials and probably in the second round too. We have to make sure we don't miss the boat in the third and final round from about 2030 onwards."

Asked why the UK had missed out on the opportunities, Moores said: "You have to ask what the automotive companies here, the big chemical companies like Ineos in the UK, were doing."

"They weren't plugged into batteries when China and Japan was, when Korea, the US and the EU was. They have not even been talking about lithium ion batteries as a serious multi-billion-pound industry when it is exactly that for everyone else in the world."

Asked whether there is a danger that the UK automotive industry will migrate to central Europe, which plans the construction of dozens of gigafactories, Ian Constance, chief executive of the taxpayer-funded Advanced Propulsion Centre, replied: "Absolutely yes."

An electric dream

Glencore has unveiled plans to build the biggest battery recycling facility in Europe, producing lithium, nickel and cobalt for use in electric vehicles (Emily Gosden writes).

The FTSE 100 commodities giant has teamed up with the New York-listed Li-Cycle to develop the new recycling hub, which would repurpose part of Glencore's existing lead and zinc smelter at Portovesme in Sardinia, Italy.

The hub could be commissioned by late 2026 or early 2027. Kunal Sinha, Glencore's head of recycling, said that it could become "the first Glencore asset to produce battery-grade lithium".

Glencore does not mine lithium but has begun trading the battery metal and is establishing a position in recycling.

Shares in Glencore closed up 2p, or 0.5 per cent, at 446½p.

Obliquely referring to the need for Britain's largest automotive group, the Range Rover and Jaguar company JLR, to stand behind the construction of a UK gigafactory, he said that without such "keystone" volume plants there could be little hope of building a midstream supply chain or accessing upstream materials.

Stephen Gifford, chief economist of the Faraday Institution, said industrial demand projections indicated a requirement for ten 20GWh battery production plants by 2040 with five in production by 2030. It meant that attracting investment and initial planning were needed now.

Asked whether he believed the UK had "missed the boat", he replied: "No, but time is running out."

The British battery industry has suffered a series of recent setbacks, including the collapse into administration of Britishvolt earlier this year.

Rival threatens to block Glencore's \$23bn Teck bid

Robert Miller

A new consortium has proposed to buy Teck Resources' metallurgical coal operations, a move that would block Glencore's \$23 billion offer to purchase the entire company.

Led by the mining veteran Pierre Lassonde, the move could prevent Glencore from acquiring Canada's largest diversified miner, which in April rejected an unsolicited takeover offer of \$23 billion from the Swiss miner and commodities trader, according to the Globe and Mail newspaper.

Glencore has made it clear it would not back down and said it remained interested after Teck's restructuring proposal was taken off the table.

"Teck wants to move forward, we've been told very definitively," Lassonde told the paper. "For them, it's a question of consulting their bankers and consulting other groups. We're told that

they want to get something done between eight and 12 weeks." He added: "We've had discussions with Teck, we've put forward a plan, and we have signed a [confidentiality agreement]. We're waiting to hear from them as to which way they want to proceed."

The Nasdaq-listed shares of Teck were up 3.5 per cent at \$45.81 by late afternoon in New York yesterday.

The Canadian businessman and philanthropist, 76, will need the backing of Teck's existing coal joint venture steel-making partners, Japan's Nippon Steel and South Korea's Posco, for his proposal to succeed.

Last year Glencore's marketing division made record adjusted earnings of \$6.4 billion, up 73 per cent year on year, with energy products accounting for \$5.2 billion of that. The bigger share of Glencore's profits last year, however, came from its mining operations, and in particular its thermal coal production.

A photograph of a man with red hair, wearing a blue jacket over a light blue shirt, standing in a train station platform. He is looking down at a white smartphone he is holding in his hands. In the background, a yellow and black train is visible on the tracks, and other people are standing further back on the platform under a large glass and steel roof.

**INVEST IN PEOPLE
OR INVEST IN TECH?
SATISFY SHAREHOLDERS
OR SATISFY CUSTOMERS?
CUT COSTS
OR DRIVE GROWTH?
YES.**

**DISCOVER THE INTELLIGENT PLATFORM FOR
DIGITAL BUSINESS THAT LETS YOU DO BOTH.**

Today, businesses everywhere are facing tough choices.
But what if you didn't have to choose?

Our unifying platform is the great simplifier, helping you say YES to levelling silos that stand in the way of your people. YES to every person, system, and process working together harmoniously. YES to working with what you have, unlocking value in days and weeks, not months and years. YES to digital solutions that deliver the agility, scalability, and simplicity your business needs now – and for what's next.

Discover the many ways we can help you put YES to work.
ServiceNow.co.uk/YES

THE WORLD WORKS WITH SERVICENOW™

JD boss making €520m play for French sportswear outfit

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

JD Sports is seeking to bolster its European expansion plans through a €520 million acquisition of Groupe Courir in France.

Courir, owned by Equisone Partners Europe, the London-based private equity firm, is a sports clothing and footwear retailer with 313 stores across six countries. In accordance with French law, its management will start a consultation process with its employee representative bodies before a binding sale and purchase agreement can be reached.

JD Sports said that due to the need for European Commission approval, it does not expect the deal to complete before the second half of this year.

The FTSE 100 retailer said it would pay €325 million for the company through existing cash resources and take on €195 million of Courir's debt.

Régis Schultz, chief executive of JD Sports, said: "Investing in quality complementary concepts, whilst furthering the growth of JD itself, is a key strategic pillar for the group and one which we will continue to pursue in the future. We look forward to concluding the contemplated transaction, welcoming the Courir team to the group and then working with management to fulfil Courir's global potential."

Schultz, 54, a Frenchman, took over as chief executive last September after a tumultuous period that resulted in the removal of Peter Cowgill as the chain's longstanding executive chairman.

JD Sports announced in February that it would open up to 1,750 more stores in Britain, Europe, North America and the rest of the world over five years. It said the expansion could help it to increase revenue by more than 10 per cent every year over the five years, with the group aiming to deliver cash generation of £1 billion annually.

Schultz said the latest plans marked the start of a "new, distinct chapter in the growth story of JD".

JD Sports Fashion was founded in 1981 by John Wardle and David Makin, who sold their stakes in 2005 and went on to set up Footasylum.

At present the company has more



The proposed acquisition of the French firm Groupe Courir is part of a move by JD Sports towards international expansion

than 3,400 shops in 32 countries after pursuing acquisitions over recent years, including DTLR Villa, the US chain, and Cosmos Sport of Greece.

In Britain, the brands it operates include Footpatrol, Blacks and Millets. In December, JD Sports sold 15 UK-based, non-core fashion businesses, including Pretty Green, Missy Empire and Cricket to Frasers Group in a deal worth £475 million.

Analysts at Peel Hunt said that JD is "keen to continue its expansion into most of its current territories and Courir fits the bill".

Eleonora Dani, an equity research analyst at Shore Capital, said that acquiring Courir would be a "significant step" in JD's growth plans and that the move showed "its commitment to adding new stores in the region. The deal appears to be strategically sound and is expected to increase full-year

Régis Schultz
became the chief
executive of JD
Sports last autumn

2023 profit before tax by 4 per cent."

JD Sports also announced plans to simplify minority shareholdings in its subsidiary businesses across Europe, including Germany and the Iberia region, to gain greater control over its long-term development and prioritise the JD brand.

Dani said these developments "are expected to streamline operations and improve decision-making efficiency".

Shares in JD Sports Fashion closed up 2½%, or 1.6 per cent, at 164½p.



De La Rue announces results delay

Alex Ralph

De La Rue has delayed publication of its annual results by a month as the struggling banknotes printer seeks support from its banks.

The company had said last month, alongside its latest profit warning, that it would announce its results for the year to March 25 at the end of May.

However, it said yesterday that they would be deferred to June 29. It remains in discussions with its lenders as it seeks an amendment to its banking covenants.

De La Rue is also in the process of recruiting a new chairman after the resignation of Kevin Loosemore, who formally stepped down at the start of this month following pressure from Crystal Amber, a large shareholder.

The company reiterated yesterday that it was "progressing candidates" through the final stage of its fast-track recruitment process. It has appointed Nick Bray, an existing director, as interim chairman.

Crystal Amber, an activist investor,



De La Rue provides banknotes and security features to central banks

wants Pepyn Dinandt, who has a background in private equity, to replace Loosemore as chairman.

Last month De La Rue issued its fourth profit warning since last year, which it blamed on the weakest

demand for banknotes in more than 20 years. It also said then that it was seeking an amendment to its banking covenants and a deferral on pension contributions.

When De La Rue issued a profit warning last November, Clive Vacher, its chief executive, accused EY, the company's external auditor, of exhibiting an "overabundance of caution" in issuing a warning over its future as a going concern.

The company, based in Basingstoke, Hampshire, was founded by Thomas De La Rue in 1813 and is one of the oldest companies listed on the London Stock Exchange.

It provides finished banknotes, polymer substrate and security features to more than half the world's central banks and issuing authorities.

The company has struggled in recent years despite attempts to turn the business around.

Shares in De La Rue, which fell to a three-year low last month, dropped 1½p, or 3.9 per cent, to close at 41p on the latest downbeat update.

Direct Line profit warning after winter of discontent

Ben Martin Banking Editor

The difficulties facing Direct Line intensified yesterday with another warning on profits.

The FTSE 250 listed company said that "adverse claims development" in the car insurance market at the turn of the year was "expected to put pressure on earnings in 2023", sending its shares down 7½p, or 4.6 per cent, to 156½p.

Bosses at the group are battling to restore investor confidence after the decision to axe its 2022 final dividend led to the abrupt departure of its chief executive in January. Analysts at RBC Capital Markets told clients that they saw "higher risks" to the outlook for the 2023 dividend after the latest update.

Direct Line, one of Britain's biggest car insurers, was caught out when a sharp rise in the price of second-hand cars and spare parts last year drove up the cost of claims, leading it to cut its profits guidance in July and November.

Deloitte's auditing of fashion firm investigated

Helen Cahill

The accountancy watchdog has started an investigation into Deloitte's audit of Joules before the retailer's collapse.

The Financial Reporting Council is scrutinising the audit group's overview of Joules' finances for the year ended May 30, 2021, as it steps up efforts to improve audit quality in the UK.

Joules fell into administration last year and its brand was bought by a joint venture formed by Next and the company's founder Tom Joule.

Deloitte said it was fully co-operating with the FRC.

The watchdog recently opened two investigations into another firm, EY, after corporate governance experts raised concerns about the consultancy fees it was deriving from its audit client Made.com. EY generated large fees from the collapsed retailer's initial public offering as well as the annual review of its accounts.

EY said it was "fully co-operating with the FRC during their inquiries".

The council has opened a separate investigation into EY over fees from an unnamed company it audits. The watchdog's ethical standards state auditors should generate no more than 70 per cent of their audit fees from other work for the same client.

EY is already under scrutiny for its audits of London Capital & Finance, NMC Health and Thomas Cook. It was fined £2.2 million over its audit of Stagecoach, the transport group.

PwC is under investigation for its auditing of Intu, the property giant that collapsed in 2020. PwC said: "We continue to make significant investment in our audit practice."

A £1 million fine for "rudimentary" failings in KPMG's audit of The Works was its 13th in five years.

The watchdog opens inquiries into audit work after an overview of the case by its conduct committee, chaired by David Willis, formerly of the law firm Herbert Smith Freehills. The committee assesses cases referred to it by accountancy firms themselves or whistleblowers, or drawn to its attention by media reports or other regulators.

The problems were compounded when freezing temperatures in December led to a jump in weather-related claims, including for homes that had been flooded by burst water pipes.

That prompted another profit warning the following month and the decision to cancel the dividend. Penny James, who had run Direct Line since May 2019, stepped down soon after.

Jon Greenwood, her acting successor, said the insurer was making "good progress" on restoring its margins through pricing. Direct Line said its gross written premium rose by 9.7 per cent to £805.7 million in the first quarter, driven by a 2.76 per cent jump at its commercial business. Gross written premium in motor edged up 3.3 per cent, while its home business saw a 2.1 per cent rise.

Its solvency ratio, a measure of financial strength, was "broadly unchanged" from December, when it was 147 per cent. Analysts expected a higher figure.

42

Business Unit Trusts

The Times unit trust information service

Social housing provider raises glass to Greene King owner's bid

Tom Howard

The Hong Kong-based owner of Greene King, the pubs group, looks set to buy one of Britain's biggest providers of social housing in a £485 million deal.

CK Asset Holdings, the vehicle controlled by Li Ka-shing, one of Asia's richest men, has offered 80p in cash for each share in Civitas Social Housing.

Although the bid is 44.4 per cent above Civitas's closing share price on Friday night, it is still 26.7 per cent below the company's net asset value.

Michael Wrobel, chairman of Civitas, said that CK's offer "undervalues the long-term prospects of Civitas" but recommended that its shareholders accept the proposal anyway.

Civitas shares rose 24.4p, or 44.6 per cent, to a shade above the 80p offer price yesterday, indicating that at least a few investors believed a better bid might be forthcoming.

Given the uncertainty around the real estate market, the shares of a number of London-listed landlords are trading at a sizeable discount to the value of their

property portfolios. The board of Civitas has bemoaned the "entrenched discount to net asset value" that its shares have traded at for some time despite having "delivered consistently on its financial and social impact objectives".

However, Wrobel conceded that "Civitas, and its sector as a whole, faces a number of challenges in sentiment which the public markets are unlikely to overcome in the short to medium term", hence his decision to back the deal.

He said: "The offer provides liquidity to shareholders with the opportunity to

exit in full and in cash at a significant premium to the current share price, in a time of macroeconomic uncertainty."

"Moreover, CKA, as a current investor in the social housing sector, has a detailed understanding of the attractive fundamentals of the real estate [market] and the expertise of the management team." If 75 per cent of shareholders back the sale, it is expected to complete this summer.

Li, 94, bought Greene King in 2019 for £4.6 billion. He is behind a number of property developments in London and

owns a big portfolio of specialist social housing in the UK. CK Asset Holdings is also an "indirect shareholder" in Civitas Investment Management, Civitas Social Housing's investment adviser.

Civitas, which made its debut on the London stock market in 2016, owns close to 700 specially adapted homes, which it rents out to housing associations and care providers looking after people with disabilities. Almost 4,600 people, many with learning or physical disabilities and mental health problems, live in its homes.

MALCOLM DENEMARK/AP; PAUL HENNESSY/REX SHUTTERSTOCK



Inmarsat merger is all clear for lift-off

Inmarsat's merger with its US rival Viasat has been cleared by the competition watchdog after an inquiry determined that

the \$7.3 billion merger would not harm competition (Helen Cahill writes). The Competition & Markets Authority has found that while both

companies are close competitors, they will still face competition from "emerging and established" companies. The regulator said the launch of Elon Musk's

Starlink showed there were enough new entrants into the space sector to provide effective competition to control consumers' internet costs.

Panasonic and Intelsat are investing in satellite communications and have both signed contracts with OneWeb. The deals will allow them to use OneWeb's

satellites to build their services with airlines. Richard Feasey, chairman of the CMA group carrying out the investigation, said: "The sector is evolving at

rapid pace — new companies are entering the market, more satellites are being launched, and firms are exploring and entering into new deals."

BUSINESS BRIEFING

Stock markets across the world remain volatile, while British companies are scrambling to cope with the effects of soaring costs.

With the situation changing by the hour, keeping up to date is essential. Get the latest news and market reaction by 8am, and analysis at 12.30pm, direct by email from the Business Editor, Richard Fletcher, and the Business News Editor, Martin Strydom.

Sign up at home.thetimes.co.uk/myNews



Mobile market in need of shake-up, says Three boss

Alex Ralph

The mobile network Three UK has warned that the market needs "structural change" in order for operators to continue investing in Britain.

Robert Finnegan, chief executive of Three UK, said that the company's returns remain below its cost of capital and questioned the industry's capacity to continue investing in the UK's digital infrastructure.

His comments come as Three and Vodafone seek to agree and receive regulatory support for a possible £15 billion merger to create Britain's biggest mobile network operator with about 28 million customers.

Frank John Sixt, the finance boss of CK Hutchison, the Hong Kong holding company that owns Three, said reaching an agreement between Britain's third and fourth-largest mobile operators was "extremely difficult".

Speaking alongside the group's first quarter trading update, he told investors that it was "probable" an under-

standing would be reached with Vodafone after months of talks. "They [Vodafone] are extremely difficult to draw a conclusion with on the one hand, but on the other hand they are, in the end, very good partners."

Any tie-up is likely to face intense scrutiny over competition and security issues, while the trade union Unite is already campaigning against the deal.

Vodafone confirmed that it was in talks with Hutchison over a non-cash transaction under which Vodafone would own 51 per cent and Hutchison 49 per cent of the combined business.

Vodafone, which has appointed Margherita Della Valle, formerly its chief financial officer, as its new chief executive, has attracted several large overseas strategic investors in recent months and is seeking to consolidate in certain European markets to boost its growth and share price.

Competition regulation has been a hurdle in the way of the industry going down from four to three big mobile players, but the companies received

encouragement in February last year when Ofcom, the industry regulator, indicated an easing of its concerns, saying that it would assess any consolidation on the "specific circumstances of that particular merger" rather than on the number of networks.

In a discussion paper on mobile markets Ofcom said that in a "well-functioning competitive market" not all participants may earn similar levels of returns. It said some had earned higher returns than others and in recent years, Vodafone and Three may not have covered their cost of capital.

Darren Purkis, Three UK's chief financial officer, said there was a more positive regulatory outlook towards consolidation "than we had six or seven years ago".

Karen Egan at Enders Analysis said: "The downward financial spiral of Three UK and Vodafone to an extent is signalling that the market is over-crowded and cannot support four nationwide players at these revenue levels and with an expanding cost base."

Ex-Sage chief Kelly steps in at WANdisco

James Hurley

Stephen Kelly, the former Sage boss, has been hired to lead WANdisco, the crisis-hit data software company.

Kelly will be interim chief executive and the business said it intends to make the role permanent if the shares suspension is lifted. The move comes days after WANdisco said it was planning to cut 30 per cent of its workforce following the discovery of an alleged sales fraud and a related accounting scandal.

Last month an independent investigation by FRP Advisory, the corporate consultancy, concluded that about \$15 million of recorded revenue and \$115 million of sales bookings linked to a senior employee were illegitimate. WANdisco had said previously that it feared recognised revenue of \$14.9 million in its 2022 accounts and \$115.4 million of sales bookings were false as a result of the suspected scam.

Kelly said: "I am a firm believer in the potential of WANdisco, and while there is much work to be done, I have relished my previous turnaround roles."

Business Markets

Emma Powell Tempus

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



NEWS IN BRIEF

Advertising up at Fox

Fox Corporation posted a \$50 million net loss for the first quarter, down from profit of \$290 million in the same period of last year, primarily due to legal costs following a recent settlement with Dominion Voting Systems. Total revenue at the business rose 18 per cent to \$4.08 billion in the three months to March 31, as advertising sales increased. Rupert Murdoch, the chairman of Fox Corp, is also executive chairman of News Corp, owner of The Times and The Sunday Times.

LinkedIn cuts 700 jobs

LinkedIn has become the latest technology company to announce job cuts. The networking app said it will cut 716 roles as it phases out its app in China. Ryan Roslansky, chief executive of LinkedIn, said the decision to close the app was due to "fierce competition and a challenging macroeconomic climate". The app in China was launched in 2021 and will be phased out by August 9. Microsoft, LinkedIn's parent company, has announced plans to lay off 10,000 jobs, close to 5 per cent of its global workforce.

Plea to stop FTX case

Sam Bankman-Fried, who denies stealing from customers of his FTX cryptocurrency exchange, has asked a judge to throw out criminal charges against him over the now-bankrupt FTX's collapse. In a filing in Manhattan federal court, his lawyers said that many cryptocurrency exchanges had collapsed during a broad market crash in 2022 and prosecutors had charged their client in a hasty "rush to judgment". The 31-year-old is on bail. Prosecutors have until May 29 to respond.

Tempur seals bed deal

Tempur Sealy International said it would buy the retailer Mattress Firm in a cash-and-stock deal valued at \$4 billion as the leading bedding maker looks to grow its business and stem a post-Covid sales weakness. The deal would give the combined company 3,000 stores worldwide, 30 online platforms and 71 manufacturing facilities. It is expected to close in the second half of 2024. Mattress Firm, part-owned by Steinhoff International, is among America's largest bedding retailers.

APPLE

Market cap	Q2 sales
\$2.73 trillion	\$94.8 billion

Among big technology stocks sunk by the end of easy money flooding financial markets and weakening consumer demand, Apple has been remarkably buoyant. The maker of the iPhone has recovered almost all of the ground lost since the start of last year, when it briefly became the first public company to reach a \$3 trillion market cap. The path to regaining that landmark valuation is in sight.

Second-quarter sales defied gloomy Wall Street forecasts, down 2.5 per cent year-over-year at \$94.8 billion, but 2.5 per cent higher if the impact of the stronger dollar against the basket of other currencies in which Apple sells its products and services is stripped out. Analysts had been looking for only \$92.9 billion for the quarter.

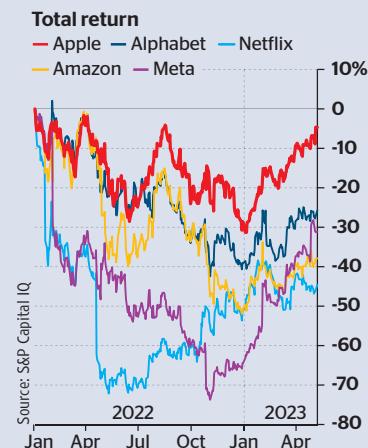
Crucially, demand for the iPhone, which accounts for just over half of Apple's net sales, has been more resilient than feared. Sales were 1.5 per cent higher at \$51.3 billion, also better than expected.

What does that reflect? Further inroads made into emerging economies, where Apple's share of the smartphone market is a sliver of more mature geographies like the US and UK. iPhone sales in markets including Indonesia, the Philippines and Mexico broke records during the first three months of this year.

India, where the first Apple stores were opened this year, is the next bright hope for pushing sales forward. Apple had an 18 per cent share of the Indian smartphone market by value last year, just behind Samsung, according to Counterpoint Research, the consultancy. But by volume of phones sold, the Cupertino-based group's slice of the market stood at 4 per cent. A fast-growing population and middle class mean there is plenty of room for Apple's premium hardware products to expand further into India.

As for last year's product shortages, sales have seemingly been deferred rather than lost altogether. The fallout from coronavirus outbreaks and unrest at the

Bearing fruit



ADVICE Buy

WHY More resilient iPhone sales and a recovery in services growth could cause sales to beat expectations again this year

manufacturing plant of Foxconn, Apple's supplier in the Chinese city of Zhengzhou, compounded supply disruption caused by Beijing's zero-Covid policies. Availability of iPhones has improved but Apple has started to shift more of its manufacturing to other countries including India and Vietnam.

China is not just crucial to supply but also the demand story. The decline in revenue in the last quarter decelerated to 3 per cent, from 7 per cent in the final three months of last year. Another improvement post-reopening could prove another fillip to sales growth.

Where do sales go from here? An annual decline in the top line of a similar magnitude is expected over the current quarter, assuming the macroeconomic situation doesn't worsen further. That partly reflects tougher competition for the Mac, which launched a new version of the Air, as well as a 4 percentage point impact on revenue growth from forex impacts. That would translate to third-quarter sales of around

True, services are hardly immune to tighter consumer spending. Digital advertising has taken a hit and time spent by consumers gaming online

Apple net sales by product

Q2 2022	Q2 2023
\$50.57bn	\$51.33bn
iPhone	
Mac	
\$10.44bn	\$7.17bn
iPad	
\$7.65bn	\$6.67bn
Wearables, home and accessories	
\$8.81bn	\$8.76bn
Services	
\$19.82bn	\$20.91bn

\$81 billion, at the top end of what analysts had forecast.

STEELY SERVICES SALES

A near 5 per cent rise in the shares on results day has pushed total gains since the start of this year to about 38 per cent. Improving investor confidence is reflected in an enterprise value of almost 21 times forecast earnings before interest, taxes and other charges, up from 15 at the start of this year. That is more generous than other big US tech names like Amazon or Facebook and the Instagram owner Meta Platforms, which have been dealt a far bloodier nose by the latest downturn.

Apple is better positioned to withstand darker economic conditions than fellow Faangs Facebook (Meta), Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google (Alphabet). Why? A base of installed users that now stands at a record of more than two billion — double the number just seven years ago. The major benefit? It allows Apple to sell more products and services to a loyal customer base. The services business, which sells software through the App Store, online storage space via iCloud and generates subscription revenue through its music, television and fitness platforms, carries an enviable gross margin of about 70 per cent.

True, services are hardly immune to tighter consumer spending. Digital advertising has taken a hit and time spent by consumers gaming online

has dropped since lockdowns ended. But if sales of services, which rose 5 per cent to a record \$20.9 billion in the latest quarter, can maintain their resilience, then it could provide some cushion against any lingering weakness in hardware sales. The number of paid subscriptions across its services rose to 975 million, up 150 million over the past 12 months.

The rate of growth in the services business trails a pre-pandemic average in the low teens. A re-acceleration in this revenue line later this year is one clear potential catalyst for the stock, analysts at Morgan Stanley point out. Another is the release of the iPhone 15, expected in September, which will bring with it a higher average selling price. If Apple can stay free of snarled-up supply chains, it could prove a far greater fillip to earnings than last year's iPhone 14 launch. Morgan Stanley forecasts a 10 per cent rebound in sales next year as pent-up iPhone demand is released and services revenue recovers.

A prudent approach to spending in the boom times prepared Apple to cope better with cooler demand. The group was one of few tech giants to resist heavy layoffs in recent months. Tim Cook, Apple boss, and co expanded headcount at about a quarter of the rate of Amazon and Meta Platforms between 2019 and the end of last year.

During that time, Apple staff numbers increased at a compound annual rate of 6 per cent, pretty much the same as during the three years running up to the outbreak of the pandemic. How does that compare with Amazon and Meta? Headcount for both grew at a rate of roughly 24 per cent a year over the same period.

Guidance for operating expenditure has been set at \$13.7 and \$13.9 billion this quarter, which is expected to contribute to a gross margin of 44 to 44.5 per cent, its strongest ever forecast for the June quarter. Component prices have also declined, a trend management expects to continue this year. Net cash stood at \$57 billion, which given its ambition to be net cash neutral over time, means investors should expect more share buybacks. Apple is one of the few US tech giants with a convincing route to growth.

PRICES

Major indices

New York	33561.81 (-56.88)
Dow Jones	12179.55 (-77.36)
Nasdaq Composite	4119.17 (-18.95)
S&P 500	
Tokyo	29242.82 (+292.94)
Nikkei 225	
Hong Kong	19867.58 (-429.45)
Hang Seng	
Amsterdam	748.38 (-4.30)
AEX Index	
Sydney	7456.70 (-15.40)
AO	
Frankfurt	15955.48 (+2.65)
DAX	
Singapore	3242.95 (-14.71)
Straits	
Brussels	3767.41 (-38.55)
BEL20	
Paris	7397.17 (-43.74)
CAC-40	
Zurich	

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Jun 23	100.70	100.85	100.12	100.33	180165	474772
	SEP 23	101.97	101.97	101.90	100.13	10	38
3-Mth Sterling	Jun 23						
	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
	Mar 24						
3-Mth Euribor	Jun 23	96.470	96.475	96.455	96.470	115830	504480
	Sep 23	96.280	96.305	96.270	96.285	124058	585152
	Dec 23	96.385	96.415	96.370	96.395	114297	360754
	Mar 24	96.595	96.640	96.590	96.620	104550	353561
	Jun 24	96.850	96.900	96.840	96.875	74887	292649
3-Mth Euroswiss	Jun 23						
	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
	Mar 24						
FTSE100	Jun 23	7787.0	7808.0	7731.5	7748.5	80518	605410
	Sep 23	7749.0	7763.5	7749.0	7761.0	5	718
FTSEurofirst 80	Jun 23				5817.5		
	Sep 23				5859.0		
Bank of England official close (4pm)							
CPI	128.87 Mar (2015 = 100)						
RPI	367.20 Mar (Jan 1987 = 100)						
RPIX	290.10 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)						
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)						
Morningstar Long/Short Commodity	4703.45 (+27.75)						

© 2021 Tradeweb Markets LLC. All rights reserved. The Tradeweb FTSE Gilt Closing Prices information contained herein is proprietary to Tradeweb; may not be copied or re-distributed; is not warranted to be accurate, complete or timely; and does not constitute investment advice. Tradeweb is not responsible for any loss or damage that might result from the use of this information.

Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 7.30pm)	Sep	75.09-75.07	Volume: 1784057
Liffe			
Crude Oils (\$/barrel FOB)			
Brent Physical	77.78	+1.83	
BFOE(Jul)	77.50	+2.14	
BFOE(Aug)	77.33	+2.18	
WTI(Jul)	73.62	+2.32	
WTI(Aug)	73.39	+2.36	
Products (\$/MT)			
Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)			
Premium Uild	807.00	810.00	
Gasoil EEC	663.50	664.50	
3.5 Fuel Oil	402.00	405.00	
Naphtha	594.00	582.00	
ICE Futures			
Gas Oil			
May	677.50-677.00	Aug	678.00-677.75
Jun	676.25-676.00	Sep	680.50-680.00
Jul	676.50-676.00		Volume: 644179
Brent (9.00pm)			
Jul	75.49-75.48	Oct	74.80-74.73
Aug	75.37-75.35	Nov	74.44-74.40
London Grain Futures			
Liffe Wheat (close £/t)			
May	186.00	Jul	190.00
Jun	186.00	Aug	190.00
Aug	186.00	Sep	190.00
Jan	186.00	Mar	190.00
Feb	186.00	Apr	190.00
Mar	186.00	May	190.00
Apr	186.00	Jun	190.00
May	186.00	Jul	190.00
Jun	186.00	Aug	190.00
Jul	186.00	Sep	190.00
Aug	186.00	Oct	190.00
Jan	186.00	Nov	190.00
Feb	186.00	Dec	190.00
Mar	186.00	Jan	190.00
Apr	186.00	Feb	190.00
May	186.00	Mar	190.00
Jun	186.00	Apr	190.00
Jul	186.00	May	190.00
Aug	186.00	Jun	190.00
Jan	186.00	Jul	190.00
Feb	186.00	Aug	190.00
Mar	186.00	Sep	190.00
Apr	186.00	Oct	190.00
May	186.00	Nov	190.00
Jun	18		



Stars come out to join RX3 Growth

A venture capital firm co-founded by the American football star Aaron Rodgers has raised almost \$150 million for its second fund, attracting investment from celebrities including the singer Christina Aguilera (Callum Jones writes).

RX3 Growth Partners said its consumer-focused Fund II was oversubscribed and attracted investment

from "limited partners" including Aguilera, Michael Phelps, the swimmer; and Colson Baker, the rapper best known as Machine Gun Kelly.

Actress Vanessa Hudgens, above, and Hartbeat Ventures, a firm co-founded by the comedian Kevin Hart and backed by JP Morgan, are also serving as "advisers".

The fund will be able to "enter new categories" as a result of the investment, RX3 said in a statement.

The firm, founded in 2018, has so far publicly backed 18 businesses, including Full Swing, a golf simulation business,

and Victor, a premium pet food company.

"This marks an exciting time for all at RX3," said Rodgers, a quarterback who spent 18 seasons at the Green Bay Packers before he was traded for the New York Jets this year.

"Our family of athletes, musicians, actors and business leaders not only adds to the unique RX3 community we have built, but also allows us to invest in and support category-leading growth-stage, consumer brands."

Rogers set up the firm with Nate Raabe, its managing partner, and investor Byron Roth.

The day's biggest movers

Company

Tui Rises ahead of interim results

IAG Peel Hunt tips to buy

Virgin Money Investors move in on recent weakness

JD Sports Eyes takeover of French sports retailer Courir

Natwest Higher bond yields

DCC CEO stepping back amid "medical condition"

Unite Group Another victim of rising bond yields

Great Portland Estates Property stocks hit by higher bond yields

Marshalls Profit warning

Victrex Gloomy forecast

Change

5.9%

3.5%

3.5%

1.2%

1%

-3.1%

-4.5%

-5.2%

-8.7%

-9.6%

Victrex suffers a crisis of confidence as shares slip

Jessica Newman Market report

There was no shortage of losers to pick from yesterday, and one of them was Victrex. The polymer manufacturer hardly had the best first half, with softer demand in its electronics, energy and industrial segments overshadowing growth in its aerospace, automotive and medical markets, causing the group's sales volume to drop 14 per cent. This contributed to pre-tax profit for the period declining 10 per cent to £39.1 million, against £43.6 million a year earlier.

While bosses at the FTSE 250 group said it had seen some improvement in monthly run-rates and easing energy inflation, pricing, and sales mix remain supportive, they admitted that full-year volumes "are

Wall Street report

Indices fell ahead of today's inflation data, which may give an idea on whether more rate rises are needed. The Dow Jones industrial average shed 56.88 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 33,561.81 and the S&P 500 lost 18.95 points, or 0.5 per cent, to 4,119.17.

still tracking to be down a double-digit percentage" following what was a record 2022.

But what was even more alarming was the company saying: "Delivering a pre-tax profit performance in line with the 2022 financial year and current expectations assumes a step up in demand during the latter part of the second half, driven by macroeconomic conditions."

That was enough for traders to sell. As a result, Victrex suffered its worst day this year, with shares closing down 160p, or 9.6 per cent, to £15.04.

UK equities also sank into the red as traders grew nervous before today's US inflation data and the Bank of England's interest rates decision tomorrow. The FTSE 100 index shed 14.29 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 7,764.09. The FTSE 250, slipped 175.46 points, or 0.9 per cent, to reach 19,277.04.

Rate-sensitive property stocks were among those hit hardest as bond yields rose. The student halls landlord

FINANCE

Sterling confounds critics

The pound could rise towards \$1.30 at the start of next year after a senior City analyst at one of America's biggest banks admitted that Britain's economic prospects were much better than expected.

Vasileios Gkionakis, head of European foreign exchange strategy at Citigroup, which has previously been more bearish about the outlook for the pound, said in a note that its predictions of a "material correction" in house prices and a collapse in consumption had not



The economy has been surprisingly resilient, a Citigroup analyst said

happened. "We have been wrong, plain, and simple. The reality is that, while inflation exhibits some idiosyncratic

persistence, contrary to what we expected, activity has proven far more resilient," the analyst said, according to The Daily Telegraph.

Sterling is currently trading close to a one-year high against the dollar at \$1.26 after a boost from strengthening economic activity and a more resilient housing market.

The stronger pound comes ahead of the Bank of England's interest rate decision tomorrow, where markets have priced in a near certainty of a 0.25 percentage point rate rise.

The shares rose 54p, or 3.5 per cent, to 156p. Other travel stocks were also in demand. Tui, which is due to unveil its interim results on Wednesday, gained 31p, or 5.9 per cent, to 562p, while Great Portland Estates gave up 28p, or 5.2 per cent, to 506p.

Ocado

, London's most shorted stock, was among the other heavy fallers, closing down 20p, or 4.1 per cent, to 475p, while DCC finished the day 15p, or 3.1 per cent, lower at £47.14 after the Irish services group said its boss Donal Murphy will step back for the next few weeks to address a medical condition.

Housebuilders suffered amid disappointing house price data from Halifax. That took its toll on Persimmon, which fell 32p, or 2.3 per cent, to £13.35, as well as Berkeley Group, which dipped 98p, or 2.2 per cent, to £43.68.

There were some better performers.

IAG

, the British Airways and Aer Lingus owner, flew to the top of the blue-chip leaderboard after Peel Hunt tipped clients to buy on the back of last week's strong first-quarter results.

Treatt, the British maker of flavours and scents, may have delivered record first-half revenues of £76 million, but investors were more concerned about the 26 per cent fall in pre-tax profits, which ultimately brought its shares down 14p, or 2.1 per cent, to 650p.

Directa Plus

, which makes and supplies graphene-based products, dropped 3p, or 4 per cent, to 71p after bagging an exclusive agreement with the Italian clothing group Alfredo Grassi.

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)					
Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Monday.					
Bullion: Open \$2021.00					
Close \$2031.24-2031.54 High \$2032.46					
Low \$2019.47					
AM \$2038.90 PM \$2000.95					
Kruggerrand \$1172.00-1244.00 (£928.71-985.77)					
Platinum \$1092.00 (£865.32)					
Silver \$25.60 (£20.29)					
Palladium \$1721.11 (£1363.84)					

European money deposits %

	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	4.20	4.63	4.74	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 4.25 ECB Refi 2.50 US Fed Fund 4.50-4.75

Halifax Mortgage Rate 3.99

Treasury Bills (Dis) Buy: 1 mth 4.420; 3 mth 4.540. Sell: 1 mth 4.230; 3 mth 4.300

1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
4.2013	0.000	4.6232	4.7447	0.000

Eurodollar Deps	5.26-5.38	5.31-5.46	5.04-5.04	4.67-4.67	3.82-3.82
-----------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.5401-8.5761	8.5721-8.5733	125ds	372ds
Euro	1.1522-1.1470	1.1516-1.1515	10pr	29pr
Montreal	1.6854-1.6913	1.6902-1.6903	0pr	4ds
New York	1.2580-1.2639	1.2619-1.2620	9pr	21pr
Oslo	13.245-13.359	13.346-13.350	124ds	348ds
Stockholm	12.812-12.876	12.871-12.874	211ds	592ds
Tokyo	169.86-170.59	170.54-170.54	70ds	216ds
Zurich	1.1213-1.1258	1.1244-1.1245	33ds	96ds
		Premium = pr		
		Discount = ds		

Dollar rates

Australia	1.4800-1.4801
Canada	1.3393-1.3398
Denmark	6.7926-6.7936
Euro	0.9125-0.9126
Hong Kong	7.8414-7.8415
Japan	135.14-135.15
Malaysia	4.4470-4.4520
Norway	10.576-10.578
Singapore	1.3278-1.3280
Sweden	10.199-10.202
Switzerland	0.8910-0.8911

Other Sterling

Argentina peso	287.79-287.80
Australia dollar	1.8677-1.8679
Bahrain dinar	0.4721-0.4790
Brazil real	6.2792-6.2830
Euro	1.1515-1.1516
Hong Kong dollar	9.8951-9.8962
India rupee	103.57-103.57
Indonesia rupiah	18608-18609
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3857-0.3880
Malaysia ringgit	5.6099-5.6162
New Zealand dollar	1.9943-1.9947
Singapore dollar	1.6756-1.6759
S Africa rand	23.484-23.496
U A E dirham	4.6312-4.6337

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia \$	1.867	+0.01
Canada \$	1.690	
Denmark Kr	8.573	+0.03
Euro €	1.152	
Hong Kong \$	9.892	-0.02
Hungary	427.673	+0.52
Indonesia	18582.530	+16.53
Israel Shk	4.623	+0.04
Japan Yen	170.378	+0.03
New Zealand \$	1.994	+0.01
Norway Kr	13.343	+0.08
Poland	5.245	+0.01
Russia	97.705	-0.18
S Africa Rd	23.462	+0.35
Sweden Kr	12.	

Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note that the information in the dividend yields column has been suspended due to technical problems at Morningstar, the provider.

12-month high and low Please note the 12-month high and low figures for shares supplied by Morningstar are based on intra-day figures, not closing prices.

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
313½	89½	Aston Martin Lag	209½	- 10	... -1.2	

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
6	...	Drumz◆	5

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
155	59½	EFG-Hermes Hldg	71½	+ 7½	... 4.5	
227	122½	EPE Special Ops◆	159	- 6	... 8.9	
1240½	817½	FBDi◆	1124½	... 5.0	...	
72½	67½	Fiske◆	67½	... 12.0	...	
78	59	Frenkel Topping◆	66	+ 1½	... 38.3	
840	548	Georgia Capital	800	+ 4	... 2.1	
915	682	Gresham House◆	800	+ 5	... 32.1	
506	320	H&T Group◆	457	+ 5	... 14.6	
52½	33	Hansard Global	49	... 16.9	...	
983	740½	Hargreaves Lansdown	788½	- 3½	... 14.0	
174½	143½	Helios Under◆	158½	... 17	...	
647½	442½	HSBC	599½	- ½	... 13.0	
847½	648	IG Group	732	+ 4	... 7.4	
883	500	Impax◆	832	+ 33	... 27.4	
1612	953½	Intermed Capital	1260	- 17½	... 7.2	
114	64½	IPF	97½	- ½	... 5.4	
171½	136	International Public P'ship	142½	- 3½	... 18.2	
546½	351½	Investec	446	- 1½	... 11.2	
253	253	Investment Co	325	... 11.6	...	
88	52½	IP Group	52½	- 2½	... 1.9	
230	94	Jarvis Securities◆	145	... 10.4	...	
179½	83½	Jupiter Fund Mgmt◆	127½	... 4	... 4.7	
95½	55½	Just Group◆	85½	+ ½	... 17	
664	368½	Lancashire Holdings	605½	+ 9	... 1.0	
284½	204	Legal & Gen◆	226	- 2½	... 6.9	
402	222	JPM Asia	349	... 9.1	...	
451½	239½	JPM Chinese	279½	- 3½	... 9.5	
726	626	JPM Caverhers	680	... 4.9	...	
120½	91	JPM Em Mkts	102½	- ½	... 10.1	
449	339	JPM Euro disc	417½	- 3½	... 14.1	
142½	107½	JPM GEM	128½	+ 1½	... 11.1	
481	386	JPM G661	451	- 2	... 1.1	
898	719½	JPM Indian	788	- 2	... 18.8	
353	301	JPM Jap Sml Co	313	+ 4	... 12.1	
510	408½	JPM Japan	468½	+ 4½	... 8.8	
1012	735	JPM Mid Cap	898	- 6	... 14.4	
104	85½	JPM Multi-Ass G&L	94½	... 2.7	...	
202	134½	JPM Em E	68X	+ 113½	...	
315	230	JPM Smllr Co	272	- 1	... 13.3	
244½	174	Keystone IT	208	+ 5	... 17	
871	649	Law Debenture	821	... 17	...	
135	99	Lowland	123	- ½	... 9.2	
223	156½	Majeed	215	... 11.2	...	
354	272½	M Currie Port	344	+ 3	... 1.5	
117	89½	Marway Val In	92½	... 44.3	...	
222	158½	Mercantile IT	201	- 3	... 13.6	
606	480	Merchants	572	- 1	... 0.8	
768	639½	Mid Wynd	687	- 3	... 1.2	
1102	875	Monks Inv Tst	966	- 11	... 10.1	
151½	104½	Montanero Eur Sml	139½	- 1½	... 12.8	
897	715	Murray Income Trust	871	- 4	... 7.2	
270	28½	Murray Int	266½	+ ½	... 1.8	
87½	70½	Nb Global Floating	73½	+ 1	... 7.9	
202	130	Prem Glb & Inf	144½	- 2	... 14.4	
309	229½	Pantheon Int	262	+ 1	... 42.8	
315	279½	Pershing Sq	2700	- 10	... 151	
502	463½	Personal Assets	484	- ½	... 0.6	
87½	70½	Schroder TotRt	412	+ 2	... 5.3	
324	254½	Schrod Int Gwth	307	+ 4	... 2.3	
626	454	Schrod UKmid	568	... 124	...	
26	11½	Schrod UK PP Tr	14½	+ 1½	... 47.5	
541	434	Scot American	532	+ 1	... 0.6	
937½	604½	Scot Mtge	618½	- 9½	... 20.4	
242	205	Secs 1st Soc	223	+ 2	... 0.8	
100½	75½	Sequoia Eco	82½	+ ½	... 11.3	
249½	195½	Temple Bar	230½	+ ½	... 6.2	
166	128½	Tipton Em Mkt	145	... 14.1	...	
393	233	Tiger Royal and Inv◆	1½	- 46.1	...	
427½	263	TR Property	289	- 8	... 6.6	
76	64½	Troy IncGtth	71½	+ ¾	... 3.8	
227	197½	Utilico Emerging Mkt	221	+ 5	... 14.9	
450	3165	Berkeley	4368	- 98	... 11.3	
1426	987	Big Yellow Group	1164	- 54	... 7.6	
455	181½	Billington Hldgs◆	440	... 35.7	...	

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	Dis(% or Pm)
1223½	928	ICG Ent Tr	1064	- 18	... -43.5	
486½	373½	Impax Env Mkts	405	- 2½	... -4.4	
374	279	Invesco Asia Tr	324	- 1	... -10.7	
186	141	Invesco BondInc	160	- 1½	... 1.9	
157½	110½	IPST Bal	133½	... 13.0	...	
258½	200	IPST Gbl Eq	231	... 11.9	...	
101½	92	IPST Managed	91	... 16.6	...	
186	141	IPK UK Eq	174½	+ 4½	... -10.0	
504	373½	IP UKsmallerCos	428	- 1	... -13.3	
800	650	JPM American	703	- 3	... -2.9	
402	222	JPM Asia	349	... -9.1	...	
451½	239½	JPM Chinese	279½	- 3½	... -9.5	
726	626	JPM Caverhers	680	... 4.9	...	
120½	91	JPM Em Mkts	102½	- ½	... -10.1	
449	339	JPM Euro disc	417½	- 3½	... -14.1	
142½	107½	JPM GEM	128½	+ 1½	... -11.1	
481	386	JPM G661	451	- 2	... 1.1	
898	719½	JPM Indian	788	- 2	... -18.8	
353	301	JPM Jap Sml Co	313	+ 4	... 12.1	
510	408½	JPM Japan	468½	+ 4½	... -8.8	
1012	735	JPM Mid Cap	898	- 6	... -14.4	
104	85½	JPM Multi-Ass G&L	94½	... 2.7	...	
202	134½	JPM Em E	68X	+ 113½	...	
315	230	JPM Smllr Co	272	- 1	... 13.3	
244½	174	Keystone IT	208	+ 5	... 17	
871	649	Law Debenture	821	... 17	...	
135	99	Lowland	123	- ½	... 9.2	
223	156½	Majeed	215	... 11.2	...	
354	272½	M Currie Port	344	+ 3	... 1.5	
117	89½	Marway Val In	92½	... 44.3	...	
222	158½	Mercantile IT	201	- 3	... 13.6	
606	480	Merchants	572	- 1	... 0.8	
768	639½	Mid Wynd	687	- 3	... 1.2	
1102	875	Monks Inv Tst	966	- 11	... 10.1	
151½	104½	Montanero Eur Sml	139½	- 1½	... 12.8	
897	715	Murray Income Trust	871	- 4	... 7.2	
270	28½	Murray Int	266½	+ ½	... 1.8	
87½	70½	Nb Global Floating	73½	+ 1	... 7.9	
202	130	Prem Glb & Inf	144½	- 2	... 14.4	
309	229½	Pantheon Int	262	+ 1	... 42.8	
315	279½	Pershing Sq	2700	- 10	... 151	
502	463½	Personal Assets	484	- ½	... 0.6	
87½	70½	Schroder TotRt	412	+ 2	... 5.3	
324	254½	Schrod Int Gwth	307	+ 4	... 2.3	
626	454	Schrod UKmid	568	... 124	...	
26	11½	Schrod UK PP Tr	14½	+ 1½	... 47.5	
541	434	Scot American	532	+ 1	... 0.6	
937½	604½	Scot Mtge	618½	- 9½	... 20.4	
242	205	Secs 1st Soc	223	+ 2	... 0.8	
100½	75½	Sequoia Eco	82½	+ ½	... 11.3	
249½	195½	Temple Bar	230½	+ ½	... 6.2	
166	128½	Tipton Em Mkt	145	... 14.1	...	
393	233	Taylor Royal and Inv◆	1			

Equity prices Business

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			
3½ 1½ N4 Pharma♦	1½	...	-2.2	8 3½ Bonhill Group♦	5½	35½ 15½ Condor Gld♦	32	-	½	450 207½ Serica Energy♦	228½ +	½	...	466 270 Restore♦	295	+	1½	...	35.1	110½ 24½ Iliko♦	45			
832½ 663½ Novartis	8311½ -	22½	10.5	172½ 71 Catalyst Media♦	140	-	5	...	1½ ½ Corcel♦	½	...	-0.3	...	13½ 8½ Shanta Gold♦	11½ -	½	...	7.1	600 331½ Ricardo	578	...	51.6	...	132½ 79½ Ingenta♦	111	...	64.9	...			
4 2½ Omega Diags♦	2½	...	-0.9	½ ½ Catenea♦	½	...	-0.2	9205½ 104½ DRD Gold	104½ +	2½	...	12.3	2604½ 1936½ Shell	2378	-	12½	...	600 408 Robert Walters	424	-	13	...	77 38 Intercede♦	60½ -	...	20.8	...				
11½ 4½ Ovoca Bio♦	6	...	-1.7	... Daily Mail§	270	-	2½	...	1½ ½ ECR Minerals♦	½	...	-3.4	...	2½ ½ Sound Energy♦	1½ -	...	11.8	20 11½ Roebuck Food Grp♦	15½ -	½	...	2.3	200 112 Iomart♦	176½ +	12½	19.4	...				
562 297 Oxford Biomedica	401	-	14	... 18.0	150 100 DCD Media§	100	-	30	...	21 4½ Edenville Energy♦	4½	...	-0.3	...	½ ½ Sunrise Resources♦	239 95½ RPS Group	221	-	1	...	59½ 24 IQE♦	25½			
5 2 Physiomics♦	3½ +	½	69 43 Ebiquity♦	48	+	½	...	1½ ½ Empyrean Energy♦	1½ -	...	-8.5	...	½ ½ Tertiary Minerals♦	½ -	...	-3.9	1159 812 RS Group	862½ +	½	...	21.8	24 16 RTC Group♦	17			
5 3½ Proteome Scies♦	4½	1466 951 Euromoney In Inv	1460	+	2	...	2184 1461 Endeavour	2078	+	10	...	30.9	2½ ½ Thor Mining♦	½ -	...	-1.7	443½ 238½ RWS Hdg§	248½ -	2½	...	22.8	1893½ 1034 LG Electronics	1418½ -	47½	3.7	...		
6808 5556 Reckitt Benckiser	6468	+	34	...	2060 1049 Future	1052	-	44	...	36½ 15½ EnQuest	16½ +	½	1.0	...	5355½ 3914½ Total Eng SE	4810½ -	60½	...	11.0	440 365 Science Group♦	406	...	18.7	...	532 256½ Micro Focus Int'l	532	+	½	-5.6		
63½ 31½ RUA Life Sciences♦	43½ -	...	-4.2	1400 930 GlobalData♦	1270	...	62.8	...	8½ 2½ Eurasia Mining♦	2½ -	½	½ ½ Tower Resources♦	-2.2	70½ 45 MTI Wireless♦	51	-	½	...	16.9	120½ 50 Hyve Group	120½ +	½			
230 70 Sareum Hdg§	135	-	7½	...	120½ 50 Hyve Group	120½ +	½	3 ½ Europa Oil&Gas♦	1	...	9.7	57½ 26 Tullow Oil	26	-	½	...	2.6	55½ 17½ Nanoco Gp	17½ -	½							
1321½ 98½ Smith & Neph‡	1258	-	8	28.5	196 46½ IG Design Grp♦	162½ -	6½	...	193½ 97½ Ferrexpo	110	...	0.8	½ ½ UK Oil & Gas♦	-2.3	108½ 62½ Netcall♦	99½ -	½	250 203 Spire Hcare	238 +	1½					
35 7½ Synairgen♦	8	-	½	-0.3	90 55½ ITV‡	78½ -	½	8.4	968 644 Fresnillo‡	717	-	13	...	1½ ½ Vast Res♦	½ -	...	-0.1	54 32½ Staffline Gp♦	39½	...	30.3	...	72½ 35 Northamer♦	37½				
70 42 Tissue Regenix♦	57	+	¾	...	10½ 4½ Jaywing♦	4½	39 19½ Galantus Gold♦	21½ -	...	-3.6	...	½ ½ Victoria Oil&Gas‡	3½ -	...	-1.8	48½ 14½ Serco	151½ +	1	...	6.2	46½ 15½ Totally	21½ -	½	33.7	...			
46½ 15½ Totally	21½ -	½	33.7	...	9½ 1½ Live Company Gp♦	2½	...	-0.4	7½ 2½ GCM Resources♦	2½ -	...	-2.3	...	½ ½ W Resources♦	2½ -	...	-0.3	188½ 14½ Synectics♦	106	420 295 Tristel♦	332½ -	...	68.5	...				
28½ 8½ ValiRx♦	9½	62½ 25 Gem Diamonds	25½ -	½	2.6	4½ 2½ Westmount Engry♦	2½ -	...	-0.4	94 35 Tribal♦	39½ +	½	...	12.4	47 26½ Merit Grp♦	46½ -						
55 19 Mirada♦	19	...	-0.8	55½ 42 Mission Group♦	51½ -	...	8.7	578 400 Glencore‡	446½ +	2	...	16.3	6 1½ Xtract Resources♦	1½ -	...	-3.1	90 49 Vianet♦	72	2½ 1 Westminster♦	1½ -	...	-1.5	...					
68½ 42½ Moneysupermarket‡	272½ +	2½	27.8	...	1306½ 1330½ Gold Fields	1330½ +	21½	...	1½ ½ Global Petrol♦	½ -	...	-2.7	7½ ½ Woodbois♦	½ -	...	1.4	89 49 Vianet♦	37½ +	4½	...	-5.3	280½ 167 Moneysupermarket‡	272½ +	2½	27.8	...					
145½ 54½ Accsys Tech♦	65½ -	1707½ 1189½ News Corp A	1348½ -	10½	...	10.4	12½ 7½ Goldplat♦	8½ -	½	6.4	7½ ½ Zephyr Energy♦	4½ -	1306½ 1330½ Gold Fields	1330½ +	21½	...	20.4	107½ 50 Shearwater Grp	62	38.4				
4728½ 339½ BASF	4068½ -	11½	8.0	...	172½ 108½ Quarto	164½ +	2	9.1	...	12½ ½ Galantus Gold♦	4 -	½	12½ ½ Indepen Res♦	165½ 95½ Shaftesbury Cap	114	-	2½	...	33.5	53½ 31½ Smartspace S'ware♦	43	...	-4.5	...		
5839½ 4148½ Bayer DM50	5065½ +	1½	59.1	...	126½ 67 Reach	83½ -	3½	9.2	...	13½ ½ Greatid Gld♦	9	12½ ½ Ironveld♦	½ -	1441 1071 Softcat‡	1332	-	32	...	286½ 168 Spirent Comms‡	174½ -	3½	16.2	...			
225 46½ Biome Tech♦	120	-	7½	...	11½ ½ REACT Grp♦	1½ -	...	-17.8	...	168 85 Horizonte Minrls♦	140	-	½	...	13½ ½ Karel Diam Res♦	4 -	12½ ½ Card Factory	102	-	1½	...	54 24½ SRT Marine♦	43½ -	½			
3½ 1½ Byotrol♦	1½	2722 2081 Relx‡	2479	+	45	...	16½ 18½ Hunting PLC‡	219½ -	1½	...	-5.5	115½ 51½ Hochschild	81½ +	3½	7.9	...	112½ 20½ Tele. Ericsson	424½ -	6½	7.7	...							
7 6½ Camb Gbl Timber♦	6½ -	...	-9.0	...	663 445½ Rightmove‡	566½ -	13½	...	10.2	160½ 15½ Igas Energy♦	18	-	½	-0.9	112½ 40½ Ashtead	4627	-	10	...	1052½ 860 Tracsis	975	+	25	...							
129 87½ Elementis	122½ -	1½	150 65 SpaceandPeople♦	96½ -	13½ ½ Indepen Res♦	12½ ½ Trakm‡	16½ -	½	12½ 21½ Trakm‡	147½ -	2½	16.1	...							
32½ 11 Hardide♦	13	+	½	-2.5	320 245 STV Group‡	250	+	1	...	168 85 Horizonte Minrls♦	140	-	½	...	115½ 54 AssetCo	54	...	0.3	...	1380 222½ Wandisco‡	1310							
2373 1784 Johnson Math	1909½ -	34	...	24.0	32½ 2081 Relx‡	2479	+	45	...	160½ 15½ Igas Energy♦	18	-	½	-0.9	148 113½ Begbies Traynor	133	-	2	...	916 415 Water Intel♦	420	-	7½	...							
1705 1242 Mondi‡	1285½ +	3½	9.8	...	106½ 15½ Rightmove‡	566½ -	13½	...	12.0	212 215 Blanco Tech♦	177½ -	148 104½ DFS Furn‡	125½ -	...	6.6	...	241 144½ Xaar	186	+	4	...							
100 77½ Robinson♦	93½ -	320 245 STV Group‡	250	+	1	...	12½ ½ Indepen Res♦	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
368½ 241½ DS Smith	312½ -	3½	...	17.7	320 245 STV Group‡	250	+	1	...	12½ ½ Ironveld♦	1½ -	...	-4.7	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
731½ 437½ Swire Pacific	608½ -	16½	310 122½ System1 Group♦	210	...	10.0	...	12½ ½ Ironveld♦	½ -	...	-4.7	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
19½ 8½ Symph Environ♦	8½	2952½ 2240½ 21st Cent Fox Inc A	2533	-	17	...	12½ ½ Ironveld♦	½ -	...	-4.7	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
332½ 88 Synthomer	113½ -	4	...	2.3	2733½ 2113½ 21st Cent Fox Inc B	2327½ -	15½	...	12.7	16 7½ Jubilee Metals♦	8½ -	...	7.2	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
2720½ 2100 Takeda Pharm	2716½ +	2½	...	15.2	16 7½ Jubilee Metals♦	8½ -	...	7.2	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...									
7 3 Velocys♦	3½ +	½	...	-4.5	356 222 Wilmington	275	+	7	...	16 7½ Jubilee Metals♦	8½ -	...	7.2	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
1931 1504 Victrex	1504	-	160	17.9	356 222 Wilmington	275	+	7	...	16 7½ Jubilee Metals♦	8½ -	...	7.2	...	1275 670½ Dunelm	1160	+	3	...	1236 1012 Gamma Comms♦	1140	+	6	...							
65																															

DAD'S ARMY

Captain Mainwaring by Steiff

A comedy legend brought to life in an exclusive limited-edition collector bear

*** NOW LISTEN EVERYONE, I HAVE
SOME VERY IMPORTANT NEWS... ***

"Dad's Army" is one of the nation's most loved comedy programmes. In its hey-day, the series attracted audiences of 18 million viewers per week with its gentle humour.

Now, Steiff have created a very special tribute to the self-proclaimed leader of the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guards. Presenting **Captain Mainwaring** - a superb limited-edition collector bear exclusively available from Danbury Mint.

A TV favourite brought to life by Steiff

His glorious light brown fur is made of genuine mohair – one of the most beautiful and sustainable natural fibres in the world. Just look at his jacket's neat military styling with the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard insignia intricately embroidered on his sleeve, and his fabulous peaked cap finished with a replica cap badge..

Danbury Mint, Davis Road, Chessington KT9 1SE.
Order online at www.danburymint.co.uk

Telephone orders on 0344 557 1000

Captain Mainwaring by Steiff

Please reserve ____ (q'ty) **Captain Mainwaring Bear(s)** for me as described in this offer. My satisfaction is guaranteed.

Please charge my credit/debit card in monthly instalments.

Card No. Mastercard Visa/Delta

Card expiry date _____ Signature _____

I will pay by cheque or postal order.

We'll invoice you for the first instalment.

SEND NO MONEY NOW

Title _____ First name _____
(Mr/Mrs/Miss etc.) (please print clearly)

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone No. _____

Email address _____

A division of MBI, Inc. No overseas orders accepted. We may process your information and share it with carefully considered companies to enhance the services we provide. For more information see our Privacy Notice at www.danburymint.co.uk.

OFFER CODE:
H10371



Actual size of
bear is 10" (27cm)
standing

Naturally, you'll find the famous Steiff button in **Captain Mainwaring's** left ear along with a white label with red writing that signifies his special limited-edition status. Not only is he available exclusively from Danbury Mint, but only 3,000 bears can ever be made.

Risk free – affordable monthly instalments

Captain Mainwaring can be yours for five interest-free monthly instalments of £59.80 (plus £1.96 postage and handling) – a total price of £299 (plus £9.80 p&h). If you are not completely satisfied, simply return him within 90 days for a FULL refund – including our postage and handling charge!

Pre-order now! Go to www.danburymint.co.uk or call 0344 557 1000. Alternatively, post your order form today, to: Danbury Mint, Davis Road, Chessington KT9 1SE.



Steiff

Makers of the world's most valuable bears.



Worldwide Theatrix Ltd

Dad's Army © James Perry Productions and Worldwide Theatrix Limited 2023. All Rights Reserved.



Actress who carved a niche playing Jewish mothers
Maria Charles
page 50



Obituaries

Bill Newton-Smith

Oxford philosophy don who was expelled from Czechoslovakia during the Cold War and later worked closely with George Soros

As a philosopher, Bill Newton-Smith believed that the founding principle of his subject was freedom to think in the first place without fear of imprisonment. That belief took him from the considerable comforts he enjoyed as a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, to behind the Iron Curtain, ultimately to arrest, interrogation and banishment from a snowy Czechoslovakia at the height of the Cold War in 1980.

In 1979 Balliol's department of philosophy had received a letter from Julius Tomin, a Czech philosopher who had begun informal tutorials in private homes in Prague after a recent purge of university "radicals". The letter was also sent to Cambridge and Harvard, but only the Canadian-born Newton-Smith acted decisively.

Fascinated by espionage and being an avid reader of spy thrillers, Newton-Smith was soon the protagonist in his own after planning a series of underground lectures in Czechoslovakia.

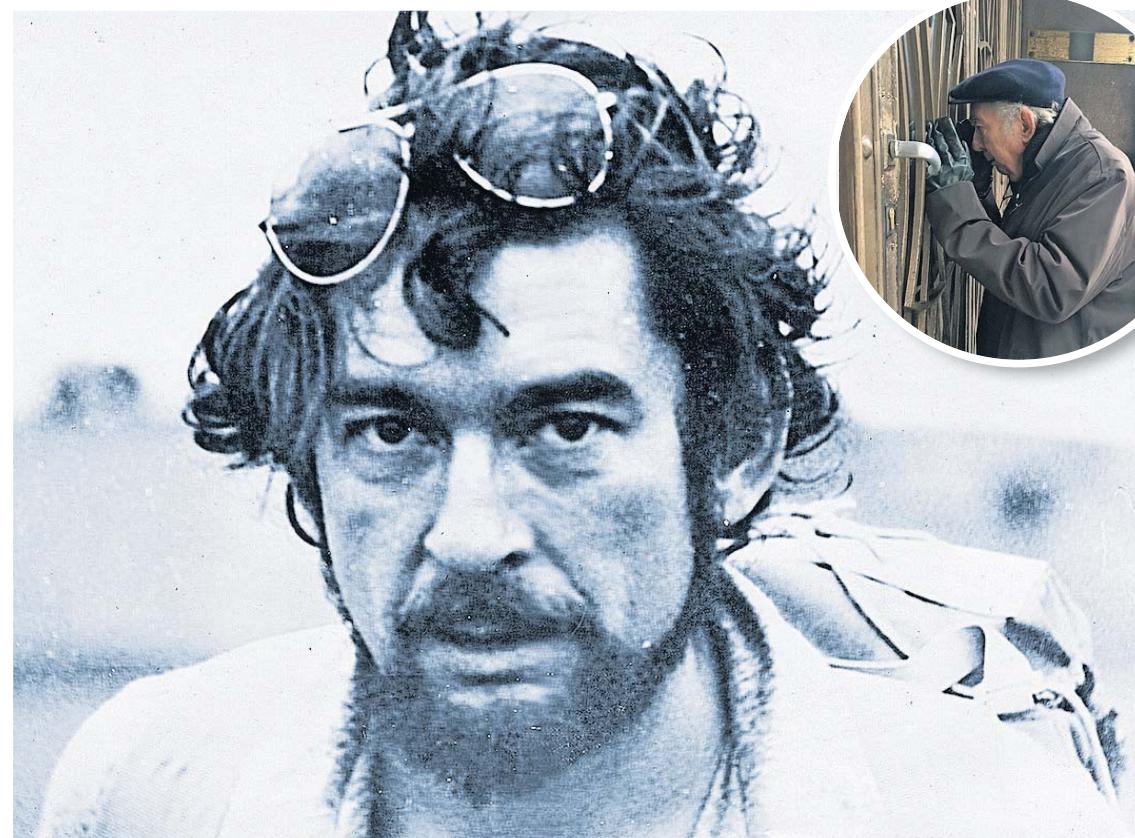
His colleagues Kathy Wilkes and Roger Scruton (obituary, January 13, 2020) went first, but by the time Newton-Smith arrived in late 1980, the secret police were becoming suspicious about the "underground university", especially after an article by Tomin about life in the Czech "security state" was published in *The New Statesman*.

In a private flat in Prague, Newton-Smith was 15 minutes into his lecture on the logic of science when there was a fierce knock on the door, which was opened to a dozen uniformed officers. Newton-Smith was arrested and taken away for interrogation. "The security men tried repeatedly to get me to say false things about Julius," recalled Newton-Smith, whose last sight of Tomin was of him being manhandled with blood on his face.

Finally, in the middle of the night, the Oxford don was driven to a snow-covered border crossing with West Germany — but not before his spy thriller turned into a farce. First, the Russian-built police car broke down. A decent amateur mechanic, Newton-Smith opened the bonnet and fixed it for them. Then the security men got lost and had to stop and ask for a map.

His expulsion from Czechoslovakia made headlines around the world, boosting the cause of academic dissidents behind the Iron Curtain. It also led to Newton-Smith meeting the Hungarian-American financier and philanthropist George Soros. Over lunch they had a fierce debate on the merits of the Austro-British philosopher Karl Popper (Newton-Smith was not a fan). He displayed no sycophancy towards Soros and mutual respect developed quickly. In 1991 Soros appointed Newton-Smith to help run his Open Society Foundation. The philosopher's first task would be to found the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, where Newton-Smith was the first rector from 1991 to 1993. The idea, backed by an \$880 million endowment from the billionaire Soros, was for an independent and international university for the wider region that would educate a new corps of regional leaders to help usher in democracy across the region after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Soros's cheque came with pressure. "I want students here in September," he



Newton-Smith in 1982 and below in 2019. Right, in 2016 peering into the Czech security police HQ where he had been held

told Newton-Smith, who used all his contacts to find visiting tutors as well as a hastily acquired set of buildings. The deadline was met, the university opened in the autumn of 1991 and became a totem for a growing agenda, championed by President Clinton and others, to open up opportunities for people in former oppressed states.

Both for Soros's foundation and for the World Bank, Newton-Smith would go on to found or overhaul 35 universities in former Soviet republics, the Middle East and the Global South — from Al-Quds University in Palestine to the American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in Moscow, Minsk, Kyiv, Bucharest and Bratislava — aimed at spreading the ethos of open academic debate so that when virgin democracies started to become another dictatorship in all but name, there were enough people around not to be fooled.

William Herbert Newton-Smith was born in Ontario in 1943 to Jack Newton-Smith, an Anglican clergyman, and Kathleen, a schoolteacher. He attended many schools as his father moved between ministries, and at Richmond Hill High School in Toronto his interest in philosophy was

piqued by reading Bertrand Russell's 1927 essay *Why I Am Not a Christian*. Newton-Smith chose to apostatise immediately as he decided that he did not need religion to explain the world.

As an undergraduate in mathematics and philosophy at Queen's University, Ontario, Newton-Smith had perhaps his most formative moment of all, travelling to East Germany in 1964 as part of a UN exchange and visiting his female pen-pal in Zittau. Profoundly shocked by the Volkspolizei, the barbed wire and the minefields on the border, he resolved to return one day.

He went on to study for a master's in philosophy at Cornell University in New York state and completed his DPhil at

Oxford. In 1974 he became a fellow of Balliol, taught philosophy and would later become senior proctor. His books on the philosophy of science include *The Structure of Time* (1980), *The Rationality of Science* (1981) and *Logic* (1984).

The Structure of Time was reprinted by Routledge in 2020, 40 years after original publication, with interest in the subject revived after the death of Professor Stephen Hawking in 2018. It explored the philosophical question of what is time? Newton-Smith rejected the theory that time is a container into which events are placed. Instead he

claimed that "empty" time is possible, and showed through a discussion of the structure of time — considering whether it might be cyclical, branching, beginning or non-beginning — that the absolutist theory of time is untenable.

As a philosopher of science, he averred that "no scientist should ever claim that they'd proved their theory to be true ... We have enough evidence from history to know that even our favourite theories today are going to end up being inadequate somewhere".

When the police car taking him to the border broke down, he fixed it

Ultimately, though, he took a benign view that science is taking us in the right direction: "Scientific theories come and go but the theories that replace them often contain successes in the previous theory."

Always a sceptic of dogma and keenly aware of the sociology of knowledge and different cultural interpretations of rationality, Newton-Smith was also among those who founded Project Syndicate in Prague in the 1990s: an initiative to collate diverse opinions from newspaper columns on current affairs from around the world. With his Oxford colleague Wilkes, he created the Inter-University Foundation to fund participants from former communist countries in philosophy of science courses.

Newton-Smith loved the outdoors and nature and often considered the world through this prism. He was an expert horseman and lived on a farm in the Brecon Beacons (now Bannau

Brycheiniog) with his second wife, the award-winning Canadian foreign television correspondent Nancy Durham, whom he met at a party in Toronto in 1981. They married at the end of 1989 and honeymooned in a freezing Moscow, where Newton-Smith impressed with his ability to procure caviar, taxis and tickets for the ballet — the secret was as many packets of Marlboro that he could get his hands on.

She said that she knew better than to get into an argument with her husband, a practised logician: "He always wins." In recent years the couple started a highly successful lavender farm, the first in Wales, developing products based on essential oils and sold from their shop in Hay-on-Wye.

They played backgammon of an evening, keeping an aggregate score of their matches going back 20 years. During lockdown they worked through Newton-Smith's cellar of vintage wines, making tasting notes.

An ebullient, unpretentious man with a dry sense of humour and a twinkle reflecting in his glassy dark eyes, he belied the stereotype of the quiet and cerebral philosopher. He was socially undeterred by the neurological condition that caused his arm to tremor — he said that it cured itself when he had a glass of wine in his hand.

He never believed that the battle for ideas was won. In 2020 the CEU, which had grown over the years to 1,243 students from 90 countries, was forced out of Hungary by the reforms of the increasingly autocratic prime minister Viktor Orban. The university has since relocated to Vienna.

Newton-Smith's final venture in academe was to become the founding chairman of Black Mountains College (BMC) in Wales, the first university in the UK dedicated to climate change and sustainability. The university's founder, Ben Rawlence, had sought him out. Newton-Smith told him he was "mad" for conceiving such an ambitious idea but became his mentor and used his connections to help Rawlence raise funds. A fine cook, Newton-Smith even hosted a fundraising dinner at his farm, serving an enormous game pie with "BMC" inscribed in pastry. It had the desired effect: that evening they secured the university's biggest donation to date. Black Mountains College, based in Talgarth, will take its first cohort of students, studying for a BA in sustainable futures, this autumn.

Newton-Smith's first marriage, to Dorris Heffron, had ended in divorce. He is survived by their two daughters. Apple serves as an Ontario Court Justice. His other daughter, Rain, recently took over as director-general of the embattled Confederation of British Industry after allegations of rape and sexual misconduct at the organisation led to a shake-up in its leadership. Facing an enormous challenge to reform the CBI as companies cancel their membership, she will need to be philosophical at times, but does not lack for inspiration.

Bill Newton-Smith, philosopher of science, was born on May 25, 1943. He died of throat cancer on April 8, 2023, aged 79

Register

Captain Ray Hazan

President of St Dunstan's (now Blind Veterans UK) who lost his sight in 1973 as a result of a parcel bomb sent by the IRA

In 1972 the Provisional IRA began an intensive bombing campaign. Soon the centre of Londonderry, where Martin McGuinness was IRA commander, resembled its near namesake in the Blitz. The following year parcel bombs were sent to high-profile targets in both Northern Ireland and the mainland.

On October 3, 1973, Captain Raymond Hazan was a company second-in-command with 2nd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment in Londonderry when a parcel was delivered to the United Technologies "Essex" electrical factory in Bligh's Lane near the nationalist Creggan estate.

Precisely how, and to whom it was addressed, was never clearly established, but the CLF (Commander Land Forces), Major General (later General Sir) Peter Leng was visiting that day, and the parcel was given to one of his escort, who took it to the nearest military unit — Hazan's.

"I asked him where he got it from," Hazan recalled in a BBC interview the following year. "My maths wasn't very good and two and two didn't equal four. It went off and everything suddenly went black. I was 28, had been married three years and was about to be a father in about five months' time."

The bomb killed Second Lieutenant Lindsay Dobbie of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC), and Hazan lost his right hand and his sight.

Raymond (Ray) Lazare Hazan was born in 1945 in Cheshire, the eldest of two sons and twin daughters, to Jewish parents. His father, Victor Hyam Hazan (obituary, December 8, 2006), a war-commissioned officer in the South Lancashire Regiment, had been recruited by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) for his linguistic ability and in 1942 was parachuted into Vichy France to help train the Resistance in the use of plastic explosives. It was a doubly hazardous undertaking after a German order in January for Jews throughout France to be rounded up. He subsequently worked with the psychological warfare department in Cairo, and after the war joined the new Nato headquarters in Paris for translation work, where his children also acquired a facility with French.

Ray Hazan was educated at Charter-

house, where he was head of house, head of choir and head of the combined cadet force. Lean, with dark good looks and proven leadership, he went straight to Sandhurst at 18 for the two-year course and was commissioned in 1965.

Two years later, when his battalion was serving on a UN tour of duty in Cyprus, he met Jennifer Marriner, who was finishing her A-levels in Dhekelia, where her father was an RAOC officer. They married in 1970 and had two sons: Jonathan, a former Royal Tank Regiment officer, now an executive coach; and Giles, a doctor. All survive him.

The marriage was dissolved, however, and in 1988 Hazan married Margaret Johnson, whom he met while working for St Dunstan's, the charity for blind veterans, where she was the archivist. Margaret died in 2021.

After months of hospital treatment, and rehabilitation at the charity's training establishment at Brighton, in 1974 Hazan was formally discharged from the army in the rank of captain. In 1976

I knew I had to be a father to my son and this challenge kept me going'

he followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Nato school of interpreting, by then in Belgium, leaving the following year to become assistant public relations officer at St Dunstan's.

The charity (now Blind Veterans UK) had been founded in 1915 by the newspaper proprietor Sir Arthur Pearson, who had become blind from glaucoma. Alarmed by the number of troops returning from France with serious eye injuries, many sustained in mustard gas attacks, he donated £5,000 towards a special home for them "to learn to be blind". St Dunstan's Lodge in Regent's Park was purchased, now the site of Winfield House, the residence of the US ambassador.

One of the first things Hazan did on joining the staff was to set up a ski club. Spectacular falls and collisions seemed to cause more distress to the guides than to the blind skiers, who would get up, brush the snow (and often blood) from their faces and carry on. Hazan



Hazan commanded respect and inspired people, according to those around him

recounted how "we have a chap here who lost his left hand and his sight, so when we go skiing together, we share gloves. He has the right one and I have the left one."

In 2004 Hazan became president of St Dunstan's, and later of the International Congress of War Blinded Associations. There was increasing work to be done, with troops blinded in later years in Northern Ireland, and then Iraq and Afghanistan. He commissioned research to understand

better what type of support was most beneficial in helping veterans recover their independent life, and which element of assistance — emotional, practical and financial — was most important to them.

Some 50 per cent responded that practical support was most important, followed closely by emotional, with only 15 per cent stating that financial help was the most essential. "This led me to reflect on my own experiences," Hazan said in 2009. "My thoughts are

that the recent debate surrounding the financial support of UK veterans, while important, should also call for a focus on a holistic approach to care within the ex-service community — one which embraces the financial, emotional and practical. After the blast, my world came to a grinding halt: the sense of loss was like a bereavement. The thought that I would never read, kick a football or see my children was an extreme blow, and I felt almost paralysed with shock."

He recalled how his first recognition that he hadn't lost everything came just a few weeks after the explosion. "I was visited by a member of the St Dunstan's team, who gave me a tactile watch and taught me to tell the time through touch. It was this practical support which for the first time made me realise I could regain independence — it was something to live for."

He remembered his first day at St Dunstan's, some six weeks after the blast: "I heard the chatter and laughter of other St Dunstaners and thought, 'Perhaps blindness isn't that bad.' The positive attitude of those I met was catching ... My son was born a few months later and I had no opportunity to get down or introspective. I had to be a father to my son and this was another challenge to keep me going. The thought of getting back to work was hugely motivating for me. I wanted to be able to provide for my family."

Hazan was appointed OBE in 2012, and finally stood down as president in 2017. His successor said of him that he "had the unique ability to both command respect and to inspire people at the same time. A fantastic orator, he was an intelligent, articulate, thoughtful and charismatic man."

Ray Hazan would often tell a joke but invariably fail to get to the punchline before laughing uncontrollably. When asked why he so often laughed at his own jokes he'd reply simply: "Because I've heard them before and they're so funny."

Captain Ray Hazan OBE, president of St Dunstan's (Blind Veterans UK), was born on February 8, 1945. He died on April 2, 2023, of ischaemia and atherosclerosis complicated by dementia, age 78

Maria Charles

Actress who carved a niche playing Jewish mothers and missed the premiere of a show after getting into a brawl with the lead



Charles in Sondheim's Follies, 1987

the Roaring Twenties at Madame Dubonnet's finishing school in the French Riviera. She remained for the play's run of four-and-a-half years at Wyndham's and ten years later starred in the sequel, *Divorce Me, Darling!*.

She was born Maria Zena Schneider in Croydon in 1929 to Jewish parents Celia (née Ashkenaza), a gifted

amateur pianist, and David, a hairdresser. He wanted her to work in his salon but Maria was so set on becoming an actress that she gave customers deliberately bad haircuts as an apprentice and played truant from school so that her parents would send her to drama school instead.

The ploy worked and after attending Wallington County School for Girls she trained at the Sylvia Bryant Stage School and later at Rada, lying about her age to get in. At 16 she was cast in her first London show, *Pick-Up Girl*, a play set in a juvenile court. Charles was the wayward teenager Ruby Lockwood, who hosts debauched parties frequented by older men and who leads the protagonist Elizabeth Collins (played by Patricia Plunkett) astray. Charles later acted the same role in the 1957 ITV Television Playhouse adaptation.

Lionel Blair was a teenage boyfriend but in 1952 she married the actor Robin Hunter, whom she had met at Buxton rep theatre in her early twenties. They divorced 14 years later after he had an affair with the actress Amanda Barrie, whom he subsequently married. She is survived by their two daughters: Kelly

is an actress and director, and Sam is a production stage manager.

The 1960s were a chequered decade for Charles. The single mother worked as a cleaner between acting jobs and even turned her hand to cabaret at the West End's Pigalle Club, reckoned the smartest burlesque in town.

In the 1970s she enjoyed something of a revival when she carved a niche for herself playing what were then considered archetypal Jewish mothers. In 1976, when Charles was sharing a riverside flat in Barnes with a bachelor 15 years her junior, the 47-year-old landed a role as the clingy mother Rita Green in the BBC *Play for Today* episode *Bar Mitzvah Boy*. A year later she played Bea Fisher, the prying mother of an agony aunt played by Maureen Lipman in the sitcom *Agony*. Her characters were always dolled-up in elegant tiger-print outfits and stiletto heels.

She appeared in the 1981 TV series *Brideshead Revisited* as the hard-as-nails nightclub owner Ma Mayfield. She also returned to her musical roots, playing Yente opposite Topol in *Fiddler on the Roof* (1983) and the charismatic coquette Solange LaFitte in Stephen

Sondheim's *Follies* (1987). She was also an acting teacher, coaching a young Daniel Craig.

Charles charmed a new generation of viewers as Lena Thistlewood in *Coronation Street* (2005), and Mrs Reaper, the shotgun-wielding grandmother in the film *Hot Fuzz* (2007).

Among her final credits was Noreen Biggs, a chain-smoking, recidivist old-timer in the gritty TV show *Bad Girls*, who is forever stoking up brawls from her prison cell. Her final screen appearance was in *Skins* (2009).

Charles, who had what one critic described as "the expression of a startled mouse", had a mischievous sense of humour and delighted in making people laugh — especially fellow actors whom she could have in stitches on stage just by raising an eyebrow, though she always kept her composure.

Maria Charles, actress, was born on September 22, 1929. She died on April 21, 2023, aged 93

Law Report

Challenge to minister's refusal to repatriate former Isis members

Court of Appeal

Published May 10, 2023

C3 and another v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Before Lord Justice Underhill, Lord Justice Holroyde and Lady Justice Elisabeth Laing [2023] EWCA Civ 444 Judgment April 25, 2023

Former members of Islamic State who were detained in a camp in Syria but whose release could be secured by the foreign secretary on request to the body holding them had to challenge his refusal to make such a request by way of judicial review.

A writ of habeas corpus did not lie as the foreign secretary had no de facto control over their release.

The Court of Appeal so stated when dismissing an appeal by the applicants, C3 and C4, against a decision of the Divisional Court (Lord Justice Lewis and Mr Justice Jay) ([2022] EWHC 2772 (Admin)) to refuse their application for a writ of habeas corpus against the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

Phillipa Kaufmann KC, Dan Squires KC and Jessica Jones for C3; **Phillipa Kaufmann KC, Dan Squires KC and Isabel Buchanan** for C4; **James Eadie KC, Lisa Giovannetti KC, Guglielmo Verdiram KC, Jason Pobjoy and Emmeline Plews** for the secretary of state.

LORD JUSTICE UNDERHILL said that the applicants were two British women who travelled to Syria to join Isis. Since the defeat of Isis they had been detained in a camp in northern Syria called Camp Roj, operated by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (the AANES). Both had young children. Conditions in the camp were unsafe and unhealthy and were wholly inappropriate for the detention of adults, let alone children. It was their case that there was no legal basis for their detention.

The AANES had indicated that it would be prepared to release the applicants and their children, so that they could be repatriated to the United Kingdom, if it received an "official request" from the UK government. The foreign secretary had refused to make such a request with regard to the applicants themselves, principally on the ground that they had travelled to Syria voluntarily and would be a threat to national security if returned to the UK, although he had expressed himself willing to consider doing so with regard to the children, if asked.

It was the applicants' case that the AANES's offer meant that the foreign secretary had de facto control over whether they were released, and that he could accordingly be compelled to repatriate them by the issue of a writ of habeas corpus.

If a writ of habeas corpus were issued the effect would be to require the foreign secretary to make the requisite official request to the AANES and take whatever other steps were necessary to bring the applicants back to the UK and produce them to the court.

It was important to appreciate the limited nature of the issue on the appeal. The foreign secretary accepted that in principle his decision not to take steps to secure the applicants' release from Camp Roj, and their repatriation to the UK, could be challenged in the courts. But he said that habeas corpus was not the correct vehicle for such a challenge and that what the applicants should have

done was to bring proceedings for judicial review of that decision.

His case was not simply that habeas corpus was formally unavailable but also that if it were issued it would have the effect of bypassing any examination by the courts, of the kind which would occur in judicial review proceedings, of the legitimacy of his reasons for not being prepared to accept the AANES's offer. The issue was thus a procedural one, albeit with substantive consequences.

The principal issue was whether, by reason of the AANES's offer, the UK government should be regarded as having control over the applicants' detention in the sense necessary to justify the issue of a writ of habeas corpus.

Having considered the habeas corpus authorities, primarily Barnardo v Ford ([1892] AC 326), R v Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Ex p O'Brien ([1923] AC 603) and Rahmatullah v Secretary of State for Defence (The Times November 16, 2012; [2013] 1 AC 614), his Lordship said that they could not fairly be read as authority for a general proposition that in any case where A was being *prima facie* unlawfully detained by B habeas corpus would lie against C if there was reason to believe that C was for any reason able to procure A's release.

It was, therefore, necessary to consider whether as a matter of principle the effect of the AANES's offer was to give the UK government control over the applicants' detention in the sense necessary for habeas corpus to lie. His Lordship did not believe that it was for the following reasons.

First, it was of fundamental importance that the UK government not only did not have actual custody of the applicants but had no involvement in their original detention. For a writ of habeas corpus to issue in those circumstances would be unprecedented.

The absence of any case in the jurisdiction in which the writ had issued in circumstances of the present kind reflected a general understanding that it lay only against those responsible for the original detention. That understanding accorded with the nature of habeas corpus as a remedy for unlawful detention.

Where B had first detained A but had passed actual custody to C, it was fair to regard B as responsible for A's continuing unlawful detention if in practice B had the power to procure his or her release by C: it was B who had caused the detention in the first place.

The applicants' current situation was indeed dire, however much it might be the result of their own choices, and it was made worse that it was shared by their innocent children. There might be — though the court was not in a position to form a view — a powerful case that neither the difficulties about the repatriation arrangements nor (which appeared to be the essential point) the foreign secretary's concerns about the risk that the applicants posed to national security could justify his refusal to take steps to secure their release and repatriation.

But those factors could not justify granting the remedy of habeas corpus in circumstances where the foreign secretary did not have the necessary control over the applicants' detention.

As already indicated, the only proper vehicle for such a case was a claim for judicial review, in which the court would consider the lawfulness of the foreign secretary's refusal of assistance.

Lord Justice Holroyde and Lady Justice Elisabeth Laing agreed.

Solicitors: **Birnberg Peirce; ITN Solicitors; Treasury Solicitor.**

Further, that condition could only be satisfied by the foreign secretary taking steps requiring, among other things, the transporting of the applicants from Syria into Iraq or Turkey, with the permission of the government in question, in order to get them to an airport from which they could be flown to the UK. Such control over the applicants' detention as the AANES's offer gave the foreign secretary was, therefore, qualified and conditional.

A power to procure the release of a detainee which was qualified in that way was not sufficient to justify the issue of a writ of habeas corpus. It was necessary that the control enjoyed by the constructive custodian was unqualified. As a matter of principle, it could only be because a respondent had an unconditional power (*de facto* if not *de jure*) to obtain the applicant's (*re*-) transfer to their custody that it would be right to treat them as custodians.

The artificiality of fitting the present situation into the framework of habeas corpus was illustrated by considering the applicants' position if the foreign secretary accepted the AANES's offer. They would be released from the custody of the AANES at the moment of handover somewhere in its territory. But it was not clear in what sense they could be regarded as being thereafter in the custody of the UK government.

No doubt in practice they would in their own interests consent to being accompanied by its representatives on the journey back to the neighbouring country and until they had received their travel documents, and probably also as far as the airport: but that would be a matter of choice rather than compulsion.

On arrival in the UK they would

on the face of it be free to go wherever they liked (unless arrested on some lawful basis). That being so, his Lordship did not see what detention on his part the foreign secretary could be expected to justify on their production (actual or notional) to the court on the return date.

It might be that some analysis

could be found that would cover the situation, but the difficulty of doing so reflected the fact that the relief that the applicants really sought was not simply their release from unlawful detention by the AANES but their repatriation.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, The Princess Royal and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were present.

His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms and The King's Body

Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard were on duty.

The British Army Band Tidworth

and the Central Band of The Royal

Air Force played selections of music

during the afternoon.

St James's Palace

9th May, 2023

The Duke of Edinburgh, Honorary Member, the British and

Commonwealth Fire Company

Foundation "Fundación 14"; this

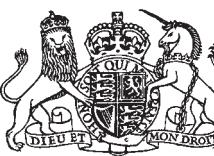
afternoon received Mr Brian

Murtagh (Vice President).

His Royal Highness, Patron, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, this evening held a Dinner at Stonehenge Fleming Family and Partners Limited, 6 St James's Square, London SW1.

The Duchess of Edinburgh, Patron, this morning visited Morden College, 19 St German's Place, London SE3.

Court Circular



Buckingham Palace

9th May, 2023

The King today broke ground on the new Whittle Laboratory, 1 JJ Thomson Avenue, Cambridge, which aims to serve as the leading global public-private sector hub focused on rapidly progressing the development of zero carbon flight systems and technologies. He was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire (Mrs Julie Spence), the Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet (Cadet Olivia Corner), the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire (Dr Bharatkumar Khetani), the Secretary of State for the

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP), Minister of State, Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (Mr George Freeman MP), the Ambassador from the United Arab Emirates (His Excellency Mr Mansoor Abulhoul), the High Commissioner for the Republic of Rwanda (His Excellency Mr Johnston Busingye), Chair of Cambridgeshire County Council (Councillor Stephen Ferguson), the Mayor of Cambridge (Councillor Mark Ashton), the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge (Dr Anthony Freeling) and the Vice-Chancellor Elect of the University of Cambridge (Professor Deborah Prentice). His Majesty, escorted by the Director of the Whittle Laboratory (Professor Robert Miller) toured the High-Speed Laboratory to view some of the latest aviation technologies and models for sustainable flight. The King subsequently attended a roundtable and met public, private and academic leaders from the aviation and energy sectors, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The Prince of Wales, on behalf of The King, and The Princess of Wales gave an Afternoon Party in the garden of Buckingham Palace to celebrate the Coronation of The King and Queen.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, The Princess Royal and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were present.

His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms and The King's Body

Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard were on duty.

The British Army Band Tidworth

and the Central Band of The Royal

Air Force played selections of music

during the afternoon.

St James's Palace

9th May, 2023

The Duke of Edinburgh, Honorary Member, the British and

Commonwealth Fire Company

Foundation "Fundación 14"; this

afternoon received Mr Brian

Murtagh (Vice President).

His Royal Highness, Patron, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, this evening held a Dinner at Stonehenge Fleming Family and Partners Limited, 6 St James's Square, London SW1.

The Duchess of Edinburgh, Patron, this morning visited Morden College, 19 St German's Place, London SE3.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

020 7782 7553
newsukadvertising.co.uk

AND AFTER you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
1 Peter 5:10 (ESV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Deaths

BILLINGTON Edward John died peacefully on 30th April 2023, aged 88, after a valiant three-year battle with motor neurone disease. Beloved husband of Fenella, cherished father of Edward, Suzetta and Richard, and adored grandfather of Freddie, Stanley, Jack, Arthur, Hugo, Annabelle, Claudia, James, Ted and Charlie. Thanksgiving service will take place at St Peter's Church, Lower Heswall, Wirral, on Tuesday 30th May 2023 at noon. Donations may be sent to the Royal British Legion. For further information please contact Jane Scott at Charles Stephens Funeral Directors, 0151 645 4396.

CHESTER Dr Peter Francis on 25th April 2023, aged 94. Died peacefully after a short illness following a long and happy life. Much-loved husband of Barbara (deceased 2022) for 69 years, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Funeral at St Edward's Church, Sutton Green, 22nd May at 12pm.

DANIELL Lt Col (RE) Francis Alan French died peacefully at home surrounded by family on 5th May 2023, aged 82, after a long illness. A loving husband to Jen, father to Peter, Annie and David, brother and grandfather, he will be dearly missed. Funeral arrangements will be announced in due course.

DAVIS Rex died at home on 20th April, aged 89. Devoted husband of the late Caroline, beloved father of Miranda and Sarah, grandfather of Grace, Stella and Ava, great-grandfather of Isla. Former subdean, Lincoln Cathedral. Cremation Kensal Green crematorium 1pm, 11th May. Funeral Lincoln Cathedral, 5.30pm, 20th May.

FAIRHURST Sarah died peacefully on 5th March 2023, aged 86. A much-loved wife, mother, grandmother and a dear friend to many. Known for her kindness and service to the community as well as her fantastic cakes! She will be sadly missed by all her family and friends. A memorial service will be held at All Saints Church, Brenchley TN12 7NQ on Friday 12th May at noon, and afterwards at Brenchley Memorial Hall. No flowers. Donations to Hospice in the Weald.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

To place notices for these sections please call 020 7481 4000

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 11.30am three days prior to insertion

JACKSON Joan on 23rd April 2023, aged 91, died peacefully at home. Held in much affection by her family and friends and her many Tupperware colleagues. Funeral on Wednesday 31st May at 12.30pm at St Mary's the Boltons, London SW10 9TB. No flowers please but donations to Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust or the Woodland Trust.

MADLEY Thelma Josephine (née Carter) died peacefully on 2nd May 2023, aged 93, at Barnet General Hospital. Widow of Sam (Cyril). Employee of Shell. No funeral. Donations in her memory to the North London Hospice.

MURRAY Anthea Mary (née Turnbull) died peacefully at home on 29th April 2023, aged 85, after a long battle with Lewy body dementia. Much-loved wife of Roger, mother of Nicola, Catherine, Fiona, Simon and grandmother to nine grandchildren. Memorial service 18th May 2023, 2.30pm at St James's Church, Norlands, Holland Park, London W14 4RA. No flowers but donations, if desired, to the Lewy Body Society. Coloured attire encouraged.

ROGERS Ulla Birgitta (née Tornqvist) passed away peacefully on 21st April 2023, dearly loved wife and best friend of David. Private cremation and ashes to be scattered at sea, at family home in Helsinki.

SAMUELS Ronnie died peacefully on 7th May 2023, aged 92, at home surrounded by his family.

WESTCOTT John on 21st April 2023, aged 94, peacefully at home with family. Bristol family lawyer, appointed MBE for charity work. A memorial service will be held at 2pm on Thursday 11th May at St Dunstan's Church, Baltonsborough, Somerset.

The simple way to place your announcement in The Times. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

newsukadvertising.co.uk

Legal Notices

BLUEFIN INSURANCE SERVICES LIMITED

(Company No: 00931954)
Principal trading address: c/o BDO LLP, 5 Temple Square, Temple Street, Liverpool, L2 5RH

Malcolm Cohen and Stacey Brown of BDO LLP, 55 Baker Street, London, W1U 7EU were appointed Joint Liquidators of the Company on 26 April 2023. Creditors of the Company are required, on or before the 14 June 2023 to send in their full names, their addresses and descriptions, full particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the Joint Liquidators, and, if so required by notice, to come in and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice. Note: Please note that this is a solvent liquidation. The directors of the Company have made a declaration of solvency and it is expected that all creditors will be paid in full.

Further details contact: Pauline Durrant, Tel: 020 7486 5888, Email: Pauline.Durrant@bdo.co.uk, Reference: 00424843. Malcolm Cohen, Joint Liquidator

JELF FINANCIAL PLANNING LTD

(Company No: 0307281)
Principal trading address: c/o BDO LLP, 5 Temple Square, Temple Street, Liverpool, L2 5RH

Malcolm Cohen and Stacey Brown of BDO LLP, 55 Baker Street, London, W1U 7EU were appointed Joint Liquidators of the Company on 2 May 2023. Creditors of the Company are required, on or before the 14 June 2023 to send in their full names, their addresses and descriptions, full particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the Joint Liquidators, and, if so required by notice, to come in and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice. Note: Please note that this is a solvent liquidation. The directors of the Company have made a declaration of solvency and it is expected that all creditors will be paid in full.

Further details contact: Pauline Durrant, Tel: 020 7486 5888, Email: Pauline.Durrant@bdo.co.uk, Reference: 00424844. Malcolm Cohen, Joint Liquidator

The perfect wedding gift

Mark an unforgettable day with a feature in Readers' Lives, a service in contracted tributes



50%
discount for
subscribers

College friends find a love to last

ELEANOR EVE AND JAMES MARTIN WERE MARRIED ON NOVEMBER 12, 2022, AT APTON HALL, IN ROCHFORD, ESSEX. THEY FEATURED IN THE TIMES ON FEBRUARY 11, 2023

Call 020 7782 5583 or email readerslives@thetimes.co.uk

THE TIMES

PHOTOGRAPH BY LIAM GILLAN

TECH REVIEW | TRENDING PRODUCT ALERT

LIFESTYLE & TECH SAVINGS



By BILL JOHNSON
NEW TECHNOLOGY
CONTRIBUTOR

PRODUCT: Zoom Monocular
PRICE: Was £69.99 Now £29.99
DATE: October 8th, 2022
RATING: ★★★★★ 5/5

Want the zoom but don't want to pay the big bucks for it? A new monocular has hit the market that may be what you need. Want huge zoom at a tiny size and price? Then this could be the most important thing you will ever read.

What is it?

It is the Zoom Monocular. A monocular is like a pair of binoculars, but for one eye. That means it is MUCH smaller but the zoom is still amazing! It has the quality of a huge telescope, but it fits in your pocket. It is tough so it can handle the outdoors and harsh conditions.



While a huge £300 telescope has great features, it is too big to bring with you.

The Problem With Big Telescopes and Binoculars

I thought big telescopes and binoculars were the best thing to get for great zoom. But the best thing is something you bring with you all the time. Sure you can still bring binoculars with you. But you have to hang them on your neck all the time (which sucks for hiking), or you need a backpack or bag to carry it.

I don't know about you, but I don't always want to carry a bag around with me. That is why I got excited when I found out about Zoom Monocular. At last, something with great zoom that you can fit in your pocket! Ever since getting my Zoom Monocular, I never miss a great shot for my photos. Why? Because I always have Zoom in my jacket pocket!

Say Goodbye To Pricey Cameras

Forget spending thousands of your hard earned money on a DSLR camera. All you need for pro quality photos is your phone camera and Zoom. How come? There is a an attachment for the Zoom that fits most mobile phones. It combines the zoom power of your camera with the telescope to rapidly enlarge any image. Giving you similar effects to a £3000 priced camera.

Only Zoom ticks ALL the boxes...but what makes it so good?

Lens Comparison	ZOOM	Brand 1	Brand 2	Brand 3	Brand 4
Sharpness	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Coating	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
High Contrast	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Low Aberration	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Low Distortion	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Low Vignetting	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
RRP	NOW £29.99	£199	£999	£1799	£2999

This is an advertisement and not an actual news article, blog, or consumer protection update. Marketing disclosure: This website is a market place. As such you should know that the owner has a monetary connection to the product and services advertised on the site. The owner receives payment whenever a qualified lead is referred but that is the extent of it. ADVERTISING DISCLOSURE: This website and the products & services referred to on the site are advertising marketplaces. This website is an advertisement and not a news publication. Any photographs of persons used on this site are models. The owner of this site and the products and services referred to on this site only provides a service where consumers can obtain and compare. Images are for illustration purposes only.



Why Is This £29.99 Monocular Better Than £300 Telescopes?

It Fits In Your Pocket and Has Military Grade Zoom

THIS ATTACHMENT IS SOLD FOR £9.99, BUT IS FREE WHEN YOU BUY USING CODE ZT1828.

It is very easy to get crisp and clear photos and videos from far away. Just clip the Zoom on your phone. Some users have even won photo contests using this exact setup! The point is, this thing is top quality!

Top Quality: crystal clear images like never before

One thing that I like is the special optical glass employed in these monoculars. I found out that it is a good prism type is what makes images look more clear.

This is the main reason why the Zoom Monocular has such a clear image.

If Zoom Is This Good, How Is It So Cheap?

Zoom is so good that when I saw the price, I did not trust it. How could it be so good, but have such a low price? That is when I looked in to the Zoom company. What I found made sense and made me trust it. This company makes a range of binoculars, night vision, and photo accessories, and have deployed their considerable skills in developing a superior monocular at a very affordable price. I have sampled their night vision as well as their other products and the Zoom lives up to the reputation they have gained for themselves.

When Should I Get My Zoom?

The best time to get your Zoom is now. Why? They have a start up promo to get people talking about them.

There is one problem though...

This deal will not last for long. In fact, as we speak, Zoom is getting more popular. This means their start up promo will end soon and go up to full price.

How Much Is Zoom Today?

As of today, Zoom is still on sale. The full price is £69.99, but they lowered it to £29.99. But, since they are doing great so far, it is even lower now! I reached out to Zoom. They gave me a great discount to share with my readers.

Today, you can get Zoom for only £29.99 plus FREE Smart Phone Connector and Tripod but trust me when I say this will not last long at all.

There is one other problem.

This thing is selling like crazy, so it could run out at any time. I suggest picking yours up right now. Especially if you want to save £40 off the price.

Where Can I Get My Zoom?

You can only get Zoom here. You can go on to our website or call FREE on 0800 472 5034 and don't forget to use Code ZT1828 to get your FREE phone attachment and Tripod. Lines open Mon - Sat 7am - 9pm & Sun 8am - 8pm.

Based On Your Feedback

This article is getting very popular. I have received a few questions I would like to answer here:

Q: Does Zoom work with my mobile phone?

A: Yes, the clip for Zoom fits on almost any phone.

Q: Can I use Zoom without a phone?

A: Yes, you can use it for many other things. People use it for sight seeing and watching events. It is also used for exploring, hiking and hunting.

Q: Can I get a refund on my Zoom?

A: Yes, Zoom has a 30 day money back guarantee. If you decide you do not want your Zoom, they will give you a refund.

Order your Zoom today. Only available online at pressplaydeals.co.uk/zoom

What it offers is leaving the industry in shock. How can something so small have so much? And for so little cost? Jealous brands want to know how Zoom has top features such as...

- See from 50 miles away
- Weighs only 320 grams - Less than a pound
- Precise Design - Made from 3D modelling software
- Waterproof and Fogproof - Built for the outdoors
- Tripod Mount - Use the tripod for stable views
- FREE Phone Clip - Attach Zoom to your phone
- Prism Type - Considered the best, used in £1000 binoculars
- 155x70x55mm Dimensions - Very small
- 20mm Eye Relief - Shaped to reduce eye strain
- 114/1100m Field of View - Wide 114° view at 1100 metres away
- Anti-Skid Frosted Sure-Grip
- Never slips from grip, even when wet
- Fully Multi-Coated Lens - Only found in top-of-the-line brands



"Totally recommend the Zoom for any wildlife enthusiast or world traveler. Took this photo with the Zoom Monocular lens... won 1st place in the 10th Annual PX3 Competition."



JACK L.
— VERIFIED —
ZOOM BUYER



"I travel the world as a huge football fan, but I'm usually up in the cheap seats. With my new Zoom I can see like I'm right by the field... it really makes you feel like you're part of the action!"



CRAIG C.
— VERIFIED —
ZOOM BUYER

About the Author: Bill Johnson Bill works in IT and has a love for the latest technology releases, innovations and breakthroughs. He typically covers stories about exciting new tech products.

Claim Your Discount Today*

(Disclaimer: only if still available)

I test a lot of products and very few make the cut. Zoom has made the cut.

It is a great monocular at an even greater price.

To get Zoom today at a 57% discount, go to their official website below.

Note: Zoom is only sold on their official website.

All UK orders ship from their warehouse. All orders ship express so you get it quick.

RRP £69.99 • YOURS TODAY FOR JUST £29.99 +p&p

pressplaydeals.co.uk/zoom

CALL FREE: 0800 472 5034

Or post the coupon below to: Pressplay Ltd, (Dept ZT1828), Unit 7A, Chelmsford Road Ind Est, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1HD.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR READERS

To: Pressplay Ltd, (Dept ZT1828), Unit 7A, Chelmsford Road Ind Est, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1HD. Please send me:

Item	Price	Qty	Total
------	-------	-----	-------

High Power Zoom Monocular with FREE Smart Phone Connector And FREE Tripod **SAVE £49.99**

£29.99

Additional Smart Phone Connector and Tripod

£9.99

Please add £4.95 postage and packing to entire order or £7.95 for priority despatch (order before 1pm weekday) DPD despatch £9.95 (orders received by 1pm weekday)

Grand TOTAL: £

I enclose Cheque/PO's (made payable to Pressplay Ltd) for £ _____ or charge my MasterCard/Visa/Maestro account

My card number is: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Security Code _____ Last 3 digits on back of card Start Date _____ / _____ Expiry Date _____ / _____ Issue No. _____ (Maestro Cards)

Name Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____ Address _____ Post Code _____

Mobile Phone No. _____ (for delivery status) Email _____ (needed for order confirmation, delivery tracking/options)

Estimated despatch within 48 hours from receipt of your order but please allow up to 7 working days for delivery. We will not rent your personal data to third party companies, for details of our privacy policy please visit our website. T&Cs apply – see website for details. *Only mainland UK areas – check your post code with our operator Registered Office: Pressplay Ltd, Manchester M17 1WD Co Reg No 02712382.

MEDIA CODE **ZT1828**



PRESSPLAY

THE BESTSELLING 5★ LUXURY *Grand Amazon & Caribbean Adventure* EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION



Exclusive
READER OFFERS
SAVINGS OF
UP TO 30%[‡]

Free \$1,200
ON BOARD SPEND*
OR UP TO 12 Free
SHORE EXCURSIONS^x

Exclusive Free
ALL-INCLUSIVE
DRINKS PACKAGE
FOR ALL BOOKINGS⁺⁺



BOOK WITH THE TOP
PARTNER FOR
OCEANIA CRUISES
Your World. Your Way.

Free
FLIGHTS[>], WI-FI⁺⁺ &
SPECIALITY DINING

BOOK WITH JUST
A DEPOSIT THEN
NOTHING TO PAY
UNTIL 2024

27 NIGHTS DEPARTING 3RD JANUARY 2025

JANUARY 2025

- Fri 3 Fly for FREE[>] from London to Bridgetown, Barbados (regional and premium class flights may be available on request[>]). Upon arrival, transfer to a hotel for your overnight stay **Bridgetown, Barbados**. This morning, transfer to the port and embark the elegant 5★ *Sirena* for your 25 night Amazon & Caribbean voyage
- Sat 4 **Scarborough, Tobago**
★Cruising the Amazon River★ Everyone knows the name, but only an intrepid handful of travellers get to experience the remarkable sights and sounds of the Amazon. Sail along the vast Amazon River as it flows through the heart of the world's largest tropical rainforest, searching for vivacious wildlife as you float among the trees
- Fri 10 **Santarém, Brazil** ★Amazon River★
- Sat 11 - Sun 12 **Boca da Valeria, Brazil** ★Amazon River★ **Manaus, Brazil** (arrive late am – overnight)
★Amazon River★ ★Recommended Excursion^x: Caiman Spotting Depart Manaus by riverboat and glide upstream, listening to the sights and sounds of the rainforest at night-time, before transferring to motorized canoe. Watch in wonder as your seasoned guide locates and briefly hypnotizes caimans with a flashlight, and be sure to capture photos of these primal forest crocodilians



- Mon 13 **Parintins, Brazil** (arrive late am) ★Amazon River★
- Tue 14 **Alter do Chão, Brazil** ★Amazon River★
- Wed 15 ★Cruising the Amazon River★
- Fri 17 **Devil's Island, French Guiana**
- Sun 19 **St. George's, Grenada**
★Recommended Excursion^x: The Spice of Our Lives Enjoy a visit to a nutmeg manufacturer to learn about unusual spices and herbs grown throughout Grenada – the ‘Spice Island’ – followed by a chance to sample several premium rums made with local sugarcane at a distillery
- Mon 20 **Îles des Saintes, Guadeloupe** (arrive late am)
- Tue 21 **Rodney Bay, St. Lucia**
- Wed 22 **Bridgetown, Barbados**
- Thu 23 **Fort-de-France, Martinique**
- Fri 24 **Gustavia, Saint Barthélemy**
- Sat 25 **Roseau, Dominica**
- Sun 26 **Castries, St. Lucia**
- Mon 27 **Kingstown, St. Vincent**
- Tue 28 **St. George's, Grenada**
- Wed 29 **Bridgetown, Barbados** Disembark and transfer to the airport for your FREE[>] overnight flight to London (regional and premium class flights may be available on request[>])
- Thu 30 **Arrive in London**
Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea

AS SEEN ON TV

BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE WITH READER OFFERS LTD

In July 2012, Jennie Bond became the face of Cruise Miles® as the Reader Offers Ltd Cruise Miles® Ambassador. As a frequent Reader Offers Ltd customer Jennie shares her experience:
“When you holiday, you definitely need to travel with a company you trust and which has a proven track record. As the UK’s No.1 Independent Cruise Specialist, Reader Offers Ltd have over 25 years of experience, they are fully ABTA and ATOL bonded, and they will reward your loyalty with Cruise Miles®. You couldn’t be in better hands than with Reader Offers Ltd. They really are the experts in their field.”

- Jennie Bond, Cruise Miles® Ambassador & former Royal Correspondent



www.rolcruise.co.uk

TRAVEL WITH
CONFIDENCE

Agent to ATOL Holder
Oceania Cruises 10527

ABTA
ABTA No F9256

CALL ONE OF OUR
CRUISE SPECIALISTS FREE ON

0808 239 8481
QUOTE OFFER REF 631433

OPEN 7 DAYS
8:30AM - 8PM



**ROL
CRUISE**

Fares are per person based on two adults sharing, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. Ports may require a tender. >Will incur supplementary costs and may require an additional overnight stay. Flights are subject to schedule changes and may be based on indirect services with flights arriving same day or overnight. Flights will be confirmed closer to departure which may affect your overall holiday duration and an additional overnight hotel stay may be required. >>Subject to availability. [‡]Savings are based on two adults sharing. *On board spend is per stateroom/suite. ⁺⁺Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. ^xChoice of free excursions exclude Wellness Tours, Go local, Oceania Select, Oceania Exclusive, Executive Collection, Food and Wine Trails, Wellness and Culinary Discovery Tours. Shore excursions must be booked at least 14 days prior to departure. Tours are subject to availability and change. 5★ refers to the cruise element only. Wildlife sightings are not guaranteed. ^{††}Trio of Coronation Wines is based on one per booking, for UK mainland addresses only. ^{††}Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Oceania Cruises® T&Cs apply. E&OE.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER OFFERS LTD PROMOTION

READER OFFERS LTD EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL OFFER

- EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 30%[‡] – PLEASE DO NOT DELAY, EXCLUSIVE FARES WILL INCREASE
- BOOK by 8pm 13th May 2023 and receive an EXCLUSIVE FREE Trio of Coronation Wines, in celebration of His Majesty's Coronation⁺

PLEASE DO NOT DELAY - SUITES ARE SELLING FAST

- Pre-cruise hotel stay in Bridgetown, Barbados
- 25 nights full board 5★ luxury cruising on board the elegant *Sirena* including:
- Choose from either \$1,200 on board spending money^{*} OR 12 FREE shore excursions^x
- Exclusive FREE Prestige drinks package FOR ALL BOOKINGS⁺⁺ – Unlimited premium spirits, Champagne, wine and beer wherever and whenever, worth up to £3,000
- FREE Wi-Fi for all bookings⁺⁺
- Small, luxurious ship with no more than 684 guests
- Elegant, casual ambience, no jacket or tie required
- FREE Speciality Dining throughout your voyage
- Experience ‘The Finest Cuisine at Sea[®]
- 24-hour butler service in all suites
- FREE shuttles from the port to the city centre in most ports
- FREE fitness classes on board & laundry facilities
- FREE FLIGHTS for all bookings[>] (regional and premium class flights may be available on request[>]) and overseas transfers

EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES[®]

Earn up to 38,698 Cruise Miles[®] worth £386 off your next booking with Reader Offers Ltd^{††}

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER OFFERS LTD FARES

STATEROOM/SUITE	GRADE	BROCHURE FARE (PP)	READER OFFERS LTD FARE (PP)
Inside	G	£9,529	£6,499
Deluxe Ocean View	C2	£10,259	£7,229
Veranda	B2	£12,039	£8,899
Concierge Veranda	A1	£12,849	£9,749
Penthouse Suite	PH1	£15,439	£12,199
Owner's Suite	OS	£22,729	£19,349

Solo fares are available on request

JUST A DEPOSIT REQUIRED THEN
NOTHING TO PAY UNTIL 2024

Today Some sunshine but a scattering of showers will spread eastwards, heavy in places. Max 17C (63F), min 3C (37F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy
du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain,
sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder
=previous day *=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday	Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr 5pm yesterday
Aberdeen	16	C	18.2
Aberporth	11	F6	0.0
Anglesey	12	C	1.2
Aviemore	14	R	1.6
Barnstaple	13	D	19.6
Bedford	15	C	11.6
Belfast	14	C	1.8
Birmingham	16	C	14.8
Bournemouth	16	R	17.2
Bridlington	18	B	5.6
Bristol	14	C	13.0
Cambridge	13	R	18.8
Cardiff	13	D	11.8
Edinburgh	15	C	4.4
Eskdalemuir	14	C	8.8
Glasgow	15	C	11.4
Hereford	17	R	11.6
Hermonceux	15	C	11.8
Ipswich	15	C	9.8
Isle of Man	14	S	0.2
Isle of Wight	16	C	13.6
Jersey	13	FG	8.6
Keswick	15	PC	8.0
Kinloss	14	PC	1.2
Leeds	15	PC	2.4
Lerwick	11	R	10.4
Leuchars	17	PC	7.6
Lincoln	18	C	10.8
Liverpool	13	M	2.2
London	16	C	9.0
Lymeham	15	C	11.6
Manchester	16	R	3.0
Margate	16	C	3.8
Milford Haven	12	C	4.6
Newcastle	17	R	2.8
Nottingham	18	C	8.2
Orkney	12	C	3.6
Oxford	16	C	13.6
Plymouth	14	R	26.4
Portland	12	R	12.6
Scilly, St Mary's	10	R	13.4
Shoreham	16	C	18.8
Shrewsbury	16	C	2.6
Snowdonia	14	D	2.4
Southend	17	PC	8.0
South Uist	12	PC	1.4
Stormyway	12	C	4.4
Tiree	14	C	2.6
Whitethaven	16	C	4.2
Wick	12	C	9.6
Yeovilton	16	C	22.0

Five days ahead

A drier day on Saturday otherwise it will be unsettled with showers or longer spells of rain

Tomorrow

Sunny spells and a scattering of showers in most places, turning heavy and thundery over Ireland, England and southwest Scotland. Max 16C, min 3C

Friday

Rather cloudy with the risk of a few showers in England, Wales and eastern Ireland, otherwise it will be a dry with sunny spells. Max 17C, min 4C

Saturday

A mostly dry day with sunny spells and feeling warm in any sunshine. The risk of an isolated shower in southeast England. Max 19C, min 4C

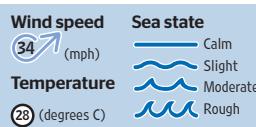
Sunday

Some sunny spells but a band of cloud and rain will spread eastwards across Ireland, Scotland, Wales and into western England. Mainly dry in eastern England. Max 17C, min 4C

Monday

Mainly dry with sunny spells and isolated showers in Ireland and Scotland. Rather cloudy with heavy and thundery showers over England and Wales. Max 15C, min 3C

The Times weather page is provided by



Flood alerts and warnings

At 17:00 on Tuesday there were 14 flood alerts and one warning in England and no flood alerts or warnings in Wales or Scotland. For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

ATLANTIC OCEAN

IRISH SEA

CELTIC SEA

CHANNEL

Orkney

Shetland

NORTH SEA

LONDON

EDINBURGH

GLASGOW

MANCHESTER

NOTTINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM

OXFORD

CAMBRIDGE

NEWCASTLE

YORK

HULL

LEEDS

SHREWSBURY

LIVERPOOL

MANCHESTER

SWANSEA

CARDIFF

BRISTOL

SOUTHAMPTON

BRIGHTON

EXETER

PLYMOUTH

PORTSMOUTH

WORCESTER

The latest articles on your commute

A digital subscription keeps you informed wherever you are, whatever you're doing. Live updates, newsletters, commenting, extra puzzles and more for less than £1 a day.

Try a digital subscription free for one month at [thetimes.co.uk/trial](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/trial) or scan the QR code

Subscribe with 

**LESS THAN
£1 A DAY**



THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES
Know your times

Sport

Ex-girlfriend of Woods had feared job loss

Golf

Rick Broadbent

Tiger Woods's ex-girlfriend said she was worried that she might end up "heartbroken and jobless" before she signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), according to emails provided by the golfer's legal team.

Erica Herman, who is separately involved in a \$30 million (£23.7 million) eviction suit with a Woods-owned trust, is attempting to quash the NDA, which she signed in 2017 when the pair began their relationship. Woods, 47, believes the NDA means any disputes between the two should go straight to private arbitration. Herman's attempt to quash the NDA was heard in a county court in Florida yesterday, where her lawyer provided a twist by disputing his client's signature on the NDA.

Under the terms of the NDA, Herman — who worked as a manager at Woods's restaurant in Jupiter, Florida — was barred from showing cards, photographs, documents or texts relating to Woods to her family and friends. In addition, she agreed not to disclose any details of Woods's diet, rehab, training techniques, sexual matters, leisure activities and personal relationships.

An email from Herman to the chief financial officer of Tiger Woods Ventures, Christopher Hubman, dated August 7, 2017, expressed her doubts about signing. "My only concern is if by chance TW does something that brings our relationship to an end, do I automatically lose my job? I don't have any problems with what's in the document because I wouldn't go public or hurt him or the kids [Woods's two children with his ex-wife, Elin Nordegren] but with my whole life in his hands I would want to have some kind of control over my future in the business. If something

happened five to ten years down the road I don't want to be in my 40s heartbroken and jobless. Thoughts?"

Hubman replied that he believed her job and personal relationship were separate items. "I don't think the end of one automatically impacts the other... although I admit it could be complicated," he wrote. "It will most likely depend on the terms, condition or reason for the relationship ending."

Herman's lawyers are citing a clause from the Speak Out Act, which was passed last year and prevents the use of NDAs if a case involves sexual harassment or assault. They claim that it was harassment for Woods to make signing the NDA a condition of Herman keeping her job as manager of The Woods restaurant. Documents filed by her team said "the landlord" had made her housing "conditional on having a sexual relationship with a co-tenant". Herman left the job in 2020 and the couple split up last October.

Neither Woods nor Herman appeared in front of circuit judge Elizabeth Metzger yesterday as the sides argued about the validity of the NDA. Benjamin Hodas, Herman's lawyer, said: "My client cannot say for certain that is her signature and she does not recall signing this document." Woods's lawyer, JB Murray, said the dispute over the signature was "a red herring".

Metzger said that she would issue her decision in writing. Herman is suing a trust owned by Woods for \$30 million after alleging that she was tricked into packing for a holiday in October, only to be told when she got to the airport that she had been locked out and could not go home. Woods's team dispute those claims. The sum is based on Herman's claim that she had an agreement to stay in Woods's \$54 million mansion for six years and comparable rental costs.



The pink jersey changed hands on the 175km ride from Venosa to Lago Laceno, with Evenepoel, right, ceding the Giro lead

Evenepoel: Losing jersey part of plan

Cycling

Elgan Alderman

Aurélien Paret-Peintre and Andreas Leknessund shared the spoils on the fourth day of the Giro d'Italia: a stage win for the Frenchman, the Maglia Rosa for the Norwegian. Remco Evenepoel came home in the peloton with no team-mates for support, any designs on a win ending at the first sign of a mountain. But maybe that is just what he wants to happen.

Evenepoel adroitly removed his leg warmers mid-race and he will have to remove his Pink Jersey, for 24 hours at least. That, so he said, was the plan, a break from the burden of being race leader — though a train of Ineos Grenadiers almost drove him into top spot while his Soudal Quick-Step team-mates dropped away.

On a day that began with attack after attack that could not stick, a seven-strong group broke away shortly before the halfway point of this 175km stage and provided the two men who competed for victory. Leknessund missed out in a sprint finish with Paret-Peintre but he has the fine consolation of becoming the first Norwegian to wear the Pink Jersey since Knut Knudsen's prologue success in 1981. He began the stage 100 seconds behind Evenepoel and finished it 28 seconds clear, with Paret-Peintre two seconds adrift.

"Do you know that, or are we just guessing?" Leknessund said when asked about leading the race, unaware the result had been confirmed. "That's super special. I went for the stage and I also knew that the pink was possible. My legs were hurting so much." Even before he knew if he was in pink, after

shedding sweat from Venosa to Lago Laceno, he had shed tears too.

The 23-year-old was unable to add to stage wins at the Tour de Suisse and Arctic Race of Norway, but it was his effort in the final kilometres that kept him clear enough of the peloton to become the leader.

While the spotlight fell on Leknessund and Paret-Peintre, Evenepoel had time away from the podium. Four years ago Primoz Roglic gave the Pink Jersey away after six stages and never got it back (though he fell more than five minutes behind, rather than the small deficit Evenepoel has).

"I am not sad about it," Evenepoel said. "I'm second in the classification, that's still a good place. The intention was to give away the jersey, especially with a view to tomorrow and the day after tomorrow."

Pegula hits out after finalists silenced

Tennis

Stuart Fraser Tennis Correspondent

The organisers of the Madrid Open have come in for further criticism after the world No 3 Jessica Pegula questioned the decision to censor the women's doubles finalists on Sunday.

Victoria Azarenka and Beatriz Haddad Maia beat Pegula and Coco Gauff in straight sets but the match was overshadowed by the controversy that followed when no microphone was made available for the traditional speeches.

While the tournament has refused to give any explanation, it appears to have been in retaliation for a series of comments made by female players during the week. Azarenka had earlier questioned the equality of the treatment given to women and men, while the singles runner-up Iga Swiatek had criticised late-night scheduling during her speech in front of the tournament director, Feliciano López.

Asked for a statement on the decision not to have speeches, a spokesperson

for the Madrid Open replied: "For the time being, the tournament will not comment on the matter."

Pegula, 29, said that the failure to provide microphones for the speeches was "really disappointing".

"Did I think we were not going to be able to speak? No, I've never heard of that in my life," she added. "Even in a 10k Challenger final [a lesser competition] you would speak."

"I don't know what century everyone was living in when they made that decision or how they actually had a conversation and decided, 'Wow, this is a great decision and there's going to be no backlash against this.'

"It spoke for itself. We were upset when it happened and told during the trophy ceremony we weren't able to speak. It kind of proved a point."

Pegula's doubles partner Gauff, 19, revealed that the organisers had apologised. "I was told it was a situation that didn't involve me that happened," she said. "I said that situation for me was not deep enough to not have a trophy

ceremony. I think that we worked hard to get to that final. It's not about the speech. I have [played in] a lot of finals, so it's not about that. It's more about the principle behind it, so this can't happen again for future girls, taking the opportunity away from them."

It is the latest in a series of sexism accusations that have marred one of the most prestigious tournaments outside the four grand-slam events. The introduction of crop tops and pleated skirts for ball girls was described by the Spanish Association for Women in Professional Sport as a form of "sexist violence". The outfits were changed before the men's singles final.

"There seemed to be a lot of drama in Madrid this year on a variety of different things," Pegula, a member of the WTA's player council, said. "There was just a build-up of a lot of tension. I'm hoping that out of what happened... we can come to some sort of decision-making process where we can start preparing for next year. These problems cannot happen again."

Man faces ten years in jail for dealing drugs to athletes

Athletics

Matt Lawton Chief Sports Correspondent

An American man faces up to ten years in a US jail after pleading guilty to supplying performance-enhancing drugs to Olympic athletes.

In what is being described as "a watershed moment in international sport", Eric Lira is the first person to be charged under new legislation in the United States that has made providing doping products to athletes a federal offence.

The Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act — named after Grigory Rodchenkov, the whistleblower who exposed the state doping programme in Russia — was introduced in 2020 and enables US authorities to prosecute those involved in "doping schemes for the purpose of influencing international sports competitions".

Lira was charged with supplying two

sprinters working under the renowned American coach Rana Reider as part of his Tumbleweed Track Club in Florida.

Thanks to a whistleblower who alerted the authorities to packages containing banned substances being sent to the athletes, anti-doping agencies were able to catch the two-times Commonwealth Games champion Blessing Okagbare. The Nigerian tested positive for growth hormone and the blood-boosting drug EPO and was withdrawn from the 100m at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021 after the opening heats. Okagbare has since been banned for 11 years.

Lira, a 43-year-old "naturopathic" therapist based in Texas, had advised the athletes to blame positive tests on contaminated meat.

In a federal court the US Attorney Damian Williams described the Lira case as a "watershed moment for international sport".

Clock ticking on Wasps' new start

With no players, a lack of leaders and an RFU ultimatum, club's future in the second tier is in doubt, writes Alex Lowe

Wasps are in a race against time to secure a place in the Championship for next season — and their future as a viable professional rugby club. At present they have no director of rugby and no players, while the chief executive Andy Scott left a month ago, with no replacement appointed. Wasps are a club who exist on paper only and the clock is ticking.

The new owners have until the RFU's board meeting this month to demonstrate that they can fulfil up to eight criteria — ranging from governance to building a competitive squad — or their licence to compete in the Championship next season will be revoked.

Wasps, the champions of England on six occasions and twice conquerors of Europe, were suspended from the Gallagher Premiership by the RFU in October after going bust with £95 million of debt, and then relegated to the second tier as punishment.

Halo22 Ltd, a company owned by Christopher Holland, lifted the club out of administration in December when it bought the intellectual property, history and memorabilia of Wasps RFC for £150,000. The Wasps Legends Charitable Foundation, which includes Kenny Logan, Peter Scrivener and Mark Rigby, is thought to have provided working capital to the phoenix operation.

The RFU announced in December that Wasps would be permitted to take their place in the Championship after the governing body had conducted "extensive due diligence", including a background check on Holland, who already owned the club's training centre at Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, and an examination of the business plan.

However, this licence approval was subject to a series of specific conditions being met and there is understood to be some concern at Twickenham over the progress Wasps have made. The RFU wants to be certain that the club will be able to participate next season so it can push ahead with restructuring the Championship, hence the looming deadline.

The Championship this season comprised 12 clubs; it was won by



Nizaam Carr in action in October, before Wasps entered administration. The club presently have no players on their books

Jersey Reds, with Richmond set to be relegated and replaced by Cambridge. The inclusion of Wasps would make it a 13-team league. Some provisional fixture lists show the division could feature 14 teams, which would mean a stay of execution for Richmond.

On a sporting front, Wasps have much to do. They must demonstrate to the RFU that a new director of rugby is at least close to being appointed and provide evidence of a recruitment plan that would deliver a squad capable of competing in the Championship.

Wasps made initial inquiries about rehiring Lee Blackett, who was the head coach when the club went bust, but he has now joined Bath as an assistant coach. With no director of rugby in place, Wasps have not recruited any players. The board has not been responding to inquiries from agents. The club will need to sign upwards of about 30 players before pre-season training begins in August.

It is uncertain what the club's playing budget would be. Having had to sell their Premiership share back to the league for £9.8 million after going into administration, Wasps no longer have access to those top-flight revenue streams, and Championship funding from the RFU is about £100,000.

Meanwhile, Ealing Trailfinders, who finished second in the league to Jersey Reds, have strengthened for next season with the recruitment from Gloucester of Billy Twelvetrees, the former England centre, and Jordy Reid, the flanker.

Wasps have made progress on a potential stadium, although that tale exposes further the cruel and continuing mismanagement of Worcester Warriors, the first club who went into administration this season.

The best location in the country for the establishment of a new professional rugby club would be Canterbury in Kent, according to

research, because of the potential for converting a strong rugby community into followers of a Premiership team. However, Wasps are set on remaining in the Midlands, near the training centre, and they have requested permission from the RFU to play at Sixways, Worcester's home ground, for the next three years.

Last week it emerged that Holland, via another of his companies, Loxwood Holdings Ltd, had loaned Worcester's new owners, Atlas WWRFC, £1.15 million. The arrangement was described by Wasps as "a means of securing our agreement to enter a three-year lease for Sixways".

With the Wasps training centre being rented by Birmingham City FC at present, the club could relocate fully to the Sixways site — using it for matches, training and as a headquarters for all rugby operations at a cost of £600,000 a year.

But the whole arrangement has

provoked strong opposition from the Worcester Warriors Supporters Trust (WWST), which has told the RFU it would be "unforgivable" to grant Wasps permission to play at Sixways.

The WWST claimed the tenancy proposal and the loan arrangement breached multiple RFU regulations, including rules that state no party can hold direct or indirect influence over a second club.

"It would be unforgivable if a club without any stadium or facilities, which has left behind vast debts and misery in Coventry, was given preferential treatment over our long-established club," the WWST said in a statement to the RFU. "Wasps have no history in our local area; we believe they are intent on effectively poaching a 'ready-made' fanbase."

If the Sixways plan is rejected by the RFU — or if Atlas WWRFC cannot pay back the loan and the stadium has to be sold — then Wasps will play their home games next season at Solihull Moors FC, which has already been signed off.

To be granted their provisional licence back in December, Wasps had to commit to settling all debts with rugby creditors, including players, club employees and agents who went unpaid before the previous incarnation of the club hit the wall.

This is believed to be one of the bigger stumbling blocks, especially if Derek Richardson, the former owner, who is owed £28 million from loans to the club, is also considered a rugby creditor. The club are understood to be arguing that the image rights portion of a player's income should not be included.

The RFU has governance demands too. Under the terms of the insolvency agreement, Wasps must demonstrate that the majority of the board is independent. There has been no public confirmation of appointments but it was reported in December that the Wasps board includes: Dame Inga Beale, a former chief executive of Lloyd's of London, Simon Morris, the global chief creative officer at Amazon, and Chris Braithwaite, a former head of Apple's global real-estate division.

The board must hold its first meeting by May 31, to which an RFU observer must be invited. Wasps must also demonstrate they have an audit and risk committee and provide their most recent accounts.

"We have been given certain criteria to meet a deadline set by the RFU and will submit a detailed written response to them by the due date," a Wasps spokesperson said.

The future of Wasps rests on whether the RFU board is satisfied by that submission. The clock is ticking.

Leicester hoping for Ashton reprieve

Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Leicester Tigers will contest the red card that Chris Ashton received against Harlequins on Saturday in an attempt to give him at least one more match before he retires. Ashton, 36, was sent off for a dangerous tackle on Cadan Murley in the final game of the regular season. If he receives a suspension, that will represent his final act as a player.

Leicester play Sale Sharks on Sunday in the Gallagher Premiership semi-final at the AJ Bell Stadium, hoping to make back-to-back finals and then retain their title at Twickenham on May 27. The club will push for Ashton's red card to be rescinded at an RFU disci-

plinary panel hearing this week. "When we get the date of the hearing, which I would have thought would be Wednesday, we will contest it," Richard Wiggleworth, Leicester's interim head coach, said. "If we get it turned around he will be available. There were mitigating factors in the tackle and [that's] why we think it is a yellow and not a red."

Recently there have been several red cards handed out in high-profile matches that have been subsequently overturned. The Leicester full back Freddie Steward was sent off for England against Ireland in the final game of the Six Nations but the card, given by the referee Jaco Peyper, was later rescinded.

"I am not calling anything 'dodgy'. I know they have got a difficult job, but

we just want everything to be clear and obvious," Wiggleworth said. "If it is a high level of force and danger then the red card is there to protect players."

"They have got to get it right. That is their job. We have got to get our tactics right, the players have got to get themselves right and they [the referees] have got to get those decisions right."

Meanwhile, Leicester are trying to free up funds to keep Anthony Watson next season. The England wing, 29, has a contract that will expire this summer before the World Cup.

Gregor Townsend, the Scotland head coach, has signed a new contract through to the 2026 Six Nations. The 50-year-old's present deal was due to expire after the World Cup in October.

'Distinguished' RFU council figure banned for racist slur

Alex Lowe Rugby Correspondent

The RFU has banned a former council member from Twickenham after he was found to have made racist comments at a Six Nations match. Alex Murphy was also stripped of his status as a distinguished member of the RFU and had his privileges, including free tickets to England games, taken away.

An independent disciplinary panel found that Murphy, a former London Irish prop, had said to another volunteer: "You realise they don't let n***** in the Royal Box." The incident occurred as Murphy was walking to the

council box at Twickenham on the day of England's victory over Wales in February 2022. A similar comment was later repeated in the bar area.

Murphy accepted the charges. He was challenged by the volunteer on WhatsApp the next day and rang them to apologise.

The panel recommended that the RFU council remove Murphy as a distinguished member and revoke his privileges. The RFU also imposed "a time-limited stadium ban". There are 60 distinguished members, which is an honorary position awarded to those with long service on the council.

Chester**Rob Wright**

1.30	Ziggy's Phoenix (nb)	3.45	Lakota Blue
2.05	Squealer	4.20	Shadow Dance
2.40	Savethelastdance	4.55	Paws For Thought (nap)
3.15	Arrest		

Going: good to soft

Sky Sports Racing

1.30 CAA Stellar Lily Agnes Conditions ITV4 Stakes (2-Y-O: £15,288; 5f) (11 runners)

1 (7)	13 MYCONIAN 10 Miss A Murphy 9-7	K Stott	54
2 (11)	1 BALON D'OR 32 (D) H Palmer 9-4	B Curtis	69
3 (8)	3 DAN DEE PRINCE 16 T Dascombe 9-4	R Kingscote	63
4 (3)	6 DANDY FITZ 20 T Easterby 9-4	C Hardie	12
5 (10)	2 JOHN STEED 9 D Loughnane 9-4	Laura Pearson	53
6 (4)	1 PARKSIDE BOY 26 (D) John O'Doghue 9-4	A Atzeni	♦99
7 (2)	ALFA MOONSTONE Craig Lidster 8-13	P Hanagan	--
8 (9)	43 SHE'S SMART 21 P Evans 8-13	Rossa Ryan	70
9 (5)	TIERNEY H Palmer 8-13	O Murphy	
10 (6)	1 ZIGGY'S DREAM 11 (D) Alice Haynes 8-13	K O'Neill	69
11 (1)	41 ZIGGY'S PHOENIX 20 (D) R Hannan 8-13	R L Moore	71

11-4 Ziggy's Phoenix, 4-Ziggy's Dream, 6-1 Balon D'or, Parkside Boy, 8-1 Tierney, 10-1 She's Smart, 14-1 Myconian, John Steed.

Rob Wright's choice: Ziggy's Phoenix showed good speed when winning at Ripon; she is well drawn

Dangers Parkside Boy, Ziggy's Dream

2.05 tote 100k Guaranteed Placepot ITV4 Every Day Handicap (3-Y-O: £15,288; 5f) (12)

1 (4)	411-04 MICHAELA'S BOY 33 (D) M Appleby 9-9	F Larson (3)	78
2 (1)	36116 SQUEALER 215 (D) N Tinkler 9-9	T Marquand	♦93

Kelso**Rob Wright**

1.40	Demandalous	4.00	Elo Du Puy
2.15	Split The Bill	4.30	Geromino
2.50	Harper Valley	5.02	Time Leader
3.25	Agilulf	5.35	Indian Louis

Going: good to soft-good in places

Racing TV

1.40 Handicap Chase ITV4 (£5,281; 2m 7f) (9)

1 (41P)	JUST DON'T KNOW 12 (D) Paul Robson 10-12-0	D McMenamin
2 (13P)	HIDDEN COMMANDER 123 (T,CD) W Coltherd 8-11-3	S Coltherd
3 (P30P)	THE FERRY MASTER 53 (P,T,CD) A M Thomson 10-11-2	R Mania
4 (U53)	MARGARET'S LEGACY 39 (T) T Vaughan 6-11-11	A Johns
5 (32P)	TOUCH KICK 26 (D) S G West 12-11-8	B Lynn (3)
6 (4P)	COSMIC OUTLAW 34 (P) R Dobbins 7-11-5	D Johnston (7)
7 (P04P)	JUGE ET PARTI 49 (P) J Ewart 10-11-4	B Hughes
8 (P422)	DOMANDLOUIS 23 (BF) L Russell 6-11-1	P W Wade (5)
9 (43P)	EXIT TO WHERE 16 (P,T,CD) J Jardine 9-10-13	C O'Farrell

7-4 Demandalous, 7-2 Touch Kick, 7-Margaret's Legacy, Hidden Commander, 10-1 Exit To Where, 14 others.

Wright choice: Demandalous is improving with experience over fences

Dangers Touch Kick, Hidden Commander

2.15 Handicap Hurdle (£4,753; 2m 7f) (11)

1 (245)	BETTER GETALONG 49 N Richards 12-12-0	Conor Rabbitt (7)
2 (655)	CURLEY FINGER 32 (P,T) R Menzies 6-11-9	N Moscrop
3 (119)	HOGANVILLE 85 (CD) G Bewley 6-11-7	J Bewley (3)
4 (341)	FABLEUX D CLOS 53 (W) S West 8-11-7	Sean Quinlan
5 (23P)	ROWDY RUSTLER 34 (T) L Russell 8-11-6	P W Wade (5)
6 (550P)	THE NAVIGATOR 23 (D) S Dwyer 8-11-5	H Brooke
7 (451A)	ANIMORE 23 (P,C) J Jardine 10-11-3	C O'Farrell
8 (344P)	SPLIT THE BILL 13 M Hamm 5-11-2	J Hogan (5)
9 (P16P)	FIRTH OF FORTH 8S R Dobbins 7-11-2	D Johnston (7)
10 (32P)	WARRIOR'S STORY 23 (T) N Alexander 7-10-12	B Lynn (3)

11 (04P)

RYEADALE RACER 375 (P,CD) Catch Bissett 12-10-2

Charlotte Jones (3)

100-30 Warriors Story, 4-1 Animore, 11-2 Fabuleux Du Clos, 7-1 Curly Finger, 8-1 Split The Bill, Hoganville, 10-1 Better Getalong, Rowdy Rustler.

2.50 Novices' Hurdle (£4,357; 2m 5f) (10)

1 (451)	BALLYPOREEN 23 (C) D McCain 6-11-13	B Hughes
2 (P02)	BILBOA RIVER 26 H Mcmahon 7-11-1	E Austin (5)
3 (450P)	FRANZ JOSEF 20 (T) A M Thomson 7-11-1	R Mania
4 (F53)	HARPER VALLEY 16 R Menzies 6-11-1	Sean Quinlan
5 (006)	HEEZIE THE BOY 57 Miss P Robson 6-11-1	C O'Farrell
6 (75/P)	IVYNATOR 238 Mrs J McGregor 5-11-1	A Doyle (5)
7 (P0F)	JIMMY'S JET 47 A M Thomson 7-11-1	D McMenamin
8 (40/5)	KOPA KILANA 23 (T) M Barnes 6-11-1	Conor Rabbitt (7)
9 (WHY NOT DREAM 40/5)	R Dobbins 5-10-8	D Johnston (7)
10 (5056)	BRASINGAMAN BELLA 25 J O'Keefe 10-2 P W Wade (5)	

5-6 Ballyporeen, 2-1 Harper Valley, 12-1 Why Not Dream, Jimmy's Jet, 14-1 Kopa Kilana, 25-1 Frano Jose, 50-1 others.

3.25 Handicap Hurdle

(Div I: £3,961; 2m 5f) (13)

1 (465P)	WEARLONGTERM 13 D Sayer 6-12-0	H Brooke
2 (PP2P)	RED MISSILE 14 (P,T) R Bell 6-11-2	P W Wade (5)
3 (F60P)	JIMMY RABBITTE 16 W Coltherd 10-11-9	S Coltherd
4 (003P)	ELIO DU PUY 53 N Alexander 5-11-6	B Lynn (3)
5 (303P)	GAME BEAAA 16 (W,D) T Bourke 6-11-4	B Hughes
6 (600P)	OUT FOR THE COUNT 102 J Dandridge 5-10-13 W Shanahan (7)	
7 (5002)	BALRANALD 32 (P,T) Mrs A C Hamilton 7-10-12 J Hamilton	
8 (4/06)	MELVICH BAY 90 D Brooker 10-10-10	R Chapman
9 (4P40)	PROSPECT HOUSE 105 (W,P,D) Niven 5-10-6 D McMenamin	
10 (62P)	BABY JANE 34 G Boanas 8-10-4	N Moscrop
11 (0P3)	SNOWED IN 21 (P) Lizzie Quinlan 10-10-2	Sean Quinlan
12 (002P)	Farne Island 25 (P) A Nicoll 6-10-2	C O'Farrell
13 (60P)	BIG THUNDER 13 H Graham & Gutherford 6-10-2 E Austin (5)	

7-4 Demandalous, 7-2 Game Beaaa, 9-1 Baby Jane, 10-1 Melvich Bay, 11-1 Prospective House, 12-1 Snowed In, Farne Island, Baby Jane, 14-1

10-1 Melvich Bay, 11-1 Prospective House, 12-1 Snowed In, Farne Island, Baby Jane.

5.02 Hunters' Chase (£3,388; 2m 6f) (5)

1 (25P)	HERMANN CLERMONT 30 (T,BF) A G Dobbins 6-12-6	B Hughes
2 (0/64)	CRACKING DESTINY 318 (W) Ewan Whillans 10-11-2	
3 (365P)	CEDAR HILL 46 (CD) A M Thomson 9-10-9	R Mania
4 (3212)	BOLLINGERANDKRUG 46 (T,BF,D) L Russell 8-10-3	P W Wade (5)
5 (4153)	LAKE TAKAPUNA 61 (P,C) J Ewart 12-10-2 D McMenamin	
6 (3416)	UTILITY DUTYS 32 (CD) S Forster 10-10-2	C O'Farrell

1-4 Hermann Clermont, 11-2 Crackling Destiny, 12-1 Cedar Hill, 13-1 Bollingerandkrug, 14-1 Lake Takapuna, 15-1 Utility Dutys, 16-1 Duty Calls.

5.35 NH Flat Race (£2,723; 2m) (13)

1 (0)	BREIZH RIVER 160 Paul Robson 5-11-2	D McMenamin
2 (03P)	EDGEWELL 23 R Menzies 5-11-2	J Hamilton
3 (SP11)	INDIAN LOUIS 101 L Russell 5-11-2	P W Wade (5)
4 (32P)	RUN RESDEV RUN 17 (T) M D Easterby 5-11-2	B Garritt
5 (ST CUTHBERT'S CAVE 49)	R Dobby 5-11-2	D Johnston (7)
6 (43)	WOTYOU'DUNNO BUDDY 164 S Corbett 5-11-2 S Coltherd	
7 (0)	CRACKING RHAPSODY 23 Ewan Whillans 4-10-10	H Brooke
8 (11)	SHENGAI ENKI 15 M O'Hanrahan 4-10-10	J Hogan (5)
9 (11)	WOLFBURG A M Thomson 4-10-10	R Mania
10 (3)	PERFECT POLI 40 Jardine 4-11-9	C O'Farrell
11 (5-2)	Indian Louis, 4-1 Lemoine, 7-1 Perfect Poli, 8-1 Shengai Enki, 10-1 Wotyou'dunno Buddy, Edgewell, 12-1 The Back Braes, St Cuthbert's Cave.	

The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton Abbot today has been abandoned — waterlogged.

● The meeting at Newton

Sport Cricket

Injuries could scupper Stokes's plan to hit Australia with pace

CONTINUED FROM BACK

ensure at least one of their genuinely quick bowlers is in the XI for each match. Wood, 33, told The Times in March that he did not expect to play as many as four Tests against Australia.

Archer, 28, played five out of ten matches for Mumbai Indians in the IPL but struggled to make an impact. He went to Belgium last month and underwent a fifth operation on his right elbow for an injury that, along with a back problem, kept him out of international cricket for 22 months. He has flown back early to the UK and been replaced at the franchise by Chris Jordan.

"Archer has been recovering from right elbow surgery," an ECB statement read. "However, pushing through the discomfort while recently playing, hoping it will settle, has proven challenging. It has been agreed for him to return to the UK for a period of rest and rehabilitation to give him the best opportunity for a full recovery."

It is yet another setback for the fast bowler, who has not played Test cricket since February 2021. He returned from his lengthy absence to play for MI Cape Town in the new South African T20 competition at the start of the year and made four ODI and three T20 appearances for England in South Africa and Bangladesh, impressing on both tours.

Rob Key, the managing director of England men's cricket, said last week that Archer would have a "massive impact" on the series. In his first taste of Test cricket, against Australia in 2019, Archer took 22 wickets in four Tests at an average of 20.27. But the re-emergence of his elbow issue casts doubt on his ability to feature in the longest form. Archer would also be in England's first-choice XI for their 50-over World Cup defence, which starts in India in October.

Wood started his IPL campaign with a five-for for Lucknow Super Giants but has made only three appearances since. After a brief bout of illness, he left the tournament at the weekend to be with his wife and said he might return in the latter stages of the competition.

Stone, 29, is expected to be out for at least four weeks after pulling up with a hamstring injury while playing for



Nottinghamshire on Saturday. It is unlikely that England would throw him straight into a Test without him first returning to the County Championship, but domestic red-ball cricket is paused between May 21 and June 11 for the T20 Blast. James Anderson, Stuart Broad, Craig Overton, Matthew Potts and

Chris Woakes have each made three championship appearances this summer. Saqib Mahmood has played once, while Jamie Overton is out because of a back stress fracture.

Seamers this season

James Anderson 14 wickets at 22.07 in three matches

Jofra Archer Returned early from IPL with elbow discomfort after two wickets in five matches

Stuart Broad 11 wickets at 29.18 in three matches

Sam Curran Seven wickets in 11 games for Punjab Kings

Saqib Mahmood One wicket in only appearance

Craig Overton Four wickets at 69.25 in three matches

Jamie Overton Out with back stress fracture

Matthew Potts 16 wickets at 26.87 in three matches

Ollie Robinson 14 for 117 in most recent match after back injection

Ben Stokes Bowled one over for 18 in the IPL

Olly Stone Six wickets at 37.50 before suffering hamstring injury

Chris Woakes Ten wickets at 19.89 in three Warwickshire appearances

Mark Wood 11 wickets in four matches for Lucknow Super Giants before illness and birth of daughter

Billings had surgery for skin cancer

Elgan Alderman

Sam Billings has revealed that he underwent surgery last year for skin cancer, which informed his decision to play in the Pakistan Super League rather than tour Bangladesh with England. He warned against being "blase" towards skin damage and urged people to take the matter more seriously.

Billings, 31, was in Australia with England over the winter when a teammate noticed a scar on his chest, after a second operation to remove a malignant melanoma skin cancer.

"I've been that classic Brit abroad, as a 22-year-old with fairer hair in Australia thinking that it was worth going a bit red to end up brown," Billings told The Daily Telegraph. "At home you see it all the time, it gets to 12 degrees and sunny, all the tops come off. I didn't think I'd be the guy who got skin damage. I hope people see my story and think twice."

Billings attended a skin cancer screening at Kent at the end of last summer. In the following weeks he had a hospital appointment in Ashford and was found to have a melanoma that was 0.6mm deep, close to the threshold for when it "gets really serious".

"It's a full body screening where they look at every mole," Billings said. "There was one on my chest, by no means the biggest mole on my body, that the doctor, Andy Birnie, said didn't look great. They decided I needed to have it removed so they could take a look at it."

Billings played in three ODIs in Australia in November and then played franchise cricket in the Big Bash, ILT20 and PSL, missing England's six-match tour to Bangladesh. The wicketkeeper-batsman has been playing for Kent in the County Championship this summer, aiming to force his way back into the Test reckoning, having won three caps last year.

"It did give me the clarity of making decisions based on what I want to do rather than maybe just toeing the line and being seen to do the right thing," he said. "You realise that cricket isn't the be all and end all. It's hugely important but you need to put things in perspective."

The Professional Cricketers' Association has agreed a partnership with LifeJacket Skin Protection, and Billings urged players and spectators, in the professional and grassroots game, to take better care of themselves.

From advising Blair and Brailsford to reshaping Somerset

Michael Barber tells Paul Edwards he's keen to attract new fans by bringing the Hundred to the West Country

Michael Barber looks out across the County Ground at Taunton. "I love this club," the Somerset chairman since last April says. "I love the people and what Somerset cricket represents. I'm enjoying every minute of my time as chair. I told people I enjoyed my time in the Blair administration, including the stress, and it's a bit like that with Somerset cricket."

If the regulars in the Marcus Trescothick Pavilion find it difficult to relate to the experience of a man who

served for eight years in the first New Labour government, they will surely find no problem in sharing Barber's emotional attachment to a county that, to a degree, also represents the West Country.

Yet as English cricket comes to terms with a new era, supporters in Taunton and elsewhere might also find Barber's experience in strategic thinking and delivering on the results of such thought immensely valuable. This, after all, is the man who has served every British prime minister since Tony Blair with the exception of Liz Truss; who has worked for governments on every continent; who has advised the FA and Team Sky under Sir Dave Brailsford.

So it is hardly surprising that the ECB's new leadership team of Richard Thompson and Richard Gould called on Barber's experience in the winter by inviting him out to Pakistan, a country he has visited more than 50

times to advise on education and health issues. Barber, 67, was also able to watch the England team under the revolutionary leadership of Brendon McCullum and Ben Stokes, and is optimistic that a similar new mindset is being brought to the top of English cricket by Thompson and Gould.

"It was remarkable how little trust existed between the county chairs and the then ECB leadership," he said of his first chairmen's meeting last April. "I served in the Blair administration and I've seen some very tense meetings in my time but the quality of the relationships in that meeting was very disturbing.

"However, the positive thing is that the ECB has a new chair, who is absolutely the right man for the job — very thoughtful, very strategic and determined — and a new chief executive, and that team will make a difference. I spoke to the Richards when I was out in Pakistan and the

atmosphere had changed dramatically. I think we could really do something significant. I'm feeling much more positive, whereas at the beginning I found it very alarming."

Some things, though, have not changed. Barber's wish dearest wish is for Somerset to win the County Championship. In Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire, the two other counties never to have won English cricket's most prestigious prize, supporters nurse the same goal.

"If you're from Somerset, the holy grail is the County Championship," he said. "The four-day game, or five-day when it's Test matches, is the



Barber has worked alongside several prime ministers

Shakespeare of cricket, the pinnacle of the game."

However, before anyone paints Barber as a fusty traditionalist, they should note that he wants to see a variety of formats played at Somerset, a county that has had to wrestle with the financial challenge of neither possessing a Test ground nor hosting a Hundred franchise. "Last year, in the 44 days that included the school summer holidays, we had four days' cricket in Taunton and that's not acceptable," he said. "We want a mixed diet of cricket and we want more of it in the holidays; that's when we can appeal to new audiences."

"If the Hundred was expanded, we would consider getting something going in this part of the country. The debate I have with the members, who are fantastically committed, is how we are going to make sure there are as many of them in 10 or 20 years' time as there are now."

A lot of the problems at Manchester United can be laid at the door of the Glazers. Not all, though. Not two wins in eight games (plus one on penalties). That isn't down to an extended takeover process. That won't be resolved by fresh billions in the bank, or new faces in the boardroom.

Between now and the end of the season, the team must look after themselves. Club ownership at this time is irrelevant. Does anyone think that Antony or any other player cares who owns United as long as his pay cheque clears? A manager may pick a club based on the owner, but the players do not. There is not an individual at United who was not signed on the Glazers' watch. How can their continued presence be a factor in this sudden decline in form?

Yet that is what is heard. United are stalling, because the process is stalling. The whole club is mired in uncertainty. And, yes, it matters to Erik ten Hag for future planning purposes. He wants to know about budgets and transfer options and these are decisions tied up with ownership. Yet the II versus II isn't.

Men in suits didn't shape defeats by Brighton & Hove Albion and West Ham United. United went 2-0 up against Sevilla in the first leg of their Europa League quarter-final, and then conceded five goals without reply. They lost to Brighton in the league, again, drew with a Tottenham Hotspur team that they had beaten comfortably earlier in the season; lost to West Ham in the league for the first time since September 2019.

It can be argued that this is an ordinary team and poor recruitment under the Glazers has made it that way. Yet few were railing against the expensive acquisition of players such as Antony, Casemiro or Jadon Sancho. Ten Hag wanted Antony and he cost £90 million. The owners facilitated that deal; the rest is up to him.

When Sir Alan Sugar and Terry Venables were at war over Tottenham Hotspur, the turmoil was also claimed to be affecting team performance. Jimmy Greaves was aghast. "We hated Bill Nicholson [the manager] and Bill hated us," he said of his playing days at White Hart Lane. "The only thing we all agreed on was that none of us could stand the board of directors." His point was that everybody didn't have to get along to produce a successful Tottenham team. So even if United's players want the Glazers out at much as the Stretford End does, it shouldn't have an impact on results. Linking the takeover — which is taking its time, as £6 billion transactions tend to do — to a dip in form is little shy of ludicrous.

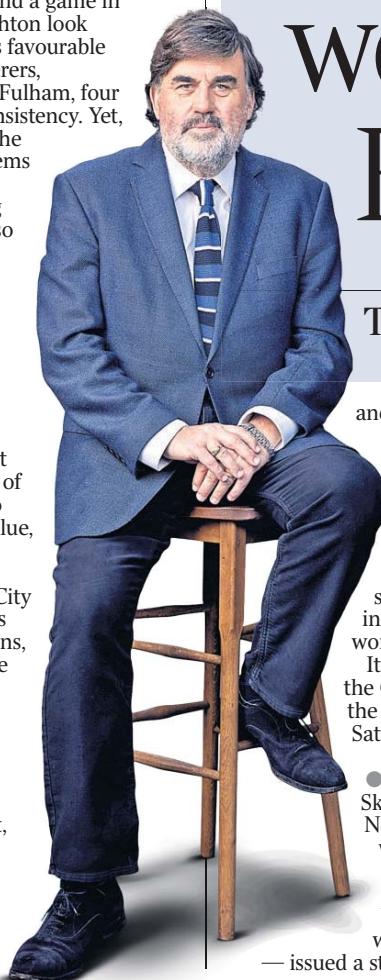
United should qualify for the Champions League. They have a point and a game in hand on Liverpool, and Brighton look exhausted. United's run-in is favourable too: Wolverhampton Wanderers, Bournemouth, Chelsea and Fulham, four opponents struggling for consistency. Yet, whoever is in charge when the smoke clears, familiar problems will remain.

It isn't as simple as getting the Glazers out. The club also need a refit. United have always been able to attract stellar names so it would be no surprise if Harry Kane ended up there next season, or Declan Rice — whose undervaluing by various United stalwarts seems increasingly comical after Sunday's performance — but where is United's equivalent of Julian Alvarez, say, or Bruno Guimarães? Where is the value, the player that no one saw coming?

Alvarez cost Manchester City only £14.1 million. Guimarães was £33.3 million, plus add-ons, for Newcastle United. Where are those insights at Manchester United? Alejandro Garnacho was a steal from Atletico Madrid, but at youth level. He had never played first-team football. Alvarez, by contrast, represented River Plate of Argentina 122 times before arriving at City. Guimarães made more than 200 appearances for Athletico Paranaense, in Brazil,



Ten Hag spent close to £90m on Antony but the Brazilian has only delivered in patches this season



The voice of sport

and for Lyon in France. It is very easy to wrap every misstep at United into a jaundiced ball and aim it at the Glazers, but it's not as simple as that. Rivals are streets ahead in the area of talent identification and, as the season wears on, it becomes increasingly apparent how much work there is still to do.

It doesn't all change when and if the Glazers go. And it is not up to the owners to beat Wolves on Saturday.

- Graeme Souness has left the Sky studio so last weekend when Newcastle played Arsenal, we were treated to the thoughts of William Gallas. He was a fine player when he wanted to be but also possibly the only man whose club — Chelsea, in 2006 — issued a statement saying they couldn't

pick him because he'd threatened to kick the ball into his own net. And this is the best opinion we have?

● It is becoming a strange end to the season at Brighton, with six goals past Wolves and beating Manchester United, but also heavy defeats by Nottingham Forest and Everton. It's Arsenal on Sunday, so anything could happen. Yet one thing is certain: given their record, every recruitment department in the country will be checking to see if they have missed a trick now that Brighton are paying £30 million for João Pedro of Watford.

- This is already a miserable season at Southampton and there will be obvious concerns at the prospect of a £110 million loan, taken out by Dragan Solak, the owner, to buy the club, which is due to be repaid by the end of 2024. Solak insists this repayment will not come out of Southampton's coffers and is not relative to the club's financial performance. Even so, the giant hit of relegation could not have come at a worse time. It seems precarious.

RFU's poor posture

Back in January, shortly after the appointment of Steve Borthwick as the England head coach, the RFU's team performance director, Nigel Redman, spelt out his vision of the future. He said that it was his desire for a female coach to be in contention to take charge of the men's team "in the next five to ten years". And then, five months later, there was a vacancy for a coach of the England's women's team — and the job went to a man. And not just any man. John Mitchell, a man from New Zealand.

Instead of statements, it may be better if the RFU focused on developing women's coaches for the women's game. Its policy was no more than posturing. The coach of England's women should be female and English.

Finding 'keepers

Hugo Lloris increasingly appears to have played his last game for Tottenham Hotspur and there are many who would like this to be true of David de Gea at Manchester United too. Be careful what you wish for. Both have flaws and have looked increasingly exposed, but good goalkeepers are hard to find. Chelsea broke the world transfer record for Kepa Arrizabalaga and two years later had to recruit Edouard Mendy. Now, neither looks certain of a future at Stamford Bridge.

Pep Guardiola had several tries before finding Ederson, the same with Arsenal and Aaron Ramsdale. The fact that Erik ten Hag spoke so staunchly in support of De Gea after his costly mistake on Monday suggests he doesn't see the position as an urgent problem that needs solving. And he has a point. De Gea may not be as reliable as he once was, but he saves United more often than he costs them. As for Tottenham, replacing Lloris is not as daunting as replacing Harry Kane, but no one should be convinced of its ease.

TV offer is no insult

The row about European broadcasters undervaluing the women's World Cup continues, with the revelation that the offer from Italy's state broadcaster RAI amounted to less than £1 million. It paid £100 million to cover the most recent men's event and Italy did not even qualify. By contrast, Italy's women are in a group with Sweden, South Africa and Argentina. They reached the quarter-finals in 2019. It seems disrespectful.

Yet what is women's football worth to RAI? That is the key. The interest across nations in sports is not consistent. I was on holiday in Sardinia in 2012, at a time when this country was enthralled by the Paralympics. Sell-out crowds every night in London, blanket television coverage, huge space in national newspapers. In Italy, the main sports paper, with 30-plus pages to fill each day, covered it in a single brief feature each morning, buried way back. An insult, or simply a reflection of their readers' interests? Maybe RAI are denigrating the women's game; or perhaps they just know their audience.

County must go up

Everyone enjoys the play-offs and we are comfortable with the injustices now. Even so, had Notts County been eliminated by Boreham Wood this week, it would have been little more than a travesty after their league campaign. There were 35 points between the two clubs when the season ended, Notts County's total of 107 being the second-highest number of points ever recorded in the top five divisions, after champions Wrexham. The team they now meet in the National League play-off final, Chesterfield, were 23 points adrift. We can surely all agree that Notts County's promotion is more than deserved.

The same with Sheffield Wednesday in League One. Their 96-point total for third place was the highest ever amassed by a team in that position across the 92 professional clubs. Wednesday's players knew going into this season that only a top-two finish would guarantee promotion. Anyone who values fairness, however, can only wish them well.

Sport Champions League semi-final

City of Milan comes alive expecting an epic reunion

Twenty years on from semi-final meeting
Owen Slot joins the locals and asks whether tonight's derby signals an Italian renaissance



If there is any place where some sense of tranquillity can be found in Milan today, it will be at the source of where the noise started.

"The biggest game for 20 years," is the clamour being amplified liberally across the city for the Milan derby in tonight's Champions League semi-final. And it's not only an evening event, it's the entire day. Actually, crowds will start accumulating around the Duomo in the morning and the tension won't let up for six days, until the second leg is complete.

Here, north of the Spanish Walls, in the Cimitero Monumentale, within 200 yards of each other, lie three of the great figures who served to create this event of such historical depth and passion. Their resting place is peaceful, grand, a vast neomedieval structure of marble and stone, a final home to the great and the good of Milan, the artists, the politicians, architects and scientists — and three footballers.

Cesare Maldini, the head of an AC Milan dynasty, the captain of their first European Cup-winning team, a future manager. His monument bears no record of his vocation, or his successes; not that it is needed. He lies outside.

Inside is Herbert Kilpin. There is an AC Milan sticker next to his marble slab and a red-and-black scarf wrapped round it. It was Kilpin, an English expat from Nottingham, who started working in Milan in 1899 and formed the Milan football and cricket club. And it was from his club that a group of refuseniks broke away to form Inter nine years later.

Between Kilpin and Maldini lies Giuseppe Meazza, who won two World Cups with Italy, captaining the second of those in France in 1938. He also scored 240 goals in 13 seasons for Inter before playing two more seasons for Milan — which is why the San Siro is named after him, the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza.

His stadium has a story here too. It is due to be pulled down in three years' time, rebuilt and improved, so the promise goes, and, controversially, with a slimmed-down capacity. Which partly explains the demand for a

ticket for tonight. Over the two legs, there have been reportedly two million ticket requests.

It is not as if there is anyone who doesn't know that, for quality, this is the B-list Champions League semi-final. It's that no one cares. This is the city's civil war back on its grandest stage, a battle for a place in a final that no Italian team have played in for six years. It is for a chance to win a trophy that once seemed to be an Italian possession but that no Italian team have lifted since José Mourinho's Inter in 2010.

It has led to some wistful suggestions that *calcio* is back. Two Italian semi-finalists, three in the quarters and two also in the semi-finals of the Europa League tomorrow — that's a return to those heydays of Italian dominance, isn't it?

Well, no. They recognise, here, the reality. This Milanese uprising is the product of good management of inferior resources; it is also about the luck of timing, a good quarter-final draw and the cycle of teams who are maybe hitting some kind of a peak before the wealthier parts of Europe come back cherry-picking the talent that has got them here.

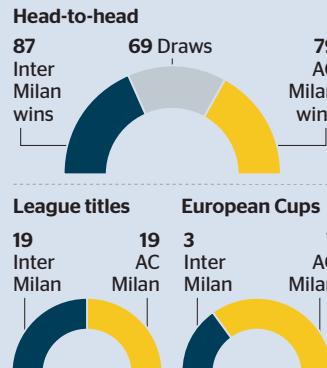
The most talked-about player on the eve of this fixture has been Rafael Leão, the Portuguese flyer whose pace and genius was primarily responsible for Milan's quarter-final victory over Napoli. Will he be fit? Will he have recovered from his thigh strain? Look past tonight's game and the question becomes: how much longer can Milan keep him here?

The lifeblood of Europe's leading football leagues is their TV revenue and England's Premier League is stretching away from the pack. La Liga and the Bundesliga put together come close to the Premier League on its own. Serie A — yes, once standard-setting, exotic, the one-time league



Fikayo Tomori, the English central defender, and Olivier Giroud lead the celebrations after Milan defeated Napoli to set up

How rivals compare



of dreams — is now fourth. It was Roberto Mancini, the Italy manager, who was asked for his view on this apparent renaissance of Italian football and gave the straightest of answers: "It hasn't happened."

So that just cranks up this occasion. It probably won't happen again next year. Neither team are any longer a Manchester City or a Real Madrid, who are perennial fixtures.

One of tonight's double act probably won't even qualify next year. This is glorious history given a one-off special extra added

chapter. That explains all the rifling back through history. The ten European titles: Milan's seven, Inter's three. The "away goals" semi-final of 2003: the last time a Milan derby was a Champions League semi-final, when they drew 0-0 and 1-1 and Milan went through on away goals — even though they share the same stadium.

Christian Vieri, the former Inter player, was interviewed in *La Gazzetta dello Sport* on Tuesday and he was still going on about it. And he didn't even play in that game.

Then, at the pre-match press conference, Federico Dimarco, the Inter full back, was going on about it too — because he was there, at the game. And he was five years old at the time. "To think that I was at it 20 years ago," he said, "and today I have the opportunity to play — it is an incredible feeling."

The build-up started at the weekend, not so much with both clubs beating their Roman opposition and Milan discovering a late vein of form against Lazio, but with a dinner of city leaders — judges, actors, writers — from both sides of the *rossoneri-nerazzurri* divide, hosted by Massimo Moratti, the former Inter owner. Valentino Rossi (Inter) was otherwise engaged, but left a video message: "Beware the Milanisti."

Carlo Capasa, the president of the National Chamber of Italian Fashion, wore an Inter 2010 shirt signed by Mourinho. Renato Pozzetto, the actor (a Milan fan) sang a song about how life is beautiful if you huddle together under the umbrella — which seems a good metaphor for these two clubs right now.

This is cultural as well as historical. The *Corriere della Sera* yesterday carried an interview with a university intellectual who had known many of the city's late great writers, and he recalled where they stood on Milan and football and their passion for their side of the divide.

This is the past dragged forward to the present. A reminder. Another taste from a cup that is almost forgotten. And an experience for the young Milanese that they may have thought had been only for their forebears.

And in football's brilliant way, the narrative is simultaneously splendidly narrow. A city is in thrall to this historical reunion; the same city is hanging on the speed of recovery of Leão's thigh.

The message yesterday from Stefano Pioli, the Milan manager, was that his team could cope, whether or not Leão passed a late fitness test. The message from Simone Inzaghi,





AC Milan v Inter Milan

Champions League semi-final, first leg
Tonight, 8pm
TV: BT Sport 1; Radio: talkSPORT

a semi-final against Inter who will be spearheaded by Lautaro Martinez, below



Within 200 yards of each other in the Cimitero Monumentale lie three Milan greats: Maldini, Kilpin and Meazza



the Inter manager, was that his side won't be bothered either way. Only briefly can football wear the pretence that it is dull and formulaic; it cannot last tonight.

Outside the San Siro on Tuesday, football tourists were hanging around the Baretto 1957 bar, as if they were counting down the hours until kick-off. A group of Slovaks were here to support Milan. The bar staff were

bracing themselves for the whirlwind that would come their way 24 hours later. A pair of Scotsmen were wondering if there was any chance anywhere of finding tickets that weren't five times the cover price.

Today, the Milanese will be out in force to join them. Their whole city comes alive again.

Only in the Cimitero will there be peace.

Chaos theory and trust in youth costs strugglers

Intense pressing, young squads and managerial change define sides who could go down, says James Gheerbrant

With Nottingham Forest's win against Southampton on Monday having increased their survival chances, there is a very real possibility that this season's relegation battle will consume three established Premier League clubs, with the bottom three places at present occupied by Leeds United (in their third consecutive top-flight season), Leicester City (nine consecutive top-flight seasons) and Southampton (11 consecutive top-flight seasons), while Everton (69 consecutive top-flight seasons!) are by no means out of it.

For all the imperilled clubs, defence seems to be more of a problem than attack. Leicester are the ninth-highest scorers in the Premier League this season and Leeds a respectable 12th (if you knew off the top of your head that the lowest scorers are Wolverhampton Wanderers, give yourself a gold star). Those two occupy the same positions if all the teams are ranked by expected goals, with Everton in 15th. For shots on target, Leicester are ninth, Everton tenth, Leeds 14th and Southampton 15th.

On the other hand, for goals conceded, Leeds have the worst defensive record in the league, Forest are third bottom, and Leicester and Southampton joint fourth bottom. In expected goals terms, Everton have the worst defence, followed by Forest (second bottom) and Leeds (third bottom).

There's another statistic that overlaps quite strikingly with the bottom of the table: tackles. Leeds have made the most tackles in the Premier League this season, followed by Southampton in third, Everton in fourth and Leicester in sixth. If we isolate only tackles in the middle third, the top three are the present bottom three: Leeds, Leicester, Southampton, with Everton in fifth. Of course, there is nothing wrong per se with making tackles — it is more what making lots of tackles represents. Teams who have a lot of collisions, especially in the middle of the pitch, tend to produce games that are chaotic rather than controlled.



And that has definitely been a motif of this season's strugglers.

Leeds and Southampton in particular have set a lot of store by a certain brand of football, based on intense pressing, which aims to disrupt the rhythm of the opponent as much as possible and create a helter-skelter game with lots of transitions. It is an approach that can be highly effective, but it also makes it very hard to establish your own rhythm, tempo and control. The limitations of a furious pressing style, without reliable patterns of settled passing play, are one salutary aspect of their seasons.

Of course, what compounded matters for Leeds and Southampton is that, having built squads to play that style of football, under managers who were very competent (or excellent, I'd argue in Ralph Hasenhüttl's case) at inculcating it, they then sacked those coaches partway through the season, and replaced them with coaches who were not as good. That has been another theme of this season's relegation battle: panicky midseason managerial changes and their general lack of effectiveness.

Southampton have gone from Hasenhüttl to Nathan Jones to Rubén Sellés, Leeds from Jesse Marsch to Javi Gracia to Sam Allardyce, Leicester from Brendan Rodgers to Dean Smith, and none of those teams have looked convincingly better than they did under their original manager: in fact, they have mostly looked worse.

It is possible that the appointments of Unai Emery by Aston Villa and Julen Lopetegui by Wolves raised the expectations of Premier League clubs about the calibre of coaches they could attract, but those appointed

Leicester are ninth-best in the league when it comes to goals scored but their defence has not matched up, including on Monday, when they scored three but conceded five in their defeat by Fulham

since then have been a rung or two below that class, and only Roy Hodgson at Crystal Palace (who had a level of familiarity with their squad) and Sean Dyche at Everton (a good defensive organiser coming into a defensively disorganised team) have presided over a real uplift.

One of the best decisions of the Premier League season has been West Ham United's to stick with David Moyes. Theirs has been nobody's idea of a good season, but even at moments of jeopardy the club reasoned that Moyes was probably better than anyone they could attract in the midst of a relegation battle. West Ham did not destabilise their season, Moyes won the games he needed to win, and now, if they want to make a change of manager, they can do so in the summer from a position of strength.

Age could also be seen as a factor. Southampton and Leeds have the second and third-youngest average ages this season, while some of the teams who have outperformed expectations (notably Fulham, Newcastle United and Aston Villa) are on the older side. Signing young players, selling them on for a profit, then recruiting good young ones is a sustainable model widely regarded as good practice, but it is also a hard trick to keep getting right, and it can result in squads that are technically and athletically gifted, but a little callow.

Every season brings new trends and new learnings. Whichever of Leeds, Leicester, Forest and Everton join Southampton in the Sky Bet Championship, there will be plenty of teams trying to learn from their mistakes this season.

Smith cancels Leicester squad's day off

Charlotte Duncker

Dean Smith pulled his Leicester City players in for training yesterday on a planned day off after Monday's 5-3 defeat by Fulham.

While the scoreline suggested a competitive game, in truth the visiting side, who at one point were 5-1 down, were thoroughly outclassed. With only three matches to go the result raised real concerns about Leicester's ability to survive in the Premier League — they are two points from safety and have a huge game against Liverpool on Monday at the King Power Stadium.

The players were asked to report to the club's training base yesterday morning, having heard chants of



Smith brought his players in for extra training after their embarrassing loss

"you're not fit to wear the shirt" from the travelling supporters at Craven Cottage. One of the key issues to which Smith, the manager, needs to find a quick solution is the team's inability to keep clean sheets. They have conceded in their past 20 league matches and have let in the first goal in 17 of their 18 league games since the turn of the year.

"When that first goal goes in, it does affect them," Smith said on Monday. "Mentally we're fragile for conceding goals. We never got close enough to them after that. When we were pressing, it became a jog rather than a sprint."

The game against Liverpool is followed by a match away to Newcastle United, before a final-day clash with West Ham United.

Sport Champions League semi-final, first leg

Bruising display 12 years in

Martin Samuel

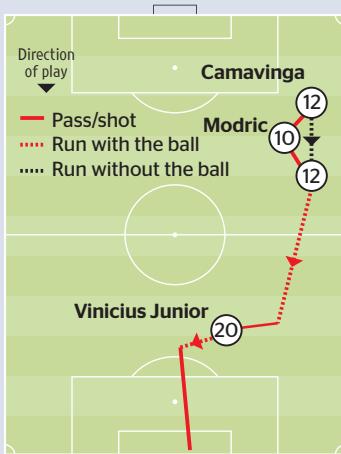
Madrid



How Real took the lead in style

The run

Camavinga plays a one-two with Modric then surges into the Man City half



The shot

He lays off to Vinicius who lets fly



they wanted them, but couldn't hold. Kevin De Bruyne equalised and the Bernabéu was momentarily silenced. They know they're in a match now too.

They have had it their own way for so long, Real Madrid. This place with its ghosts and legends intimidates visitors, from opponents to referees. Yet not City. Not last night. This was a bold, brave possession-based performance — there really is no other kind with Guardiola — that tees up a thrilling second-leg occasion. And it may yet end in disillusionment again, but there is something about this City side that suggests they are made of stronger stuff. They took what Madrid threw at them — a well-executed game plan, a fabulous goal by Vinicius Jr — and hurled it straight back. That's what experience does for you, eventually.

It's been a long haul, to this point. It was 2011 when City first embarked on the Champions League journey that many feel is their destiny. In that time there have been two group-stage exits, three in the round of 16, three quarter-final failures, two in semi-finals — both times eliminated by Real Madrid — and that final disappointment against Chelsea in 2021. Yet this felt different. This felt like a team finally coming of age in Europe. Madrid had them where



Vinicius Jr gives Real the lead with a spectacular long-range shot after receiving the ball from Eduardo Camavinga, who ran

With due respect to the Milanese it is perhaps a bonus that these teams were drawn together in the Champions League last four. That way, the tournament gets two finals this year. The real one, obviously, on June 10 in Istanbul, and this one, played over two legs, across a minimum of 180 minutes and in front of fervent crowds rather than the dreaded football family, all goody bags and tacky souvenirs.

Watching these teams was to witness European football on another plane. The best players, the smartest minds, a fabulous history on one side, brilliant upstarts on the other. This is what Real

Madrid thought a Super League would deliver, but how could that be, without this most prestigious prize as reward? Turning nights like this into mundane annual fixtures would have been death. There deserves to be something enormous at stake each time these coaches, these players, these clubs, meet. It should be more than a gimmick to be sold to far continents.

As Guardiola attempted to pass Real Madrid to death in their own stadium, and Ancelotti responded with a fiendish waiting game, setting traps, letting City have so much of the ball they might let their guard down and blunder

into one, this was close to the best football can offer. That is why it was worth fighting for, this competition. That is why, in the knockout stage at least, it can never get old.

The level of whistling inside the Bernabéu suggested the locals did not have Ancelotti's patience with City on the ball. They were furious with how much of it City were seeing. After 25 minutes, 72 per cent possession; after 30 minutes, 253 passes to Madrid's 90. Yet after 36 minutes, one goal to City's nil. And those are the only numbers that matter, as Ancelotti would no doubt inform, if he was given to sermonising.

talkSPORT PRESENTS

TWO SPORTING HEAVYWEIGHTS

JIM WHITE &

SIMON JORDAN

PLUS GUESTS

LISTEN ON
DAB 1089/1053 AM SMART SPEAKER
THE TALKSPORT APP TALKSPORT.COM

TODAY
FROM 10AM – 1PM

talkSPORT

making for City



from his own half before teeing up his team-mate (see graphic, left) for his seventh Champions League goal of the season

Modest to a fault, the Italian said before this game that he does not have to tell his players much on nights like this. Yet no team with Madrid's ability plays safe unless under instruction. Madrid have brilliant, beautiful players who would instinctively take the game to the opposition. Yes, they are stunnering on the counterattack, but on the front foot too, which is how they play most of their games in La Liga. So Ancelotti is playing down his role when he talks as if his players make it up as they go. Their lead here was the embodiment of a plan coming together, and it rattled City, who had been lulled into a

false sense of security, with the belief they were controlling the game.

By half-time, and with hindsight, it was obvious who was in control at that stage. Real had played this perfectly, the way they play this competition perfectly so often. Certainly, they were playing referee Artur Dias, from Portugal, who appeared in awe of the men in white, unable to believe they could possibly not have the purest intentions at heart. Dani Carvajal had already had several goes at Jack Grealish when he shoved him at pace into the electronic advertising hoardings. Grealish flicked out in retaliation and Carvajal collapsed as if

run through with something Penny Mordaunt might carry.

If football is serious about preventing dangerous injury, Carvajal should have been off. One day, someone is going to get badly hurt that way — a broken shoulder, maybe a significant head injury. By contrast, what Grealish did wouldn't have squashed a fly. Yet Dias ticked them off, as if both actions were the same. Eventually, he booked Toni Kroos — but it took a thigh-high challenge to get there. Justice was served in the end, though, and City will hope to burst Real's bubble completely in a week's time.

Results

Football

Champions League
Semi-final, first leg
Real Madrid (1) 1 Man City (0) 1
Vinicius Júnior 36 De Bruyne 67
63.485

Cinch play-offs, first legs

Premiership: Quarter-final

Partick (2) 4 Queen's Park (1) 3

Turner 15 Thomas 33, 87

McMillan 28 Boateng 83

Fitzpatrick 69 3,754

Graham 90+7

Championship semi-finals

Airdrieonians (5) 6 Falkirk (0) 2

Devenny 8 Donaldson 61

McCabe 14 Kennedy 68

90+5 (pen)

Smith 16

Taylor-Sinclair 31

Fordyce 41

Sent off: J Rae (Airdrieonians) 65;

J Allan (Falkirk) 90

Allia (1) 1 Hamilton (0) 0

Donnelly 45+2 1,011

League One semi-finals

Annan (3) 6 Dumbarton (0) 0

Goss 7, 24 840

Muir 40, Smith 62

Dochart 84

Luisint 89

Sent off: K Orsi (Dumbarton) 29

East Fife (0) 0 Clyde (0) 1

Rennie 53

Cricket

First ODI: Ireland v Bangladesh

Chelmsford (Ireland won toss): No result, rain

Bangladesh

(balls)
*Tamim Iqbal c Tucker b Adair 14 (19)

Tamim Das lbw b Little 0 (1)

Najmul Shanto c Adair b Campher 44 (66)

Shakib Al Hasan b Hume 20 (21)

Towhid Hridoy c Tucker b Hume 27 (31)

*Mushfiqur Rahim c Doherty b Little 61 (70)

Mehdi Miraz c Doherty b Dockrell 27 (34)

Taijul Islam c Adair b Little 14 (36)

Shoriful Islam c Tucker b Adair 16 (15)

Hasan Mahmud not out 4 (5)

Ebadot Hossain not out 1 (2)

Extras (lb 6, w 12) 18

Total (9 wkts, 50 overs) 246

Fall of wickets 1-3, 2-15, 3-52, 4-102, 5-122,

6-187, 7-220, 8-239, 9-243.

Bowling C Miraz 10-0-61-3; Adair 10-14-2;

Hume 10-0-32-2; McBrine 5-0-21-0;

Campher 8-0-50-1; Dockrell 7-0-32-1.

Ireland (balls)

S T Doherty c and b Taijul 17 (39)

P R Stirling c Miraz b Shoriful 15 (10)

*A Balbirnie b Mahmud 5 (9)

H T Tector not out 21 (37)

tL Tucker not out 2 (4)

Extras (lb 3, w 2) 5

Total (3 wkts, 16.3 overs) 65

C Campher, G H Dockrell, A R McBrine,

M R Adair, J Little and G I Hume did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-22, 2-27, 3-63.

Bowling Mahmud 5-0-21-1; Shoriful

Islam 5-0-21-1; Hossain 4.3-0-15-0; Taijul

Islam 2-0-5-1.

● Three-match series level 0-0

Indian Premier League

Mumbai Indians v Royal Challengers Bangalore

Wankhede (Mumbai Indians won toss):

Mumbai Indians (2pts) beat Royal

Challengers Bangalore by six wickets

Royal Challengers Bangalore

(balls)

V Kohli c Kishan b Behrendorff 1 (4)

*F de Plessis c sub b Green 65 (41)

A Rawat c Green b Behrendorff 6 (4)

G J Maxwell c Wadhera

b Behrendorff 68 (33)

M K Lomor c Kartikeya 1 (3)

T K Darith c Wadhera b Jordan 30 (18)

K M Jadhav not out 12 (10)

P W H de Silva not out 12 (8)

Extras (lb 1, nb 1, w 2) 4

Total (6 wkts, 20 overs) 199

J R Hazlewood, Mohammed Siraj, V V Rashid and H V Patel did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-2, 2-16, 3-136, 4-143,

5-146, 6-185.

Bowling Behrendorff 4-0-36-3; Chawla

4-0-41-0; Green 2-0-15-1; Jordan 4-0-48-1;

Kartikeya 4-0-35-1; Madhwal 2-0-23-0.

Mumbai Indians (balls)

*T P K Ishan c Rawat b De Silva 42 (21)

*R G Sharma lbw b De Silva 7 (8)

S A Yadav c Jadhav b Vyshak 83 (35)

N Wadhera not out 52 (34)

T H David c Maxwell b Vyshak 0 (1)

C D Green not out 2 (2)

Extras (lb 6, nb 2, w 6) 14

Total (4 wkts, 16.3 overs) 200

C J Jordan, P P Chawla, J B Behrendorff,

K Kartikeya and A Madhwal did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-51, 2-52, 3-192, 4-192.

Bowling Siraj 3-0-31-0; Hazlewood

3-0-32-0; Hasaranga 4-0-53-2; Vyshak

3-0-37-2; Patel 3.3-0-41-0.

Cycling

Giro d'Italia

Leading positions: Fourth stage

(Venosa to Lago Laceno, 175km): 1, A

Paret-Peintre (Fr, AG2R Citroën) 4hr

16min 4sec; 2, A Leknessund (Nor, DSM)

at 2sec behind; 3, T Skujins (Lat, Trek-

Segafredo) 57; 4, V Albanese (It, EOLO-

Ramsdale set for pay rise and longer deal

Tom Allnutt

Aaron Ramsdale is set to be rewarded with a new long-term contract after playing a leading role in Arsenal's surprise title charge this season.

Ramsdale has two years left on his present deal and while there is an option to extend it by a further year, Arsenal want to tie down the 24-year-old, with a significant increase on his £60,000-a-week salary. There is a recognition that Ramsdale's new terms should reflect his status as an established goalkeeper.

Arsenal's technical director, Edu, and the director of football operations, Richard Garlick, are working on new contracts for core players, with the club also hoping to confirm extensions for Bukayo Saka and William Saliba. The pair's contracts are both due to expire next year.

An announcement could be made before the end of the season, although Arsenal want to avoid any distractions during the run-in. Mikel Arteta's side are pushing Manchester City all the way in the Premier League title race after their superb 2-0 victory away against Newcastle United on Sunday moved them to within a point of City, albeit having played one game more.

Ramsdale registered his 13th clean sheet of the season at St James' Park and made crucial saves from Joe Willock and Callum Wilson. He joined Arsenal from Sheffield United in 2021 in a deal worth £30 million.

"He has been brilliant," Arteta said after the game. "It has been a big jump for him, from where he was, to play at a club like Arsenal and with the standards that are

required, but he has really improved in every aspect, especially in his consistency and in his life, his maturity and how he can read the game. I am really pleased with him."

Arsenal's wage bill is only the sixth-highest in the Premier League after the club successfully shifted big earners such as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Mesut Özil in recent years while investing in younger, cheaper talent. The challenge will be to maintain that approach as they attempt to juggle their return to the Champions League next season with trying to compete again at the top of the Premier League. As well as rewarding star performers in the present squad, Arteta has stressed the importance of making quality additions, which would allow for more rotation.

Arsenal want to bring in a premium defender, midfielder and attacker in the summer, but Arteta also wants to improve the depth of the squad, which will depend on how many players are let go. Declan Rice is a key target although the 24-year-old will not come cheap, with West Ham United aware that Jude Bellingham at Borussia Dortmund is likely to cost significantly more than £100 million this summer.

Rice was named man of the match as West Ham beat Manchester United, who are also keen on the midfielder, 1-0 on Sunday at the London Stadium.

"That's why he's probably the best English midfield player around," David Moyes, the West Ham manager, said afterwards. "And that's why he's going to be extremely expensive if anyone comes calling."

Ramsdale earns £60,000 per week on his present deal

Reduced contract for De Gea

Paul Hirst

David de Gea is close to agreeing a new contract with Manchester United, but the goalkeeper's salary and bonuses will be significantly reduced.

The 32-year-old, who is out of contract in July, is nearing an agreement on a new deal that will keep him at the club beyond the end of next season, despite his recent errors. United chose not to trigger a one-year extension to De Gea's present deal because it was worth £375,000 a week and contained several lucrative bonus clauses.

De Gea, who has played 540 times for United, joined the club in 2011 and broke Peter Schmeichel's clean-sheet

Liverpool ask to start next season with away game

Liverpool have asked to play their opening game of next season away from home to ensure that their new £80 million expanded Anfield Road Stand is fully operational (Paul Joyce writes). They made a similar request to the Premier League when the new Main Stand opened in 2016.

Work on the project, which began in September 2021, will increase Anfield's capacity by 7,000 to 61,000.

The Premier League season starts on August 12 and Liverpool believe Anfield will be in a position to host a game a week later. Contractors will start removing the roof of the existing stand immediately after Liverpool's final home game of this season, against Aston Villa on May 20.

Wolves charged by FA for fans' homophobic chants

Wolverhampton Wanderers have been charged by the FA with failing to control their fans during a match against Chelsea in which there were homophobic chants.

Three arrests were made after Wolves' 1-0 victory at Molineux on April 8, relating to alleged offensive chants in the second half towards Chelsea supporters, who were targeted by homophobic chants earlier this season. Warnings were delivered over the PA system.

The FA has previously warned clubs that they will face disciplinary action for discriminatory behaviour by supporters.

Wolves have until Monday to respond.

Sport Champions League semi-final, first leg

De Bruyne proves he can inspire Treble push

Henry Winter

Chief Football Writer, Madrid



Real Madrid

Vinicius Jr 36

1

Manchester City

De Bruyne 67

1

Kevin De Bruyne's magnificent strike that gives Manchester City such great hope of reaching the Champions League final was so much more than a celebration of one exceptional talent's stellar technique.

The goal embodied all that is good about City, the qualities that could drive them to the Treble, the guts as well as the guile, the intelligence of movement and the teamwork. The goal sets up next week's second leg so nicely. Real will still believe they will progress, because of their sumptuous attacking qualities, but they know they are in a fight with a tough, tactically adept and determined opponent in Pep Guardiola's side.

The goal flowed from a collective resilience, the City players' strong connection with each other, as well as one individual's sublime connection with the ball. Lesser heads and hearts might have feared the worst when Vinícius Júnior put Real ahead. City had dominated the ball for the opening half an hour but had nothing to show for their sweeping passing moves apart from glowing tributes on social media about their 74 per cent possession, making 253 passes to Real's 93, reducing the European champions to chasing shadows and their supporters to whistling in frustration.

It was relentless, this spreading of the ball between the visiting players and spreading of hope among the travelling support. Up in the gods of this stadium that is being transformed from imposing to architecturally stunning, City supporters sang in praise of John Stones as he played the ball around Vinícius to Bernardo Silva on the wing, then Rodri turned away from Luka Modric, passing to Silva. City kept switching play, right to left, Kyle Walker to Jack Grealish, and left to right, Ilkay Gundogan and De Bruyne to Silva.

Real fans assume progress in the Champions League as almost a right. City chose to fight for the right. Even when Thibaut Courtois saved shots from De Bruyne and Rodri and then Erling Haaland's header in the first half, they did not hesitate to storm back.

But City could not relax. It was bruising as well as draining. Gundogan ran into Antonio Rüdiger and collapsed to the floor. Guardiola gestured an elbow, demanding officials have a look but it

was accidental. But there was no doubt that Rüdiger and company, especially Dani Carvajal, were prepared to resort to strong-arm tactics. This was a test of City's mettle.

Real's calibre was always there, a weapon waiting to be wielded. Courtois's long ball down the field was instantly controlled by Karim Benzema. Vinícius got away from Walker and crossed low and hard, only for Rubén Dias to make a sliding interception.

And then Real really went through the gears with nine minutes of the first half remaining. Maybe that was why their fans had gathered so confidently. It was against the run of play, but not against Real's perspective of their place in the European firmament. Maybe they just knew the European champions would conjure up some magic. Real had failed to press City sufficiently, appearing almost diffident. This was clearly a tactic by Carlo Ancelotti, knowing how much damage the speeding likes of Rodrygo and Vinícius could do in transition.

And so they broke down the left. Eduardo Camavinga was in the left-back role he fills so capably, taking the ball, and passing past Bernardo Silva inside to Modric. Rodri was pressing, but was easily outwitted. The Croatian's touch was magnificent, the ball flicked with the outside of his right foot back to Camavinga, who outpaced Silva. He swiftly covered 50 yards, and with his sixth touch transferred the ball right to Vinícius. Ilkay Gundogan was too slow to cover back. Dias was too slow to rush out, and seemed more focused on keeping his hands behind his back. Vinícius was hardly waiting, taking a touch and driving the ball from 25 yards past Ederson.

City could have felt history repeating itself, ignominy again hurtling their way after what befell them here in the second leg last year as Real imposed their undoubted class.

But City did not sit back feeling sorry for themselves. They went for a side containing two Ballon d'Or winners, a side willed on by a passionate home support, and in a game where City's sharpest cutting edge, Haaland, was struggling to escape Rüdiger.

Trailing, City did not lick their wounds. They ignored them. City regrouped, stuck to their principles and attacked and attacked and were rightly rewarded. The Blue Moon rose over the Bernabéu.

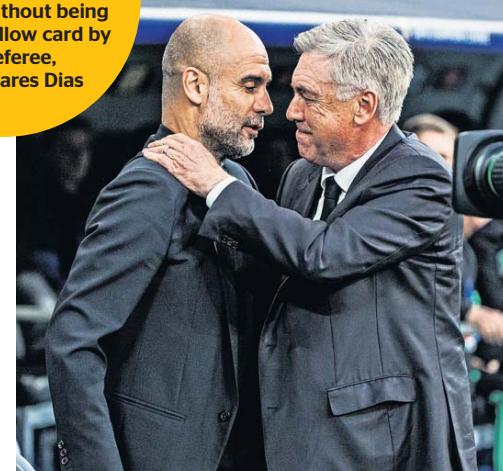
So many qualities were on display in City's goal. Rodri first. He anticipated Camavinga's loose ball, darted in and picked it off, turning over possession 30 yards out on the right. Then City paraded their slick passing, the patterns of play creating space for the finisher, transferring the ball across to the left.

Now it was Grealish demonstrating



3

Times Dani Carvajal fouled Jack Grealish in the first half without being shown a yellow card by the referee, Artur Soares Dias



City's strengths, their belief and adventure, taking the game to Real, weaving between Federico Valverde and Carvajal, who had been kicking him all night. Carvajal's performance bordered on the disgraceful, and Grealish showed his character — City's character — to fight back.

Consider what Carvajal did to Grealish in the first half. Real's right back tracked Grealish deep, fouling him, politely lifting him up, then taking him out again. As the half closed, Carvajal could have ended Grealish's game when he dangerously barged the Englishman into the revolving advertising hoardings, just at the point when it was showing Turkish Airlines.

Any thoughts of Istanbul and the June 10 final could have been placed permanently on hold for Grealish but fortunately he escaped serious injury. Carvajal should have been cautioned, not least for his pathetic simulation in response to Grealish's angry reaction. So this was what Grealish was up against. So Grealish just focused on his game, playing the ball past Carvajal to Ilkay Gundogan. Now it was the City captain's turn to display that determination, holding off the towering Rüdiger before laying the ball off to De Bruyne.

The Belgian had been drifting all over, linking and looking for openings, and here he moved just left of centre. City were a kaleidoscope of movement, all designed to open up this shooting chance. Haaland, tireless in running for the team, moved slightly right to drag David Alaba out of position, and De Bruyne had his moment, meeting Gundogan's ball first time from 25 yards. He struck it so true that it flew past Thibaut Courtois. City fans loved it, and taunted the locals with "You're not singing any more".

Real were furious, believing that Stones had handled in the build-up and that they should also have had a corner. The usually composed Ancelotti complained so loudly he was booked.

City continued to show their collective strengths, keeping Real at bay. Toni Kroos's free kick to the far post was met by Benzema, whose downward header was saved by Ederson. City stood tall, and their supporters, high up, chorused their approval. Their team had responded to the setback. They had confirmed their camaraderie and team ethic. Next week brings another test at the Etihad. City will be ready. They have the technique as De Bruyne highlighted. They have the fighting spirit.

Uefa's £4.2bn from TV rights

Clubs involved in Europe will be able to cash in even more from next year, with the new Champions League format set to help deliver a 33 per cent rise in TV money to about £4.2 billion a season for Uefa across all European competitions (Martyn Ziegler writes).

Although the Champions League money will be split between 36 clubs, instead of 32, from the 2024-25 campaign onwards, it will mean a bigger payday for most, with some earning an extra £30 million or more per season.

The controversial "coefficient" element to how the money is split looks set to remain, though the amount paid to the top clubs may be reduced. Under the system Manchester City, the highest-ranked English side in the Champions League, will get about £28 million in coefficient funding next season. But if Newcastle United qualify, they would earn less than £3 million, as they have not been in Europe over the previous ten seasons.



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER BRADLEY ORMESHER



Clockwise from main: De Bruyne scores the equaliser for City; Benzema could not find a way past Dias and Ederson; Guardiola and Ancelotti after the final whistle; Real right back Carvajal went unpunished despite repeatedly fouling Grealish

'The referee wasn't paying attention'

CONTINUED FROM BACK

whether it crosses the goalline. "It was out, and it's not just me saying that, it's technology saying that," Ancelotti said.

"BeIN Sports used 3D technology. They showed it was out. I don't understand why they didn't use VAR."

"The referee wasn't paying a lot of attention anyway. He booked me and I wasn't playing."

City could not make their early dominance count and Real made them pay when Vinícius Júnior put the home team ahead with a 25-yard strike. Real put City under pressure at the start of the second half, but De Bruyne struck from outside the box in the 67th minute to leave the tie on a knife-edge.

Ancelotti felt that his team were the better side. "We easily could have won," he said. "We controlled the game well. After scoring we played well."

"We go to Manchester with good feelings for the second leg because we played well. We just have to play again like we did tonight. We were not worried when City had possession."



BeIN Sports, the Qatari broadcaster, claimed its technology showed that the ball went out of play before City scored in the second half

Pep Guardiola said he was "really satisfied" with his team's performance in the Bernabéu, where they were knocked out of the competition in a dramatic fashion last season, conceding three late goals in the second leg of the semi-final.

"We defended the box really well in general," the City manager said. "Now it's like a play-off, a final, in Manchester and we are looking forward to it."

Jack Grealish warned Real that City will prove to be tough opponents at the Etihad, where they have lost only once this season: to Brentford in November.

"Within ourselves at the Etihad, we

feel unstoppable there," Grealish said. "We came here to try to win, but it shows our character to come back from a goal down. It's always difficult to play at a place like this. In the end I think it was a fair result. They had their chances, we had a few as well. I really enjoyed it. I've never felt so confident going on to the pitch and having these players around me."

Grealish had a running battle with Dani Carvajal, who fouled him three times in the opening half-hour and sent him crashing into the advertising hoardings just before half-time. The £100 million attacker said he enjoyed the occasion, though.

"I had a text from my mum before the game and she was saying, 'These are the nights you dreamt of as a kid' and it's true," Grealish said.

"Playing in the semi-final of a Champions League, everyone in the world was probably watching. Sometimes you pinch yourself — this is the life, isn't it? I loved it, man. You can have a few nerves but these are the nights you play football for."

Player ratings By Paul Hirst

Real Madrid (4-3-3)

THIBAUT COURTOIS Saved four shots in the first 20 minutes, though none had venom. Couldn't have stopped Kevin De Bruyne's effort. **7**

DANI CARVAJAL Fouled Jack Grealish three times, the first of which sent the City winger crashing into the advertising hoardings. **5**

ANTONIO RÜDIGER Roughed up Erling Haaland with a tough early tackle and also collided with Ilkay Gundogan in another strong challenge. **7**

DAVID ALABA Put in a crucial tackle ten minutes into the second half when the prolific Haaland was about to pull the trigger. **7**

EDUARDO CAMAVINGA Ran 50 yards with the ball at his feet before setting up Vinícius Júnior for his goal. Defended OK. **8**

FEDERICO VALVERDE Had a quiet opening half-hour but then burst into life, surging forward down the right to set up a chance. Shot over also. **6**

TONI KROOS Wasteful, by his high standards, in possession. Spent much of the night trying, unsuccessfully, to shackle Gundogan. **5**

LUKA MODRICH Struggled to deal with the pace of the match early on but then played a vital role in Vinícius's strike, passing to Camavinga. **7**

RODRIGO Kept Manuel Akanji busy. Would have had an assist had Ederson not come out to snatch the ball away from Benzema. **7**

KARIM BENZEMA Thirty-five years old but still arguably the best No 9 in world football. Some of his link-up play was superb. **8**

VINÍCIUS JÚNIOR Put Real ahead with his 23rd goal of the season, his best return in his career. Played with the City defence all night. **8**

Total **75**

Substitutes

M Asensio (for Rodrygo 81min), A Tchouaméni (Kroos 84), Nacho (Modric 87).

Booked Kroos, Camavinga.

Man City (4-3-3)

EDERSON Could do little to stop Vinícius's strike. Dived at Benzema's feet. Superb 89th-minute save from Aurélien Tchouaméni. **7**

KYLE WALKER Played a couple of nice passes early in the first half but faded a bit thereafter. Found it tough against Vinícius occasionally. **6**

JOHN STONES Played well, particularly in the first half when he got forward. Had a more defensive role in the second half. **6**

RÚBEN DIAS Made a vital interception to stop Benzema scoring in the first half. Gave the ball away too easily sometimes. **6**

MANUEL AKANJI Started brightly, playing out of position at left back, but did find it hard coming up against Rodrygo's trickery. **7**

KEVIN DE BRUYNE Equalised with a stunning finish from the edge of the area. Had tested Courtois early on with another effort. **9**

RODRIGO The Spaniard swept the ball up well, particularly in the early stages of the first half to quieten the home fans. **7**

ILKAY GUNDOGAN Battled on after a nasty collision with Rüdiger in the first half. Got the better of Kroos in midfield and set De Bruyne up. **8**

BERNARDO SILVA Failed to stop Camavinga sprinting forward in the build-up to the first goal. Worked hard off the ball. **6**

ERLING HAALAND A quiet night for the Norwegian. Had a tame shot and a weak header at goal in the first half but barely featured thereafter. **6**

JACK GREALISH Did not lose his temper despite rough treatment from Carvajal. Played his part in De Bruyne's goal. **8**

Total **76**

Booked Gundogan, Silva.

Referee A Soares Dias (Por)

Sport

City's saviour

De Bruyne scores wonder goal but angry Ancelotti insists it should not have stood

Real Madrid	1
Manchester City	1

Champions League semi-final first leg

Paul Hirst Madrid

Kevin De Bruyne scored a stunning goal to set up a mouthwatering Champions League semi-final second leg — but the Real Madrid head coach Carlo Ancelotti insisted that the Belgium midfielder's equaliser should not have stood.

Ancelotti received a yellow card for protesting to the officials in the aftermath of De Bruyne's 20-yard strike, which earned City a 1-1 draw in the Bernabéu last night and brought the tie level going into next Wednesday's match at the Etihad Stadium.

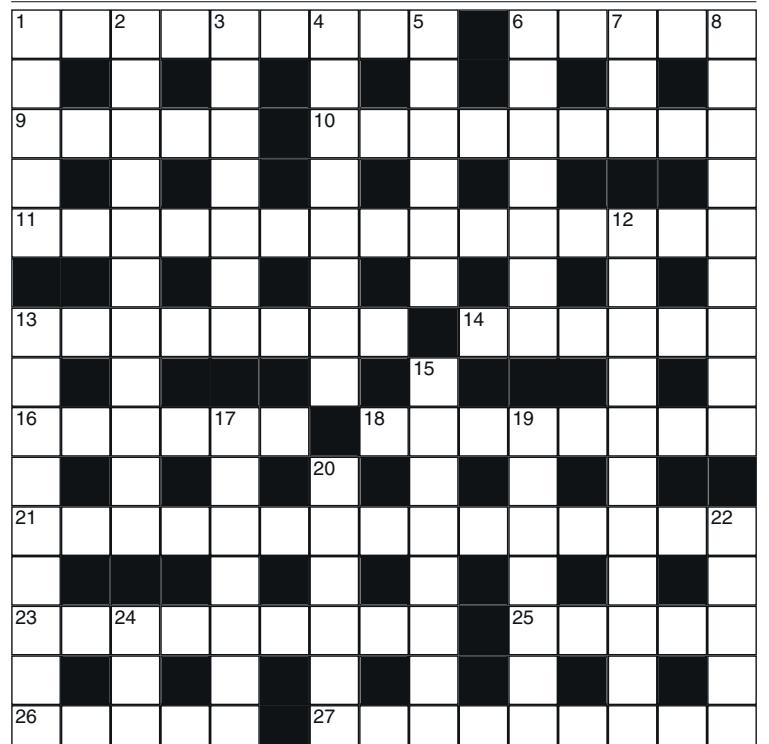
The Italian was convinced the ball had gone out of play in the build-up to the goal when Bernardo Silva won possession on the touchline in front of the dugouts. Using its own technology, the Qatari broadcaster, beIN Sports, claimed the ball did go out of play and that a throw-in should have been awarded. VAR, however, does not track the ball's location on the touchline and can only check

Continued on page 67



De Bruyne takes the acclaim from Erling Haaland and Bernardo Silva after his goal; Ancelotti thought the ball went out of play and was booked for his protests, inset

Times Crossword 28,599



ACROSS

- 1 If not old, king must be protected by judicious people (9)
- 6 Produced a low, sullen feeling, we hear (5)
- 9 Was a criminal almost sent west in Irish town? (5)
- 10 One that's battered in sport tussle, completely gutted (9)
- 11 Case of academic curiosity, but not in materialism (15)
- 13 Right back loth to make cross (8)
- 14 Silky material in the country changing hands (6)
- 16 Soft fur for boy in school for spells (6)
- 18 Dip into awful magazine at last and take issue (8)
- 21 On a visit, he at once concocted a trifle (1,4,2,3,5)
- 23 Business groups organise return of capital after fraud (9)
- 25 Note fate's spared nothing in place of iniquity (5)
- 26 Harry investing £1000 in bank (5)
- 27 That man's touring Asian area, these being the high points of his trip? (9)

DOWN

- 1 What Columbo ends with: great series finale (5)
- 2 Large piece of meat concealed around northern lodge (11)
- 3 Impatient Republican and I see TV broadcast (7)
- 4 That thing I stored in box is most irritating (8)
- 5 Involving striptease that's sexy, got stick for undressing (6)
- 6 Woman's family member given lidless serving bowl (7)
- 7 Promise to leave rugby goal in grass (3)
- 8 Velocity in both directions somewhere far from earth (4,5)
- 12 Green cornfield cultivated in Kenya periodically (11)
- 13 Performer of rap act with end going wrong (3,6)
- 15 Somewhat oafish? Far more breeding's expected here (4,4)
- 17 Go off east, following retired policeman? (7)
- 19 Waking from bibulous revelry having lost head (7)
- 20 Appropriate in society, of course (6)
- 22 New house put up for Gallic commune (5)
- 24 Agree this would make Leander less fat? (3)

Yesterday's solution 28,598



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 2020 was 67%



Milan holds its breath

Owen Slot on a city preparing for biggest derby in 20 years
Special report, pages 62-63



Archer fitness fear for Ashes

Ewan Alderman

England's pace-bowling stocks have suffered another blow five weeks before the start of the Ashes after Jofra Archer returned home from the Indian Premier League with an elbow problem, while Olly Stone is awaiting a scan on a hamstring.

Ben Stokes, the England captain, wants an eight-man squad of seam bowlers available for the five Tests against Australia. The 90mph trio of Archer, Stone and Mark Wood were earmarked to feature in rotation during the series but it seems likely that only Wood will be available for the first Test, starting on June 16 at Edgbaston.

Wood has just left the IPL for the birth of his daughter and could be available for the Test against Ireland, which begins on June 1. However, England may choose to manage his workload to

Continued on page 60

Wasps hit with RFU deadline

Alex Lowe Rugby Correspondent

Wasps must prove to the RFU before the end of this month that they will be ready to compete in the Championship next season, or their licence will be revoked and the club's existence thrown into doubt.

The six-times English champions were suspended from the Gallagher Premiership in October after going bust with £95 million of debt and then demoted to the Championship. The RFU laid down a series of conditions over their return to the second tier, but the club is yet to appoint a director of rugby or recruit any players.

"We have been given certain criteria to meet a deadline set by the RFU and will submit a detailed written response to them by the due date," a Wasps spokesman said.

Full story, page 58

T TIMES Travel Offers

Cities and Cruises

Discover our experts' favourite tours and experiences in Europe and beyond



ABTA
Travel with confidence



Times readers
get £100 off
any Exodus
shorthaul trip
with the code
TIMES100^

TEN DAYS FROM
£8,450*
per person

Departures
May to July 2024

Price Includes

- ✓ All meals while on the ship
- ✓ Beer and house wine during dinner
- ✓ All accommodation
- ✓ All transport and listed activities
- ✓ Full complement of qualified Expedition Staff
- ✓ Mandatory transfer package including return flights between Helsinki and Longyearbyen
- ✓ Flights from the UK

Our Trusted Partner



**CALL TODAY ON
0808 304 2767
QUOTE TIMES100^**



Scan the QR code
with your camera
app to view more
details. Or visit
[thetimes.co.uk/
ex-spitsbergen](http://thetimes.co.uk/ex-spitsbergen)

Introduction to Spitsbergen

Explore the Svalbard Archipelago and its stunning landscape and wildlife

This voyage provides the opportunity to get a taste of everything the Arctic has to offer, from Polar bears and walrus to spectacular scenery. Be treated to daily presentations by the Expedition Team on board the ship, and daily wildlife sightings on land. Hike, explore and enjoy the beauty of the Arctic on this adventure to Spitsbergen



WHAT WE Love

Explore the remarkable Svalbard Archipelago in 24 hour daylight. Incredible wildlife viewing including seabirds, walrus, Arctic foxes and Polar bears.



*Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Price is flight inclusive. Additional dates may be available, please call for details. Offer subject to availability and prices may fluctuate. Prices are correct at time of publication, and subject to confirmation at time of booking. ^Quote TIMES100 to be eligible for the £100pp discount, included in the price above. It is not combinable with any other offers or loyalty discount. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Exodus Travels, ABTA Y0751, ATOL 25825, a company wholly independent of News UK.





Times Travel Offers Exclusive:

Complimentary pre-tour extension including sushi-making class

Save up to
£400pp.
Book by
31 May

18 DAYS FROM
£7,490*
per person

Departures
September 2023 to
November 2024

Price Includes

- ✓ International flights and current taxes
- ✓ Touring with Guides and entrance fees
- ✓ Exclusive free pre-tour extension including a hotel night with dinner and breakfast and sushi-making class
- ✓ All meals
- ✓ Domestic transportation, including bullet train to Kyoto
- ✓ All accommodation throughout the tour
- ✓ A Times Travel exclusive offer: Complimentary pre-tour extension including sushi-making class. Quote TIMES-ON

Our Trusted Partner



Best of Japan Tour

Immerse yourself in Japan's historical treasures and cultural wonders on this extensive tour that explores the country's most spectacular landscapes, including the iconic Mount Fuji and the Japanese Alps.

Starting in vibrant Osaka, you'll explore Japan's main island, Honshu, ending up amongst the bright lights and sky-scraping towers of capital Tokyo. En route you'll see and experience the very best of what Japan has to offer: learn about the history of Kyoto, the charms of ancient Nara;

and Hiroshima, where you'll be able to reflect on the tragic events of the past whilst discovering the city's bright future. Expect plenty of traditional Japanese experiences, from a tea ceremony to washi paper making and, depending on your departure date, a sumo wrestling tournament.

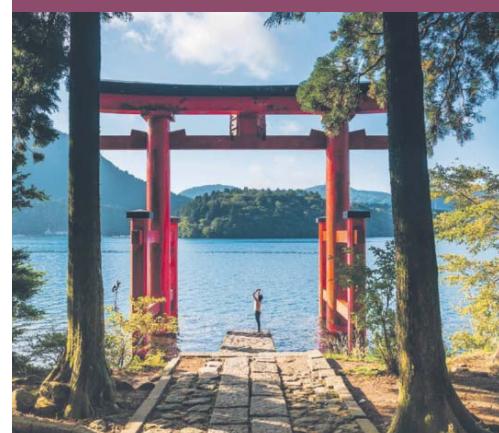
When booking this tour with The Times Travel Offers, you will get an exclusive complimentary pre-tour extension including an extra hotel night with dinner and breakfast included and a sushi-making class - make sure to quote TIMES-ON when booking.



CALL TODAY ON
0808 258 4088
QUOTE TIMES-ON



Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details. Or visit thetimes.co.uk/ww-japan



WHAT WE Love

The all-encompassing itinerary with an exceptional range of authentic inclusions, from delicious local cuisine to immersive experiences. You will also experience an exclusive complimentary pre-tour extension when booking through Times Travel Offers.

*Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Quote TIMES-ON when booking for the extension offer. ^Offer is available on bookings confirmed between 6 - 31 May 2023 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. The offer cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. Flights on holidays booked more than 11 months in advance may be subject to supplements when airline fares are published. The offer is subject to availability and Wendy Wu Tours reserve the right to change or withdraw the offer. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Wendy Wu, ABTA W7994 ATOL 6639, a company wholly independent of News UK.



Save up to
£300pp.
Book by
31 May

17 DAYS FROM
£4,090*
per person



Times Travel Offers Exclusive:

Complimentary pre-tour extension including dumpling-making class

Wonders of China

This all-encompassing 17-day tour of China blends must-see sights with spectacular natural scenery and cultural encounters.

Starting in the bustling capital, Beijing, explore the magnificent Forbidden City and harmonious Temple of Heaven, before a trip to the iconic Great Wall. You'll discover the ancient city walls of Xian and come face-to-face with the enigmatic ranks of life-sized Terracotta Warriors which have been shrouded in mystery since their discovery in the 1970s.

Next up is a four-night cruise on the Yangtze River, stopping at many highlights along the way. Witness the world's largest hydroelectric dam, the Three Gorges, and sail peacefully along the Shennong Stream soaking up the

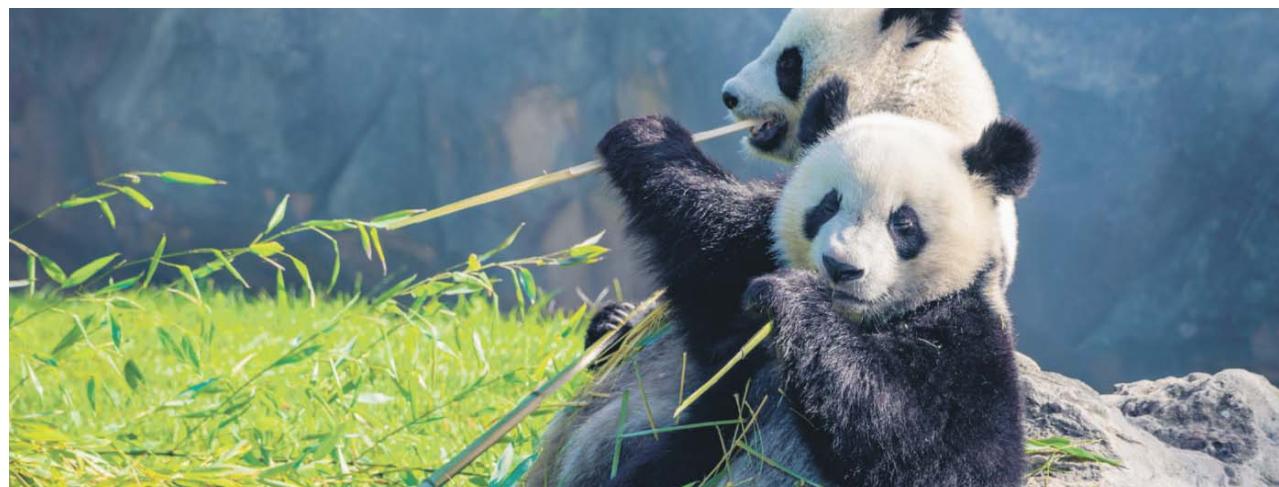
dramatic scenery as you pass riverside villages and forest-covered mountains.

No trip to mainland China is complete without seeing their most adorable residents; the giant pandas. Visit Chongqing Zoo's Panda House for a closer look at these playful bears before boarding a high-speed bullet train to the stunning city of Guilin - one of China's most picturesque regions.

Wind between the dramatic limestone karsts of the Li River with a trip to the lush emerald-green countryside of Yangshuo, and return to Guilin to visit the famous Sun and Moon Pagodas of Ronghu Lake and the colourful Reed Flute Caves.

The trip ends amongst the towering skyscrapers of Shanghai - a city where the old and new sit harmoniously side by side. See the city's contrasting skyline with an evening cruise along the Huangpu River, find serenity at the peaceful Yu Gardens and explore the magnificent architecture along The Bund.

When booking this tour with The Times Expert Traveller, you will get an exclusive complimentary pre-tour extension including an extra hotel night with breakfast and dinner included as well as a dumpling making class - make sure to quote TIMES-ON when booking.



*Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Quote TIMES-ON when booking for the extension offer. ^Offer is available on bookings confirmed between 6 - 31 May 2023 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. The offer cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. Flights on holidays booked more than 11 months in advance may be subject to supplements when airline fares are published. The offer is subject to availability and Wendy Wu Tours reserve the right to change or withdraw the offer. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Wendy Wu, ABTA W7994 ATOL 6639, a company wholly independent of News UK.

Departures
September 2023 to
November 2024

Itinerary

Beijing • Xi'an • Yangtze River Cruise •
Guilin • Yangshuo • Shanghai

Price Includes

- ✓ International flights
- ✓ All 4* Accommodation
- ✓ All Meals
- ✓ Exclusive free pre-tour extension including hotel night, dinner and dumpling making class - quote TIMES-ON when booking
- ✓ Domestic transportation
- ✓ Touring with guides and entrance fees
- ✓ Visa fees for UK passport holders

CALL TODAY ON
0808 258 4004
QUOTE TIMES-ON



Scan the QR code
with your camera
app to view more
details. Or visit
[thetimes.co.uk/
ww-china](http://thetimes.co.uk/ww-china)

Our Trusted Partner

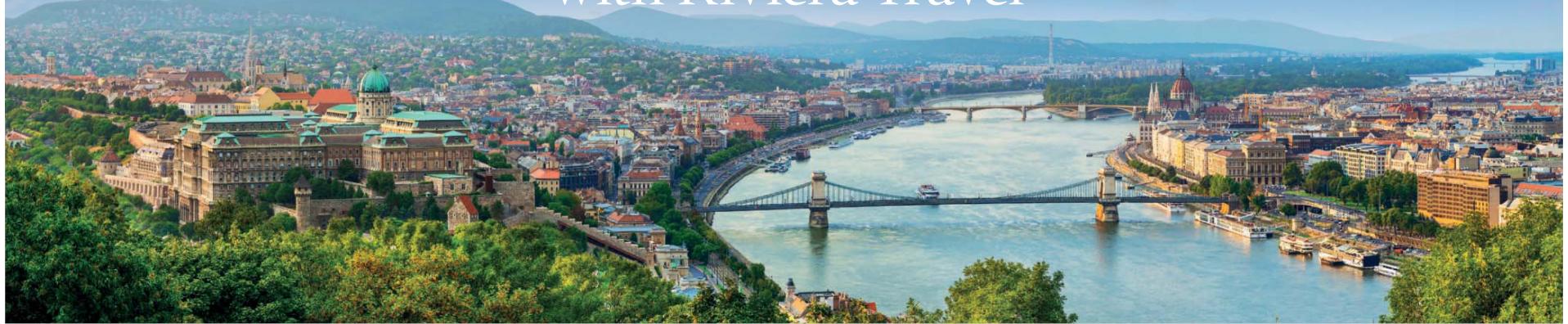
 Wendy Wu Tours



WHAT WE Love

China is a land of many wonders – ancient and modern, natural and man-made. This hugely popular tour is a comprehensive journey through China's most iconic sights from the magnificent Great Wall to the mighty Yangtze River.

Enjoy two of our favourite river cruises with Riviera Travel



The Blue Danube

SERVICES OF A CRUISE DIRECTOR AND CONCIERGE

CRUISE



Save up to £1000 per cabin on select October departures**

FROM
£1,399
PER PERSON



Rhine and Moselle

SERVICES OF A CRUISE DIRECTOR AND CONCIERGE

CRUISE



Save up to £800 per cabin or a free City Stay**

FROM
£1,514
PER PERSON



EIGHT DAYS DEPARTURES MAY TO OCTOBER 2023 AND APRIL TO OCTOBER 2024

Unwind on our magical river cruise and enjoy an escorted tour to imperial Budapest, the Pearl of the Danube. See Bratislava, Esztergom, Melk, Salzburg and unforgettable Vienna along the course of Eastern Europe's mightiest river.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board (except one lunch if choosing the Salzburg excursion), including welcome cocktails and the Captain's Dinner
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and Wi-Fi (connection speeds may vary)
- Return scheduled flights from a selection of regional airports
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides

YOUR INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Seven guided tours including the neoclassical Esztergom Basilica, charming Bratislava, historic Dürnstein, remarkable Melk Abbey, baroque Linz or magnificent Salzburg, elegant Vienna and captivating Budapest
- Live classical quartet recital on board
- Hungarian folklore show on board

2023 CITY STAY OPTION

- Option to add three nights to your holiday staying in Vienna at the centrally located Austria Trend Savoyen Vienna from £535pp

To book, visit thetimes.co.uk/riviera-rcd

EIGHT DAYS DEPARTURES MAY TO OCTOBER 2023 AND APRIL TO OCTOBER 2024

This wonderful cruise visits some of the most fascinating and beautiful sights straddling the majestic Rhine and Moselle, two of Europe's most picturesque rivers. Your floating accommodation is one of the most luxurious vessels navigating these delightful rivers.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including welcome cocktails and the Captain's Dinner
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and Wi-Fi (connection speeds may vary)
- Return scheduled flights from a selection of regional airports or seat on Eurostar from London St Pancras International with regional rail connections available*
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides

YOUR INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Seven guided tours including captivating Cochem, fascinating Trier, timeless Bernkastel, charming Koblenz, beautiful Boppard, magical Rüdesheim and magnificent Cologne
- Cruise through the Rhine Gorge

2023 CITY STAY OPTION

- Option to add three nights to your holiday staying at the centrally located Dorint Hotel am Heumarkt in Cologne from £475pp

To book, visit thetimes.co.uk/riviera-rcm



Call now to book, quoting TIMES-1005

0808 239 9949 thetimes.co.uk/riviera TIMES Travel Offers

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, DE14 1SP. See website for full details. *Supplement may apply. **Saving is based on two people sharing. Applies to new bookings on select October 2023 departures and is subject to availability. See website for further T's & C's.



T TIMES Travel Offers



21 nights from
£6,499
per person

Sale Extended: Save up
to £1,000 per couple*
Ends 11.05.23

Last ten cabins
remaining



Celebrity X Cruises

Our Trusted Partner
IMAGINE CRUISING
MORE THAN JUST A CRUISE.

All-inclusive Chilean Fjords voyage, luxury Andean Explorer rail and Machu Picchu tour

From Incan treasures to the rugged beauty of the Chilean Fjords, discover South America's indelible beauty during an unforgettable adventure over land, rail and sea.

Our adventure begins in Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires with a one-night hotel stay, before embarking the elegant Celebrity Eclipse® for an unforgettable Chilean Fjords cruise.

On board you'll voyage to the ends of the Earth, discovering the Chilean coast's astounding beauty, as you glide into one of the southernmost regions of the world. Admire the jaw-dropping depths of the fjords, icy blue glaciers and the jagged peaks of snow-draped mountains from the comforts of your intimate vessel with unforgettable scenic cruising.

Other highlights of your voyage include Uruguay's capital, Montevideo; laid-back Punta del

Este; and the southernmost point of the Americas, Cape Horn. You'll also marvel breathtaking nature in Ushuaia and towering glaciers in Puntas Arenas. Disembarking in Valparaíso, you'll fly to Lima for a two-night hotel stay; and relish a fully escorted city tour.

Next, you'll reignite the romance of luxury rail travel as you join Belmond's Andean Explorer as she carves a path between Peru's ancient wonders and natural kingdoms. As you traverse through the Peruvian highlands, journeying from Arequipa to Cusco, you'll travel in inimitable style relishing all-inclusive luxuries and off-train excursions at Puno and Lake Titicaca along the way.

Arriving in Cusco, you'll savour an overnight hotel stay ahead of exploring the Sacred Valley, home of several Incan Sites, and the spellbinding Machu Picchu, where you'll enjoy respective hotel stays. Finally, you'll return to Lima for another overnight hotel stay before flying home with a wealth of memories to cherish.

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.



Departing
March 1, 2024

Cruise Itinerary

Buenos Aires • Montevideo • Punta Del Este • Puerto Madryn • Cape Horn • Ushuaia • Punta Arenas • Strait of Magellan (scenic cruising) • Chilean Fjords (scenic cruising) • Valparaíso

Price Includes

- ✓ Two-night all-inclusive luxury Belmond Andean Explorer rail journey from Arequipa to Cusco with an off-train excursion at Puno and Lake Titicaca
- ✓ 12 night all-inclusive cruise on board Celebrity Eclipse®
- ✓ Complimentary Classic Drinks Package, Wi-Fi and Tips
- ✓ Complimentary Ocean View to Veranda upgrade
- ✓ Five-star hotel stays in Buenos Aires and Sacred Valley
- ✓ Four-star hotel stays in Lima and Cusco
- ✓ All hotel stays include breakfast
- ✓ Fully escorted tours including Buenos Aires city tour, highlights of Lima tour, Arequipa walking tour, walking city tour of Cusco, Sacred Valley tour including the Salt Mines of Maras, Moray and Ollantaytambo Ruins and Machu Picchu
- ✓ All flights and transfers - London departure

CALL TODAY ON
0808 278 7372

For more information scan the QR code on the left or visit thetimes.co.uk/ic-chileanfjords

Main image is intended for illustrative purposes only. Holidays are operated by Imagine Cruising Ltd, Portland House, Bincknoll Lane, Interface Business Park, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon SN4 8SY and subject to the booking conditions of Imagine Cruising Ltd, a company wholly independent of News UK, ATOL and ABTA protected. Imagine Cruising: ABTA Y6300; ATOL 11078. *Prices include discount and savings based on two passengers sharing a Veranda cabin.

ABTA
Travel with confidence



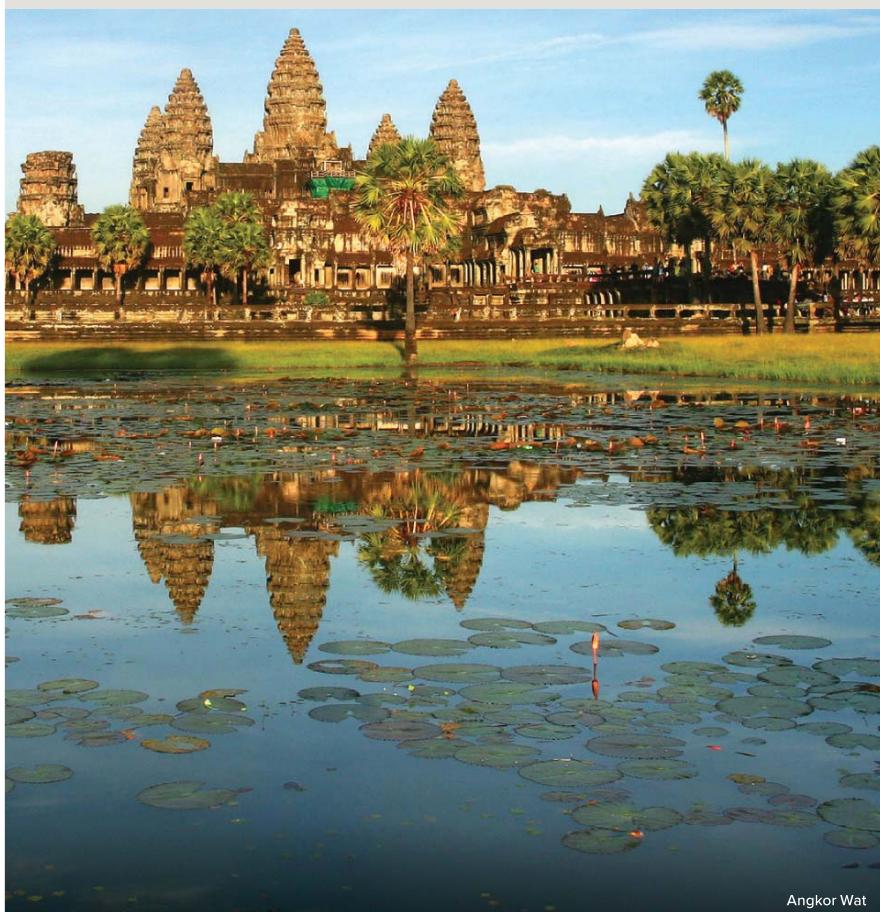
15 days now from £2,997pp

Follow the Mekong - Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam

Take a colourful journey of a lifetime through South East Asia's verdant lands, experiencing unforgettable must-see highlights.

This extraordinary tour begins amid the excitement, noise and kaleidoscopic wonder of the Thai capital, Bangkok. After the chance to see the River Kwai, you'll journey into Cambodia, to explore the Khmer citadel of Angkor Thom, discover the vast serenity of Angkor Wat, and the palaces and museums of the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. A scenic boat journey through the Mekong Delta brings you to Ho Chi Minh City – formerly and famously Saigon – a fitting finale to this wonderful tour of South East Asia.

Departures September, 2023 to November, 2024



Angkor Wat



Tour Highlights & Inclusions

- 12 nights' bed and breakfast accommodation at a series of four-star hotels in Bangkok (three nights), Battambang (one), Siem Reap (three), Phnom Penh (one), Chaudoc (one), Cantho (one) and Ho Chi Minh City (two), plus two nights on the aircraft
- Six lunches and eight dinners
- Bangkok's Buddhas, palaces and monuments
- A visit to the floating markets at Damnoen Saduak and Cai Rang
- A visit to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly known as Saigon)
- Journey along the Mekong River by fast passenger boat
- Cruise across Tonlé Sap – South East Asia's 'Great Lake'
- A scenic journey to the Cambodian border and French colonial Battambang
- Two full days at Siem Reap, including a visit to the temples at Angkor Wat
- A city tour of the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh
- A chance to see the infamous Cu Chi tunnel complex, a former Viet Cong hideaway
- Return flights on Singapore Airlines to Bangkok (returning from Ho Chi Minh City) via Singapore
- Comfortable, air-conditioned coach and boat travel and transfers
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager

 **Newmarket HOLIDAYS**

0808 304 3048 quote **TIM**
 thetimes.co.uk/nh-mekong

 **TIMES Travel Offers**

Terms and Conditions: *Save up to 10% discount applies to specific holidays and tours only. All other holidays and tours will have a 5% discount applied. Applies to new bookings made by 9 June 2023. The Offer does not apply to holidays with late availability pricing and excludes, Ocean Cruise, River Cruise, Andre Rieu events, Lapland and Wimbledon. This offer cannot be combined or used in conjunction with any other discount, promotion or concession. Prices shown include discounts. The discount applies to your final holiday price (excluding holiday insurance) at the time of booking. The Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Newmarket Holidays Ltd, ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325 protected company wholly independent of News UK. Prices correct at time of going to press. Single supplements apply. Standard landline charges apply.

 **ABTA**
Travel with confidence
 **ATOL PROTECTED**



12 DAYS FROM
£5,429*
per person

Times exclusive departure
April 6, 2024

Price Includes

- ✓ Hotels (10 nights), traditional Inn (one night, shared facilities)
- ✓ 11 breakfasts, one lunch, one dinner
- ✓ All transport between in-destination activities, including arrival transfer
- ✓ Local CEO (Chief Experience Officer) throughout

Our Trusted Partner

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
JOURNEYS
with **G Adventures**

Iconic Japan

Experience the beauty of Japan with greater exploration, insider access, and the freedom to roam – all without sacrificing comfort.

In Japan, tradition and modernity are celebrated side-by-side in ways that often appear contradictory. Immerse yourself in this intriguing culture, beginning in sprawling Tokyo, one of the world's most innovative cities. Then head by rail into the countryside to visit traditional villages and tranquil shrines. Explore quaint geisha districts and inspiring gardens; savour the fresh flavours of Japanese cuisine; and get a glimpse of the ancient soul of this fascinating, futuristic country.



**CALL TODAY ON
0808 304 2809
QUOTE TIMES-ON**



Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details. Or visit thetimes.co.uk/ga-japan



WHAT WE Love

Combining the very best of Japanese culture, history, architecture and cuisine, this itinerary does not compromise on experiencing all that Japan has to offer.