

How

to

have

more

fun

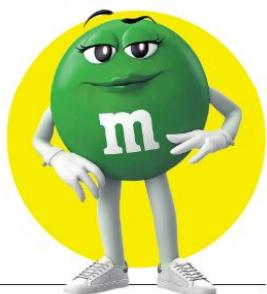
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An extremely serious investigation

Wednesday 26/01/22

# Life & Arts

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# A moment that changed me A stranger told me he was my brother



Ashley John-Baptiste discovered in his 20s that he had at least four siblings

**Growing up in care, Ashley John-Baptiste believed he was an only child. Then a man messaged him online ...**

**I** was a toddler when I entered the care system. By the time I left, at 18, I had been shunted between four foster homes and a residential care home, all across south-east London.

I met my biological mum for the first time since entering the care system when I was about 10. I never met my dad. To the knowledge of my various social workers and

foster parents, I had no siblings. But, in my mid-20s, I received a message on social media that changed my life. A stranger about a decade older than me got in touch to tell me that he was my brother. Jeez.

Eventually, we spoke on the phone and established that he was my half-brother - we had the same father. He had occasionally babysat me before I was fostered. He also told me that I had at least three other siblings. Perhaps most astounding was the fact that he lived in south Bermondsey - the same part of London as me.

Did we ever pass each other in the street? Were we ever on the same bus, or in the same shop?

While the revelation of the existence of a brother was mostly welcome, I can still remember the palpable shock and confusion I felt when I read his initial message. An unexpected note from a stranger on Facebook had collided with my already fractured identity, raising a wave of questions about who I was and where I came from.

When he got in touch, I was making strides in rebuilding my life after care. I was a graduate and

had recently started a career as a journalist at the BBC. I lived on my own terms. I had good friends and a sense of direction, but this message disrupted all of that. Still, I tried to hold it all inside.

Despite the magnitude of him getting in touch, we never met in person. We messaged each other a bit for a few weeks and initially I scoured his Facebook profile, but we didn't pursue a relationship.

Years passed without any contact - until the first Covid lockdown.

In April 2020, my partner gave birth to our first child. I was finally starting a family of my own. A month or so later, we went back to the hospital for a check-up. To our relief, all was well.

As we left, I spotted a man outside the building. We locked eyes. Weirdly, perhaps, I recognised him instantly. He was the brother who had got in touch all those years ago. He looked exactly the same in person as he did in his profile picture.

I called his name and, to my relief, he also recognised me.

We stood there, outside the hospital, chatting. Time stood still. In that moment, it felt as if we had

known each other our whole lives. There was a deep knowing. Nothing was awkward about it. If anything, it felt too normal.

He said he was at the hospital visiting his sick mother. I introduced him to my baby, we took a photo together and even made plans to catch up properly in the near future.

Since that encounter, though, we haven't met.

For ages after that meeting, I was consumed with questions

about my past. Why did social workers and foster carers tell me I was an only child? How did no one with authority in my care experience know about my siblings? Do children's services even care about, or prioritise learning about, the family histories of looked-after children?

That encounter, and the revelation that I had other siblings, touched me deeply. To know that I had siblings as a looked-after child means I am able to take comfort in knowing that there are others who were affected by the decisions of my absent father. Although I don't know, and may never know, these siblings on a personal level, they serve as a touch point to understanding my past and my sense of identity. Knowing they exist reassures me that I am a part of something bigger than myself.

I now have a photo of my brother. A photo of my baby daughter's uncle.

At this stage of my life, knowing they are alive and well is more than enough for me.

BBC Three's *Split Up in Care: Life Without Siblings* is on iPlayer from today

**Having siblings reassures me that I am a part of something bigger than myself**

# Arwa Mahdawi

## Office or beach? If only ordinary workers had that choice

**I**s the office dead? Or have rumours of its death been greatly exaggerated? The pandemic has already spawned a million think pieces on the subject. Now that Boris Johnson has dropped work-from-home guidance and some big companies are starting to tell staff to come back in, brace yourself for a gazillion more.

If you don't have time to navigate the debate, here's a handy summary: the future of work looks very different depending on who you ask. People who have spent the pandemic Zooming from spacious holiday homes, and those with a financial stake in remote work, seem to be adamant that the days of trudging to an office are over. People with a financial stake in commercial real estate and ancillary industries, meanwhile, have been working overtime extolling the virtues of in-person work.

One big proponent of the "offices are for ever" crowd is the architect Clive Wilkinson, who (this will shock you) designs office spaces. Not just any office spaces, mind you: Wilkinson is the guy responsible for Google's fancy headquarters in California. He's got some regrets about the Googleplex now: in a recent interview with NPR, Wilkinson admitted that too many on-site perks can be "dangerous" because employees never have any reason to leave the office. Still, Wilkinson said the office may need to be reimagined but that doesn't mean it's dead. "The office is the fermenting ground for people growing into successful adults," he opined. "How would that ever be dead?"

On the other extreme of the debate is Brian Chesky, Airbnb's CEO and a man who clearly hasn't spent the last two years quietly weeping as he tries to get work done while living in a one-bedroom flat with a very loud baby, a hyperactive dog and another adult. Last week Chesky announced that he will be working remotely as he hops from Airbnb to Airbnb around the world. Why? Well, because he's a billionaire and he can. And also, as he explained on Twitter, because this is the future: remote work has "untethered many people (obviously not everyone, but a large chunk) from the need to be in an office every day." That means "more people will start living abroad ... and [becoming] digital nomads". Which, of course, is great news for Airbnb.

Airbnb-hopping as you work from the beach sounds lovely, right? But while the people who can do this may be a lucrative customer base for Airbnb, they can't be described as a "large chunk" of the population. Those of us who have been lucky enough to work remotely during the pandemic can easily overestimate how many people have had the same opportunity. Last September, the Atlantic commissioned a

poll asking Americans to estimate how many people had worked from home during the pandemic. Seventy-three per cent of the respondents who had worked remotely guessed at least half of Americans had done the same. In reality, the number of Americans who worked remotely was only 35% at its highest point (May 2020). Only 13.4% were working from home by the end of last summer. The numbers seem to be higher in Britain (47% in April 2020), but we're still not talking about an overwhelming majority.

And this is the key issue when it comes to the whole remote v in-person work conversation. Far too much airtime is given to the experiences of a relatively small proportion of the population; every other type of worker seems to be invisible. There may be a lot of grand ideas about the "future of work" floating around, but there's nothing futuristic about fixating on how to improve the lives of white-collar workers while ignoring everyone else. That's just business as usual.



Only 35% of Americans worked remotely during the pandemic



## Sexy sweets: the latest victims of the woke agenda?

No doubt I speak for every woman on Earth when I say this: thank you, Mars! When I was a little girl I felt as if I could never be my authentic self because of the way the green M&M mascot used to dress. Every time I saw her tottering around in advertisements wearing white go-go boots and fluttering her long eyelashes, a little part of me would die inside. Although young, I recognised something profound: women would only be free when multinationals allowed anthropomorphised chocolate to wear sensible shoes.

At long last, that time has come. Last week, Mars Wrigley, the international purveyor of sugary goods, announced that it was revamping (or, rather, de-vamping) its six M&M characters to promote inclusivity. Most notably: the green one is switching out boots for trainers and the brown one is swapping stilettos for kitten heels. It is kind of questionable that they are still forcing the brown one into heels of any kind if you ask me. Nevertheless, it is still a massive step forward for feminism.

Alas, Fox News is not quite so enthusiastic about the fact that chocolate characters are updating their footwear. "M&Ms will not be satisfied until every last cartoon character is deeply unappealing and totally androgynous," Fox host Tucker Carlson railed. "Until the moment you wouldn't want to have a drink with any one of them. That's the goal. When you're totally turned off, we've achieved equity."

Yikes, ladies! We were supposed to keep that part of the 2022 feminist agenda secret. Who let Carlson in on the strategy? Still, since we are showing our hand here, let me warn conservatives that fem&minism is just the beginning of the corporate inclusivity revolution. We are not going to rest until Tony the Tiger comes out as non-binary. They're brirrrrrrave!



## Pass notes



Nº 4,364

## Middle-age spread

Age: 40+.

**Appearance:** Doughy, wrinkled, overspilling. **You mean old and fat?** It comes to us all, inevitably.

**Speak for yourself. I just joined a gym and lost 50 pounds.** You lost 50 pounds by going to the gym?

**No, that's how much I spent. I haven't actually been inside the gym.** That was also sort of inevitable.

**I guess I'm just doomed to spend my later years being overweight and in ill-health.** One or the other, maybe, but not necessarily both.

**What does that mean?** You might be genetically disposed toward favourable adiposity.

**I see. What does that mean?** It means you could be OK, provided your middle-age spread is spread right. According to a new study, some obese people are much healthier than others, depending on where they store fat.

**In the fridge?** On your person, they mean.

**Oh, I suppose it's a sort of saddlebag arrangement. Why does it matter?** The study suggested that obese subjects who stored fat mostly under the skin were better off than those with an identical BMI who stored fat predominantly in the liver and the pancreas.

**How can I make sure all my fat is in the right place?** You can't. According to Dr Hanieh Yaghootkar, who led the research: "Some people have unlucky fat genes, meaning they store higher levels of fat everywhere, including under the skin, liver and pancreas."

**What about under my chin? That's quite far away from my liver.** If you've got favourable adiposity, you're at lower risk of 12 obesity-related diseases, including type 2 diabetes, coronary disease and stroke.

**That's it - I'm waddling down to that gym tomorrow and demanding my money back.** Not so fast - for some conditions, obesity increases your risk no matter where the fat is stored. These include rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, gallstones, psoriasis and deep vein thrombosis.

**But still, middle-age spread is genetic; it's just my metabolism slowing down.** That's not true - a study published in Science last year showed that your metabolism peaks at the age of one, but stays relatively stable from 20 to about 60.

**You mean this double chin is my fault?** There may be larger societal forces at work.

**I'll take that as a yes. I'm sorry.**

**Do say:** "It doesn't matter what you look like on the outside, as long as you're healthy on the inside."

**Don't say:** "There's just more of me to love; unfortunately, it's tightly packed around my liver."

# The great menopause gold rush

There is now a £450bn industry serving women's post-reproductive years. But are these treatments improving women's lives or just making money? By Linda Geddes

**F**rom menopause calendars to menopause scented candles, and menopause supplements to menopause spa breaks, there is no shortage of products to help ease a woman's transition into her post-reproductive years. If you're after something stronger, how about vaginal rejuvenation laser treatment or bioidentical oestrogen? You could even try to postpone menopause for a decade or so – provided you are willing to freeze a slice of your ovary in your 20s and then have it grafted back on in later life.

Menopause is enjoying a moment. After centuries of enduring the rollercoaster of physical and emotional symptoms that often accompany it, middle-aged women have never been so well-catered for with products purporting to help. But is this sudden choice empowering, or just exploitative?

Half the world's population will experience the menopause and, according to one recent report,

the global menopause market represents a \$600bn (£450bn) business opportunity. Dietary supplements, symptom-tracking apps, telemedicine and cosmetics represent some of the biggest investment prospects.

But while medical experts are delighted that common symptoms such as night sweats, heavy bleeding, anxiety and low libido are being discussed more openly, and welcome the development of workplace programmes to better support women, some are concerned by the apparent menopause gold rush that is under way.

"Overall, it is absolutely brilliant that so many more people are talking about menopause, but I think it's getting too complicated, too medicalised and too commercial," says Dr Heather Currie, an associate specialist gynaecologist at Dumfries & Galloway NHS, and managing director of the menopausematters website.

"It really keeps me awake at night," says Dr Louise Newson, a GP, menopause specialist and founder of the Menopause Charity, who has set up a private menopause clinic. "When I was experiencing symptoms five years ago, I couldn't get hormone replacement therapy (HRT) from my GP because they were too scared to prescribe it. I would have spent thousands on anything to save my job as a doctor, and to save my marriage, because I was really struggling."

Menopause occurs when a woman's periods stop and her ovaries cease producing significant amounts of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. This can occur naturally, due to a diminishing number of eggs – usually between the ages of about 45 and 55 – or it can occur prematurely, if the ovaries are surgically removed, for example, or damaged by treatments such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

Oestrogen affects the body in many ways – from brain function, to bone density, skin elasticity, vaginal lubrication and the distribution of fat – so losing it causes organs and tissues to behave differently. However, this transition does not occur overnight. Perimenopause refers

to the time leading up to a woman's last menstrual period.

"During that time, women's hormones are very variable, so in fact, you can get really quite high oestrogen levels," says Dr Paula Briggs, a consultant in sexual and reproductive health at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust and chair-elect of the British Menopause Society. These fluctuating hormone levels underpin some of the symptoms women experience, such as heavy and/or irregular periods, heart palpitations or mood swings.

As perimenopause progresses, women may experience other symptoms, such as hot flushes, night sweats, sleeplessness, skin irritation, anxiety or a reduced interest in sex – some of which may continue even after a woman stops having periods.

"You do get women who will go through that transition with absolutely no symptoms whatsoever, but very few women will get away without anything at all," says Briggs.

Post-menopause, hormone levels tend to be low and more stable, but this too can create problems. In the short term, falling oestrogen levels affect the part of the brain that controls body temperature, resulting in hot flushes and night sweats. Many women will experience vaginal dryness, itching, or pain during sex, which, left untreated,

may increase the risk of recurrent urinary tract infections.

For centuries, many women suffered in silence but, today, women broadly fall into one of two "camps": those plumping for hormone replacement therapies (HRT) to alleviate their symptoms, and those seeking alternatives to hormone treatment.

The history of HRT began in the early 1940s but it wasn't until the 60s that the use of HRT became widespread.

Various studies began to suggest that HRT might have other benefits, such as the prevention of osteoporosis or cardiovascular disease. Not only could women stay feminine for ever, they might stay healthy for ever, too.

This illusion was shattered in 2002, with the publication of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study, which found that HRT actually increased the risk of coronary heart disease and heart attacks, and also breast cancer and stroke – although the risk of colorectal or endometrial cancer and osteoporosis was reduced. The results triggered panic among many HRT users.

"Following these results, there was a 70% or greater decline in the use of prescription menopausal hormone therapy," says Prof JoAnn Manson of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, US, a principal investigator on the WHI study since its inception in the early 90s.

This sudden and wholesale rejection of HRT left a large vacuum in terms of treatments for women experiencing menopause symptoms.

"Companies rushed in to fill the void," says Manson. "The advantage they had was that they were not required to list the potential risks. They did not have to put a warning on compounded bioidentical hormone therapy, for example, or on these over-the-counter products that are untested for either safety or efficacy."

There's no doubt some women do benefit from taking such products. For instance, a 2016 review of plant-based therapies published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (Jama) found that phytoestrogens (plant-based compounds that



**From 2002, companies rushed to fill the treatment void after the sudden rejection of HRT**

mimic the effects of oestrogen in the body), such as soy extracts or herbal remedies, including red clover and black cohosh, were associated with modest reductions in the frequency of hot flushes and vaginal dryness but produced no significant reduction in night sweats. "However, because of general suboptimal quality and the heterogeneous nature of the current evidence, further rigorous studies are needed," its authors said.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) also states that black cohosh or St John's wort may relieve hot flushes and night sweats. However, "the quality, purity, constituents, and safety" of complementary products "may be unknown, and different preparations may vary", it says.

"I think the assumption is that, if you can buy something over the counter, it's safe, but that's not necessarily so – and you wouldn't necessarily get the same level of consultation as if you spoke to a health professional," says Briggs. "Black cohosh can be toxic to the liver, depending on the concentration, and St John's wort is an enzyme-inducing drug, so it can



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An overweight woman is likely to gain more from healthy eating than taking hormones

menopause specialist services that increasingly exist in many areas of the UK.

HRT isn't the only option, though, and with recent publicity around the benefits of HRT from celebrity advocates such as Davina McCall, some experts feel that the pendulum is now starting to swing too far in the opposite direction.

"I'm now seeing women who often have significant health problems, who are being led to believe that HRT will miraculously cure them," says Briggs. "Some of that is coming from celebrities who often have a very different lifestyle from the patients I'm dealing with."

She is anxious that the overprescribing of hormone therapies could trigger the same sort of crash as the publication of the WHI study did in 2002. She says: "I think there's a lot of us who are feeling very uncomfortable - largely around very high [hormone] doses being used, lack of progestogens, testosterone by the shedload. Of course, HRT might be appropriate, but it might not be."

But pills and procedures are only part of the solution. "Menopause is a natural life stage for the majority of women, and it needs to be embraced and managed, rather than treated as a disease," says Irene Aninye, director of science programmes at the Society for Women's Health Research, which recently recommended preparing women early (as young as 35) for better health during the menopause transition and beyond.

"This transition is different for everybody, and how your body responds to it is affected by your overall health and any specific conditions you may have," Aninye says. A woman who is overweight or unfit is likely to gain more from healthy eating and exercise than taking hormones. Eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise will also help guard against the longer term consequences of low oestrogen, such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

"What is needed," says Briggs, "is a situation where menopause is talked about so that people know what's likely to come, and they can make informed decisions about how they want to manage that part of their life."

interfere with other medications. Phytoestrogens like red clover are OK, but you wouldn't take them if you'd had oestrogen-receptor positive breast cancer - because it could stimulate any residual cancer cells to grow."

Then there are compounded "bioidentical" hormone therapies beloved of celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey - plant-based preparations promoted as being identical to human hormones. Crafted into bespoke creams, lozenges or vaginal preparations by "specialist pharmacies" - often following costly blood or saliva hormone tests - they are sometimes painted as a natural or safer alternative to standard HRT.

"These are not regulated, they're not licensed, and they come under supplements, so they don't have to follow the same standards as regulated hormones to be produced," says Newson. Neither do you have to be a doctor to prescribe these products. "I think a lot of it is a big marketing ploy, because people have been scared off HRT."

In their efforts to avoid conventional HRT, some women who are experiencing vaginal

or bladder symptoms as a result of the menopause are resorting to expensive "laser vaginal rejuvenation" treatment. This involves creating "micro-abrasions" to stimulate the production of collagen and boost the blood supply.

Although some studies have suggested that laser rejuvenation may help to alleviate symptoms, the evidence for this is mixed: one study published in JAMA in October found that so-called "fractional carbon dioxide laser treatment" may be no better than a placebo. There are also concerns that laser treatment could be harmful in some situations. In 2018, the FDA issued a statement warning about the possibility of burns and scarring as a result of it.

Laser therapy may not even be necessary for many women. If over-the-counter lubricants and moisturisers don't help, low-dose vaginal oestrogen delivered as a cream or pessary often proves an effective treatment. Because the hormone is released locally "it doesn't raise the blood level of oestrogen above what is considered the normal menopausal range", says Manson. "Local

oestrogen is very effective and it's safe for most women."

Evidence is also mounting that some of the fears about HRT may have been overblown. "Many of the risks [identified in the original studies] were driven by women who were more distant from the onset of menopause when they started hormone therapy - particularly women who were at least 70 years old when they were enrolled in the trial," says Manson. "Women in their 50s tended to do quite well. They even had a signal for a lower risk of heart disease and all-cause mortality."

**H**R isn't risk-free, but then no medical product is. Newson is a strong advocate of HRT, arguing that women should be allowed to take it for life if they want to. "Menopause is a hormone deficiency, but people have been scared away

from their own hormones because of poor data, and because of scaremongering in the media and medical press," she says.

Because Newson runs a private menopause clinic she arguably has commercial skin in the game. She balks at this suggestion, pointing out that she channels some of the proceeds into her not-for-profit enterprises, such as the Menopause Charity and the Balance menopause app. She claims she set up her private practice because women have often struggled to find help within the NHS, and "have nowhere else to go". Also, because there aren't enough dedicated menopause clinics for specialists like herself to secure NHS jobs. However, that's starting to change.

"For some women, it might depend on who they've seen as to what advice they're given," says Currie. "To counteract that, there's a huge amount of education going on with the aim of women being able to get consistent advice wherever they are in the country."

If a woman's GP isn't being helpful, she advises asking if there's anyone else in the surgery who has a special interest in menopause, or to be referred to one of the regional

# I need a funtervention!

After two years of Covid and cancelled plans, **Elle Hunt** had almost forgotten how to enjoy herself. Time for a refresher course ...

**I**t speaks to the scale of the challenge that, in the month that I set out to have more fun, my Christmas and new year plans are derailed by Covid; I am relieved of half my savings by a phone scammer; and a man I'm meeting for a first date suggests that maybe I am depressed.

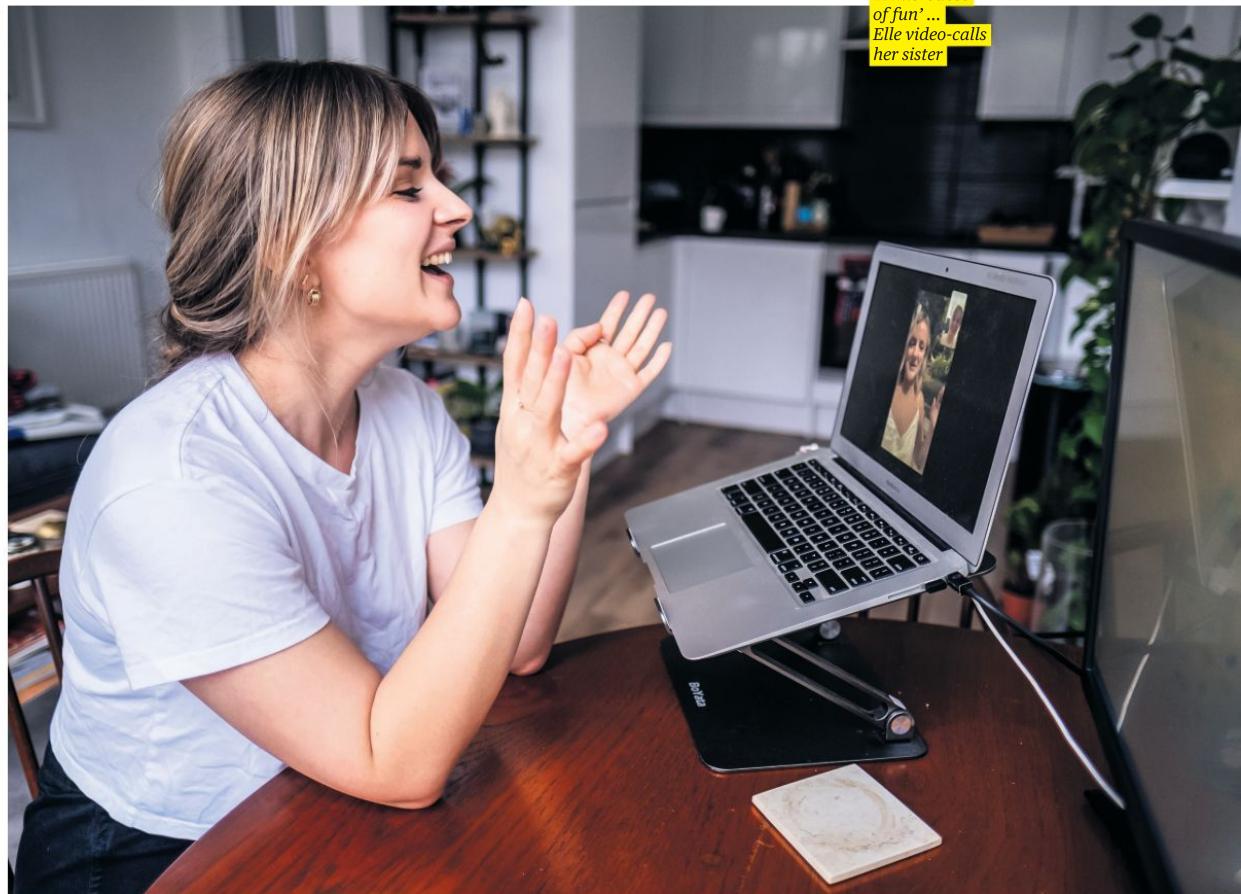
I get my money back, and my date is a supply chain consultant, not a doctor - but fun certainly seems like a faraway prospect.

I have been tasked with testing out the advice in *The Power of Fun*, a new book by the science journalist Catherine Price. Fun, she argues, is not something that's nice to have, but actually essential to a happy, healthy life - and it's possible to have more of it, even during a pandemic.

I will admit that when Price and I first speak, the week before Christmas, I am sceptical. Omicron cases are surging, the official advice is to "deprioritise" socialising - and the sun goes down by 4pm. Meanwhile the back cover of Price's book invites me to reflect: "When did you last feel exhilarated and lighthearted? When is the last time you felt fully alive?"

I cast my mind back, and back, and back, to what feels like a different period in history. Maybe I am depressed - or maybe it's just the pandemic.

Simply living through the last two years is, for most of us, reason enough for an urgent "funtervention", suggests Price. I had been steeling myself for our interview, anticipating the A-grade Pollyanna who would have the gall to exhort "the power of fun" through a deadly pandemic - but



she's delightful company: warm, knowledgeable and reassuringly down to earth.

She has been only too conscious of how her pitch might land, Price tells me over Skype. "The idea that 'you should just have fun!' - people are going to want to punch me in the face, you know?" She laughs.

"The message I am really trying to get across is that if we think more seriously about what fun is ... it can help us through this. This is what we need to focus on, if we want to make it through this next phase of the pandemic with our sanity intact."

Price points to the "broaden-and-build" theory of positive psychology that suggests positive emotions don't just reflect resilience, wellbeing and health - they build it, helping us to endure future stress. Other research has suggested that, while some of our happiness is determined by our genes and circumstances - for example, living through a pandemic - as much as 40% may be in our control.

That's not to say that it is easy to influence: if fun is hard to summon

or define at the best of times, it is surely more elusive than ever now. But to Price, that is all the more reason to prioritise it.

There is an assumption that fun is effortless - "that your leisure time will just fill itself," she says. "But unless you put effort into figuring out how you want to fill it, you risk having the feeling that Viktor Frankl described as 'Sunday neurosis' - when the void within yourself becomes manifest."

Frankl, a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, wrote in 1946 about the existential despair that descends at the end of the busy week. I am very familiar with that void, I tell Price, though I know it as "the abyss". Sometimes friends and I describe our state of mind in relation to it, as: "inching closer to" or "on the very edge of".

I realise I am sounding depressed again but Price is sympathetic. "I've felt that through my life, but I'm happy to say that I don't feel that so much now, and I really do think that's a result of this project."

The goal, she says, is not nonstop

**We're just trying to add lightness, to take some steps to feel energised and alive**



fun, or even outstanding fun: "We're just trying to add lightness, to take some steps to feel energised and alive." Let's see, she adds, how far away from the abyss she can take me.

## Finding your fun

I hit a hurdle more or less immediately. I struggle to articulate what, exactly, "fun" is. It's not necessarily watching Netflix, as anyone who has been caught out by their slack-jawed reflection in the "Are you still watching?" screen knows. Nor is it board games, or musical instruments, if you're contentedly tin-eared.

Everyone's experience of fun - every experience of fun, even - is different, says Price. Many things that we ostensibly do "for fun" we may not even enjoy. She began her investigation into fun with her own experiences and those of her "Fun Squad", a self-selecting global group of 1,500 people, recruited from Price's mailing list.

Between her own "life-affirming"



*I'm struck by how much I love making cannelloni'*



## I enjoy an hour of TV. First dates can be fun but are unpredictable. Twitter is a no

calling my sister in New Zealand, a perfect example of what Price calls a "microdose" of fun, which can be easily slotted into busy schedules.

I'm struck by the fun I have making cannelloni: the minor challenge of a new recipe, the meditative act of stuffing the pasta. Eating all six portions by myself, over a week? Not so much.

It quickly becomes clear that my most reliable "fun magnet" is connecting with other people, a challenge when I live alone and my friends have gone to ground over Christmas.

But knowing that battery will be running down, I make more of an effort to be present and engaged as I go about shops and cafes. Those exchanges do make me feel lighter, and the world seem friendlier (apart from the phone scammer).

Inspired by poet Ross Gay's *The Book of Delights* - which included pecans and people calling him "sweetie" - Price started exchanging her own daily delights in a group chat with faraway friends. "And it really makes a difference."

I score the trifecta by video-

vacation! Have a big party!" - but these things have been out of reach."

Aiming for the "true fun" trifecta presents "a way to think about the things that nourish us, and to figure out achievable things we can do, to make ourselves feel just a little bit more alive".

### Seeking delights

I start small, noticing how and when I experience playfulness, connection and flow in a day. What doesn't feel fun that should? And when am I taken by surprise?

As I attune to my internal fun-meter, I find that I enjoy an hour of television, but see steeply reduced returns from there onwards - and the same goes for one to one-and-a-half glasses of wine. First dates can be fun, but wildly unpredictable. Twitter is hardly ever any fun at all.

I score the trifecta by video-

experience of group guitar lessons and her correspondents' recollections - of pastimes as varied as playing fetch with their dog, squishing through mud and sleepovers in school - Price identified three factors of real, restorative fun: playfulness, connection and flow.

The confluence of the three she termed "true fun": when we feel lighthearted, engaged with another person and absorbed by the activity. It's possible to have fun if only one or two of the criteria are met, Price says - but highly unlikely if none are.

By evaluating our time through those filters, we can crystallise our personal definition of fun and make space for more of it in our lives. We might need to lower our expectations, Price suggests. "People tend to think: 'Go on a

magnet friends into doing the same, and his messages are a treat to receive. Mine describe some perfect cobwebs and a woman waving at me in my flat from the bus stop across the road. They are barely worth mentioning, but I am glad I did.

### Creating the conditions

It's not just the pandemic working against us having more fun - it's much of modern life.

Playfulness, connection and flow are all notably active states - meaning that passive consumption, though enjoyable or relaxing, is unlikely to ever transport or restore us the way the best kind of fun can.

"true fun" requires us to be present and at ease, not distracted, self-critical, stressed or sleep-deprived. For many of us, that's a tall order. We may slump in front of screens every evening because we are too exhausted to consider anything else. (Price titles this chapter: "Why you feel dead inside".)

My first breakthrough in my "funtervention" is that I am not rested enough to be open to the idea.

I had not grasped that, by getting less than eight hours' sleep a night, I was eroding my capacity to enjoy my days. It is the prompt I need to introduce a proper bedtime routine and to charge my phone in another room overnight. By identifying rest as a prerequisite for pleasure, I prioritise it. (And I soon start zipping through novels like I used to do pre-smartphone.)

For caregivers, of course, the challenge is much greater. Resentment is a "universal fun killer", says Price. She suggests that the first step in creating the conditions for more fun might be ensuring that childcare and chores are equally divided.

### Revisit old interests

I have already failed spectacularly at one of Price's rules: "Don't turn fun into work" - but so has she. As freelance writers, we both have form in "turning personal issues into professional projects", as she puts it, with the end result being that it is hard to separate our lives from our jobs.

I feel this acutely, having ditched all my hobbies - learning French, singing in a choir, playing guitar and darkroom photography (not to mention writing "for fun") - at 17, when I started pursuing journalism in earnest.

Now the closest I come is running and weightlifting: sources of flow and connection, but too close to "self-optimising" (to paraphrase writer Jia Tolentino) to be optimal fun.

"We are all so out of practice, raised in this cult of productivity,"

says Price. She suggests that I revisit some of those interests that I chucked for my career.

As it turns out, I am cat-sitting over new year at a house that has an electric piano, and I spend a happy half-hour haltingly working out a Taylor Swift song. I'm so pleasingly ineffectual, it could only be for my own enjoyment.

### Continuing the testing - and the commitment

Even after a few weeks of small-scale experiments with fun, I am struck by how soon it starts to feel more natural and easy, to flow more freely. And I am perturbed to realise how much of the resistance was within me all along.

Without being conscious of it, I had for a long time been orienting my days around what I couldn't do because of the pandemic, or what I had to do for work. Levity, or even leisure, couldn't get a look-in.

The epigraph of Price's book, from author Michael Lewis, proved to be perspicacious: "If you get into the habit of life not being fun, you start to not even notice."

For me, responsible for keeping only myself afloat, it is a relatively straightforward matter of creating space in my schedule and shifting my mindset so that daily delights can register. If they are thin on the ground, I will try to engineer one myself by calling a friend, going on a walk somewhere new or seeking out a stranger's dog (fail-safe).

For many other people, the challenge will be much harder to overcome, if not impossible. As Price acknowledges, food, shelter, adequate rest and physical safety are prerequisites for fun: in the case of poverty, job insecurity, sickness and abuse, it may be irrelevant.

But still, I think, she is right to urge us to try, in whatever way we can. Compared with other approaches to self-care and protecting your mental health, seeking to have more fun is accessible and instantly rewarding.

That is what Price appreciates about fun, she says. "It turns this thing you 'should' do for some future pay-off into something that you want to do, because it's enjoyable right then, in the moment."

And it is true that - after only a few weeks of looking to have more fun, without even trying very hard - I do notice the difference. The abyss is there. But I'm more at ease with it.

*The Power of Fun* is published by Bantam Press, price £14.99. To order a copy for £13.04, go to [guardianbookshop.com](http://guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply. In February, Catherine Price will be running a global #Funtervention challenge. See [howtohavefun.com](http://howtohavefun.com) to sign up

Anton Corbijn



## 'I make stars interesting, not beautiful'

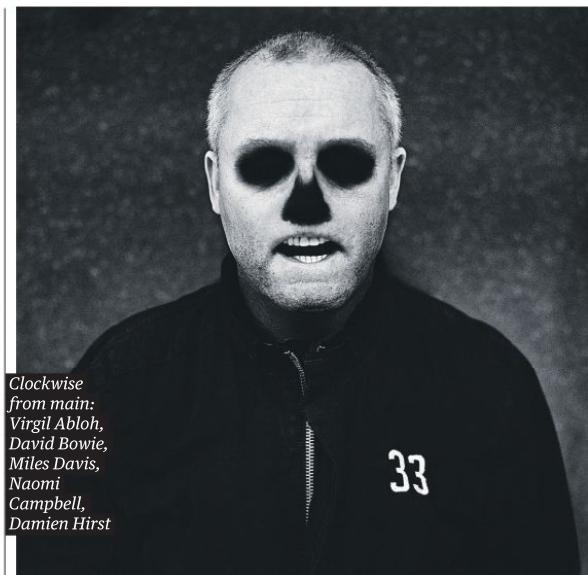
David Bowie was a gent, Naomi Campbell was a revelation and Virgil Abloh was hauntingly prophetic. The great portrait photographer Anton Corbijn relives five of his best shoots with **Tim Jonze**

**A**nton Corbijn, speaking from his home in Kenya, holds a fried sardine between his fingers and positions it tantalisingly in front of his Zoom camera. "I'm sorry," he says, "but somebody put these next to me

and they smelled so good I had to take a bite."

Fried fish aside, Corbijn, who is 66, lives a "healthy life" in Africa and the distance to Europe hasn't interfered with his work. His latest exhibition - which can be seen at his studio in The Hague and online at [de-pury.com](http://de-pury.com) - positions him as a portrait photographer across a wide range of stars and subjects. Is this because the man behind some of music's most famous images, from Joy Division to U2, is frustrated at being pigeonholed?

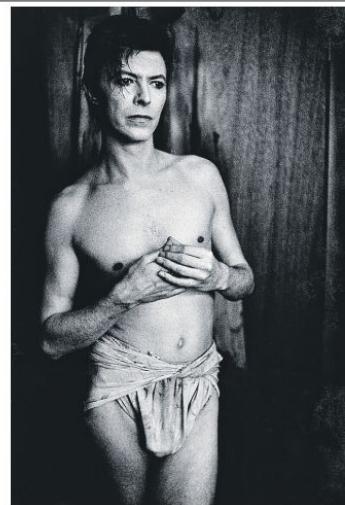
Clockwise  
from main:  
Virgil Abloh,  
David Bowie,  
Miles Davis,  
Naomi  
Campbell,  
Damien Hirst



### 'I didn't know he was ill'

*Virgil Abloh, Chicago, 2019*  
Virgil was preparing for a show of his fashion designs at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. This was taken just outside, for Vogue. The museum had windows with coloured material on them and I thought it would be interesting to shoot through that. It's a playful image. I am a lot more playful than people think, though perhaps that comes out more in my videos.

This was indeed taken in the same year Virgil found out about



his health [he was diagnosed with a rare cancer in 2019 and died in 2021]. I did not know anything about that. This image looks like he is in daylight with night encroaching. Sometimes, pictures can take on different meanings afterwards. I did a picture of Joy Division when I moved to England in 1979: Ian Curtis is looking towards the camera and the others look away. It's as if I knew something but of course I did not.

It did affect me when I found out Virgil had died because he was an

incredible talent. He wasn't your normal kind of designer. He was very smart. Far too young to leave.

#### I changed the number to 33 as that's the age Jesus died'

Damien Hirst, Stroud, 2011

This is more of a concept photograph. The theme, obviously, is death. The eyes and nose were done with makeup as Damien stood in front of the camera. Behind him is one of his works, that consists of dead insects. His jacket, from the G-star label, had a 3301 logo on it. I took the "01" off in post-production because 33 is the age Jesus died.

This image references For the Love of God, the work Damien made of a skull encrusted with 8,601 diamonds. It wasn't a collaboration: I just asked him if I could do a picture like that and he was OK with it. And it looks like a \$50m picture to me!

Damien is quite a normal-looking guy but with photography there is always a way to make the image work. I am a fan of his audaciousness. Some of his ideas are beautiful, some challenging, others not. But that's not so important. He's an innovator.

#### You'd never ask musicians to take their clothes off'

Naomi Campbell, London, 1994

When I was younger, I had real problems with outer beauty. I focused on what was beautiful on the inside and how to make people look interesting rather than beautiful. With models, I never knew what I could add to the apparent beauty already there. But then I met a few and they became people to me, rather than models.

Although I took this in the 1990s, it wasn't published until 2020 in my book MOODe. I had been going through my archives and found all these pictures I had forgotten about. That's what tends to happen: your selection becomes your memory of the entire shoot. You forget what else you have. This was one of the images I rediscovered. I liked it, with the shoe. It felt natural to shoot Naomi nude because she was incredibly beautiful and natural looking. She has always been great to me. She knows how to give you something. Yes, I am aware of her fierce reputation but I never had a run-in with her.

Shooting musicians was nothing like this. Back in the 1970s, music was a very male-dominated field. You wouldn't ask any of them to take their clothes off!

#### 'And what's your name again?'

Miles Davis, Montreal, 1985

Miles was doing an interview with Richard Cook and I was allowed to sit in but not take pictures. He wasn't particularly nice to Richard. Whenever he answered a question, he would say: "And what's your name again?" I had a shoot with him the next day, five or six minutes in a hotel room. He gave me a drawing he'd done which was really nice. I still have it.

Miles was a beautiful man. His stare here is very intense. This was taken later in his life, when he was

in a lot of pain. He took injections of goat serum that affected his pupils. That's what is striking in this picture. His pupils are as large as you'll ever see.

There's a famous story of Miles having dinner with Ronald Reagan at the White House. Nancy says: "And what did you do to be invited here?" Miles replies: "I changed the course of music five times. What did you do apart from fuck the president?" I don't know if it's true but I like it.

We shot near the window. I can't recall why Miles took this pose but he liked it and wanted to use it for the album Tutu. Sadly, Warner Brothers said it had to be done by a famous photographer and I didn't qualify at the time. So they asked Irving Penn. I love the image Penn took but you can see where the inspiration comes from.

Miles has such a strong, intense face. It's so beautiful. A lot of photographers who photograph me ask me to do the same pose. I never look half as good.

#### I blew my cooker money on the flight out to Chicago'

David Bowie, Chicago, 1980

I was working as the main photographer at the NME and had just moved into a squat in east London. The NME's Angus MacKinnon was going to interview David in Chicago but they wouldn't allow a photographer. Thankfully, my parents had given me money to buy a cooker so I spent it on a flight and just turned up at the interview. It cost £800, a lot of money for me at the time, but these things pay off if you make life an adventure.

Bowie's assistant said: "What are you doing here? We had a deal - no photography." Luckily, when David had visited Holland once, I had left my portfolio at his hotel. The next day, I was given it back with a note saying "thank you". I thought it was just a "piss off" really. But when I told the assistant, she looked in her notebook and realised she'd scribbled down: "Best photographer in Holland - Anton Corbijn." So I was in with a chance. She told David and he gave me permission. It was very kind, as he wasn't actually allowed to be photographed in stage costume.

The shoot was brief, but the next day we met in a bar to do more. He was an amazing guy, a gentleman, funny, all that stuff, but also extremely good looking and aesthetically aware. I remember there was a jukebox and he put on Frank Sinatra's That's What God Looks Like To Me.

This is one of my favourite photographs. It's not just a shot of Bowie, it's a Christ-like thing. That's what you hope for when you take photographs: that it transcends all the usual stuff. A lot of the credit has to go to him. It's a beautiful gaze. What was he thinking? I don't know. Maybe: "I'd like a beer."

De Pury presents: Anton Corbijn is at de-pury.com, 24 January to 28 February, and on show at the photographer's studio in The Hague by appointment

Hanging on ...  
Lindsay Rico  
in One Big Bag  
by Every Ocean  
Hughes (below)

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; MARTA THIENER



## A sense of an ending

Caring for her gran inspired US artist Every Ocean Hughes to train as a 'death doula' and help the dying let go. She tells Laura Snapes about her corpse kit

**O**ne Big Bag is a portrait of a young death doula: a holistic carer who tends to the wishes of a dying individual and assists their family after they die. In the film, made by US artist Every Ocean Hughes, a young woman details the contents of her "corpse kit", while the items hang by strings from the ceiling at the respective heights of their use on the body. The list is prosaic but revelatory, comforting and unsettling: glue to seal wounds and tampons to plug orifices; snacks for the living who forget to eat; ice to chill, but - careful - not to freeze. The doula considers the items closely, but adds mysterious choreography, rhythmically pounding her fists on her body, slamming her thighs against the ground.

Showed alongside an installation of the suspended items, One Big Bag marks a shift into direct, material work from an artist known for abstraction. Hughes appears via Zoom from her home in Stockholm, a kind and effusive presence with a cropped bob and fantastic hexagonal brown glasses.

Caring for her beloved grandmother Enid Hughes at the end of her life set her on this path, she explains, though at first she spent a year thinking she might never make art again. She still worked as an art professor but craved a more tangible skill. "I have a lot of friends who are incredible activists and I thought, 'What's my service?' Then I thought, 'Actually, I can do this: I can look at death, and the processes around death.'"

Born Emily Roysdon, Hughes changed her name in tribute to her grandmother's love of the sea. Her death also inspired Hughes to attend end-of-life doula training in 2018, which she says was a deep and intimate experience. It's a growing area: End of Life Doula UK has 220 registered members.

While Hughes hasn't yet practised, she considers it part of her "long-term apprenticeship to death" - one that started when her childhood best friend died aged nine. Her subsequent best friend died when Hughes was 15. "I don't even think I can begin to limit the impact it had on me," says

Hughes, who grew up in Maryland. "It gave me a strong backbone and resilience but it also shut me down. I was quite

emotionally repressed." She connects the abstraction of her previous works to "learning to survive in my head. I was less attached to anything from the neck down."

Finding a queer community helped her break through that repression. People generally think of queer culture in relation to coming out and sexual politics, says Hughes. "But for me it was also encountering a political community of people who have experienced grief and trauma."

She found it at hippie Hampshire College in Massachusetts, where she made friends with such feminist artists and zine-makers as K8 Hardy. Later, in New York, she met JD Samson, who would go on to join feminist punk bands Le Tigre and Men. Samson became her first girlfriend and got a tattoo of Hughes's face on her arm - *after* they broke up. These experiences "opened this door to art and grief and queer culture".

One Big Bag has a particular resonance in the Covid era, when many families have been forced to watch loved ones die via video, but Hughes started developing the work in 2019. "I didn't want to then turn it into pandemic work," she says. "But the context is profoundly changed."

She would rather frame One Big Bag in the context of "queer death", an emerging area of study. For Hughes, this means self-determination "for people who are dying to think about the fact that this is their experience". Lindsay Rico, who plays the death doula, describes the importance of different hair braids in death preparation, and how a death doula for an LGBTQ+ person may have to defend their wishes to relatives and the healthcare and death industries to make sure their identity is respected.

Agency isn't an option with sudden deaths. Nor does it reach equally across racial and economic divides. Hughes has studied the history of Black funeral homes, which played a crucial role in the civil rights movement. "[They become] a political site - meetings around organising and communities were happening in funeral homes."

The accessibility of this project has been a revelation. "With grief and dying," she says, "people lose control. What moves me the most is this element of not knowing and letting go. You can only be present. If there's a place to learn the lesson about letting go in life, this is the moment." She laughs. "You cannot control it."

One Big Bag is on at Studio Voltaire, London, 28 January to 17 April



Louisa Jacobson as Marian Brook and Denée Benton as Peggy Scott

**Review** *The Gilded Age*,  
Sky Atlantic

## All human life is here in 1880s New York – but not in any credible way

★★★★★

Lucy Mangan



**B**oost your vaccinations, don whatever PPE you have to hand – the new variant Julian Fellowes has breached our shores. This time, his typing is set in late-19th-century New York. Yes, it's Brownstone Abbey. Its official title is *The Gilded Age*, but we all know what we are dealing with. There are posh people – the old families who have been in New York since it was a glint in a Dutchman's eye. Then there are the upstart types who made buckets of stinky new money building railroads and are now busy building mansions all over Manhattan and trying to lay down tracks into smart society. We'll call them the Shambertills. And then there are servants, who live beneath these posh people and bitch about them whenever the restraining influence of the butler is absent.

We lay our scene in Central Park. It is 1882 and it's full of sheep. They turn and run from the camera. It is a wise move, all things considered.

The first note struck is a sorrowful one. Miss Marian Brook (Louisa Jacobson, who is still young and will survive the dialogue that is soon to come her way) learns that the death of her father, Henry, has left her penniless and that she will be thrown on the mercy of her two aunts. "Don't worry, Mr Riggs," she says, smiling bravely at the handsome young solicitor who has had to break the news. "I'm not beaten yet!"

"At the risk of impertinence," he replies, because Fellowes knows "impertinence" is a very 1882 word. "I'd say you are a long way from being beaten, Miss Brook."

Get used to this kind of drivelling redundancy, folks, because there is an awful lot of it. Also, everyone is using that strange voice Americans do to indicate that they are posh in the past – it mixes precise diction with a strained tone, as if they are all having a hard time on the loo. Which, actually – well, never mind. We needn't labour the point.

Marian's aunts (or "auurahnts", as it is pronounced in 1882) are Cynthia Nixon as Ada Brook, presumably as punishment for letting *And Just Like That* ... go ahead, and Christina Baranski – who must have a very persuasive agent – as Agnes van Rhijn. 'Tis Agnes who holds the purse strings and is most conscious of the standards to be upheld by her and her peers. She and they are aghast at the arrival of the Russells. Mr George (Morgan Spector) is a robber baron ("I may be a bastard, but you are a fool" is a thing he says) and has built his castle opposite Agnes's elegant home, much to her displeasure. His wife (Carrie Coon) is a social climber who has her finger on the pulse. "We cannot succeed in this town without Mrs Astor's approval, I know that much," she tells George when he is taking a brief break from intimidating aldermen and crushing rivals under the weight of his fortune.

All of human life is here. Not in any credible way – just here. Marian acquires a young black woman, Peggy Scott (Denée Benton), as a friend on her journey to her auurahnts. She is taken on as a live-in secretary by Agnes so Fellowes can develop as nuanced a portrait of race relations in turn-of-the-century New York as he does of class. It is agony, but no more so than the rest.

There is a younger set – indistinguishable apart from Agnes's son Oscar and John Adams (John Quincy Adams's great-grandson, dontcha know), who have a shared feature that will upset Mama no end when she finds out – who care not a jot for convention, so that love across the new/old money divide can play out. "I only ask that you never break your own moral code," says Aunt Ada, whom I suspect should not be allowed to cross Fifth Avenue unaided. "How wise, Aunt Ada!" says Marian. I will have to look up whether taking the piss had been invented by 1882. And there are secrets among the servants. Miss Turner hates Mrs Russell and is bidding for an affair with Mr Russell. The Van Rhijn butler Bannister (Simon Jones) says he has nothing to hide, which makes me suspect he has something to hide.

In short, it's just what HBO ordered from the man who by now is surely actually churning this stuff out in his sleep rather than simply giving the faultless impression of it.

And another thing

I spend too much time hoping that the Game of Thrones prequel will have solved the Targaryen wig problem. I need to get out more.

## Jay Blades: Learning to Read at 51

9pm, BBC One



One in 10 adults in the UK have dyslexia, and this includes the hugely affable Jay Blades, furniture restorer and host of *The Repair Shop*. This one-off programme follows Blades from not being able to read the letter awarding him his MBE to vowing to be able to read to his daughter by the time she turns 16. We then join him as he takes literacy lessons – all the while showing the reality of dyslexia with heart, candour and that East End charm.

Hollie Richardson

### We Are England

7.30pm, BBC One

Another of the series of short documentaries telling overlooked stories of modern life. In this episode, ex-soldier Darren delves into the problems of veterans struggling on civvy street. Darren experienced addiction and prison after leaving the military. What can be done to prevent others suffering similar fates? Might HGV driving be a productive avenue?

Phil Harrison

### The Bay

9pm, ITV

In a very procedural mid-season episode of the coastal crime show, secrets about the deceased slowly leak out. Fortunately, the story has other concerns – racial tensions in a small town, and the stresses of building a blended family – to offset the blandness of the sleuthing.

Jack Seal

### Katie Price's Mucky Mansion

9pm, Channel 4

Here's Katie Price doing up her "mucky mansion" (so-called by the tabloids). But there's more to this than meets the eye – it's

no coincidence the house crumbled at the same time that Price's personal life did. Whatever your thoughts are on her, she has a knack for hard-to-switch-over telly. **HR**

### The Mind of Herbert Clunkerdunk

10pm, BBC Two

If you're unsure of what to make of this surreal comedy series, you are not alone. In this second season of 15-minute shorts, Spencer Jones (*Upstart Crow*) continues to share the unfiltered imagination of his alter ego Herbert Clunkerdunk. Expect silly songs, mobile phones with eyes and dreamlike sequences in tonight's double bill. **HR**

### Storyville: Final Account

10pm, BBC Four

Ahead of Wednesday's Holocaust Memorial Day, Luke Holland's documentary about the last living generation of German citizens of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich gets an airing. Holland – who died of cancer while it was in post-production – worked on it over the course of 10 years and talked to more than 150 people, asking how their past affects their present. **HR**

BBC One	BBC Two	ITV	Channel 4	Channel 5	BBC Four
<b>6.0 Breakfast</b> (T) 9.15 Morning Live (T) 10.0 Rip Off Britain (T) 10.45 The Moment of Proof (T) (R) 11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) 12.15 Bargain Hunt (T) (R) 1.0 News (T) 1.30 Regional News and Weather (T) 1.45 Doctors (T) 2.15 Father Brown (T) (R) 3.0 Escape to the Country (T) (R) 3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown (T) 4.30 Antiques Road Trip (T) 5.15 Pointless (T) (R) 6.0 News (T) 6.30 Regional News and Weather 6.55 Party Political Broadcast (T) 7.0 The One Show 7.30 We Are England	<b>6.30 The Farmers' Country Showdown</b> (T) 7.15 Antiques Road Trip (T) (R) 8.30 Take a Hike (T) (R) 9.0 News (T) 11.15 Politics Live (T) 1.0 Ready Steady Cook (T) (R) 1.45 Eggheads (T) (R) 2.15 The House That £100K Built (T) (R) 3.15 Back in Time for the Factory (T) (R) 4.15 Tennis: Australian Open Highlights 2022 (T) 5.15 Flog It! (T) (R) 6.0 Richard Osman's House of Games (T) (R) 6.30 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) 7.0 Hairy Bikers: Route 66 (T) (R)	<b>6.0 Good Morning Britain</b> (T) 9.0 Lorraine (T) 10.0 This Morning (T) 12.30 Loose Women (T) 13.0 News and Weather (T) 1.15 Local News and Weather (T) 2.0 Dickinson's Real Deal (T) 3.0 Lingo (T) 3.59 Local News and Weather (T) 4.0 Tipping Point (T) 5.0 The Chase (T) 6.0 Local News and Weather (T) 6.25 Party Political Broadcast (T) 6.30 News and Weather (T) 7.0 Emmerdale (T) 7.30 Coronation Street (T)	<b>6.0 Countdown</b> (T) (R) 6.45 Cheers (T) (R) 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) 9.0 Frasier (T) (R) 10.30 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) 11.25 News (T) 11.30 Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) 12.30 Steph's Packed Lunch (T) 2.10 Countdown (T) 3.0 A Place in the Sun (T) 4.0 A New Life in the Sun (T) 5.0 Junior Bake Off (T) 6.0 The Simpsons (T) (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks (T) (R) 7.0 News (T)	<b>6.0 Milkshake!</b> 9.15 Jeremy Vine (T) 11.15 Shoplifters & Scammers: At War With the Law (T) 12.15 News (T) 12.20 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords (T) (R) 1.15 Home and Away (T) 1.45 Neighbours (T) 2.15 FILM Witness to a Murder (David DeCoteau, 2017) (T) 4.0 Watercolour Challenge (T) 5.0 News (T) 6.0 Neighbours (T) (R) 6.30 Winter Road Rescue (T) 7.0 Dream Home Makeovers With Sophie Robinson (T)	<b>7.0 Great British Railway Journeys</b> (T) Michael Portillo travels from Aberystwyth and finishes in Newtown. 7.30 Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain (T) (R).
<b>8.0 The Repair Shop</b> (T) Items fixed include an electrostatic generator and a second world war sailor's hat. Last in the series.	<b>8.0 Winterwatch</b> (T) Based at Wild Ken Hill in Norfolk, Chris Packham and Michaela Strachan discuss some of the most topical wildlife issues.	<b>8.0 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs</b> (T) Paul meets a shar pei cross that needs surgery to correct its sight.	<b>8.0 Kirstie and Phil's Love It Or List It</b> (T) Kirstie and Phil help a couple who cannot agree what to do with their home in Wandsworth, south London.	<b>8.0 You Are What You Eat</b> (T) Trisha Goddard and Dr Amir Khan help Sabrina and Laura change their eating habits. Includes news update.	<b>8.0 New Zealand: Earth's Mythical Islands</b> (T) (R) A caving expedition reveals relics of the country's pre-human past.
<b>9.0 Jay Blades: Learning to Read at 51</b> (T) Documentary following the Repair Shop presenter as he embarks on a six-month course to learn how to read.	<b>9.0 Inside the Factory</b> (T) Gregg Wallace heads to Coventry to pay a visit to the biggest tortilla factory in Europe, which makes 60,000 tonnes of snacks every year.	<b>9.0 Coronation Street</b> (T) Bernie faces the police over Joseph's disappearance.	<b>9.0 Katie Price's Mucky Mansion</b> (T) New series. The former model and her family renovate their home, beginning by designing a new kitchen.	<b>9.0 22 Kids &amp; Counting</b> (T) It's all change as one child moves back and another moves out, with Luke returning from the RAF and Chloe going to live with her boyfriend, Jake.	<b>9.0 The Man Who Saw Too Much</b> (T) (R) Boris Pahor, the oldest living survivor of a Nazi concentration camp, talks to Alan Yentob about life and death at Natzweiler.
<b>10.0 News</b> (T) <b>10.25 Regional News</b> (T) Weather <b>10.35 Stacey Dooley: Stalkers</b> (T) Part two. The journalist focuses on stranger stalking. <b>11.20 Would I Lie to You?</b> (T) (R) <b>11.55 Question of Sport</b> (T) (R) <b>12.25 The Graham Norton Show</b> (T) (R) 1.15 Superman & Lois (T) <b>1.55 Weather for the Week Ahead</b> (T) 2.0 News (T)	<b>10.0 The Mind of Herbert Clunkerdunk</b> (T) Comedy, starring Spencer Jones. <b>10.30 Newsnight</b> (T) Weather <b>11.15 FILM Little Joe</b> (Jessica Hausner, 2019) (T) Sci-fi. <b>12.55 Sign Zone</b> See Hear (T) (R)	<b>10.0 News</b> (T) Weather <b>10.30 Local News</b> (T) Weather <b>10.45 Peston</b> (T) Political chat hosted by Robert Peston. <b>11.40 The John Bishop Show</b> (T) (R) The standup is joined by dancer Oti Mabuse and actor and comedian Rob Brydon. <b>12.15 Shop: Ideal World</b> 3.0 Bling (T) (R) 3.50 Unwind With ITV 5.05 Tipping Point (T) (R)	<b>10.0 Extraordinary Extensions</b> (R) 11.0 999: What's Your Emergency? (T) (R) <b>12.05 Kitchen Nightmares USA</b> (T) (R) 1.0 The Simpsons (T) (R) 1.25 FILM Plastic (Julian Gilbey, 2014) (T) Thriller. <b>3.05 Couples Come Dine With Me</b> (T) 4.0 Location, Location, Location (T) (R) 4.55 The Answer Trap (T) (R)	<b>10.0 Skin A&amp;E</b> (T) <b>11.05 Is Your Fault I'm Fat</b> (T) (R) <b>12.05 Shoplifters: At War With the Law</b> (T) (R) 1.0 The Live Casino Show (T) (T) 3.05 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords (T) (R) 3.55 Britain's Great Cathedrals (T) (R) 4.45 Wildlife SOS (T) (R) 5.10 House Busters (T) (R) 5.35 Peppa Pig (R)	<b>10.0 Storyville: Final Account</b> (T) Luke Holland's documentary interviews participants in Hitler's Third Reich. <b>11.30 Art on the BBC: Turner - Light &amp; Landscape</b> (T) (R) <b>12.30 Great British Railway Journeys</b> (T) (R) 1.0 Building of Britain (T) (R) 1.30 Earth's Mythical Islands (R) 2.30 The Man Who Saw Too Much (R)

## Other channels

### Dave

6.0am Teleshopping  
**7.10 Yanni: Supercar Customiser** 8.0 Timber Kings 9.0 Storage Hunters UK 10.0 American Pickers 11.0 Secrets of the Supercars 12.0 Top Gear 1.0 Border Force: America's Gatekeepers 2.0 Expedition With Steve Backshall 3.0 Rick Stein's Long Weekends 4.0 Top Gear 5.0 Rick Stein's Long Weekends 6.0 Taskmaster 7.0 Richard Osman's House of Games 7.40 Room 101 8.20 Would I Lie to You? 9.0 QI XL 10.0 Live at the Apollo 11.0 Taskmaster 12.0 Mock the Week 12.40 Room 101 1.20 Would I Lie to You? 2.0 Mel Giedroyc: Unforgivable 2.50 Mel Giedroyc: Unforgivable 4.0 Teleshopping

**Film4**  
**11.0am FILM** The Red Pony (1949) 12.45 FILM Wake of the Red Witch (1948) 2.55 FILM The Bridges at Toko-Ri (1954) 5.0 FILM Carry on Cabby (1963) 6.50 FILM The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2003) 9.0 FILM Wind River (2017) 11.10 FILM Maze Runner: The Death Cure (2018) 2.0 FILM Benjamin (2018)

### Don't Tell the Bride: Revisted

9.0 Celebs Go Dating 10.0 Celebrity Gogglebox 11.05 Gogglebox 12.10 Naked Attraction 1.15 Celebs Go Dating 2.15 Below Deck: Mediterranean 3.10 Naked Attraction 4.05 Don't Tell the Bride 5.0 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA

### Film4

11.0am FILM The Red Pony (1949) 12.45 FILM Wake of the Red Witch (1948) 2.55 FILM The Bridges at Toko-Ri (1954) 5.0 FILM Carry on Cabby (1963) 6.50 FILM The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2003) 9.0 FILM Wind River (2017) 11.10 FILM Maze Runner: The Death Cure (2018) 2.0 FILM Benjamin (2018)

### You've Been Framed!

6.0 Celeb Catchphrase 7.0 Superstore 8.0 Bob's Burgers 9.0 The Murder of Molly McLaren: Social Media Murders 10.0 Family Guy 11.30 American Dad! 12.5 Bob's Burgers 1.25 Superstore 2.20 Hey Tracey! 3.0 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records 3.25 Unwind With ITV 3.30 Teleshopping

### More4

8.55am Food Unwrapped 9.15 A Place in the Sun 11.05 Find It, Fix It, Flug It 12.05 Find It, Fix It, Flug It 1.05 Hunter Hunters 2.10 Four in a Bed 2.40 Four in a Bed 3.15 Four in a Bed 4.20 Four in a Bed 4.55 Find It, Fix It, Flug It 5.55 Escape to the Chateau: DIY 7.55 Grand Designs 9.0 The Great British Dig: History in Your Back Garden 10.0 Skeletons of the Mary Rose: The New Evidence 11.05 Britain's Wildest Weather 12.50 Emergency Helicopter Medics: Late Night Emergencies 1.55 The Great British Dig: History in Your Back Garden 2.55 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown

### Sky Max

6.0am Stargate SG-1 8.0 Supergirl 9.0 DC's Legends of Tomorrow 10.0 The Flash 11.0 NCIS: New Orleans

1.0 Hawaii Five-0 2.0 MacGyver 3.0 DC's Legends of Tomorrow 4.0 Supergirl 5.0 The Flash 6.0 Stargate SG-1 8.0 Football's Funniest Moments 10.0 Never Mind the Buzzcocks 10.45 David Blaine: Beyond Magic 11.40 Dating No Filter 12.40 Road Wars 1.05 The Force: Manchester 2.0 Stop, Search, Seize 3.0 Hawaii Five-0 4.0 MacGyver 5.0 Air Ambulance ER

### Sky Arts

6.0am Beethoven: Complete Piano Concertos

6.45 Royal Ballet: Ashton Triple Bill 8.0 Tales of the Unexpected 10.0 Discovering: Orson Welles 3.0 Robert Burns: No Holds Bard 4.0 Music Icons: Singer Writes the Song 4.30 Video Killed the Radio Star 5.0 Tales of the Unexpected 6.0 Discovering: Laurence

### Olivier 7.0

Portrait Artist of the Year 2018 8.0 Landscape Artist of the Year 2022 9.0 Matisse: From Tate Modern & MoMA 10.0 The Eighties 11.0 Great Film Composers: The Music of the Movies 12.0 Beside Bowie: The Mick Ronson Story 2.0 Discovering: Emma Thompson 2.55 Rose 5.10 Auction 5.35 Auction

### Sky Atlantic

6.0am The Guest Wing

7.0 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 8.0 Six Feet Under 10.15 The Wire 12.30 Game of Thrones 1.35 Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets

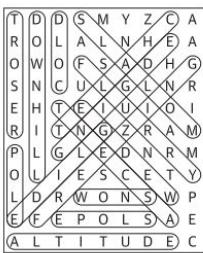
3.30 Six Feet Under 5.45 The Wire 7.55 Game of Thrones 9.0 Native Son (2019) 11.0 Six Feet Under 2.25 Yellowjackets 3.30 In Treatment 4.05 The British

### Wind River, Film4

1.0am

## Yesterday's solutions

## Wordsearch



## Solution no 16,136



## Sudoku no 5520

2	3	5	7	4	6	8	1	9
7	1	4	9	5	8	6	3	2
8	9	6	1	3	2	5	4	7
4	2	9	8	6	3	7	5	1
6	8	1	2	7	5	4	9	3
3	5	7	4	9	1	2	6	8
5	7	2	6	1	9	3	8	4
9	6	8	3	2	4	1	7	5
1	4	3	5	8	7	9	2	6

Word wheel  
THATCHING

## Suguru

3	5	1	2	4	3
4	2	4	3	5	1
1	3	5	2	4	3
2	4	1	3	1	2
3	5	2	5	4	3
2	1	4	1	2	1

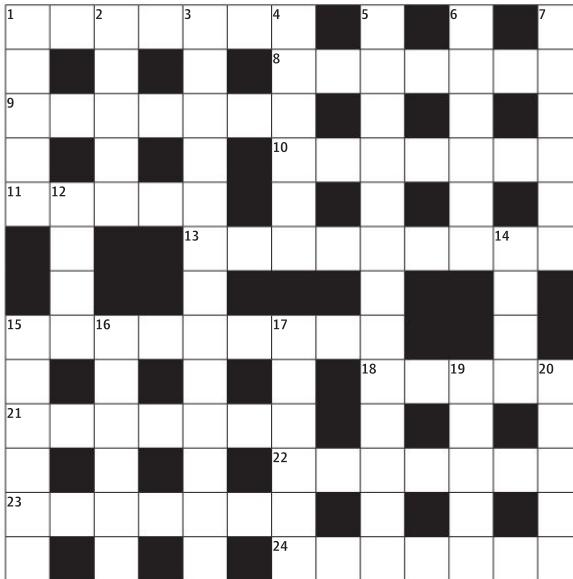
## Quick crossword no 16,137

## Across

- 1 A fruitful sign? (7)  
8 Put up with? (7)  
9 Beware (4,3)  
10 Self-denying (7)  
11 Bring about (havoc?) (5)  
13 Vehicle with five doors and a lot of space (6,3)  
15 Wave this to get instant results? (5,4)  
18 That's disgusting! (5)  
21 It could be (7)  
22 Surround (7)  
23 Pastoral verse (7)  
24 Deference (7)

## Down

- 1 Regulation made by a local authority (2-3)  
2 Gas that in the atmosphere filters ultraviolet radiation (5)  
3 Where shares are traded (5,8)  
4 Organism with characteristics resulting from change in its genes (6)  
5 Estimate based on experience – deduce sea gust (anag) (8,5)  
6 Monkeys, Circle or Roll? (6)  
7 Be in accord (6)  
12 Educating \_\_\_, 1980 Willy Russell stage comedy (4)  
14 (Historically) donations to those in need (4)  
15 Fool (informal) (6)  
16 Foundation garment (6)  
17 Solution (6)  
19 Bizarre (5)  
20 Wielded a broom (5)



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## Sudoku no 5521

Medium. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at [theguardian.com/sudoku](http://theguardian.com/sudoku)

			5	2				
		4	3	6	7			
	8				2			
		8			1			
9	3	6			2	7	5	
	7				8			
		4	9					
2		8	7			1		
	9	2	1	3				

## Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of 2 squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

	2							
3	4							
		1						
9	3	6		2	7	5		
	7				8			
		4	9					
2		8	7			1		
	9	2	1	3				

## Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-74. Good-62. Average-45.



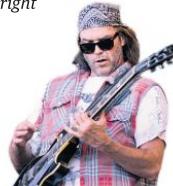
## Wordsearch

Can you find 15 words associated with hotels in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

B	R	E	A	K	F	A	S	T
Y	S	H	C					
B	T	O	H	N	O	L	G	O
B	A	L	L	O	L	M	A	R
O	F	I	R	I	S	P	G	R
L	F	D	B	T	F	K	G	I
V	E	A	A	P	S	T	U	D
B	N	Y	D	E	I	E	L	O
Y	C	N	A	C	A	V	U	R
S	U	I	T	E	N	E	H	G
I	E	N	M	R	S	T	P	E

## Pet corner

Neil Young sang about his dog in his song Old King. What was its name?  
a. Elvis  
b. James Brown  
c. MJ  
d. Clark Gable  
Answer top right



Why do MPs ban themselves from discussing the Queen? *Martin Kettle, page 3*

Vladimir Putin's real target in Ukraine is the west *Keir Giles, page 4*

Thierry Mugler, daring and outrageous fashion designer *Obituaries, page 6*

G2  
Daily  
pullout  
life &  
arts  
section  
**Inside**

The Guardian Wednesday 26 January 2022

Opinion  
and ideas

# Journal

## This time, Boris Johnson really has had his cake and eaten it

Monday's announcement of an inquiry into alleged anti-Muslim racism in the government meant that I was going to begin with one of the more eye-watering quotes from Boris Johnson's terrible novel, *Seventy-Two Virgins*.

**Marina Hyde**



(*Seventy-Two Virgins* is the title, not who bought it.) But further partygate revelations - and finally a police investigation - instead force me to tong open another work in the Johnson canon: *The Churchill Factor*. This minimum opus is riddled with sensational factual errors but is meant to advance Johnson's big theory that we shouldn't write off great men as "meretricious bubbles on the vast tides of social history". On the contrary, great men turn history, and he's one of them. (Johnson, obviously - not Churchill. Britain's greatest wartime leader is chiefly deployed as a useful proxy for the narcissist author.)

It is, then, entirely fitting of Boris Johnson's historical stature that as Russia stands on the brink of an invasion of Ukraine, the talk is all of the prime minister's singalong birthday party during the first lockdown. Has ever a meretricious bubble been more in need of a pin? A vast tide of something is flowing out of Downing Street, but it doesn't smell like history.

Needless to say that isn't the line Johnson's few remaining allies are going with. Sent out into no-man's land yesterday morning, the transport secretary, Grant Shapps, claimed that what people were *really* concerned about was the genuinely serious situation in Ukraine. Sorry, but no. This populist government

can't have it both ways. You can't forever claim to be the voice of the people, and then claim that what the people are really worried about is Russian troop manoeuvres on the Ukraine border. I'm afraid that is just total bollocks. "The people" are not talking about that very much at all.

Whether the cabinet and other serious folk reckon they *should* be talking about it is a separate matter - but it's a little too late for coulda-woulda-shoulda from an administration that has spent the past two and a half years stoking every single trivial and diversionary culture war that it possibly could. Go to the pub, go online, stand at the school gates. What the people are actually doing their nuts about is the endless revelations of Downing Street partying. Such is life? Such has this government made it.

Anyway, a recap on the latest party, which apparently took place in June 2020 in the cabinet room and involved a birthday cake, singing, and 30 guests, including Lulu Lytle, the prime minister's interior designer. Clearly, the presence of the personal decorator is the rococo detail that really elevates this tale - although, according to her own account, Lulu seems to have been what you might call present but not



This time, Boris Johnson really has had his cake and eaten it

**Marina Hyde**

◀ Continued from front

 involved. In all honesty, I can't help feeling rather sorry for Lytle during the whole saga of the Downing Street flat refurbishment. She is simply a decorator who took a commission, clearly with no understanding that she was working for a couple of greedy chancers who didn't have a clue how they were going to pay for it, nor particularly cared. Last night's statement from her firm says Lytle "entered the cabinet room briefly as requested", and that she was "waiting to speak to the prime minister". I bet she was. She was probably thinking this was her best chance of asking Johnson if he'd found his lost wallet yet.

But I'm afraid that upon receipt of the latest information, we're going to have to raise the odd question about the dates involved. Here is Lytle's office last night, confirming that she "was present in Downing Street on 19 June [2020] working on the

## A vast tide of something is flowing out of Downing Street, but it doesn't smell like history

refurbishment". And yet, more than five months after that date - on 29 November 2020 - here is Johnson emailing Lord Brownlow that his flat is "a tip" and he is "keen to allow Lulu Lytle to get on with it". Has some tear opened up in the time-chintz continuum? Can work be under way five months before the prime minister is keen to get it started? It does all serve as a reminder that the flat refurbishment scandal has yet to be got to the bottom of by any of the various Clouseaux who've had a crack at it.

Then again, it's just one of a cavalcade of shameful businesses, frequent lies and serial obfuscations that were always the inevitable result of putting Johnson in Downing Street. I wonder if the great political theorists of the Conservative party still want to boast that they are all "priced in" to Johnson's long-lasting appeal.

It doesn't feel that way, does it? The impression that the public were treated like mugs by the overlords who made the rules has become thoroughly overriding. I now have no idea why I couldn't have had a sixth birthday party for my daughter that same week of Johnson's gathering. After all, she'd been working in a classroom with her friends all day - what's the difference if they then all come round to ours/the cabinet room, and carry on with cake there? They're all in a bubble too, aren't they? Had I known that Nadine Dorries would have defended me to the hilt, I would have thrown the usual sugarfest. And yet, are we perhaps all on the point of developing a sneaking suspicion that Nadine only defends very important and powerful people who give her jobs at which she's useless? As for the prime minister's wife, maybe she just couldn't bear the look on her big kid's little face if he was denied his 56<sup>th</sup> birthday tea.

Quite how long Conservative MPs and the wider British public will continue to indulge him is another matter. Realism appears to be getting the upper hand on cakeism. Johnson promises you "global Britain" - but in fact makes your country a laughing stock. He promises to level you up but just drags everything down to his level. He promises you "the people's government" but you get the Downing Street version of Marie Antoinette's ridiculous hamfest. He tells you that you can have your cake and eat it, but the only one who actually gets cake is him.

In the end, Johnsonism is little more than a con trick, and the jig looks increasingly close to being up. Perhaps that is beginning to dawn on even him. Enemies of the naif will shudder at reports that Johnson has installed a fire pit in the Downing Street garden, but it may be the only constructive thing he's ever done. After all, familiarising himself with fiery pits would seem to be a wise long-term hedge.

# The Guardian

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*'Comment is free... but facts are sacred' CP Scott*

## Politics

### The government's reckless attitude goes beyond parties in Downing Street

What has changed? Having previously said that the Metropolitan police would not investigate Downing Street parties, Dame Cressida Dick confirmed yesterday that her force would look into the circumstances surrounding eight gatherings that are alleged to have taken place at Downing Street and other Whitehall premises, in breach of coronavirus regulations. Once again, the temperature has been raised in Westminster, and the normal business of government is displaced by feverish speculation.

For the prime minister's supporters to direct people to ignore this, as some have tried to do on the grounds that other issues are more important, is both ridiculous and insulting. Until the question of whether Boris Johnson and his staff broke the law is definitively answered, it will continue to be asked - and rightly so. At least the wait may soon be over, with the report by civil servant Sue Gray expected to be published shortly, in advance of the police's enquiries.

Undeniably, the whole saga has elements of soap opera, with Mr Johnson's enemies apparently drip-dripping information according to their own version of No 10's news management grid. But diverting as the spectacle may be to some, as revelations of illicit celebrations continue to pile up, it is devastating to others who gave up so much during the lockdowns. The danger is that once the story has run its course, the aftersmell will be bitter. The hypocrisy of a leader who says one thing and does another, and who refuses to accept that rules his government told others to stick to

(on pain of fines up to £10,000) also apply to him, is not only prompting anger with him but could poison attitudes to politicians and public life more generally.

The cavalier attitude to standards is not limited to partying and wallpaper. Resigning from the government in the House of Lords on Monday, Lord Agnew accused ministers of "arrogance" and "schoolboy errors" in their approach to detecting fraud. More than 1,000 companies that received government support were not even trading at the time they received Covid loans. As Labour's Rachel Reeves put it, billions of pounds (HMRC estimates £5.8bn) have been "gifted to criminals".

The urgency of the pandemic response no more justifies this than it did the scandal surrounding procurement of PPE equipment. Last month, a high court judge ruled that a secret "VIP lane", through which ministerial contacts offering supplies were fast-tracked, was unlawful. The government now not only stands accused of disastrous mishandling of public money, but of illegality and refusing to put errors right. The contrast to the anxious messages about fiscal prudence that follow any suggestion of increasing benefits, or other public spending, could hardly be more glaring.

Flaws in the prime minister's character, including dishonesty, are not news. The Met now has a crucial role to play, and must prove to the public that the occupants of high office are subject to the same laws as everyone else. But whatever the conclusion of partygate, wider concerns about the conduct of the government are unlikely to go away. Probity, responsibility and care from their leaders are what the public needs, at what remains for many an extremely difficult time. Tory MPs held back from trying to topple their leader last week, nervous for good reason about his most likely replacements. That may well change with the latest developments. It is surely evident that this prime minister is unfit for office.

## Russia

### The west must maintain its unity in the face of this threat to Ukraine

The US president's need to state on Monday that there is "total unanimity" over how to deal with the Ukraine crisis, like the video call with European leaders which preceded it, was itself evidence of ongoing differences among western allies. There is no dispute about the threat: more than 100,000 Russian troops are now massed near Ukraine's borders. The US has put 8,500 troops on standby to deploy to Europe to reinforce allies there, while Nato has reinforced its eastern borders with warships and fighter jets. A senior US official briefed yesterday that in the event of an invasion, sanctions will "start at the top of the escalation ladder and stay there".

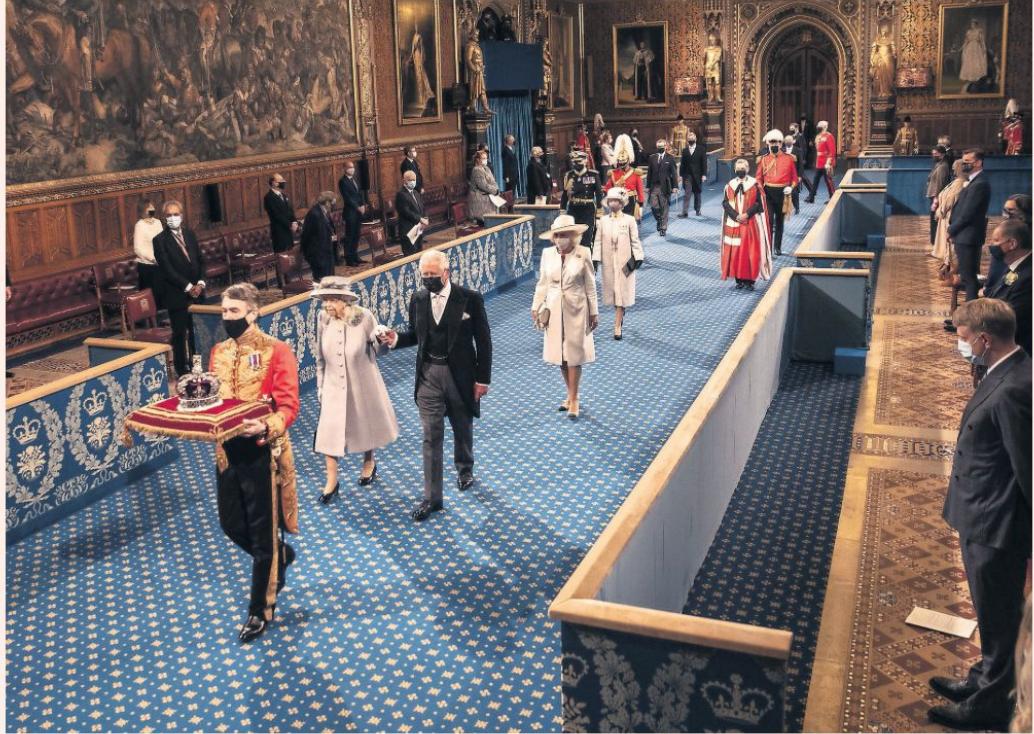
In addition to the clear deterrent message, talks continue: Dmitry Kozak, the Kremlin's deputy chief of staff, will meet French, German and Ukrainian officials in Paris today, in the "Normandy format". Set against that, Russia paid little price for the annexation of Crimea and fomenting the separatist uprising in the Donbas region in 2014. There is a credible case that Russia is set on a major military offensive - not merely pursuing coercive diplomacy - and that it is in Moscow's interests to act before Kyiv receives further arms shipments. Above all, there is at present no visible off-ramp for Vladimir Putin. The very thing he says Russia must counter - Nato's presence in eastern Europe - is growing because of his own actions. He might take an exit; it's harder to see him beating a retreat.

So the risks are high and rising. But an attack on

Ukraine is not inevitable. French officials have indicated that they regard recent US and UK briefing as alarmist; Kyiv itself is notably more cautious. An analysis by the Centre for Defence Strategies, a Ukrainian thinktank, says a full-scale invasion capturing most of the country in the next few months seems unlikely, given current Russian troop formations. But it also suggests that "hybrid invasion" is already being implemented, citing the recent cyber-attack. Moscow may believe that such methods, along with cross-border missile strikes, sabotage and political meddling, might be enough to effect a change of government. (The EU offer of €1.2bn in emergency financial assistance is designed to reduce pressure on Kyiv.)

What price would Russia pay? Its markets have already tanked; and it appears to have amassed a cash stockpile in preparation for sanctions. It believes its control of gas supplies give it asymmetric leverage, especially given Europe's cost of living crisis. And it may count on distraction and disunity in the west. The stepping up of US rhetoric is in part an attempt to compensate for Joe Biden's gaffe suggesting Nato division over how to respond to a "minor incursion". Excitable UK briefing over the weekend comes as the prime minister hopes for people to look beyond his domestic woes. Germany, from history, principle (established policy against arms sales to war zones) and pragmatism (it gets more than half of its gas from Russia), is strikingly more muted; uncertainty persists over how far it would go, especially over the NordStream 2 gas pipeline.

Nonetheless, there are signs that the allies are moving closer after Monday's call - US coordination with Qatar and other suppliers to address the energy shortfall is helpful - and are certainly more united than in 2014. The drumbeat of war is concentrating minds and encouraging solidarity. That must now be maintained and built upon.



## Why do MPs ban themselves from discussing the Queen?

Martin Kettle



**W**ith Boris Johnson reeling, the House of Commons was a stormy place at prime minister's questions last Wednesday. The impact on the prime minister's fate was minutely scrutinised. As a result, a separate exchange during that session has had less attention than it deserves. In one of his questions, Keir Starmer began talking about the contrast, widely highlighted in the media beforehand, between the Queen sitting alone, obeying Covid rules at her husband's funeral, and staff at No 10 ignoring the rules while partying with colleagues the previous evening.

You might think this was a reasonable point for a parliamentarian to make. But no. For at this point the Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle intervened, and told MPs: "We normally would not, and quite rightly, mention the royal family. We do not get into discussions on the royal family." Reprimanded, Starmer moved on to his next question.

Why did the Speaker do this? Why do "we" - the Commons - normally not mention the royal family? And why is this restraint, in the Speaker's view, apparently "quite right"? Here, surely, is a conversation this country should have. The convention is dubious, absurd and not a little hypocritical. It is ripe for reform.

Let's be clear. What the Speaker told Starmer last week was not some idiosyncratic assertion. His intervention was institutional, not personal. He was restating established practice as set out in the house's procedural bible, Erskine May. Hoyle was also saying exactly what three former Westminster clerks had told me a few days earlier he would say if an MP ever tried to ask a question about either the monarch or the royal family - or specifically challenged the behaviour and official standing of Prince Andrew, the Duke of York.

The ostensible justification for what the Speaker said was that questions to ministers can deal only with matters of ministerial responsibility. Since no minister answers to parliament for the royal family, the subject is off limits. And yet it wasn't always like this. In 1809 - before Erskine May was codified - the House of Commons held an inquiry into the

*The Queen attends the state opening of parliament, 11 May 2021*  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
RICHARD POHLE/AP

**We are adults, and entitled to discuss the kind of constitutional monarchy we live in, what it stands for and who is part of it**

conduct of another Duke of York, who resigned as commander in chief of the army as a result.

Nor does it mean, even in 2022, that no minister has responsibility for the royal family. Because they do. In reality, the prime minister has that role as the Queen's chief adviser. The prime minister advises the Queen on all sorts of subjects, and ultimately he or she will advise her on her own conduct.

Examples in fairly recent times stretch from what is the most dramatic of them all, the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936, to the late-20th century royal divorces, the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and whether Prince Charles should marry Camilla Parker Bowles. Prime ministers have been involved in advising on all these cases. In one or two, they have even given brief statements to the Commons about them.

Indeed it is a reasonable bet that Johnson will have advised the Queen on both the withdrawal from public life of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex in 2020 and the handling of Prince Andrew's position in the Virginia Giuffre case in recent weeks. It is strange that the partying prime minister is likely to have given his advice, or had his advice sought, on whether the partying prince should be stripped of his honours.

Yet why not? Andrew's conduct raises the danger of reputational damage to the royal family, and thus to Britain's standing. A prime minister ought to be concerned about that. So should MPs. They should therefore be able to ask the prime minister about his role and advice, and to express their own views. These are, after all, matters of public interest as well as matters of interest to the public.

**A**ll this raises a much larger question for British democracy. Since we are a constitutional monarchy, and proud of it in the majority of cases, how can it be that our parliament is gagged - and is gagging itself - from talking about how that constitutional monarchy is actually working? The effect is self-important self-censorship.

A lot of it is about deference to the 95-year-old Queen, who is hugely respected. Yet once the Queen dies the same deference may not be seamlessly carried forward. It may even disappear. The idea that in the "new" monarchy, after the Queen's death, the public will continue to feel constrained from talking about the royal family in the same way is likely to be false.

We should all - the Houses of Parliament included - prepare to have these conversations more openly. We are adults, entitled to discuss the kind of constitutional monarchy under which we live, entitled to discuss what it stands for (not least in terms of the established religion), and who is and is not part of it. This happens in other monarchies, but not ours. It ought to start here too, and now, because decisions about the slimmed-down firm that is reportedly planned by Prince Charles and William will in many cases have been taken already.

Even if Charles was to announce such changes on his accession, the Speaker would probably still be advising that MPs could not express their views. This is plain silly. It is time for parliament to stand up for itself. It is time for the party leaders and senior backbenchers - people such as Peter Bottomley, Harriet Harman, David Davis and Joanna Cherry - to get together and find a way to let the sunshine in.



## Putin's target in Ukraine is the west

**Keir Giles**



The west has been fixated for more than two months on Russian preparations to mount a new land invasion of Ukraine. Except it hasn't happened - and it's not likely to, at least in the form most commonly imagined. Russia has used the bright, shiny object of an obvious troop concentration to panic the west into considering seriously its demands for rolling back Nato. But by focusing on the wrong problem and joining in negotiations on Russia's terms, the US and Nato have fallen for a massive strategic deception operation.

By all accounts Russia's preparations for conflict are genuine. But they have to be. When it conducted a dry run last year, Russia saw how foreign analysts

swiftly discounted the likelihood of a major assault because they saw forces had not arrived with essential materiel. This time Russia has made sure they are there, and visible. And Russia is continuing to move troops westwards in order to keep up the pressure on western decision-makers.

That's led to a view that the deployment cannot be just for show since it is "too big not to be used". But that misses the point - it is precisely this concentration of Russian troops that has brought the US to the table. And away from the immediate and explicit demands tied to the troop buildup, Russia has achieved other, secondary, objectives. Issues previously at the front of western minds, such as Russia's occupation of Crimea and continuing ceasefire violations in eastern Ukraine, have been swept aside.

It's true there are a number of well-argued and highly plausible scenarios for land operations against Ukraine. But each presents Russia with significant challenges. A limited-scale operation brings no benefits, while a full-on onslaught designed to take and hold Ukrainian territory is considered beyond the reach of the force currently assembled.

In the most recent statements from the US, firm responses to Russia are promised in the form of severe economic sanctions and military reinforcement of Europe - but only if Russia mounts a land invasion of Ukraine. That's another powerful incentive for Russia to do something different instead.

In fact, the approach the US has taken seems to completely disregard the wide range of options for hostile action by Russia that don't actually involve invading anywhere. The option of cross-border strikes using air, missile or cyber power remains on the table. Subversion, sabotage and deniable operations to disrupt and destabilise the target country are other tempting means for Russia to make its displeasure felt.

And Ukraine may not even be the target. If Russia believes any of its own propaganda, Vladimir Putin thinks that what he is confronting in Ukraine is not Ukrainians but the west. And Russia's demands are aimed at Nato and the US, not Ukraine itself. What that means is that any Russian action intended to step up the pressure may be directed elsewhere, and non-Nato European states farther afield may be at risk of deniable damage or disruption.

Ireland, recently the target of unwelcome Russian attention, is anticipating Russian naval exercises in its exclusive economic zone at the beginning of February. Irish parliamentarians have pointed to the sensitive location for the live-fire drills, saying Russia deliberately chose it for proximity to shipping lanes, flight paths and subsea cables. When considering the full range of Russia's options, it's essential to think not only outside the box but also outside Ukraine.

None of this means defensive assistance to Ukraine is wasted. Supplies of essential arms and equipment are reducing the likelihood of a ground incursion still further. And there's always scope for all-out war after a catastrophic error of judgment by Russia. Despite caricatures of Putin as a wily strategist anticipating his opponents' every move, the ruling elite in Moscow is no more immune to miscalculations and self-inflicted injuries than others around the world.

But for now, officials in Kyiv point out that responding to Russian threats with "panic" only serves Moscow's interests. Early concerns that Russia would mount a hostile demonstration in order to force the pace of negotiations have not been borne out. Instead of Putin delivering his promised "military-technical response", the process has dragged on, with its economic cost steadily mounting. Russia may soon feel it needs to make its move, but we shouldn't expect that move to be the one everybody is waiting for.

**Keir Giles**  
works with  
the Russia  
and Eurasia  
programme of  
Chatham House.  
He is the author  
of *Moscow  
Rules: What  
Drives Russia  
to Confront  
the West*

Established 1906

**Country diary**

Sandy, Bedfordshire

A cast of hundreds has descended on the farm fields in midwinter. Out in the winter wheat, a rowdy assortment of crows behave like gatecrashers at a party where the boozes has already run out. Trampling their restlessness over the first leaves of grass, cawing and wing-flapping, they claw at chilled soil where frost-averse invertebrates are dead, dormant or deep below. The crows don't stay long.

The hedge alongside is bare of berries and bursting with birds. Bush to bush, twig to twig, a flock of chaffinches is whipped along by "pink pink" exclamations, and their speed-foraging seems too fast for them to glean anything worthwhile. Some spill out over the ground beside, and pick over earth that has been picked over by innumerable beaks before. Within seconds, the whole band - maybe 50-strong - has abandoned cover and struck out across the fields.

An even bigger group of linnets drop into the hedge top, using the barrier only as a staging and perhaps regrouping post. They, too, move on into open country, searching seed banks that haven't been replenished in months.

Watching these itinerant flocks come and go is another traveller, a mute local whose horizons have shrunk to the end of a stick. Most birdwatchers know it as a voice of the uplands. The stonechat has left its rocks on the moors and cliffs to endure the colder months here in silence. But like most of the stonechats that migrate to Bedfordshire, it has brought company. The roaming pair occupy a small niche - in three or four months, I've never seen them more than a half mile from here.

An endearing "there's one, where's the other?" constant along the hedges and drainage ditches, they are always a short distance apart, always poised at the tip of a dead stem. I know this big-headed bird on the hedge by its relentless fidgeting, twisting this way and that, flicking its tail. The tiny in search of the minute, it ekes out an existence here by being alert to grab at any little scrap of life.

Derek Niemann



ILLUSTRATION: CLIFFORD HARPER

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# Ukraine's independence must have UK support

Simon Jenkins (Britain should stay well out of Russia's dispute with Ukraine, 21 January) claims that Russia's "border disputes" with Ukraine have "nothing whatsoever to do with Britain" - but it has everything to do with the more than 20,000 diaspora Ukrainians and Britons of Ukrainian descent who live in the UK, of whom I am one.

Mr Jenkins appears to be of the opinion that Ukrainian sovereignty is less important than the desire of those who govern Russia not to be humiliated on the international stage. This is incorrect. Ukraine is not and has never been an integral part of Russia; it is an independent nation with a separate language, history and religious and political traditions. It was, for centuries, under the colonial rule of Tsarist Russia (or the Habsburg empire, depending on the region) and then of the Soviet Union, suffered unspeakably at the hands of the Soviet government in the 1930s and was subjected to extreme cultural suppression in the 19th century.

It is inexplicably disappointing and hurtful to see that in 2022 there are Guardian columnists who have

apparently bought into 19th-century Russian imperial propaganda.

**Christopher Jotischky**  
Lancaster

● As an MEP in the 1990s, serving as vice-chair of the joint parliamentary committee with Poland, and attending meetings with representatives of other applicant states to the EU. I discussed with them why they also wished to join Nato, and tried to dissuade them. But they were clear that membership of Nato would protect them from again falling under Russian rule.

Ukraine did not at that time apply for EU membership, but sent observers to joint meetings. I felt then that it was not wise to move too far to the east, but rather to build up good relationships with former Soviet states. I chaired a session at a local government conference for applicant states in Warsaw, and observers from Ukraine were keenly interested in developments being worked towards in Poland and other neighbouring states. On another occasion in Strasbourg I addressed a group of Ukrainian farmers about reform of the common agricultural policy; they seemed cheered at what

I said about the need for reform. I give these as examples that already in the mid-1990s there were people in Ukraine looking west rather than east to Russia, with a view to developing a more open democratic society. This was not being pushed on them by the EU, which was not behaving triumphantly, but created a funding stream to help former Soviet states, including Russia, to develop democratic institutions.

**Veronica Hardstaff**  
Sheffield

● Simon Jenkins writes (24 January) of Nato's post-cold-war expansion eastwards as though it was an invasion and occupation rather than a free choice by independent sovereign nations. That is also the reason why Ukraine seeks to join Nato; it is an independent, sovereign country with a distinct identity that wishes to find its own way in the world. Jenkins' alternative - a grandiloquent world of "spheres of influence" - would have Ukraine permanently subservient to Russia.

This year is the 100th anniversary of Irish independence. For those, like Jenkins, who find it difficult to understand why a country like Ukraine might wish to chart its own course, let him look over the Irish Sea. Our support for Ukraine should be loud, unequivocal and unlimited: freedom is indivisible.

**Simon Diggins**  
Retired colonel, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire

## Corrections and clarifications

● The Prince of Wales used the phrase "monstrous carbuncle" to describe an earlier proposal to extend the National Gallery, not the £50m Sainsbury wing (Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover obituary, 17 January, Journal, p7).

● A month in Ambridge (1 January, p23) speculated that the Archers character Will Grundy "never sounds sexy but maybe is, owing to his role as the village gamekeeper". In fact he is no longer a gamekeeper.

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to [guardian.readers@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.readers@theguardian.com) or The readers' editor, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU. You can also leave a voicemail on 020 3353 4736

## A neat summary of the Highway Code

I read Peter Walker's piece about changes to the Highway Code with interest (Common myths about what UK Highway Code changes will mean, the guardian.com, 24 January). I have long thought that the vast majority of the Highway Code's content could be wrapped up in one simple piece of advice that all road users would do well to remember: "Do as you would be done by."

**Steve Gooding**  
Director, RAC Foundation

● The picture Yotam Ottolenghi paints isn't quite accurate (Diversity is my favourite ingredient, 22 January). We had pomegranates as children in the 1950s and 60s. They were from an ordinary greengrocer - I remember eating the pips using a pin. And hummus was definitely here well over 25 years ago. I first bought it from a Safeway supermarket in the mid-1970s.

**Christine Brooman**  
Bristol

● I also use up old vegetables and savoury leftovers in soup with the addition of Marmite and tomato puree, although I draw the line at a friend's mother-in-law's variation that involved scraping visitors' plates into the boiling mixture. I've never yet had the willpower to come by old cake (Letters, 25 January).

**Trish Durrant**  
Bristol

● To the nominations of the British institutions that we should be proud of (Letters, 25 January), I would add the Open University, set up by the Labour government in the 1960s. Harold Wilson often talked about it as his proudest achievement as prime minister. Those were the days.

**Matthew Ryder**  
Buckden, Cambridgeshire

## Our blighted birthdays and party politics

In March 2021, for my 74th birthday, I went to a local park with my 88-year-old husband (Report, 25 January). We bought takeaway coffees and warm Portuguese custard tarts to remind us of a holiday in Lisbon. We found a bench overlooking the river and sat down to celebrate. A park keeper apologetically told us it was illegal for us to sit down and that we had to stand up and move on. That was a birthday party to remember.

**Carrie Hill**  
Bath

● On 19 June 2020, Boris Johnson's fiancee throws a party indoors for his birthday in breach of the rules. On 20 June, our son visits to celebrate his birthday; my son, wife and I sit in the garden at a distance. Then 21 June is my birthday; my wife and I spend the day alone.

**David Freedman**  
London

● On my second birthday as a widow, in May 2020, I celebrated with an online party, organised by my family. We had great fun until I

remarked that the only living beings I was allowed to touch were the dogs being walked in the park.

**Val Mainwood**  
Wivenhoe, Essex

● Why was Lulu Lytle in Downing Street? For almost half of the first lockdown, I nursed an ailing washing machine until I was able to welcome repairers into my house. But then I did not have to suffer the discomfort of dull wallpaper.

**Rosemary Jenkins**  
London

● On Carrie Johnson explain why Marks & Spencer food is acceptable for a birthday party, but John Lewis furnishings at No 10 are not?

**Richard Ehrlich**  
London

● Some of us in the US are watching Boris Johnson's latest scandal with bemusement. But could you stop calling it "partygate"? You are falling into the lazy habit of America's hackneyed appending of "-gate" to anything that smacks of impropriety. It's tired, trite and banal. Surely there is a more quintessentially British word - how about "partyhenge"?

**Dave Mackmiller**  
Saint Paul, Minnesota, US

● Might the term "party politics" take on a new meaning?

**David Davidge**  
Odiham, Hampshire

## Distressing delays to postal deliveries

Many of the complaints that Royal Mail has received (theguardian.com, 25 January) are from my Hornsey and Wood Green constituents, as for the second year running our community has been one of the hardest-hit by postal delays. I have had countless distressing emails from residents who have missed urgent cancer referrals, not received death certificates for loved ones, or spent Christmas alone and isolating without a single card or gift arriving.

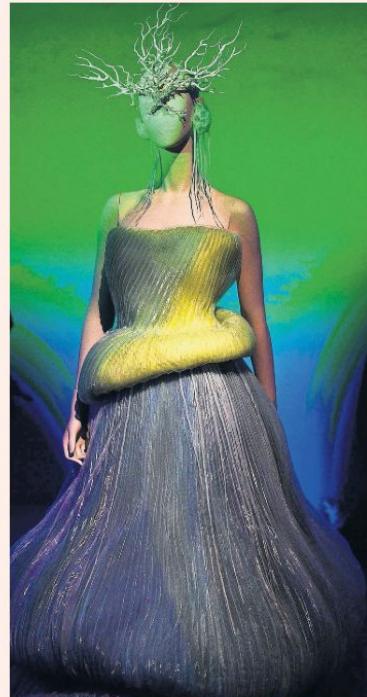
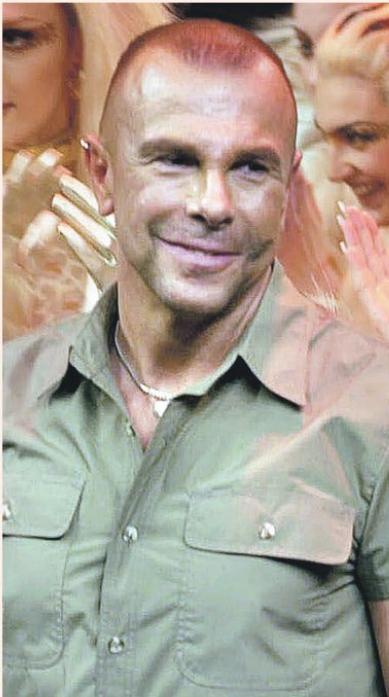
Royal Mail reported pre-tax profits of £315m in the six months to the end of September, up from £17m a year earlier. It has a near monopoly on letter deliveries, but where's the investment in enough temporary staff to deal with the backlog and support our hard-working posties?

I've already written to Ofcom to urge it to use its regulatory powers to act. Residents and small businesses deserve better.

**Catherine West MP**  
Labour, Hornsey and Wood Green

● Could this be the most delayed Christmas card this year? First-class stamp, date-stamped by Royal Mail in Southampton on 23 December; received 15 January in Manchester.

**John and Judy Watson**  
Manchester



## Thierry Mugler

### French fashion designer loved by celebrities for his daring and often outrageous creations

**A**t long last, when Thierry Mugler finally permitted a museum to curate a retrospective of his work, it showed his exceptionally shapely contribution to fashion.

The exhibition, which opened in Montreal, Canada, in 2019 and transferred last September to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, was all about three-dimensional bodies with strong command and control, dressed to stress their voluptuousness and power. Even the photographs looked like sculptures. He did goddesses, empresses and superheroines. No gamines, waifs or ordinary women.

For a decade from the early 1980s, Mugler, who has died aged 73, was a definer of the mood of the mode in extravagant ensembles, and even more in his staging. Paris couture had ventured out into catwalk presentation in the 70s,

but Mugler introduced celebrity guests, big performances, filmed inserts and amplification borrowed from stadium rock concerts, for entertainment rather than to shift clothes; 6,000 Parisians bought tickets for his 1984 spectacle at the Zenith, the city's biggest arena.

Mugler's designs connected with the capital's cabaret tradition - later picked up by Broadway and Hollywood - of costuming showgirls as highly sexualised abstractions - woman as bird, animal, insect, car hood ornament.

Musicians recognised that a Mugler outfit could astonish an audience at a first entrance. "You can wear a uniform," sang David Bowie in Boys Keep Swinging, 1979, and one of the uniforms he wore for its music video was a pink dress by Mugler. Diana Ross, Madonna and Celine Dion commissioned stage costumes from him; he tussled with George Michael for control of the directing of the 1992 video for Too Funky, featuring models in Mugler outrage-wear.

*Lady Gaga, left, on the catwalk in Paris in 2011. Right, a dress by Mugler, centre, on show as part of a retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in the French capital*

JACQUES BRINON/AP; REMY DE LA MAUVINIÈRE/AP; CHRISTOPHE ARCHAMBAULT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

In a later generation, Lady Gaga and Cardi B chose gala appearance gowns from his archives, and after Beyoncé saw Mugler's work in the 2008 Superheroes exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she ordered 58 outfits for herself for her 2009 I Am ... World Tour, plus gear for the rest of its cast, and asked Mugler to help stage the shows.

He was free to make what pleased him rather than fretting about selling frocks because of a 1992 deal with the French multinational Clarins that had awarded him a 34% stake in his new perfume, Angel.

Its overwhelming ingredient was synthetic ethyl maltol, which had previously added praline and jam aromas to confectionery, so Mugler models prancing in vinyl, leather and tyre-rubber dresses and plastic corsets smelt like a patisserie. This first gourmand perfume in its box of twilight blue is among the all-time scent bestsellers, and subsidised his last, epic, fashion pageant at the Cirque d'Hiver in Paris in 1995.

Mugler had been creating his own theatre and movie-based fantasy world since his childhood in Strasbourg, where he was one of two sons of a local doctor and his fashion-passionate wife. He hated home and school, although after he started dance classes at nine he maintained strict self-discipline to keep at it until he briefly joined the corps de ballet at the city's Opéra National du Rhin in 1965.

Mugler's real education came from a flea-pit cinema behind Strasbourg's railway station, where he saw five films a day, many of them old Hollywood: the designer Travis Banton swathing Marlene Dietrich in leather and fur, Walter

**His real education came from a flea-pit cinema, where he saw five films a day, many of them old Hollywood**

Punkett glorifying Cyd Charisse into a rocket-thighed siren. Along with Mugler's mother's wide shoulders, Charisse's form and poise were a lifelong inspiration, and he was thrilled when later she modelled in his shows.

Mugler was too lanky to be cast as a ballet prince and too weird in his flea-market outfits to pass without unkind comment in Strasbourg. He rejected Maurice Bejart's offer to join the Ballet of the 20th Century, because it was based in Brussels, another conventional city, and went to Paris instead.

There his self-presentation was applauded and he earned money by selling designs to ready-to-wear firms. He did the same in Amsterdam, while living on a houseboat; he contributed to Tommy Roberts's London pop art emporium, Mr Freedom; and he drove a van to Afghanistan and learned Kathakali dance in India.

But Mugler never turned hippy, and back in Paris in 1971 he was not in accord with the gentle naivety of current fashion. He had developed, through ballet, ideas about the body in movement and wanted to clothe it with striking simplicity, in grand, rather than little, black dresses. In 1973, he started his own first label, Café de Paris, and in 1978 opened a boutique on the Place des Victoires, showing collections with other créateurs de mode who produced exclusive clothes outside the world of haute couture.

Mugler's were by far the most architectural, after the manner of the postmodern style, with cornice shoulders and girder heels, and the most raunchy, using pornographic tropes before body-consciousness was common, which provoked angry reaction from women who disliked his constrictions.

The organising body of Paris couture formally asked him to show in 1992; he delayed a collection to tie in with the launch of Angel, and, inhibited by the rigid seasonal calendar, later dropped out. Mugler withdrew from fashion in 2002, just before Clarins, who had bought the rights to his name in 1997, closed his loss-making ready-to-wear brand.

However, his retirement, funded by Angel, Alien and other perfumes, was busy right up to the current Thierry Mugler: Courrissime exhibition, its core project to remake and redesign himself. First, he reclaimed his birth name, Manfred, then practised yoga and meditation, and morphed his lean frame into massive body-built tattooed muscles. After a jeep crash and a motorbike accident, he had reconstructive facial surgery, designing bone grafts to transform him from a "thin, charming dancer" into "a warrior".

**Veronica Horwell**

**Manfred Thierry Mugler, fashion designer, born 21 December 1948; died 23 January 2022**

# Malcolm Molyneux

## Pioneering tropical medicine expert whose research led to a greater understanding of malaria

**D**uring the time Malcolm Molyneux, who has died aged 77, was working at the Queen Elizabeth Central hospital in Blantyre as a consultant in 1974, he developed a keen sense of some of Malawi's major health problems and the research needed to address them. None was more pressing than malaria, which at the time killed about 1 million people every year, mostly children in Africa.

A decade later he moved on to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine at the University of Liverpool. With an American colleague, Dr Terrie Taylor, he raised funds from the Wellcome Trust and US National Institutes of Health to open a research ward adjacent to the children's department in Blantyre and began studying malaria there in 1990.

Some of his earliest work was on cerebral malaria, the often fatal coma that affects children infected with the malaria parasite. Malcolm identified factors associated with severe disease and developed a new score to assess severity. The Blantyre Coma score, as it became

known, is still in use today; the original publication has been widely cited in later research papers.

With a better definition of what cerebral malaria was, it became possible to investigate its cause and develop treatments. As the Malawi research programme grew, other major health problems were addressed, including chest, gastrointestinal and brain infections, as well as HIV; on a typical ward round in the late 1990s it seemed that every child was accompanied by a grandparent because the virus had wiped out a whole generation of parents. In the local language, Chichewa, Malcolm would always comfort, even if he could not cure.

He played a key role in the formation of the College of Medicine at the University of Malawi in 1991 by ensuring that research was considered a vital element within it. In 1994 a formal research partnership was established between Liverpool and the College of Medicine, and Malcolm soon returned to Malawi to lead what became the Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust (MLW) programme. In all he spent 30 years in Malawi.

While his research focused on improving immediate patient

Molyneux, right, during a ward round with his colleague Dr Terrie Taylor, at the Queen Elizabeth Central hospital in Blantyre, Malawi, in 2006

JOHN ROBERT WILLIAMS

care, he supported many others in their attempts to understand the underlying mechanisms of disease in order to arrive at new therapies, and encouraged the development of talented clinicians and scientists.

In addition to helping Malawian scientists, he supported young investigators from the UK and other wealthier countries. He insisted that those with medical backgrounds should help with the clinical workload, as well as pursuing their research interests.

Twice a year he returned to Liverpool to teach. His combination of laconic humour and natural story telling made him a memorable, if unconventional, lecturer. He would often abandon his slides and perch on a desk, arms folded, to chat informally about the subject. By the time he retired as director of MLW in 2007 there were more than 400 people working there, including both local and foreign clinicians and scientists. He continued living in Malawi until 2015, supporting and mentoring informally, and displaying limitless enthusiasm.

Malcolm had himself started life in Africa. Born in the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), he was the son of missionary parents, Joyce (nee Gammon) and Colin Molyneux, and went to the Sakeji Mission school in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). After gaining a natural sciences and then a medical degree (1967) at Cambridge University, he completed his postgraduate clinical training in London. There he met Elizabeth Neech, and they married in 1969.

As a medical student he had briefly visited Malawi, and after five years working in London returned there with Liz and their young family. Initially the couple worked as medical missionaries in a remote hospital. Although his faith remained important to him, Malcolm did not foist it on others.

Liz went on to become professor of paediatrics at the College of Medicine, and in 2006 they were both appointed OBE. Malcolm edited several medical journals, and advised the Malawian government and World Health Organisation.

In retirement he remained as active as ever, cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats and climbing Ben Nevis along the way, a challenge taken up by others as The Length and Height of Britain; he then cycled to the island's most north-westerly, western and eastern points. These ventures, which he managed despite having chronic leukaemia, raised thousands of pounds for the hospital in Malawi and other charities.

He is survived by Liz, a daughter, three sons and 11 grandchildren.

**Tom Solomon and Henry Mwandumba**

*Malcolm Edward Molyneux, medical researcher and director, born 20 November 1943; died 16 November 2021*

## Birthdays

**Igor Aleksander**, professor of neural systems engineering, 85; **Anita Baker**, singer, 64; **Sir Timothy Clifford**, art historian, 76; **Adam Crozier**, former chief executive, ITV, 58; **Angela Davis**, political activist, 78; **Ellen DeGeneres**, chat show host, 64; **Gustavo Dudamel**, conductor, 41; **Sir Leslie Ebdon**, director, Fair Access to Higher Education, 75; **Jules Feiffer**, cartoonist and playwright, 93; **Roy Goodman**, conductor and violinist, 71; **Sir Christopher Hampton**, playwright, 76; **Kim Hughes**, cricketer, 68; **Nicolas Kent**, theatre director, 77; **Prof Dame Anne Mills**, deputy director, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 71; **José Mourinho**, football manager, 59; **Anders Fogh Rasmussen**, former secretary general, Nato, 69; **Dame Paula Rego**, painter, 87; **Andrew Ridgeley**, musician, 59; **Brendan Rodgers**, football manager, 49; **Heather Stanning**, rower, 37; **Mark Urban**, broadcaster, 61; **Laura Wade-Gery**, former non-executive director, John Lewis, 57; **Lucinda Williams**, singer, 69.

**In Malawi**  
he initially worked as a medical missionary in a remote hospital. His faith remained important to him

## Letter Lord Myners

Unlike most city grandees, Paul Myners (obituary, 17 January) was a consistent advocate of social change. Last year a small group of us, volunteers campaigning to protect the BBC and public service broadcasting, went to him for advice, and he agreed to chair the British Broadcasting Challenge.

The venture benefited from his incisive intelligence and his conviction that the government had to be stopped from wrecking a great British institution. He was fearless, asking embarrassing questions in the House of Lords and using freedom of information (FOI) inquiries with relish. He thought it was the right thing to do and we miss him very much.

**Pat Younge**

## Announcements

### Deaths

**KINGSTON, Ivan**, 89. Died peacefully 6 January 2022 at St John's Hospice, St Johns Wood, following a long illness. Much loved father of Katy, Martin and Julia, grandfather to sixteen, great-grandfather to twelve and uncle to family members around the world (including England, South Africa, Germany, New Zealand, Australia and the United States). He will be sorely missed. He will be laid to rest in a private family burial in the South Downs next to his beloved Hansi. Celebration of his life will take place in the Spring. Donations to St John's Hospice.

For Announcements, Acknowledgments, Adoptions, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Deaths, Engagements, Memorial Services and In Memoriam, email us at [announcements@theguardian.com](mailto:announcements@theguardian.com) including your name, address and telephone number or phone 0203 353 2114.



## Yesterday's solutions

### Killer sudoku

*Easy*

6	9	7	1	8	2	3	5	4
4	8	2	6	5	3	1	7	9
1	5	3	4	9	7	6	8	2
8	2	5	9	4	1	7	6	3
7	4	1	5	3	6	2	9	8
3	6	9	2	7	8	5	4	1
5	3	6	8	2	4	9	1	7
2	1	4	7	6	9	8	3	5
9	7	8	3	1	5	4	2	6

*Medium*

1	4	3	9	8	7	2	6	5
8	6	2	3	1	5	9	7	4
5	7	9	6	4	2	3	8	1
6	5	8	7	9	4	1	3	2
7	2	4	5	3	1	6	9	8
9	3	1	8	2	6	5	4	7
3	1	5	4	6	8	7	2	9
2	8	6	1	7	9	4	5	3
4	9	7	2	5	3	8	1	6

### Codeword

U	E	M	D	A	U	A					
B	A	N	J	O	A	N	N	E	X	E	D
I	C	N	W	T	O	H					
Q	U	A	K	C	E	D					
U	M	L	I	R							
I	M	P	R	O	V	E					
T	G	S	O	U							
Y	O	K	E	S	S	E					
E	K	L	S	O	S	T					
S	Y	N	E	N	L	W					
N	Y	O	D	R	I	G					
O	D	D	V	T							
U	N	L	U	P	F	R					
U	N	L	I	E	O	N					
B	O	N	Z	A	R	A					
A	S	R	S	R	S	Y					

### Cryptic crossword

*Solution No. 28,663*

S	T	R	A	T	S	Y	N	T	A	X
H	C	R	U	A	D					
T	E	R	I	R	M	A	T	I	N	
O	E	D	O	U	K	E	N			
W	A	S	H	I	N	U	P			
N	A	S	C	A	N	Q	I			
W	O	T	P	O	T	Q	I			
S	P	O	T	S	N	A	I			
O	P	T	S	N	A	I	S			
P	L	D	C	R	T	W	C			
E	L	D	E	R	B	R	E			
E	Y	E	R	E	M	M	O			
O	I	A	C	S	U					
P	E	S	T	E	N					
E	H	I	B	I	P					
E	X	H	I	T	A					
G	A	N	T	A	R					
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					
R	E	U	E	R	K					

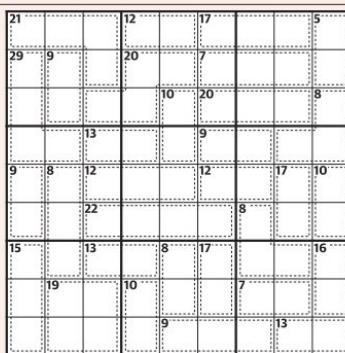


Stuck? For help call 0906 200 83 83. Calls cost £1.10 per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Service supplied by AT&T. Call 0330 333 6946 for customer service (charged at standard rate). Want more? Get access to more than 4,000 puzzles at [theguardian.com/crossword](http://theguardian.com/crossword). To buy puzzle books, visit [guardianbookshop.com](http://guardianbookshop.com) or call 0330 333 6846.

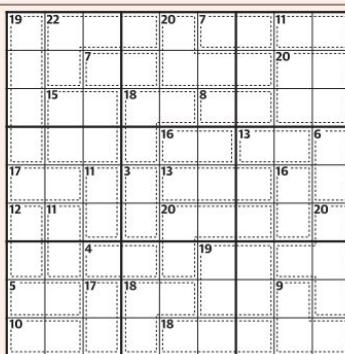
## Killer sudoku

*Easy*

The normal rules of Sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.

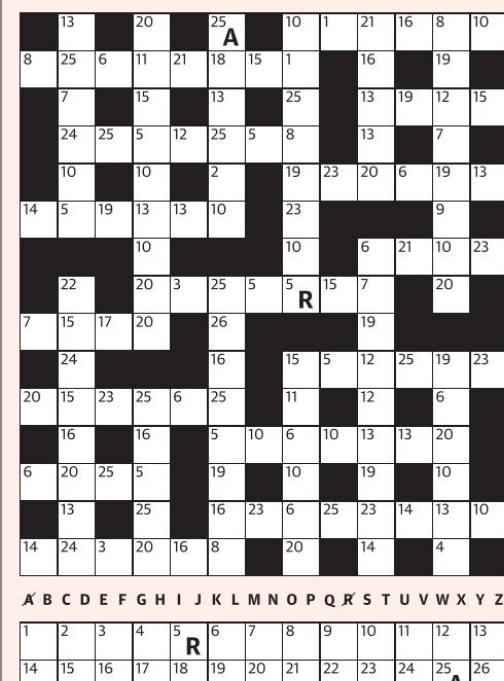


*Medium*



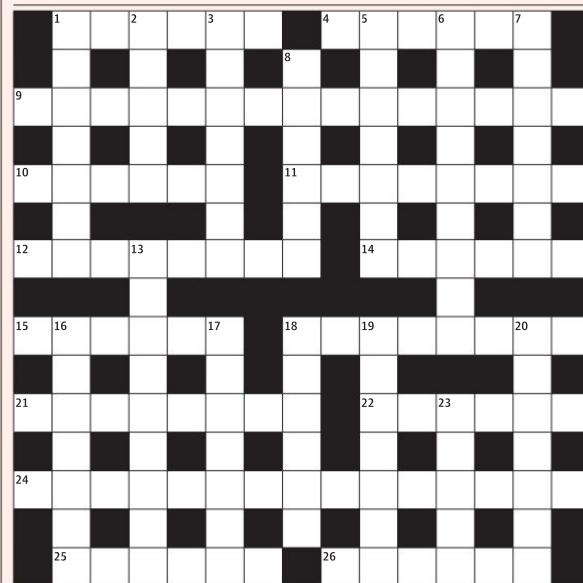
## Codeword

Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.



## Guardian cryptic crossword

No 28,664 set by Nutmeg



### Across

- 1 A great deal contributed within limits of policy (6)
- 4 Support for young boxer, perhaps (4,2)
- 9 Maybe Saudi theologian in distance, always keeping to the rear (6,9)
- 10 Holidaymaker affected to a greater extent? (6)
- 11 Move back match official, one refused by coaches previously (8)
- 12 Who's last to be welcomed by assembled crewmen? (8)
- 14 Case of dirty clothing isn't nice (6)
- 15 Scandal reflected on a society girl (6)
- 18 Nutmeg seen in part of London gym? No chance! (4,4)
- 21 Where VAT requires change of any kind (8)
- 22 He scored 1,000 down under and rivalled their openers (6)
- 24 Frame splenetic review of history play (4,4,2,5)
- 25 Vet's mask (6)
- 26 Ladies possibly wanting occupation, I admitted (6)

### Down

- 1,16 Mobile hospital covers independent sector institutions (7,7)
- 2 Eventually finish parody, scratching head (3,2)
- 3 Proposition from those folk holding Scandinavian capital (7)
- 5 County ground showing initial score (7)
- 6 Gives up personal words spoken before sex between married couple (5,4)
- 7,20 Tense and terse response to a well-chosen gift? (7,7)
- 8,18 Impressive tactic to overcome disablement (6,6)
- 13 Superintendent close to entrance stopping joyrider? (9)
- 16 See 1
- 17 Setter's contrarily breaking engagement to take another course (7)
- 18 See 8
- 19 Reminder from blokes in feminist campaign truncated (7)
- 20 See 7
- 23 Forming bands visible in horizon, almost (5)