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Firms may face legal action over 'no jab, no job' threats

Aubrey Allegretti
Rowena Mason

Pressure is mounting on ministers to outlaw companies' "no jab, no job" policies, amid warnings that firms could be hit by a wave of legal claims for discrimination.

After major US businesses including Google and Facebook announced plans to allow only fully vaccinated staff into their offices, senior British government figures appeared relaxed about other firms following suit.

The move was welcomed by the transport secretary, Grant Shapps, who called it a "good idea" and said the "reality" was that some firms would require employees to have had both Covid jabs – though he added legislation would not be passed to make it mandatory.

But newly updated advice from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development cautioned that it would be "an intrusion on an employee's body and may discriminate on the basis of disability, or religious or philosophical belief".

In guidance to its 160,000 members, the group, which represents human resources professionals, made clear that businesses "cannot forcibly vaccinate employees or potential employees" – unless legally required. So far the government has only said care home workers in England must be double-vaccinated, with a consultation under way on whether to extend the demand to NHS staff. If people were forced to get vaccinated in other roles, that could amount to a criminal offence against the person and claims such as assault and battery, the CIPD said.

> *'This kind of coercion will prove damaging to the fabric of society'*
>
> **Will Wragg**
> *Conservative MP*

The Equality and Human Rights Commission also urged companies not to apply a blanket "no jab, no job" policy, saying their approaches should be "proportionate, non-discriminatory and make provision for those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons".

Pressure also came from Acas, the dispute resolution group, which said that if staff did not want jabs, bosses should 15

BMX pair pedal to the medals in Tokyo

Bethany Shriever took gold in the BMX while her friend and training companion Kye Whyte took silver, leading another haul of six medals for Britain at the Tokyo Olympics. Shriever had been forced to raise her own funds after official support was withdrawn from female BMX riders after the Rio Games. **News** *Page 4*→

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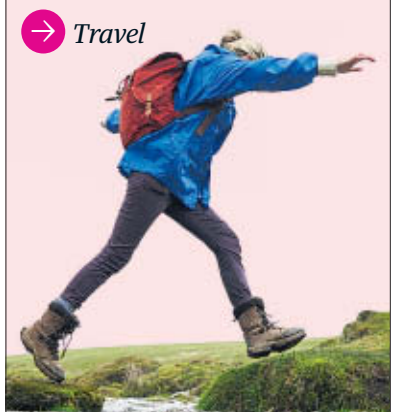

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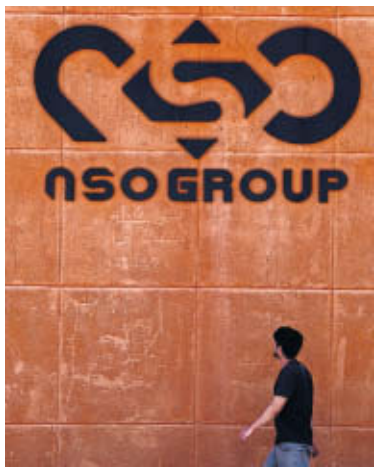
News

US raises concerns with Israel over NSO spyware revelations



Offices of the cyberfirm NSO Group. Israel has told the US it is taking the controversy surrounding the Pegasus revelations seriously

Stephanie Kirchgaessner
Washington

The White House has raised concerns with top Israeli officials about allegations that spyware sold by the Israeli technology company NSO Group has been used by governments around the world to monitor journalists, activists and – potentially – government officials who have close ties to the US.

Brett McGurk, a top Biden administration adviser on the Middle East, raised questions privately about NSO in a meeting last week with Zohar Palti, a senior Israeli defence ministry official, according to reports by Axios and the Washington Post.

Palti reportedly told McGurk that the controversy was being taken very seriously and that Israel was examining whether it needed to change rules around how offensive cyber-weapons were sold to other countries.

Under the current rules, Israel's ministry of defence reviews requests for export licences before NSO's surveillance technology is sold to any foreign country. NSO has said the reviews are rigorous and take into account the country's record on human rights.

The development comes two weeks after the Pegasus project, a journalistic consortium that includes the Guardian and 16 other media partners, revealed details of a massive leak of phone numbers of individuals who are believed to have been selected as candidates for possible surveillance by NSO's government clients, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Hungary.

The phone numbers of the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and Joe Biden's Iran envoy, Robert Malley, were among tens of thousands of numbers of individuals who were apparently considered people of interest by NSO clients.

Forensic analysis of dozens of phones by Amnesty International's Security Lab, a technical partner of the Pegasus project, found that many of the phones analysed and included on the leaked list had either been infected by NSO's spyware, called Pegasus, or that there had been attempted infections.

When NSO's Pegasus spyware infects a phone, government clients who use it can gain access to an individual's phone conversations, messages, photos and location, as well as turn the phone into a portable listening device by manipulating its recorder.

The leak contains a list of more than 50,000 phone numbers that are believed to have been identified as those of people of interest by NSO clients since 2016.

The appearance of a number on the leaked list does not mean it was subject to an attempted or successful hack. NSO said Macron was not a "target" of any of its customers, meaning the company denies there was any attempted or successful Pegasus infection of his phone.

It says it is technically impossible for its foreign government clients to target US phone numbers with Pegasus.

NSO has also said the data has "no relevance" to the company, and has rejected the reporting by the Pegasus project as "full of wrong assumptions and uncorroborated theories".

It denied that the leaked data represented those targeted for surveillance by the Pegasus software. NSO has called the 50,000 number exaggerated and said it was too large to represent individuals targeted by Pegasus.

The Washington Post, a partner in the Pegasus project, reported on Thursday that an Israeli official had confirmed contact in recent days between US and Israeli officials about the consortium's findings, and that Israeli officials had told US counterparts that the matter was being taken seriously.

Israel has reportedly also launched its own investigation into the matter.

Israeli authorities inspected NSO's offices near Tel Aviv on Wednesday, at the same time as the country's defence minister, Benny Gantz, arrived for a pre-arranged visit to Paris in which the Pegasus revelations were discussed with his French counterpart.

Early media reports described the moves on NSO's offices as a raid, but the company said in a statement that the authorities had "visited" rather than raided its premises.

NSO said it had been informed in advance that defence ministry officials responsible for overseeing commercial exports of sensitive cyber-exports would be carrying out an inspection.

"The company is working in full transparency with the Israeli authorities," it said.

Readers hail Guardian and Observer

Titles are most trusted in survey by Ofcom

The Guardian and Observer are the second most widely read titles across digital and print and the most widely used in terms of digital alone, research by the media regulator Ofcom shows.

In terms of websites/apps used for news, the Guardian and Observer outrank every other newspaper title, behind only the BBC, Google and Sky, according to the Ofcom research, based on audience surveys.

Younger audiences (16-24s) and people from minority ethnic groups are generally more likely to read the Guardian than other media outlets. Our readers rate us more highly for providing trusted news about Covid-19 and "helping people to understand the restrictions" than users of any other news outlet in the survey – including other publishers and also BBC News, ITV and Sky.

Our readers rank us higher for quality, accuracy, trust, presenting a range of opinions, depth of analysis and helping them "understand what is going on in the world today" than those of any other title.

▼ *A knife with feline blood on it and Bouquet's DNA on the handle was found during a search of his home*

PHOTOGRAPH: JULIA GALVIN/ALAMY

Brighton cat killer jailed for five years after being caught on CCTV

Nicola Slawson

Cat owners in Brighton and Hove yesterday welcomed the sentencing of a shopping centre security guard whose killing spree over a period of eight months had created a "palpable fear" their pet could be next.

Steve Bouquet, 54, had denied 16 counts of criminal damage in relation to cats and one count of possession of a knife but was convicted last month.

The owners of some of the cats that Bouquet stabbed to death were at Hove crown court yesterday to see him imprisoned for five years and three months. Nine cats – Hendrix, Tommy, Hannah, Alan, Nancy, Gizmo, Kyo, Ollie and Cosmo – were killed and a further seven injured.

▲ *A photograph of a dead cat was found on Steve Bouquet's phone*

The incidents took place between October 2018 and June 2019. Bouquet was finally captured on CCTV set up by an owner of a dead cat. During the trial jurors heard accounts from several cat owners who found their pets injured on their doorsteps.

Judge Jeremy Gold QC, sentencing Bouquet, said his behaviour was "cruel, it was sustained and it struck at the heart of family life". Bouquet, who had been called the "Brighton cat killer" by local residents, appeared before the judge for the first time yesterday after not attending his trial.

In his police interview read out during the trial, Bouquet told officers he was "no threat to animals". However, a photo of a dead cat was found on his phone, the court heard.

CCTV footage allegedly implicating Bouquet in the attacks emerged after one pet owner, Stewart Montgomery, spotted a camera near a trail of blood outside his house where his kitten, Hendrix, had been stabbed with a knife. The camera had been erected by a neighbour whose cat had been killed the year before, the court heard. The footage was said to show Bouquet stroking a cat and taking something from his rucksack before making a "sudden jerk" with his arm.

"This is the moment we say that the defendant stabs Hendrix with some force," said the prosecutor, Rowan Jenkins.

A knife, with feline blood on it and Bouquet's DNA on the handle, was found during a search of his home, while mobile phone evidence placed him in the vicinity of many of the stabbings during the time they took place, the Crown Prosecution Service said. Jayne Cioffi from the CPS said: "This has been a tragic case for all the owners involved. Not only did Steve Bouquet inflict horrendous suffering to each of the animals he attacked, but he also caused real trauma to their owners, many of whom found their beloved pets injured and bleeding.

> ***'None of us can comprehend what drove Bouquet to do this to family pets'***
>
> **Jayne Cioffi** *Crown Prosecution Service*

"None of us can comprehend what drove Bouquet to do this to family pets. His claims that it was simply chance that he was present at various times when the animals were attacked were rightly dismissed by the jury after being disproved by the investigation and prosecution work."

Terry Mynott, an actor who stars in Channel 4's The Mimic, said he was pleased Bouquet didn't get away with just a fine. His cat, Bowser, was found with a single wound, 2cm wide, that went clean through his back leg and spine. Terry and his partner "threw everything" they could to try to save him but the wound was too deep and he died a few days later.

"I held him in my arms and saw the life drain out of his eyes, he was only one year old," he said.

Mynott said he was still gutted by the loss of his beloved pet and although Bowser was not one of the nine dead cats named in the trial, he was convinced his cat died at the hands of Bouquet, along with many more for which there was not enough evidence to prosecute.

"I'm pleased his trial is over but I hope that while serving his time, he is made to get psychiatric help so he never hurts an animal or human for the rest of his life. I've already lost so it is hard to feel anything toward him. The worst that could happen happened."

Mynott has thrown himself into supporting the RSPCA's Cancel Out Cruelty campaign. "All I can do is put my energy into helping other animals," he said.

Joy Persaud, a cat owner from Hove, also welcomed the sentencing. She said there was a "palpable fear" among cat owners before the perpetrator was found. "It is a relief to know that this man has been locked up and that his hideous crimes will be punished."

First image released of Staunton playing the Queen in The Crown

Georgina Quach

The first image has been released of Imelda Staunton playing the Queen in the Crown as she films season five of the Netflix drama.

Staunton has taken over from the Golden Globe winner Olivia Colman as the latest series ushers in a new era for the royal family.

Best known for her Oscar-nominated role in 2004's Vera Drake and for playing Dolores Umbridge in the Harry Potter films, Staunton will portray the Queen throughout the 1990s and up to 2003, taking in the John Major and Tony Blair years, as well as the death of Prince Diana..

Alongside the image, The Crown's official Twitter account wrote: "An early glimpse of our new Queen Elizabeth II, Imelda Staunton."

Staunton will be joined by Jonny Lee Miller as John Major and Lesley Manville as Princess Margaret. The Game of Thrones star Jonathan Pryce will take on the role of Prince Philip, while Elizabeth Debicki, star of the film Tenet, features as Diana, Princess of Wales. Dominic West, best known for his roles in The Wire and The Affair, will portray Prince Charles, repacing Josh O'Connor. The shoot kicked off this month at Elstree Studios in Hertfordshire.

The forthcoming season, which is due to air next year, follows a period of history centring on Charles and Diana's turbulent marriage, as well as the deaths of Diana and Princess Margaret and the fire at Windsor Castle.

▲ *Imelda Staunton as the Queen in season five of the Netflix drama*

The Crown's sixth season will reportedly be the last. In an interview with the magazine Broadcast earlier this month, the executive producer Suzanna Mackie said The Crown's creator, Peter Morgan, "simply cannot" write another season because recent history hasn't "had time to gain a proper perspective".

Claire Foy was the first actor to play the Queen in the Netflix series.

After Colman took over, she was nominated for Emmys in The Crown's third and fourth seasons. She won a Golden Globe for her work in the show's third season.

Bethany Shriever
Gold *BMX*

Luke Greenbank
Bronze *Swimming*

Kye Whyte
Silver *BMX*

Bryony Page
Bronze *Trampolining*

Duncan Scott
Silver *Swimming*

British medal express: BMX pair lead Team GB surge

Alexandra Topping

A stunning medal double on the BMX track added to Great Britain's Tokyo haul yesterday, on a day of frenetic activity when the squad won six medals, taking Team GB to a tally of 26.

Day seven also meant Great Britain progressed to the semi finals of the women's rugby 7s, but there was heartache in the football, as the women lost 4-3 to Australia in an extra-time thriller and failed to progress to the semi-finals.

There were more medals in the pool, in trampolining and a final bronze in the rowing – bringing to a close an otherwise disappointing regatta for Great Britain.

The British team – which currently has more medals than at the same point in Rio 2016 – has won medals in 13 different disciplines, more than any other country. Of the teams above them in the table, China and the US have won in 12, Japan and the Russian Olympic Committee in 10, and Australia in five.

But the day belonged to Bethany Shriever, 22, who won over a legion of new BMX racing fans with an astonishing, daring and commanding performance, holding off two-time champion Mariana Pajón to take gold.

It is the reward for years of dedication and grit for the former teaching assistant, who in the wake of Rio 2016 was forced to fundraise after UK Sport initially decided that only male BMX riders would be financially supported.

Her victory came shortly after long-time friend and training companion Kye Whyte took silver in the men's competition, sparking memorable scenes of celebration as Whyte lifted Shriever off her feet to swing her round with joy.

Essex-born Shriever said the race had been "perfect". "It's our first Games and we've absolutely loved it. I could barely walk afterwards, I left it all on the track. It's been a long, hard journey, I've had to rely a lot on my family, and the team for supporting me to become a full-time."

Whyte, nicknamed the Prince of Peckham, finished just 0.114 seconds behind Dutch rider Niek Kimmann to take silver on his Games debut.

He described being overcome with emotion seeing his brother Tre, a former world championship medallist in the event and his family stay up until 5am to watch the race.

Gunning for the title of Britain's busiest Olympian, at the aquatics centre, Duncan Scott won a silver in the men's 200m individual medley, to go with his silver in the 200m freestyle and the gold in the 4x200m freestyle relay.

The Glaswegian is now the most successful British Olympic swimmer since the Edwardian era at a single Games and with two events left – the men's medley relay and the mixed medley relay – he could become the first British athlete in any sport to win four medals (or more) at one Olympics.

His friend, Luke Greenbank, 23, won bronze in the 200m backstroke. The pair of them are expected to be on Great Britain's team for the men's 4x100m medley tomorrow – Scott's 10th race of the week.

Bryony Page won her second Olympic medal on the bounce with bronze in the women's trampoline event. The 30-year-old from Crewe, who won a surprise silver in Rio in 2016, finished behind the Chinese Zhu Xueying and Liu Lingling.

The inquest into Great Britain's disappointing performance in the rowing also got under way after the men's eight salvaged a medal, taking bronze. The team of Josh Bugajski, Jacob Dawson, Tom George, Mohamed Sbihi, Charles Elwes, Oliver Wynne-Griffith, James Rudkin and Tom Ford were not expected to win a medal, but finished third behind New Zealand and Germany.

Sir Matthew Pinsent, who won four consecutive gold medals in the water, said there was no escaping the fact that the British team had not performed as well as in the last six Olympic Games. Great Britain finished the Tokyo Games with two rowing medals, their lowest tally since Atlanta 1996, where they took two, and the first time they have not won a gold since 1980.

"I don't think there are many questions to ask of the athletes," he said. "I think they have performed out of their skins. But I will be talking to the performance director, Brendan Purcell, before the end of the day ... ultimately the performance of the British team is his job."

On the first day at the track Great Britain's Dina Asher-Smith finished second in her 100m heat behind America's Teahna Daniels – a shaky start by her standards, with her time of 11.07 only 11th fastest across the eight heats.

13

The number of disciplines Team GB has won medals in so far in Tokyo, more than any other country

Take a bow, Peckham

'The club is like a mini Olympic programme'

Damien Gayle

Standing at the gate at the start of the BMX track in Burgess Park, south-east London, under a looming grey sky, Caleb Tewolde peers out from behind his matt black, full-face helmet at the course ahead. He has the pure unbroken focus that only a four-year-old can muster.

And he needs it; he has a lot to live up to: his older brother, Lucas, seven, is already a national No 1 and that morning their clubmate Kye White, 21, won Olympic silver.

Peckham BMX has already contributed seven British Olympic team members: at one point, four out of seven in the BMX team came from the club. "Basically [the club is] like a mini Olympic programme," said its founder, CK Flash, 47. Just like British Cycling, which develops riders for the road and velodrome, Peckham BMX has its own nutritionist, its own weightlifting coach, as well as about 10 riding coaches. "We talk about diet, we talk about water, we talk about how much sleep you get, how should you stretch," Flash said.

> *'I just told them, build me the best track you want, and make it difficult, because if you make it difficult you get results'*
>
> **CK Flash**
> *Peckham BMX Club*

It has taken two decades to build up to this. Flash, a former DJ, started training riders in 2003. He began in Brixton, where he first met Tre Whyte, Kye's older brother, who rose to become British national champion and took bronze in the world championships in 2014. After building a stable of riders there, he moved to Peckham.

"Eventually the guys from Brixton came to Peckham and then, within three years of training them, they won every title in England, which was regional champions, youth games champions, national champions, European champions, and we got a world champion from it as well in 2012."

On a rainy afternoon yesterday, Caleb was the youngest of a dozen or so members of Peckham BMX careening around the course, showcasing their talents for a mob of journalists who had come to find out the club's magic formula. Older members flicked the back wheels of their small-framed BMX bikes as they soared through the air; Caleb rolled gently over each bump, enjoying the momentum.

Raising a BMX rider is itself hard work, said Keighley Anderson, 32, Caleb's mother, who takes her boys to races up and down the country. It can also get expensive: both her boys are kitted out in armour, helmet, padded gloves – and that's before the cost of the bike.

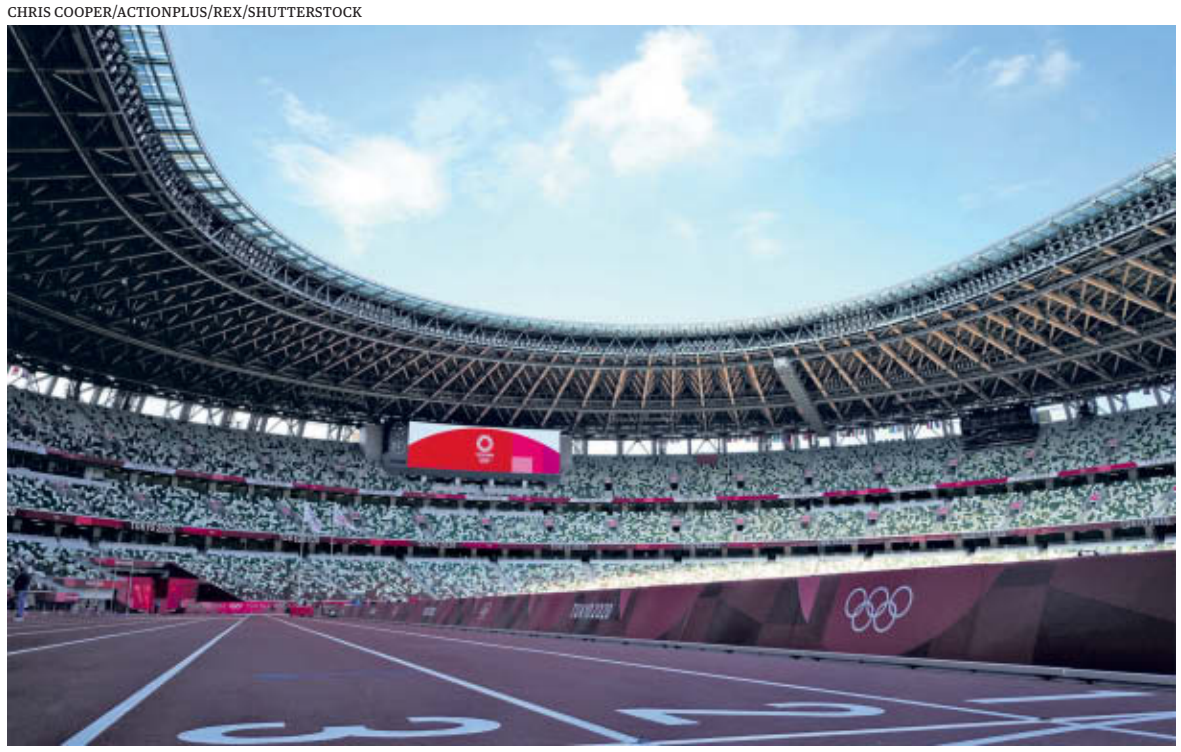
Despite that, Peckham BMX is open to all, whether kids can afford the gear or not. A clubhouse built from old shipping containers has dozens of loan bicycles and helmets for riders who want to try out the sport. Every Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday they have 90 to 110 riders turn up to train, with some places funded by the council.

What also sets Peckham apart from rival clubs is the quality of its track, one of the longest in Britain. Handed £1.1m of funding from Southwark council – as part of the 2012 Olympics legacy fund – and the National Lottery, Flash went to Clark & Kent, a dedicated BMX track-building contractor from Shropshire. "I just told them: just build me the best track you want, and make it difficult, because if you make things difficult you get results," said Flash.

What sets Kye Whyte apart? Brutal determination, says Flash. "If we have to do 10 or 50 laps he's going to make sure he's winning all 50 laps, he's one of them ones … He ain't letting you beat him, even if it kills him he's going to beat you 50 times, right?"

▲ *Soaring Peckham BMXers in action* PHOTOGRAPH: LINDA NYLIND/THE GUARDIAN

▼ *Tokyo's Olympic Stadium is a $1.4bn refurbishment of the arena used for the 1964 Games* PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS COOPER/ACTIONPLUS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



'Mournfully empty' Games loses the shared moments

Barney Ronay
Tokyo

At 8.14pm Tokyo time, as the public address burbled weirdly and a crew of Lycra-wrapped athletes, male and female, collapsed together in a narrow corner of the Tokyo Olympic stadium, Marvin Schlegel, a 23-year-old German runner, leaped up on to a concrete walkway above the running track and began to roar into the empty space.

Fists clenched, neck muscles fanned, Schlegel continued to roar, a kind of wild-man victory bark. Ten minutes earlier he had run the anchor leg in Germany's mixed 4x400 relay team. His quartet, two women and two men, had just qualified for today's Olympic final by the finest of margins.

He kept on roaring, fists pumping, pomp-rock style, and it was good, and fun and entirely uplifting because this felt like life. Blond, frightening, endorphin-crazed life. But life all the same inside this giant lighted bowl, host to 68,000 empty seats, and a monument on the opening day of the Tokyo 2020 athletics programme to sport in the time of plague.

It would be unkind to describe the Olympic events to this point as a worthy starter before the main dish. But it would also be correct. The summer Games would be a far lesser thing with its doomed Euro-aristo pastimes: the shooting, the splashing about, the homo-equine ballet. But it couldn't exist at all without track and field.

The real allure of these events is their universality. Athletics is the best part of the Olympics because it is in outline entirely fair and egalitarian, the core of that old sporting ideal. You don't need a boat or a horse. The most that's required is an orb to toss or a bar to leap over. All you really need is legs and will.

This is a stage that everyone can share. Including, last night, a wondrously happy German relay team, featuring a 23-year-old whose life's ambition, according to an old Instagram post, was always to compete at these Games.

For the people of Tokyo there will be relief at reaching the second half of their Olympics, and no doubt sadness at seeing this vast global beano take place without an invitation, just a bill for the works.

The Olympic stadium is the hub of every Games and always its most costly part. This one is a $1.4bn refurb of the 1964 Olympic arena, just north of the Tokyo Bay area.

Even as the day's programme began it was mournfully huge and mournfully empty. The beige and brown seats at least have a speckled effect in the distant upper tiers, giving an imitation of life. Otherwise it is surely the starkest of all the world's many empty shared spaces right now, a place constructed to stage the greatest show on earth, which is simply a vast man-made absence.

The stadium was rebuilt by the renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, whose Wikipedia page states that his goal is to recover the tradition of Japanese buildings and to reinterpret them for the 21st century. Kuma also built the Dundee V&A.

The Tokyo 2020 blurb suggests the stadium is supposed to feel "connected to its surrounds", an organic part of this dense, green city. But it didn't feel connected to much on Olympics day seven, more a place of temporary communion, athletes, officials and volunteers scuttling about trying to stage a show for the world. As the women's triple jump and shot put heats kicked into gear the stadium announcer continued to burble away unheeded, something to fill the silence, along with the weird, anxiety-inducing incidental music, a rumble of bass, a sudden drum break, broken up now and then by a yell as the shot was launched.

It is easy to forget how hard this is on the athletes, how odd it is to be competing at their life's goal, the end point of an obsession, in front of all this emptiness. Or perhaps not. Maybe it's normal by now. It has been almost a year and a half. Hopefully not. We need this stuff.

This Olympic by-product will at least serve a useful life as Japan's national stadium when shared mass existence is permitted again. But its presence here does highlight the frequent pointless expense of Big Sport, and the need in future for these vast projects. So many years in the making for two weeks of televised action. Time to call a halt on the cement contracts. Let's all take a moment here.

It was hard to avoid silence as the day's competition wound down. People: you miss them after a while. One thing this Games won't have is that shared moment of the grand finale, the wave of feeling as the crowd rises to some feat of human ultimacy. London 2012 had its Super Saturday, crowned by Mo Farah's gold in the 10,000 metres – and the same race ended the action on the opening day in Tokyo.

It provided a thrilling finish: Selemon Barega of Ethiopia sprinting down the final straight to take gold ahead of Joshua Cheptegei of Uganda and his countryman Jacob Kiplimo. As Barega crossed the line he started off on a victory lap, realised there wasn't much point and went to the nearest stand of officials and coaches.

The Ugandans held their flag for the cameras, flanked by a gleeful bobbing huddle of team members. Did it feel like the Olympics? Kind of. The moment was there, but not the people, the shared moment replaced, in Tokyo, with that feeling of shouting into the void.

ISO 100

REC

Eve

Eve is the intimate story of a nine-year-old-girl living in one of the oldest off-grid communities in the UK. We follow the fledgling climate activist as she navigates her way back into schooling and proudly speaks up for her passionate belief in stopping climate catastrophe.

Watch the film at theguardian.com/eve

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USA

Carl Hester
Equestrian
Team GB

JEAN CATUFFE/ GETTY IMAGES

The Rainbow Games

LGBTQ+ activists hail embrace of out athletes in Tokyo

Alexandra Topping

When, still damp from the pool after winning his long-awaited gold medal, the diver Tom Daley declared his pride at being a gay man and also an Olympic champion, there were tears and full hearts across the UK.

And while there was little shock – Daley has been a vocal advocate of LGBTQ+ rights for years – there was a joy and ease to his pronouncement that was new. With more publicly out athletes in these Games than in all others combined, Tokyo 2020 is being hailed as the Rainbow Olympics, with LGBTQ+ rights campaigners hoping its message of positive inclusivity can have a lasting, global impact.

There are at least 172 LGBTQ+ and out athletes competing in Tokyo, more than three times as many as at Rio 2016, according to Outsports.com, which tracks the number and celebrates the achievements of LGBTQ+ sportspeople. It counted 23 publicly out Olympians in London 2012 and 56 in Rio 2016; the US tops the table with most out stars in 2021, with Team GB taking bronze with 16.

Its co-founder Cyd Zeigler said LGBTQ+ athletes still in the Olympic village were contacting his team, asking to be added to the list, a dramatic shift from five years ago when the opposite was more likely to happen. "That really reflects the pride that these athletes take in being LGBTQ. It's not something that they want to hide anymore, they want to be recognised as part of the community," he said. "It's clear that these really are the Rainbow Games."

At Rio 2016 Team GB's hockey captain, Kate Richardson-Walsh, and her wife and teammate, Helen, made no secret about their relationship, having been together for years. But if they were competing now, they would have been even more frank and open, she said: "When I heard, I'm going to get emotional here, when I heard Tom Daley talk in the press conference about being a proud gay man, and an Olympic gold medallist, I just thought, yes, absolutely yes – what a strong, powerful statement to make.

"We certainly didn't hide away or keep things to ourselves. But I just wonder if perhaps now we would have been talking about it in a much more frank way."

The couple received "some negative stuff", but emails from fans saying they had helped them be open about their sexuality "made it all worth it".

On one occasion, a taxi driver, not recognising Richardson-Walsh, asked if she didn't think it was wrong that the Team GB women's hockey captain – his own passenger – was in a relationship with one of her teammates. "I was thinking, this is actually me he's talking about and I'm in the back of his taxi and I don't know if I feel safe enough to confront this," she said. "Now I feel like I would be in a much better position to, in a non-aggressive way, challenge that."

By Thursday Outsports reckoned that Team LGBTQ ranked 12th overall in the medal table. Stefanie Dolson is on Outsports' list of winners after taking a gold medal with the USA in the 3x3 basketball; and Team GB's Carl Hester won a bronze in the dressage.

Women outnumber men on the list of out gay athletes by about a 8-1 margin, with women's football alone counting for more than 40 out players. Other male gay competitors include the New Zealand diver Anton Down-Jenkins, the equestrians Edward Gal and Hans Peter Minderhoud from the Netherlands, and the US cox Julian Venonsky. In the opening ceremony, the US basketball star Sue Bird, engaged to the football legend Megan Rapinoe, beamed as she bore the American flag.

On Wednesday, after taking silver in the 1,500m freestyle swimming, her compatriot Erica Sullivan told the Washington Post: "I'm multicultural. I'm queer. I'm a lot of minorities. That's what America is."

> *'That's the Olympics' power ... Athletes and cultures are exposed to one another'*
>
> **Cyd Zeigler**
> *Outsports.com*

The footballer Quinn – who came out as non-binary trans in 2020 – is playing for Canada in the Olympics, while the non-binary US skateboarder Alana Smith declared their goal going into the Olympics was to be "a visual representation for humans like me". Amid considerable controversy, the weightlifter Laurel Hubbard, who is transgender, is due to compete for New Zealand at the Games next week, and was this week praised by the International Olympics Committee.

Tokyo 2020 has also underlined the opportunity the Olympics provides for haphazard, unscripted cultural exchange. After his victory, Daley spoke to a Chinese journalist about his son and husband, sitting between athletes from Russia and China, where same-sex marriage is illegal.

Zeigler recalled a gay footballer's tale of speaking to the curious Iranian football team about his sexuality, because in their country homosexuality was illegal, and punishable by death. "That is the power of these Games," he said. "Athletes from all around the world are exposed to one another, and different cultures are exposed to different kinds of people ... Athletes take that experience back into places like Iran, China and Russia and I think it's incredibly important."

While Daley's post-swim interview was devoured by an overwhelmingly supportive public, other athletes risk their lives to be publicly out at the Olympics. After the Polish rower Katarzyna Zillmann won silver in the quadruple sculls she thanked her girlfriend, explaining that she wanted to use her platform to help the LGBTQ+ community in Poland, where there has been a rising wave of state-sponsored homophobia. Helping other young people struggling with their sexuality was enough "to completely forget about thousands of hate comments and disgusted faces", she said.

The Tongan swimmer Amini Fonua is openly gay and a national hero in a country were homosexuality is illegal and punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

"As much as I love to celebrate the progress, we still have a way to go," said Liz Ward, the director of programmes at Stonewall. "Tokyo has been like no other Olympics I've ever known and it's so exciting, but I'm sure that in some sports there are still athletes that are unable to be their true selves and celebrate this."

Nicola Adams, who made history as boxing's first female gold medal-winner at London 2012, said the Tokyo Games has represented the LGBTQ+ community like never before. "That's a win in itself," she said. "These athletes have not only had the courage to compete for their countries but to also come out and share their personal stories – it's incredibly heroic of them and a great turning point."

Remains in Pyrenees are found to be missing British hiker

Robyn Vinter and agencies

Tributes have been paid to British hiker Esther Dingley after tests on human remains found in the Pyrenees confirmed that she had died.

Dingley, 37, had been walking solo near the Spanish and French border and was last seen on 22 November.

Her family initially held out hope that the experienced hiker would be found alive, but the initial search was stopped by bad weather and later searches found no trace of her. DNA testing on a skull found by a mountain runner last week, near where the personal trainer went missing, confirmed yesterday it was her.

In a statement, her family said the news was "devastating beyond words".

Her partner, Daniel Colegate, and her mother, Ria Bryant, said: "We have all known for many months that the chance we would get to hug our beloved Esther again, to feel her warm hand in ours, to see her beautiful smile and to watch the room light up again whenever she arrived was tiny, but with this confirmation that small hope has now faded."

▲ *Esther Dingley went missing last year while hiking alone in mountains*

They expressed gratitude to police teams in France and Spain, the British consulate and the charity LBT Global, which provides overseas crisis support.

Colegate previously described Dingley, a former junior rower for Great Britain, as "the best person I've ever met".

The pair met at Oxford University and lived in County Durham before going travelling in 2014.

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UK denies deployment of naval strike group is provocation of China

Dan Sabbagh
Helen Davidson *Taipei*

Britain yesterday said it had no plans to stage a naval confrontation with Beijing in the South China Sea, hours after the Chinese state media warned against an expected provocation.

A British carrier strike group, led by the Royal Navy aircraft carrier Queen Elizabeth, had been expected to carry out a more assertive deployment, but will instead take the most direct route across the contested waters from Singapore to the Philippine Sea.

British defence sources said the aircraft carrier would sail "tens of miles away" from the disputed Spratly and Paracel Islands, which are claimed by China. The Queen Elizabeth and allied ships entered the South China Sea this week, and are expected to leave by the end of today.

It is understood there is no intention to repeat the decision to sail the HMS Defender through disputed waters off the coast of Crimea in June, which led to the warship being followed by the Russian coastguard and buzzed by low flying planes.

Instead the carrier strike group will go on to take part in exercises with the United States, Australia, France, and Japan in the Philippine Sea, in a multinational show of strength aimed at Beijing.

One source said those exercises could include British warships visiting Japan's Senkaku Islands, which are also claimed by China, in the East China Sea, as part of an effort by Britain to bolster its post-Brexit relationship with Tokyo.

Expectation had built up that Britain could sail closer to disputed islands in the South China Sea, following the Black Sea episode and a history of tensions between the two countries over the issue.

In August 2018, another British warship, HMS Albion was ordered by the then defence secretary Gavin Williamson to sail close to the Paracel Islands, prompting a diplomatic row. Talk that HMS Queen Elizabeth might go to the South China Sea in 2019 led to China cancelling a round of trade talks with Britain.

A spokesman for China's Ministry of National Defence, Wu Qian, said it respected freedom of navigation but firmly opposed any naval activities that aimed to provoke controversy. "The action should never try to destabilise regional peace, including the latest military collaboration between the UK and Japan," he said. "The Chinese navy will take any necessary actions to counter-measure such behaviour."

The passage marks the first time Britain's new strike group, led by HMS Queen Elizabeth and including two destroyers and two frigates, has been deployed to the Asia-Pacific region.

Later in the year, Britain will also permanently assign two warships to the region. "We are not going to go to the other side of the world to be provocative. We will be confident, but not confrontational," the defence secretary, Ben Wallace, told parliament in April.

Some UK allies have questioned whether Britain can have an effective presence in the region. On Tuesday the US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin, said Britain could "be more helpful in other parts of the world".

Additional reporting **Jason Lu**

◀ *The HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier at Limassol Port, Cyprus, this month. It is now in the South China Sea. China said it would 'take necessary actions'*

PHOTOGRAPH: ROY ISSA/AFP/GETTY

▼ *In Surrey, youngsters from Myti youth club in Tadworth brave the blustery conditions to scale Box Hill*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX LENTATI/LNP

Warnings of floods as Storm Evert continues to lash its way east

PA Media

The Met Office has issued weather and flood warnings as Storm Evert moves eastwards across Britain with thunderstorms forecast for the weekend.

Yellow wind warnings are in place for coastal areas in south-east England and East Anglia, and thunderstorm warnings for a swathe of the country from Nottingham to Norwich and north as far as Hull.

The Met Office said it would be unsettled across England and Wales yesterday as Storm Evert moved eastwards, with strong winds across the south-east coast and "torrential thundery downpours".

It added: "There'll be further heavy downpours around on Saturday. The focus for the heaviest of these will be across central, eastern and southern England where there could be some thunderstorms. Another day where the weather will bring some locally tricky travelling conditions."

◀ *Waves crash over the breakwater in Newhaven, East Sussex, yesterday as high winds whipped up rough seas*
PHOTOGRAPH: PETER CRIPPS/ALAMY

▲ *Festivalgoers struggle to erect tents amid strong winds and lashing rain at Farmfest in Bruton, Somerset*
PHOTOGRAPH: JASON BRYANT/APEX

Storm Evert, which began on Thursday evening, produced gusts of wind close to 70mph across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The highest gust recorded so far was 69mph (111km/h) in St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly, the Met Office said.

The RNLI volunteer crew from St Mary's and Sennen Cove spent Thursday night helping to rescue people from yachts around the Isles of Scilly. Falmouth Coastguard operations centre reported a total of 22 incidents over the night.

Pete Hicks, coxswain of St Mary's RNLI lifeboat, said: "We were afloat from about 11pm until around 3am [Friday] morning, it was a very busy night for everyone involved ... The conditions were horrendous, at one point we had over 50 knots of wind with squally showers."

The Environment Agency has issued two flood alerts for the Eastern Yar in the Isle of Wight and the Somerset coast at Porlock Weir.

Mark Morgan-Hillam, 48, his wife, Leanne, 43, and children age four, 10 and 14 went camping just above Polzeath, Cornwall, on Thursday evening.

The deputy headteacher from Appley Bridge, Wigan, told the PA Media news agency: "The lack of warning was an issue. It was only at 9/10pm at night that we noticed the storm warning had changed to amber, and I think that caught a lot of people out on our site who went to bed thinking it would be windy, but not blow their tent over."

22

The number of incidents reported to Falmouth Coastguard overnight as Storm Evert battered Cornwall

Delia Smith's culinary secret ... she leaves the cooking to her husband

Nicola Slawson

For more than five decades, Delia Smith has taught several generations to cook countless recipes with her no-nonsense approach. But Britain's first superstar TV chef has now admitted she lets her husband do the cooking.

Smith, 80,rarely cooks at home, leaving the journalist Michael Wynn Jones, her husband of 50 years, to hover over the stove while she goes "to the end of the garden".

She told The Times that she did not criticise her husband's efforts "if he sticks to the recipe" - a fitting instruction from a woman who has sold more than 21 million cookbooks.

"It's a question of keeping out of the way, because if I'm in the kitchen, I can't help going and turning the heat down or stirring," she said.

When asked if any meddling would result in her husband yelling "get out of my kitchen", she replied: "That's Michael. That's why I go down to the end of the garden."

Smith, who spent her career bringing simple cooking into the homes of millions of Britons, once famously instructed people on the best way to boil an egg. Wynn-Jones, she says, does use her recipes when cooking for them both.

It is fair to say - perhaps in part due to her love of Norwich City football club - that Smith's life in general has moved away from cooking. She has not published any new cookbooks since 2009 and her last TV series was 11 years ago. Her website, Delia Online, remains popular.

Aside from home-cooked meals, Smith is now often found eating at Yellows Bar & Grill, her restaurant at Carrow Road, the home of Norwich City - which she and Wynn-Jones became majority shareholders of in 1997.

In the interview, she suggested the government's plans to tax sugar and salt in an effort to tackle obesity were "wrong" because both are "natural foods".

Smith added: "What I would whack the tax on is chocolate bars and, you know, crisps, salted peanuts, things that have too much salt.

"I don't think crisps and peanuts are the problem. I think the problem with salt and the problem with sugar is food that comes from a factory."

▲ *Delia Smith and husband Michael Wynn-Jones at a Norwich City event*

Stonehenge Campaigners win court victory over tunnel plan

PA Media

Campaigners have won a high court battle over the decision by the transport secretary, Grant Shapps, to approve a controversial road project including a tunnel near Stonehenge.

Save Stonehenge World Heritage Site challenged his decision to back the £1.7bn scheme to overhaul eight miles of the A303, including the two-mile tunnel. Approval was given in November last year, despite advice from Planning Inspectorate officials that it would cause "permanent, irreversible harm" to the Unesco world heritage site in Wiltshire.

Mr Justice Holgate found the decision was unlawful on two grounds. There was an "error of law" in the decision-making because there was no evidence of the impact on each individual asset at the historic site. And Shapps failed to consider alternative schemes, in accordance with the world heritage convention and common law.

"The relative merits of the alternative tunnel options ... were an obviously material consideration which [Schapps] was required to assess. It was irrational not to do so."

The government can appeal.

More historic sites at risk of losing Unesco status, ministers warned

Josh Halliday

UK cultural landmarks such as Stonehenge could be stripped of their coveted world heritage status unless the government curbs "ill-advised development" and protects historic sites for future generations, a Unesco chief has warned.

Dr Mechtild Rössler, the director of Unesco's World Heritage Centre, urged ministers to do everything they can to conserve the UK's treasures after Liverpool became only the third place in nearly 50 years to lose its revered status.

Rössler said developers should be made more aware of the international value of places such as Stonehenge before proposing potentially harmful projects. She said: "These are the most outstanding places we have on Earth. If we are not capable of protecting these, for me the question is what will be left on this planet?"

The intervention came before yesterday's high court ruling that the transport secretary, Grant Shapps, had acted unlawfully in granting permission for a two-mile tunnel to be built underneath Stonehenge.

However, the government has a chance to appeal against the ruling. if the project does eventually get the go-ahead the Wiltshire stone circle is expected to be placed on Unesco's "in danger" list - a precursor to being stripped of world heritage status - in another humiliating blow for Britain.

Rössler said the UK government "should take into account the beneficial provisions of the world heritage convention and do everything to protect this heritage for generations to come because we are not protecting this heritage for us today."

Heritage bodies have warned that the UK risks losing its reputation for conserving historic sites because projects such as the Stonehenge tunnel and Everton's new football stadium on Liverpool's historic waterfront have been allowed by the government in recent years to go ahead.

Rössler said she was surprised that Shapps had approved the £1.7bn Stonehenge tunnel despite the government's planning inspectorate concluding it would cause "permanent, irreversible harm" to the site. Stonehenge is "one of the most emblematic sites we have on the world heritage list", she said, adding that it would have been much better if the government had discussed the development further with Unesco's world heritage bodies before granting approval in November.

She said the government must produce a heritage impact report by February "with a view of [Unesco] putting Stonehenge on the list of world heritage in danger".

The stone circle, which attracts nearly a million tourists a year, has been on the world heritage list since 1986. It would be the best-known cultural attraction to be delisted if such a step were taken, giving the UK the ignominious distinction of being the first country to have two historic sites removed from the list.

The UK's plethora of historic monuments, which range from prehistoric sites such as Stonehenge to medieval castles and Roman forts, contribute billions of pounds to the economy each year and draw in millions of visitors from around the world.

Rössler said the decision to strip Liverpool of its status was "a loss for all of us" but that the city's leaders had failed to address its concerns for years about the Liverpool Waters project by Peel Holdings, the major developer owned by the reclusive billionaire John Whittaker.

"The warning was in 2012," she said. "There was no feedback in terms of complying with the request from the world heritage committee to stop the situation which leads to the loss of outstanding universal value. That is the problem."

Asked whether Unesco was concerned about the UK's management of its historic landmarks, she said: "The UK has all the policies in place, you have the institutional bodies ... and management plans for most of the sites in place. However, I have to say sometimes there is ill-advised development."

Rössler called for more financial support for the UK's world heritage sites, which on average receive only about £1m a year from central government. Unlike other countries, the UK has not established a national foundation to fund the sites.

A government spokesperson said: "The UK is a world leader in cultural heritage protection with 33 Unesco world heritage status sites on the list, including the slate landscape of north-west Wales which was added this week ... Protecting the heritage and archaeology of the Stonehenge site is a priority and we will continue to work closely with Unesco ... and the heritage and scientific community on next steps."

> *'Policies are in place ... but sometimes there is ill-advised development'*
>
> **Dr Mechtild Rössler**
> *Unesco director*

◀ *Critics have compared the twisted, bronze-coloured roof of the W hotel in Edinburgh's St James Quarter to the poo emoji*
PHOTOGRAPH: IAIN MASTERTON/ ALAMY

▲ *Plans to build a two-mile road tunnel near Stonehenge would cause irreversible damage to the site, Unesco has warned*
PHOTOGRAPH: MATT CARDY/GETTY IMAGES

Under threat

Fears for UK landmarks from Lake District to Westminster

While the UK does not currently have any cultural treasures on the Unesco "world heritage in danger" list, concerns have been raised about developments at Stonehenge and other famous landmarks.

1 Stonehenge
Unesco has confirmed Stonehenge would be added to the list and could be stripped of its world heritage status if a £2.4bn road tunnel near the stones is permitted to go ahead. It said that despite efforts to soften the impact, the proposed two-mile tunnel would irreversibly damage an area of outstanding universal value. Archaeologists, local campaigners and even the nation's druids launched a court battle to block the development, arguing that the approval of the proposal did not factor in the potential damage to the prehistoric sites surrounding Stonehenge.

The scheme, which was rubber-stamped by the government in November, threatens to destroy up to half a million artefacts, according to Prof Mike Pearson, archaeologist and member of the independent A303 Scientific Committee.

2 Edinburgh
Branded "the Golden Turd" by critics, a new five-star hotel in the sought-after St James Quarter of the Scottish capital has sparked outrage among architectural heritage campaigners. Due to open next year, the retail-hotel-housing behemoth – situated in the world heritage site – will boast 214 guest rooms and an Extreme Wow Suite, the W hotel's name for its presidential suite.

Jutting out into the skyline, its spiralling bronze-coloured structure has been compared to the poo emoji, worthy of its own mock Twitter account (and the worst building of the year award 2020). It received planning permission in 2015, in a split decision by councillors against the recommendation of the city's planners.

▲ *Westminster's status was thrown into doubt in 2013 after plans for an £800m skyscraper were approved*
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE PARSONS/PA WIRE

3 Cornwall and Devon
Plans to build a £10m rum distillery have stoked fears that Cornwall and west Devon may lose its heritage status. The distillery would harness excess energy from the UK's first geothermal plant built nearby to "tropically" mature rum in four pods that mimic Caribbean temperatures. Much of the landscape in Cornwall and Devon was transformed during the Industrial Revolution to make way for underground mines, engine houses, ports and harbours.

Historic England, the government's adviser on environmental heritage, said it had "strong concerns" about the proposal to create the sustainably run facility, with a visitor centre and bar, at United Downs.

The plans were challenged by the current leaseholder, Purple Cornwall, which organises stock car racing at United Downs Raceway. "We don't oppose these sorts of projects in Cornwall, but we want to protect our raceway. It's one of the few things young people can do," Crispen Rosevear, who manages track events, told the i. Residents took part in a 10-hour run to raise funds for the cause.

4 Westminster
In 2013, the capital's international heritage status was cast into doubt after planning permission was granted for an £800m skyscraper, Elizabeth House, to be built next to Waterloo station. Westminster city council – along with English Heritage – said the 29-storey office block would blight the site by obscuring views of landmarks including Westminster Palace and Big Ben.

"The proposed building is ill-conceived, overly large, and of modest architectural quality. I am far from alone in holding this opinion," wrote Robert Davis, Westminster's deputy leader, in a letter to Lambeth council, which had approved the development alongside the Greater London authority and the government's communities department.

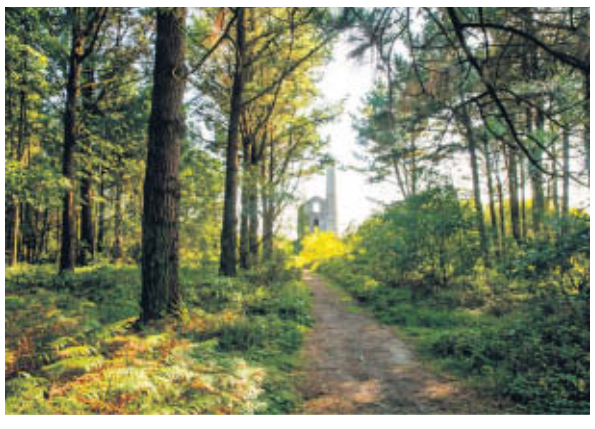
The project went ahead, and Unesco decided not to put Westminster on its endangered list. The cultural watchdog pinpointed weaknesses in UK planning laws and called for legal protection for heritage sites to be strengthened.

5 Lake District
World Heritage Watch (WHW), a non-profit organisation that advises Unesco, sounded the alarm in 2018 that the Lake District's world heritage status was being threatened by 4x4 vehicles. It criticised the damage, particularly at Tilberthwaite, near Coniston, caused by off-road driving.

Campaigners have faced a long battle with the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA), which last year went to the high court after the LDNPA granted 4x4s and motorbikes access to two old farm and quarry tracks, known as green lanes, in Langdale and near Coniston. They say cars and motorbikes have eroded tracks, churning up soil and spoiling the area for visitors and farmers.

"In its bid for world heritage status the LDNPA used the very attributes of outstanding universal value that are now being damaged," said Stephan Dömpke, the chair of WHW. The body asked Unesco to make the Lake District's heritage status dependent on the LDNPA acting to prevent further damage caused by the vehicles.

Georgina Quach



◀ *Plans for a rum distillery and visitor centre powered by geothermal energy in Cornwall's historic mining region have met local opposition*
PHOTOGRAPH: JONNY WEEKS/ THE GUARDIAN

◀ *Vehicles above Coniston in the Lake District. World Heritage Watch said the national park's status was threatened by recreational off-road driving*
PHOTOGRAPH: ASHLEY COOPER/ ALAMY

Suspended jail term for man who assaulted Chris Whitty

PA Media

A former estate agent left Prof Chris Whitty "humiliated" after he put him in a headlock when England's chief medical officer declined to take a photo with him.

Lewis Hughes, 24, of Romford, Essex, put his future at risk with "10 seconds of madness" when he accosted Whitty in St James's Park in central London last month, Westminster magistrates' court heard. Footage of the incident, lasting around 20 seconds, was shared on social media.

Hughes, who was sacked following the incident on 27 June, admitted a charge of assault by beating and was handed a suspended sentence.

Senior district judge Paul Goldspring told Hughes Whitty "goes about his very difficult job without the expectation of yobs like you accosting him, assaulting him".

Hughes was given an eight-week prison sentence, suspended for two years and was ordered to pay a total of £307 in fines and compensation.

Goldspring said he believed Whitty would be donating the £100 compensation to charity, saying it would be the "mark of the man". He told Hughes: "Let it be a lesson to you, yobbish behaviour and drinking alcohol has consequences."

▲ *Lewis Hughes leaves Westminster magistrates court yesterday*

Laurie-Anne Power, defending, said Hughes was "remorseful" and had paid a "heavy price" through losing his job as an estate agent.

Jonathan Chew, 24, from Chelmsford, Essex, pleaded not guilty to the same charge. Chew also denied wilfully obstructing police constable Steven Ozden on the same day.

He was bailed to be tried at the same court on 23 November.

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Sturgeon vows to act after drug deaths hit new record in Scotland

Severin Carrell
Scotland editor

Nicola Sturgeon has said her government is determined to tackle Scotland's problem with drugs deaths, after it emerged that a record 1,339 people were killed last year.

National Records of Scotland, the statistics agency, said the figure was a 5% increase on the drugs-related fatalities registered in 2019, and the seventh annual increase in a row.

It said Scotland continues to have Europe's highest per capita rate of drugs deaths, at 25.2 fatalities per 100,000, more than three and a half times higher than the rest of the UK. People in Scotland's poorest areas were 18 times more likely to die from drugs than those in the wealthiest.

The first minister said this record was "shameful", and pledged concerted action. Opposition leaders said the Scottish National party government had to accept a large share of the blame: it had been in government for 14 years and had previously cut funding for drugs services.

Sturgeon, who was Scotland's health secretary from 2007 to 2012, tweeted: "The number of lives lost to drugs is unacceptable, each one a human tragedy. @scotgov does not shirk the responsibility and we are determined to make changes that will save lives. Today, my thoughts are with every family who has lost a loved one - I am sorry for the loss you have suffered.

"However, I know [that] what is required isn't words, but action to prevent people dying, and that is what we are determined to deliver."

The NRS data shows that annual drugs deaths had begun stabilising between 2009 and 2013, but had climbed every year since. In 2013, the year before the independence referendum, the total was 527, yet rose by 137% over the following seven years.

Angela Constance, Scotland's drugs policy minister, who was appointed last year after her predecessor was sacked, said these deaths were "heart-breaking".

She said the Scottish government was putting an extra £250m into tackling the crisis over the next five years. That included £100m on residential rehabilitation services, £18m on outreach services, and £13.5m for alcohol and drugs partnerships.

The NRS said the number of drugs deaths last year was 4.5 times the level recorded in 2000, with men 2.7 times more likely to die than women. Many died from taking a cocktail of drugs: more than one substance was found in the bodies of 93% of those who had died.

The average age of drugs-related fatalities had risen from 32 to 43 over the past 20 years, implying that many who died had been addicted for years. Almost two-thirds of deaths last year were of people aged 35-54.

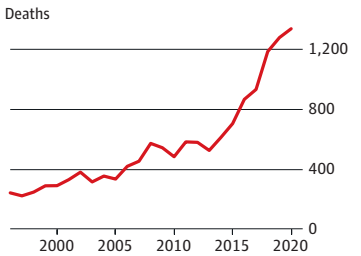
Dundee had the most drugs deaths per capita, at 43.1 per 100,000 people, across the five-year period from 2016 to 2020, followed by Glasgow at 39.8 and Inverclyde at 36.7.

While politicians put heavy emphasis on the Home Office refusal to approve safe injecting rooms for heroin addicts, or to consider decriminalisation of drugs, campaigners believe that multi-generational poverty, the normalisation of drug misuse and childhood trauma are the root causes of Scotland's drugs crisis.

Dave Liddell, chief executive of the Scottish Drugs Forum, said only 35-40% of Scottish addicts were in treatment; in the rest of the UK it was nearly double that. "For many people in desperate need, treatment, in too many parts of Scotland, is neither accessible nor acceptable. That has to change," he said.

Dr Rebecca Lawrence, chair of the addictions faculty at the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland, said: "Rehabilitation should always be there at the right time, for the right individuals ... fully resourced community services with rapid access for all patients, must be provided."

There were 1,339 drug-related deaths registered in Scotland in 2020 - the most since records began



Source: National records of Scotland

Milking it

Race to create first lab-grown real dairy product

Rachel Hall

For decades, people on plant-based diets were restricted to soya-based options to recreate dairy, until veganism went mainstream and palate-pleasing almond, coconut and oat-based alternatives emerged.

Last week, Swedish scientists launched a potato milk, equally lauded for its sustainability credentials and criticised for deriving from a humdrum carbohydrate. The holy grail now – according to researchers – is a genuine dairy milk made in a lab.

A growing number of startups from Silicon Valley to Singapore are rapidly joining the race to create the first imitation cow's milk, based on artificially reproducing the proteins in curds (casein) and whey, that is suitable for mass market consumption.

Scientists say it will recreate dairy's authentic mouthfeel and temperature resistance, and constitute the perfect texture for vegan cheese, capable of melting just like the real thing.

The quest is big business, with the dairy alternatives market among the fastest growing of all packaged foods, and worth £2.5bn in western Europe in 2020-21, according to new figures from Euromonitor. In the UK, the market has grown by 69% over the past five years, with non-soya-based milks increasing by 129%.

▲ *Dairy heifers in Cumbria. Startups around the world are trying to recreate dairy's mouthfeel*
PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN EVESON/ALAMY LIVE NEWS

The barrier, according to Marité Cárdenas, a researcher at Malmö University working on casein protein, is that mimicking the proteins found in cow's milk to create lab-grown dairy is a "biotechnological challenge".

It is usually done by giving micro-organisms a genetic code that enables them to produce real milk proteins through a precision fermentation process – but this is difficult to do on the large scale required for manufacturing.

Mainstream consumers are also more likely to adopt plant-based products if they are as tasty as the real thing, said Mike Leonard, chief technology officer at Motif FoodWorks, which is working with several universities to develop better plant-based foods: "Most of our current options just don't cut it in terms of an eating experience."

Perfect Day found whey and casein were key

The only firm to have brought protein fermentation-based products to market so far is Perfect Day, a Silicon Valley-based startup. It developed the first whey protein from cow's milk, and sells its products in 5,000 stores in the US.

Its chief executive Ryan Pandya said his company was born out of a desire to figure out "what makes milk, milk".

He and his co-founders discovered that whey and casein were the secret: "These complex molecules are perfectly structured to deliver dairy's unique taste and texture. It's ideal for providing a rich, creamy, smooth, and indulgent eating experience and excels in product applications requiring solubility, gelation, water-binding, foaming, heat stability, and emulsification." The problem is that the price remains prohibitively high, at about £8 for a 550ml tub of Perfect Day ice-cream.

This is a focus for another startup, New Culture, which is developing mozzarella that melts perfectly for pizza using fermented protein-based milk. Inja Radman, a co-founder, said the firm had progressed enormously over the past two years in technological terms, but scaling this up to commercial manufacturing levels remained a challenge due to the slow process of running trials.

But she predicted that in the future, as the technology develops and governments shift subsidies away from industrial farming, companies like hers would be a cheaper option.

This is likely to be speeded up by the entry of big consumer companies such as Nestlé and Danone, which are buying lab-grown dairy startups, as well as investment banks "pouring money" into the industry, said Euromonitor's Maria Mascaraque. But Thomas Sanders, emeritus professor of nutrition at King's College London, warned any dairy alternatives must seek to recreate the nutritional value of cow's milk by adding in B12, riboflavin, calcium. "It doesn't really matter what adults put in their coffee but I would have concerns about giving [some plant-based] milks to young children," he said.

Ucas: record numbers of students will get first choice of university

Richard Adams
Education editor

Record numbers of UK students are to be accepted by their first choice of university this year despite a surge in applications and uncertainty over A-level grades, according to the head of the national admissions services, Ucas.

Clare Marchant, the chief executive of Ucas, said she did not expect this year's admissions process to be derailed by a "tsunami of appeals" over teacher-assessed grades (Tags), awarded in place of formal exams, because of the high numbers of applicants happy to get their first choice.

"If we have record numbers, 80%-plus, get their first place, you know it's going to be a small cohort that will go into appeals territory," Marchant told a seminar hosted by the Higher Education Policy Institute, before the publication of A-level results on 10 August.

Marchant sought to reassure those who did not gain their first choice, saying there would be a "boundless choice" of alternatives, with places on 30,000 courses available through Ucas's clearing process, which takes place after results are published.

"Our advice to students is very much going to be: we'd probably expect record numbers to get their first choice, which is great, but if you don't get your first choice, you look at your insurance, look at your other choices, and look at what sort of options are available to you in clearing," Marchant said.

She conceded there would be "pockets" of shortages of places in some selective universities, saying: "Some institutions will have been very ambitious in their offer-making, some will have held back because Tags are an unknown quantity. But I think we'll see a really fair spread in clearing this year."

Ucas has said record numbers of UK school leavers and sixth formers are applying for higher education places starting in the autumn.

More than 310,000 18-year-olds had applied by its deadline at the end of June, 10% more than the previous record of 281,000 in 2020. More than 50% of school leavers in Northern Ireland, and 44% in England, have applied for university places.

Marchant said that while application rates among students from disadvantaged backgrounds were increasing, those from more affluent backgrounds were rising more quickly, potentially widening the participation gap between the social classes. "The gap between the most advantaged students and the most disadvantaged students has been reducing over a number of years [so] we want to keep an eye on that."

Israel blames Iran for attack on tanker that killed Briton

Martin Chulov
Dan Sabbagh

Israel has blamed Iran for a suspected drone attack on a tanker in the Arabian Sea that killed two crew, including a British national, and has vowed a harsh response.

The ship, Mercer Street, was hit off the coast of Oman late on Thursday in what is thought to have been a swarm attack involving multiple drones.

The Israeli foreign minister, Yair Lapid, said he had contacted Dominic Raab, his UK counterpart. "Iran is not just an Israeli problem, but an exporter of terrorism, destruction and instability that harms us all," he said. "The world must not be silent in the face of Iranian terrorism that also harms freedom of shipping."

Though Mercer Street is Japanese-owned, it is managed by Israeli-owned Zodiac Maritime, part of the billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group, which initially described the incident as piracy. The other victim was Romanian, the firm said.

The piracy claim was rejected by regional officials who said the strike appeared to fit a pattern of previous attacks linked to Iran and Israel carried out in a shadow war between the two foes. Drones had been increasingly used by both sides this year.

> ***'Iran is not just an Israeli problem but an exporter of terrorism'***
>
> **Yair Lapid**
> *Israeli foreign minister*

A UK government spokesperson said: "Our thoughts are with the loved ones of a British national who has died following an incident on a tanker off the coast of Oman."

The British maritime security firm Ambrey said the attack had killed one of its team members, along with a member of the tanker's crew.

"It is with deep regret that I can confirm that an Ambrey team member has tragically been killed in a security incident," the company said.

"We can confirm a member of the crew was also killed ... Our thoughts are with the family and friends of those involved at this incredibly sad time."

MPs cash in on sporting freebies courtesy of drinks and betting firms

Rowena Mason
Deputy political editor

MPs enjoyed a bonanza of free tickets worth more than £100,000 this summer from gambling, drinks and sporting companies, as they took advantage of the government's Covid pilot scheme for large events.

Cabinet ministers Ben Wallace and Brandon Lewis, plus opposition leader Keir Starmer were among those who benefited from free tickets declared during the month of July, with more than 35 MPs in total accepting hospitality as they took part in the research project.

With large events banned for more than a year due to Covid rules, MPs appeared keen to make use of the pilot scheme as they took up invitations to the Euro 2020 football, motor racing at Silverstone and Goodwood, tennis at Wimbledon, cricket at Lord's, the Rugby League Challenge Cup and the Brit Awards.

Many fans with long-held tickets to Euro 2020 matches had them cancelled due to Covid restrictions, but 19 MPs managed to get their hands on them for free, courtesy of gambling companies and the Premier League.

Wallace, the defence secretary, was one of 10 MPs who took advantage of corporate hospitality worth £3,547 from Gibraltar-based Entain, the owner of Ladbrokes, to watch England play at Wembley.

Jonathan Reynolds, the shadow work and pensions secretary, took the same £3,547 package, while Starmer's parliamentary private secretary, Sharon Hodgson, accepted hospitality of the same value from the Betting and Gaming Council. Nigel Adams, a Foreign Office minister, also took free tickets worth £1,999.14 from the industry body to attend a Euro 2020 England match.

The gambling industry hosted the MPs at a time when the government is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Gambling Act to consider further restrictions on their advertising.

Matt Zarb-Cousin, the director of the Clean Up Gambling campaign, said the industry appeared to have used an international tournament as "an excuse for wining and dining MPs" ahead of the review. The group also warned that legislators "should think twice about accepting hospitality from a sector that derives the majority of its profits from people experiencing harm."

Starmer's tickets to Euro 2020 football worth £1,628 came courtesy of the Premier League. Jonathan Ashworth, the shadow health secretary, was also gifted tickets to the semi-final worth £1,040.

Lewis, the Northern Ireland secretary, enjoyed a day at the England v Pakistan cricket at Lord's donated by Bestway Holdings worth £954 and a ticket to the Grand Prix worth £1,264 from Motorsports UK. Mark Spencer, the chief whip, also took a ticket to the Grand Prix worth £1,516.80. Several MPs were given Euro hospitality by Heineken, the drinks company.

The MPs were among thousands of people who were able to take advantage of the government's scientific trials on large-scale public events, with each one setting different criteria for the selection of participants.

Participants were expected to take rapid lateral flow tests before attending, while the gold-standard PCR testing before and after an event was voluntary. The government said early findings from Phase I trials found "no substantial outbreaks". The results covering the Euro 2020 matches and others have not yet been released.

Overall, betting and gambling companies taking MPs to the Euro 2020 football at Wembley were the biggest providers of free tickets. About 10 Tory and Labour MPs have previously declared tickets from gambling companies to England football matches, but the MPs' latest register of interests showed a further nine took hospitality. Five MPs were given free tickets to Wimbledon, five to motorsports events and four enjoyed hospitality at the golf.

A spokesperson for the Betting and Gaming Council said: "The regulated betting and gaming industry supports a range of sports, including football, and this funding has proved vital during the pandemic. All hospitality is within the rules and fully declared."

The MPs have been contacted for comment. A spokesman for Lewis said: "Any reportable hospitality will be properly declared in the usual way."

▲ *Keir Starmer and wife Victoria at Wembley for the Euro 2020 final*

Summer vaccine festival Music and free food encourage uptake

Kevin Rawlinson

It certainly felt like a British music festival. A band was playing on the main stage, food vans dispensed trays, and across the field people filed in and out of a big tent. There was even standard festival weather: bright sunshine with the threat of rain and, inevitably, mud.

This was no Glasto though. It was the summer vaccine festival in east London, where people were being encouraged to walk in, get a Covid jab and enjoy free food and music.

Several of those who went to get their doses yesterday said they had just happened upon the festival as they passed Langdon Park in Tower Hamlets. They heard the music, smelled the food and decided to head in and get vaccinated.

"It's lovely," said Dhilshana Shiraj as she waited to receive her second dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. "I could get the jab and bring the kids along as well, so they could enjoy themselves."

Tower Hamlets council and Barts Health NHS Trust put on the outreach event, one of several they are running. "If the people won't come to the vaccine, then take the vaccine to them," said Tejal Patel, a senior pharmacist who was overseeing the operation.

They are motivated, in part, by relatively low rates of vaccine uptake in the borough. Patel said there were particular concerns about uptake among people of some minority ethnic backgrounds and religions, as well as younger people more generally.

▲ *The festival is attracting people with free live bands and food vans*

Local health officials had found it useful to work with temples and mosques and to run events such as the festival in their efforts to tackle the problem, she said, and their initiatives had reached 15,000 people in the area since they started up.

If the implicit threat of ongoing restrictions for those without a vaccine passport are a stick, then the summer vaccine festival is very much a carrot.

Shiraj was enthusiastic about the idea, suggesting that the sound of the music would draw people in the surrounding area to the park. She said she had found getting her first dose a nerve-wracking experience in what were more imposing and clinical surrounds. Having the

▼ *Dhilshana Shirai gets vaccinated at a festival aimed at younger people in Langdon Park, east London*

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAEME ROBERTSON/THE GUARDIAN

Roll up, roll up!
Jabs offered at circus

Pop-up vaccine centres are being set up at festivals, sporting events and even a circus in England this weekend, as the NHS bids to boost takeup among younger people.

The latest official data shows that 60% of 18-25 year olds have received at least one jab since all over-18s were invited to come forward for vaccination last month.

But ministers are concerned that demand among younger age groups appears to be levelling off, despite the threat of vaccine passports for venues such as nightclubs.

The Department of Health and Social Care believes perceived inconvenience may be one of the key factors deterring younger adults from taking up the offer of vaccination.

Members of the public visiting Circus Extreme in Halifax – or even just passing the circus big top – will be able to get vaccinated, as well as fans at Burnley FC and punters at Goodwood racecourse. Officials say they have been encouraged by the takeup of existing drop-in vaccination centres.

Heather Stewart

second jab during a visit to a mini-festival near her home was a very different experience. "I feel more relaxed if I have something to distract me," she said.

Some of those heading to the tent said they had an appointment for their jab, but were taking the opportunity to get it more quickly. Ian O'Shaughnessy was not one of them. He had held off for fear of being used as a guinea pig.

But he saw the tent and heard the music as he was passing on his bike. "It encouraged me," he said, adding that he may not have taken the step had he been required to book an appointment at a vaccination centre.

Having had his first dose though, he said he would definitely return for his second dose in due course.

One vaccinator who has worked on outreach programmes in the past explained that such events are acutely vulnerable to the weather turning. So it proved on Friday as spells of sunshine were interrupted by driving rain.

Officials, however, said they would be running the festival all weekend. They hope that as words gets around, hundreds of people will have been vaccinated by the time they pack up the main stage and tow away the food vans.

Victims
The real lives behind the daily figures

Sarah Marsh

Despite recent talk of falling coronavirus cases, the number of deaths from the virus have increased recently, hitting 131 on Tuesday – the highest since March. Behind those numbers are lives lost and grieving families urging people to get vaccinated and keep taking precautions.

Among those dealing with their grief is Paul Nuttall after the death of his 24-year-old son, Billy – affectionately called "sunbeam" for his ability to light up a room.

Billy, an Oxford history graduate who was doing a master's in politics at Manchester, had isolated – barely leaving the house – for 18 months and because of this he gained weight, reaching 190kg (30st). He went to fitness classes with his dad but before they could really make a difference he caught Covid and died on 26 July.

Tributes have poured in for the student, described by his teachers as the "heart and soul" of their classes, who was passionate about fighting inequality and wanted to launch a career developing policies to improve lives. Nuttall said his son was his "best friend" and he had received condolence messages from all over the world. Due to his young age he had not been called early for the vaccination, and his father said he was "waiting and waiting" for it.

His friend Emily credits Billy with saving her life after he supported her through a "hellish personal independence payments [PIP] appeal". "When the council struggled to source daily living care to help me live with my disabilities, Billy stepped in and he has spent the last two years being my primary carer," she said, adding that he spent his time fighting "unfairness" for others.

"I can't help but wonder whether he might have pulled through if he had had the chance to receive his first dose of a vaccine, but despite living in one of the early Delta variant hotspots, delays in surge vaccination of young people meant that he didn't have chance to get his first jab before falling ill."

Dani Coombs would have turned 26 on Thursday but never got to celebrate. Her family are fundraising to raise money for her fiance, who is now a single parent of three children.

▲ *Billy Nuttall fell ill while 'waiting and waiting' for his first jab. Left, former nurse Julie Lewis 'dedicated her life to others'*

Her aunt, Kelly Coombs, said her niece was not classed as vulnerable and so had not been given the vaccine early. However, she did have a condition that weakened her immune system. Urging all young people to get jabbed, she added that Dani's story showed that age did not make you invincible to the virus. "Young people don't see the importance of it," she said.

"Dani was a stay-at-home mother with three children aged seven, four and two. The youngest child had ADHD and autism, so she had her hands full … She was rushing around and not thinking of herself, as mums do. But if she had known she was vulnerable she would have gone and had the vaccine earlier," Kelly said.

For Julie Lewis, 66, Covid took hold quickly and after two weeks an ambulance was called. The former nurse died 48 hours later on 10 June, six days before her birthday.

"I don't think it has sunk in yet," her daughter Lucy said, adding that an inquiry into the pandemic needs to happen as soon as possible so lessons can be learned and no more lives lost. "My mum was everyone's mum – nobody was not welcome around our house. She was the warmest person, and would do anything for anyone. Her whole life was dedicated to looking after others, so much so that she put herself last."

Lucy has added Julie's name to a public memorial wall, which she said at the moment is not protected and could be taken down. She said having a space to remember loved ones "makes a difference" to show they are not just statistics.

"They were people's mums, dads, grandmothers and children," she said.

Continued *from page 1*

Companies may face legal action over 'no jab, no job' threats

listen to their concerns, be sensitive towards personal situations and wary of discrimination.

Shapps yesterday said companies might require staff to be vaccinated owing to the nature of their business or as a tool to combat vaccine hesitancy. He told Sky News: "We are not going to make that legislation that every adult has to be double vaccinated before they go back to the office, but yes it is a good idea and yes some companies will require it."

It came after the foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, said on Thursday it would be "smart" for firms to insist staff be fully vaccinated.

But Keir Starmer said while he could "see a case" for introducing domestic Covid passports that show test as well as vaccine results at mass events, he did not agree with barring people from employment based on vaccinations. "For day-to-day routine access to the office, access to health services or dentistry or even food, I don't agree," the Labour leader said.

The Tory MP, Will Wragg, told the Guardian firms should be encouraging staff to get vaccinated rather than threatening them, and ministers should "stop encouraging this kind of coercion, which will prove deeply damaging to the fabric of society".

Concerns were also raised by Prof Stephen Reicher, who sits on the government's behavioural advice group known as SPI-B. He said making vaccines mandatory might be reasonable for those jobs with responsibilty for people's physical care – but for others, the negatives outweighed the benefits. It would disproportionately hit some groups, making jobs "more ethnically and socially exclusive" and lead to "anger and resistance", decreasing take-up among those who are already hesitant.

"These policies carry considerable risks," Reicher said, warning that if people were vaccinated against their will, it might create other forms of resistance to Covid measures. "It is far better and more effective to secure vaccination through engagement than through imposition."

Major unions also oppose firms insisting on vaccinations. Christina McAnea, Unison general secretary, said: "Only with widespread [vaccine] take-up can the virus be defeated. Achieving this requires persuasion and encouragement, not compulsion and coercion. Forcing people can only lead to needless confrontation at work and legal cases that could drag on for years."

Susan Harris, GMB legal director, said: "The way to increase take-up among workers is to educate and reassure them. Bullying workers into taking a vaccine they are unsure about is cruel, unfair and a recipe for disaster."

Unite said "no jab, no job" demands were "a disgraceful attempt to create a divisive narrative around workers and the vaccine" which ignored the fact workers were themselves demanding safe working conditions, engagement with safety reps, effective workplace testing, and proper pay for those who had to self-isolate.

Charlie Mullins, founder of Pimlico Plumbing, defended having already initiated a policy of insisting staff were fully-jabbed, saying he "believed in people's safety".

He insisted no workers were let go if they had a medical exemption, and cited the example of one employee who was reluctant but got the jab after being told by colleagues that not doing so was selfish.

"This is for new people coming on," he said, adding it had only hit a "very small minority of people". "It's about a life and death situation, so we feel very comfortable with it."

Masks 95% of adults still use one after 'Freedom Day' – survey

Natalie Grover
Science correspondent

Only one adult in 20 is no longer wearing a mask outdoors despite the relaxing of legal mask-wearing requirements this month, according to the official survey on Covid compliance since "Freedom Day".

The number of adults claiming they wore face coverings when outside their home remained at 95%, the same as the week before the mandate was lifted, figures showed. A high proportion of adults still felt that complying with Covid safety measures were either very important or important – such as wearing a face covering while shopping (89% this past week, 90% the week before) and socially distancing from those not in their household (88% this past week, 89% the week before).

The data, which encompasses the week between 21 and 25 July, comes from a survey of 3,784 adults from Great Britain by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). On 19 July, most restrictions in England were lifted, and mask-wearing ceased to be compulsory.

In addition, 69% of respondents said they saw everyone or almost everyone wearing face coverings while shopping in the previous seven days. Those saying they always or often maintained social distancing fell slightly, from 63% last week to 61%.

Despite the unlocking earlier this month, Boris Johnson said he expected masks to be worn in crowded places. They also remain mandatory on London transport and some services around the country. Hospitals, GPs and other health providers can also still require patients and visitors to wear masks, unless they are exempt. As of 19 July, social distancing rules have also ended.

Prof Stephen Reicher, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) subcommittee on behavioural science, said the latest ONS data confirmed previous polling: "It confirms the public understood the dangers and acted accordingly... In many ways what we are seeing is ... that people adhere despite and not because of the government."

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drinkaware.co.uk for the facts

Infection rate

One in 65 in England has virus, ONS figures suggest

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

It is "too early to say" whether a recent fall in recorded daily Covid cases reflects an actual drop in infection rates, experts have cautioned, as the latest government data presented a mixed picture.

According to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics, based on swabs collected from randomly selected households, an estimated one in 65 people in the community in England had the virus in the week ending 24 July, up from one in 75 the week before.

The survey suggests infection levels have also risen in Wales and Northern Ireland, although Scotland has experienced a decline.

Although the ONS team said the rise in infection levels in England was showing possible signs of slowing, the findings are nonetheless at odds with daily figures for Covid cases, which are based on people who have come forward for testing, often once symptoms have developed.

According to data from the government coronavirus dashboard, the number of daily cases by date reported plummeted from a peak of 50,955 in England on 17 July to 20,290 cases on 27 July, before rising to 27,524 on Thursday and falling to 26,241 yesterday.

Prof Paul Hunter, from the Norwich School of Medicine at the University of East Anglia, said: "The important point is that the ONS survey largely covers a period prior to the decline in cases, especially as this is a prevalence survey and people can be positive for some time after acquiring their infection.

"We will have to wait till next week before we can see any indication of the recent decline in cases. Generally changes in ONS data lag about two weeks behind daily cases data."

Duncan Cook, deputy director of the Covid-19 Infection Survey, suggested the disparity could also be down to the ONS's random testing approach, which picks up symptomatic and asymptomatic infections.

"These statistics do not reflect the recent dip in the daily testing figures in England, so it's important to understand the differences between the two sources. Our survey tests a large randomised sample of the population and provides an independent estimate of infections in the wider community ... Around 40% of positive tests in the ONS study are from people who show no symptoms of infection. This group is therefore less likely to show up in the daily figures."

However, Cook said it would take time before the trends became clear. "Together with our partners across the UK we will continue to investigate whether the current wave of infections is stabilising or not. On that it remains too early to say," he said.

The ONS team said that in the most recent week of data for England, the percentage of people testing positive for Covid increased in all regions except the east and the south-west, with infection levels only clearly rising among those aged over 50 and in children from aged two up to year 11 in schools (ages 15 to 16).

In Scotland, daily reported Covid cases have been falling since the start of the month. However, a decline in infection levels has only now appeared in the ONS data, with about one in 110 people in the community estimated to have had Covid in the most recent week, down from one in 80 the week before.

The figures come as the R value for England was estimated to be between 1.1 and 1.4. This number indicates the average number of people one infected person goes on to infect, and is a slight fall on last week's estimate of 1.2 to 1.4.

Experts have warned against reading too much into recent fluctuations in Covid datasets, suggesting there could be plenty of upticks and downturns to come.

26,241

The number of Covid-19 cases recorded in England yesterday, a decline on the previous day's figure

▼ Boris Johnson with Prince Charles at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Stafffordshire this week
PHOTOGRAPH: JACOB KING/PA WIRE

Mystery dip

Experts confused over 'unheard of' fall in UK cases

Jessica Elgot and Ian Sample

As England's "freedom day" dawned on 19 July, Boris Johnson was grumpily confined to his 16th-century grace-and-favour mansion, humiliated by the row over a bungled quarantine exemption. Cases were at more than 46,000 per day as all legal restrictions lifted and the international press called it Britain's great gamble.

Almost two weeks later, despite dire predictions, the UK's cases are falling. Downing Street does not quite dare to be jubilant but cases fell for seven consecutive days this week for the first time since November, though the past few days have seen a slight uptick. On Thursday, they were down by 40% on the week before.

There have been various attempts to explain it - the end of the "Euros effect", the school holidays, a decline in testing, or a final approach towards herd immunity - but nothing conclusive.

No one inside government will say they believe the worst is over - political and scientific advisers have been burned too many times. Even the prime minister has restrained himself, privately telling his aides: "We need to see if this is a bactrian camel or a dromedary - does it have one hump or two?"

"We are not hanging mission accomplished signs," one senior government aide said. "The uncertainty is pretty high. I think it would be foolish to pretend there wasn't a decent chance of another increase in cases."

Initially, as cases dipped, Whitehall sources said there was a feeling inside government that the data was an outlier - but after seven consecutive days, the trend can no longer be dismissed. "It's definitely a trend," said one. "Now we do need to see this sustained - this pandemic has been very unpredictable. We can't yet make a call about the course of this wave."

Friday is the point when Johnson may finally be able to say the country has turned a corner - or not. The cases still do not show the impact of the final stage 4 lifting.

"It's only then when we will really know for sure if we are seeing what we think we are seeing," one Whitehall source said. "And that will be a moment of relief if it does continue to drop after that because ultimately we want people to get on to their lives, to get off furlough, to reopen their businesses, we wanted them to do that and it means a lot to millions of people."

It is still unclear, even to the country's most esteemed modellers and epidemiologists, what exactly is going on. The sharpness of the peak suggests that the drop was not driven by immunity. Levels of immunity differ across the country, and that being the case, different regions would reach their peaks at different times before cases began to fall. The result would be cases plateauing and remaining stable for some weeks before eventually trending downwards.

A closer look at the data showed that cases had soared in young men during the Euros - the virus surged when they met up in homes and pubs to watch the semi-final and final - creating what one modeller called "a wave within a wave".

After the final at Wembley on 11 July the surge of new cases petered out. It wasn't sufficient on its own to produce the rapid drop in cases, but with immunity and broadly synchronous school closures, better weather, and potentially changes in whether people tested, there was enough to drive cases down. There are also some signs that the UK could be on the cusp of some form of herd immunity, even if the virus is likely to endure indefinitely.

Dr Meaghan Kall, an epidemiologist at Public Health England, suggested most age groups were getting "very close to herd immunity" because of antibody data.

Prof Tim Spector, who runs the Zoe Covid Symptom Study, which uses an app to get people to report when they are suffering coronavirus symptoms, said his figures suggest cases are running at about twice the level recorded on the government's dashboard. He said young people may be choosing not to get tested.

"It's dropped something like 30% in two days, which is pretty much unheard of in pandemics, and remember this is happening without restrictions, without lockdowns, without some sudden event," he told Sky News. "To me, it looks a bit fishy. It looks as if there's some other explanation for this."

None of the modelling published by Sage factored in the Euros and none anticipated the past week's sharp fall in cases. Modellers say that reflects the difficulty of predicting human behaviour.

And while the models made this clear, the vast uncertainty in what would happen this summer was somehow lost in the messaging. "A little more humility in the face of uncertainty would do everyone some good," said Mark Woolhouse, professor of infectious disease epidemiology at Edinburgh University.

In Whitehall, one of the theories is that there continues to be sustained public caution. "People are still generally wearing masks, keeping their distance," one adviser said. "That means you still see the effects of that caution. People know now what the behaviours are that will protect them and those appear to be still being used.

"The advice when we did step 4 was, you will have an exit wave whenever you open up, and how that plays out will be dependent on individual behaviour. We do think now that people know very well what to do and they do take reasonable precautions."

Over the summer, Johnson and other ministers will ramp up a sustained campaign to get 3 million more young people vaccinated, a key gap in the UK's coverage - though the take-up rate among young people is still a significant majority at 63%.

"I think one of the things we can say is that this wave conclusively proves how effective the vaccines are," one Whitehall source said. "Vaccines have prevented 60,000 deaths. That's extraordinary compared with where we were."

> ***'It's dropped about 30% in two days. It looks a bit fishy. There's some other explanation'***
>
> **Prof Tim Spector**
> *Zoe Symptom Study*

'Pingdemic'
Milk supplies run dry

Supermarkets face a "summer of disruption" to milk deliveries if widespread driver shortages amid the Covid pandemic are not addressed, according to the UK's biggest dairy supplier.

Arla, which supplies milk to about 2,400 stores each day, said it was unable to deliver to 600 shops last Saturday because of dwindling driver numbers.

Ash Amirahmadi, the managing director of Arla Foods UK, said existing staff shortages had been worsened by drivers forced to self-isolate after being notified, or "pinged" by the NHS test and trace app. "We need to make sure we don't have food shortages in the summer," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

The company is offering a £2,000 signing-on bonus for new drivers prepared to work weekends.

Amirahmadi called on the government to help clear a backlog of HGV driving tests and to add lorry drivers to the list of skilled worker visas, making it easier for EU workers to come to the UK.
Sarah Butler

▲ Milk suppliers are struggling to fulfil orders owing to driver shortages

Greenland loses enough ice in one day to cover Florida

Oliver Milman

Greenland's ice sheet is undergoing a surge in melting, with the amount disappearing in one day this week enough to cover the whole of Florida in 5cm (2in) of water, say researchers.

The burst of melting has reached deep into Greenland's vast icy interior, with data from the Danish government showing the ice sheet lost 8.5bn tonnes of surface mass on Tuesday alone. A further 8.4bn tonnes was lost on Thursday, the Polar Portal monitoring website reported.

Ice that melts away in Greenland flows as water into the ocean, where it adds to the ongoing increase in global sea level caused by human-induced climate change.

▲ *A meltwater canyon on the enormous Greenland ice sheet*

"It's a very high level of melting and it will probably change the face of Greenland because it will be a very strong driver for an acceleration of future melting, and therefore sea level rise," said Marco Tedesco, a glacier expert at Columbia University and adjunct scientist at Nasa.

Tedesco said a patch of high pressure was sucking and holding warmer air from further south "like a vacuum cleaner" and holding it over eastern Greenland, causing an all-time record temperature of 19.8C in the region on Wednesday. As seasonal snow melts away, darker core ice is exposed, which then melts and adds to sea level rise.

"We had these sort of atmospheric events in the past but they are now getting longer and more frequent," Tedesco said. "The snow is like a protective blanket so once that's gone you get locked into faster and faster melting, so who knows what will happen with the melting now."

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Waste firm Biffa fined £1.5m for exporting banned rubbish

Diane Taylor

The UK's largest waste company, Biffa, has been fined £1.5m for exporting filthy rubbish marked as wastepaper for recycling in India and Indonesia, in actions a judge called "reckless, bordering on deliberate".

Last week, the company was convicted of sending more than 1,000 tonnes of household waste to India and Indonesia, in breach of a ban on sending such waste to developing countries, after a two-week trial at Wood Green crown court .

Items packaged as wastepaper for export to Asia in the company's recycling facility in Edmonton, north London between 2018-19 included about 50,000 tins, 40,000 plastic bags, 25,000 clothing items, 3,000 nappies - and even a frying pan and a souvenir New York T-shirt.

The seven-figure fine is the second time in two years that the company has been fined for exporting household waste to a country not in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Investigators who discovered the rogue waste recorded "a strong putrid" smell and an "acidic aroma" after they held up 16 of the 25-tonne containers at Southampton, but 26 others had already left the port.

Biffa had said the prosecution brought by the Environment Agency had not been in the public interest in a statement issued after its earlier conviction.

However, after yesterday's sentence, it has now removed that statement from its website. Biffa said: "We take our responsibility for environmental stewardship very seriously and we accept the court's judgment. We no longer export wastepaper outside the OECD and will carefully review our processes to ensure they fully meet the implications of this judgment."

The judge, Shane Collery QC, told the court Biffa had shown no contrition. He found the company's previous comments about the Environment Agency "aggravating and unattractive".

The Environment Agency brought the prosecution against Biffa after uncovering rolling contracts to send vast amounts of waste to India and Indonesia.

Malcolm Lythgo, the head of waste regulation at the Environment Agency, said: "Biffa shipped banned materials to developing countries without having systems in place to prevent the offences. The Environment Agency will pursue those who blight the lives of overseas communities through illegal exports. This guilty verdict underlines that anyone producing or handling waste must only export material legally and safely for recycling."

During the most recent trial, jurors were told of Biffa's rolling monthly contracts worth a combined £39,500 to move the household waste to India or Indonesia. Biffa was convicted of four breaches of regulation 23 of the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007 between October 2018 and April 2019. In addition to the £1.5m fine, Biffa was ordered to pay costs of £153,828, and a proceeds of crime order of £38,388.

In September 2019, Biffa was fined £350,000, with costs of £240,000 and a proceeds of crime order of £9,912, for sending household waste, described as wastepaper, to China between May and June 2015.

Britain is a signatory to international agreements to ensure that household and hazardous waste produced here is not exported to developing nations.

The Biffa Group has an annual turnover of more than £1bn. About 100,000 tonnes of waste is exported from its Edmonton site each year.

3,000

The number of nappies found in the seized shipment that Biffa had packaged as wastepaper

1,000

Tonnes of household waste Biffa was convicted of sending to India and Indonesia in breach of a ban

Shapps plan to promote greener travel may save historic railway bridges

Sarah Marsh

Victorian railway bridges whose arches were due to be filled in with concrete in an act previously decried as "cultural vandalism" will be repurposed as part of a new scheme to encourage walking and cycling, the transport secretary has announced.

The government is halting the demolition of historic train lines in the hope that they can be remodelled as routes that encourage greener means of travel.

Grant Shapps announced the summer of cycling and walking strategy yesterday, which proposes to improve related infrastructure around the UK, supported by a £338m budget.

It comes after a Highways England (HE) decision to pour concrete in a railway arch provoked anger from local residents, with the government-owned firm being told it may have to reverse the move. In a letter to the council last year, HE had argued that no planning permission was needed because the infill project was part of a maintenance programme.

Eden district council told HE it had to apply for retrospective planning permission for the project, which involved pouring an estimated 1,000 tonnes of concrete and aggregate under the bridge at Great Musgrave, Cumbria. Engineers and restoration experts were angered at the filling in of the 159-year-old bridge, saying it could have been saved with just £5,000 of repairs.

The Labour peer Richard Faulkner, president of the Heritage Railway Association, described the operation as "cultural vandalism".

Campaigners warned of other sites at risk, including a bridge in Saltash, Cornwall, designed by the pioneering Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and two Victorian bridges in Dumfries and Galloway.

However, yesterday's announcement means all infilling and demolition plans – except at sites posing a risk to public safety – will be paused as the areas are considered for development as cycle routes.

Such a conversion has already taken place along a 13-mile stretch of disused railway line near Bristol, now popular with cyclists and tourists.

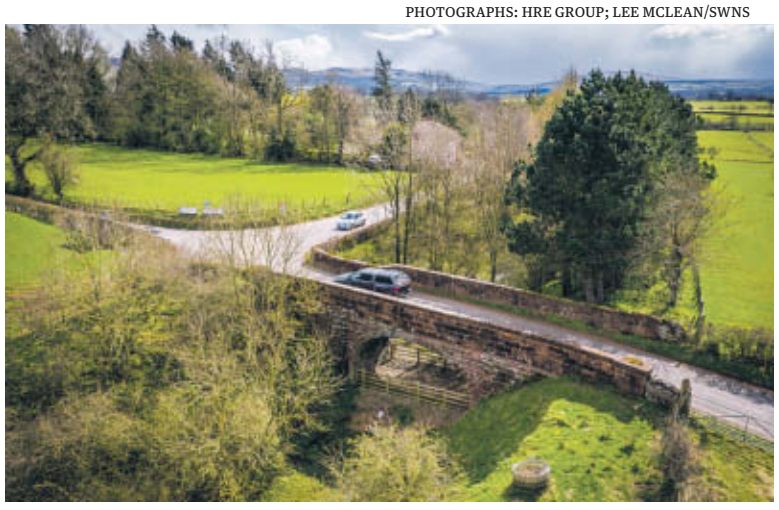
The strategy document says the government plans to "establish a formalised framework and engagement process for these structures, to understand in each case whether there is a realistic prospect of it being used for active travel or other transport purposes in future". Officials will then "ensure that the views of local stakeholders, including active travel groups and the local authority, are fully taken into account".

Shapps said: "Millions of us have found over the past year how cycling and walking are great ways to stay fit, ease congestion on the roads and do your bit for the environment …

"This £338m package marks the start of what promises to be a great summer of cycling and walking, enabling more people to make those sustainable travel choices that make our air cleaner and cities greener."

£338m

Budget to improve infrastructure related to the UK government's cycling and walking strategy



▼ *The 159-year-old bridge at Great Musgrave in Cumbria before (top) and after the infill operation*

PHOTOGRAPHS: HRE GROUP; LEE MCLEAN/SWNS

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Politics

Starmer presses over Afghan interpreters

Keir Starmer has urged the government to follow the lead of the US by speeding up efforts to resettle Afghan interpreters who supported British forces.

The Labour leader said the UK had a "moral duty" to help the interpreters, who may be in danger from the Taliban if they stay in Afghanistan. The first flight evacuating Afghan interpreters to the US arrived in Washington yesterday.

Starmer said: "I would like to see the government show the same initiative. The interpreters in Afghanistan have been hugely important to us ... we owe an obligation to those interpreters who have courageously helped us. We can't abandon them."

The Tory MP Tom Tugendhat, who chairs the foreign affairs committee, warned that the families of Afghans who worked alongside the British are also at risk of being killed by the Taliban if found.

He told the BBC: "In many of these cases there has been an individual who may have children over the age of 18, or who may be looking after a relative's children, and therefore not be able to qualify for his entire family to move, and of course no parent is going to abandon their child or, indeed, their adopted child. So we just need the bureaucracy to catch up." **PA Media**

Transport

Funds cut for councils that axed cycle lanes

Councils which "prematurely" removed new schemes to boost cycling have had their funding cut. The Department for Transport said that local authorities in Brighton, Leicestershire, Liverpool and Portsmouth are among those whose active travel funding has been halted.

Seven London boroughs are also affected, such as the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth, Ealing and Sutton.

Pop-up cycle lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods were installed across England following the coronavirus outbreak last year. But several councils reversed the schemes after vocal opposition from motorists.

The transport minister Chris Heaton-Harris wrote to councils: "For all the controversy ... there is growing evidence they command public support." **PA Media**

Broadcasting

Lord Sugar opposes Channel 4 privatisation

Alan Sugar has voiced his opposition to the potential privatisation of Channel 4. The Apprentice star said selling off the publicly owned broadcaster would be "a bad thing for the audiences and the sector in general".

The channel, which was founded in 1982, is owned by the government and receives its funding from advertising. A consultation is looking at the economic, social and cultural costs and benefits of putting it into private hands. Potential investors are likely to include big American companies.

Lord Sugar tweeted: "I am not in favour of the privatisation. I believe it would be a bad thing for the audiences and the sector in general. C4 generates £1bn to the UK economy, and privatisation would put this at real risk." **PA Media**

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Loom lines

Push for rediscovery of works by 'the mill girl poetess'

Alison Flood

▼ *Ethel Carnie Holdsworth whose now forgotten novels outsold the works of HG Wells in her heyday*
PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF HELEN BROWN

Ethel Carnie Holdsworth wrote in 1914 that "literature up till now has been lopsided, dealing with life only from the standpoint of one class". Now the Lancashire mill worker and author, a forgotten name who is believed to be the first working-class woman in Britain to publish a novel, and who in her heyday outsold HG Wells, is to be celebrated with an alternative blue plaque and a return to print.

Born in Oswaldtwistle in Lancashire in 1886, she began working in a textile factory at the age of 11. She also wrote poetry, saying that the rhythm of the looms helped her compose her lines.

Nicknamed the "Lancashire mill girl poetess" by the local paper, she came to the attention of the journalist Robert Blatchford, who gave her a job on his magazine, the Woman Worker. Holdsworth published her first novel, Miss Nobody, in 1913 and went on to write a further nine. She also set up the anti-fascist journal the Clear Light, and helped other working-class women learn to read and write. She stopped writing novels in 1946, "worn out" by the process, according to her daughter.

Although one of her books, Helen of Four Gates, was a hit in the UK and in the US, outselling Wells two-fold and adapted into a silent movie in 1920, her name has largely faded today. But now a group of academics and creatives are setting out to reclaim it.

Pendle Radicals, a research and creative project led by Mid Pennine Arts, is working with the guerrilla art collective Rosie's Plaques to unveil an alternative blue plaque to her in Nelson in early September. The academic Dr Nicola Wilson, meanwhile, is working to republish her fiction, with her long-lost novel The House That Jill Built due out next year, the latest in a series of reissues. Pendle Radicals has also created a new podcast series about the author, and placed some of her poems in the Poetry Archive.

"She's as important as Robert Tressell, and he's still widely celebrated amongst leftwing readers. Ethel is from a humbler background," said Wilson. "She wrote more, for years, and she really tried to address a wide audience. Her books are so powerful still, and relevant."

The House That Jill Built, published in 1924, is believed to be the first novel to focus on women escaping domestic violence. Helen of Four Gates (1917) is a dark gothic romance set in the Lancashire hills. Her 1913 novel Miss Nobody follows the fortunes of Carrie Brown, a "scullery drudge" turned oyster shop owner from Ardwick. And her 1925 novel This Slavery, which Wilson calls her most radical, follows sisters and mill girls Hester and Rachel Martin, who are left unemployed after a fire at the mill.

> ***'She tried to address a wide audience. Her books are powerful still, and relevant'***
>
> **Dr Nicola Wilson**
> *Academic*

"She writes in popular genres – romance, murder mystery, detective stories – and she throws in feminism and socialist politics. She's really unusual, so radical and still very relevant. She's quite satirical – I think of people like Jonathan Coe when I read her," said Wilson. "She was partly forgotten because she didn't write for the last 30-odd years of her life, so by the end of her life [in 1962] she wasn't well known. Also she writes about ordinary people and she wasn't particularly highbrow."

Anti-war and anti-conscription before the first world war, Carnie Holdsworth was on the fringes of various socialist and Marxist groups, a member of various parties at different times, and had therefore fallen out of much feminist history, according to Wilson. "And she didn't have an 'influential' husband," she added.

She was married to the poet Alfred Holdsworth. They had two daughters and ran the Clear Light from their home near Hebden Bridge in the 1920s, with funds from her books, until it became unviable. "They separated – possibly domestic violence involved as Ethel writes about this very powerfully in poetry and her books," said Wilson.

Janet Swan of Pendle Radicals said the author was a much needed inspirational figure. "She has so much faith in human beings and that is what we need at the moment … Her books are filled with the message that we really do need to reconnect and realise that without the love and friendship and support of other human beings, we can't survive. It's a socialist message."

A spokesperson from Rosie's Plaques, which is working to counteract the fact that of the 4,500 heritage plaques in Britain, less than 12% celebrate women, said: "Ethel was remarkable as a writer, a woman and an activist. It's an outrage her name is not celebrated and known more widely."

Review

Breathtaking joy of Proms returns at last

First Night of the Proms
Royal Albert Hall
★★★★☆

The first Prom to welcome an audience back into the Royal Albert Hall began with a work of low-key celebration, Vaughan Williams's Serenade to Music. As its last chord died away, there was a collective silence, the kind that's conjured when hundreds of people hold their breath. This kind of delicious communal moment is what was missing last summer, when the Proms were performed with no audience in the hall.

Things aren't quite back to normal yet. This season runs for six weeks, not eight. To make more room for distanced orchestral players, the stage has been expanded. And although seats are being sold with no social distancing, the arena can't have held more than 150 prommers standing, and there were plenty of empty seats. But the audience was big enough to create a buzz. As the conductor Dalia Stasevska greeted the audience with a delighted wave, the mood was jubilant.

The Vaughan Williams, which sets lines from The Merchant of Venice, was the perfect opener for the occasion, its wistful melodiousness just joyous enough, and showcasing four soloists.

Poulenc's Organ Concerto was the work that you won't hear anywhere else, gothic and severe one moment, delighting in souped-up harmonies the next.

The new piece, James MacMillan's When Soft Voices Die, saw Michael Mofidian's pitch-dark bass, Allan Clayton's clarion tenor and Jess Dandy's velvet mezzo-soprano all delivering Shelley's words eloquently. But it was when Elizabeth Llewellyn's soprano soared above the full orchestra that the piece glowed. Finally, there was Sibelius's Symphony No. 2. Was it at times too breathlessly driven? Perhaps, yet Stasevska's pacing was masterful – a coiled spring to push the uncertainties of the music world from our minds. Erica Jeal

▲ *Dalia Stasevska conducting: the mood in the hall was jubilant*

▼ *Fires burn on Tottenham High Road on 6 August 2011 as civil unrest followed a police shooting*
PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW LLOYD/GETTY

A tinderbox of tensions still in place, 10 years after riots

Analysis by the Guardian reveals many of the factors behind civil unrest remain

Niamh McIntyre
Pamela Duncan
Haroon Siddique

The conditions that led to riots across England 10 years ago still exist today, experts have warned, as data analysis showed significant cuts to youth services in affected areas and an increase in racial disparity in stop and search.

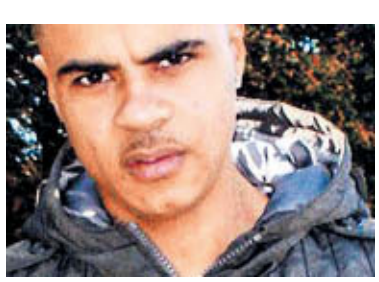
On 4 August 2011, police officers shot and killed Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old mixed-race man, in Tottenham, north London. His death sparked a wave of civil unrest that began in the capital and spread to other cities, causing property damage to the value of £40m a day.

The Guardian analysed data around youth services, stop and search and deprivation in the areas most affected to see how things have changed since then.

The analysis centres on the five areas where 49% of crimes took place during the riots – Haringey, Croydon, Southwark, Birmingham and Manchester.

Council services for young people have been decimated since 2010-11, at the beginning of the coalition government's austerity programme, according to data analysed by YMCA England & Wales and shared exclusively with the Guardian.

Between then and 2019-20, the national budget for youth services was cut by £372m when adjusted for inflation, down 73%. Some of the areas affected by the riots have experienced even steeper cuts. In Haringey, where the riots originated, the youth services budget fell from £5.6m to £970,000 – a cut of 85% taking inflation into account.



▲ *Mark Duggan was shot by police in August 2011, sparking a wave of riots*

Aika Stephenson, the legal director of the youth advocacy charity Just for Kids Law, said the cuts to social services had been "unrelenting", affecting "almost every aspect that directly affects young people so, if anything, the situation is worse".

Of the five areas analysed, Southwark lost 82% of its youth budget over this period, Birmingham 80% and Croydon 79%. Manchester's decrease was in line with the national average.

The Guardian's groundbreaking Reading the Riots project at the time interviewed 270 people who were involved in the 2011 disturbances. Of those, 85% said policing was an important contributory factor. Nearly three-quarters of interviewees said they had been stopped and searched in the previous 12 months.

Ten years on, the most recent figures show that while stop and search numbers have declined overall, black people are still far more likely to be targeted by police than white people.

This week the government said it was considering permanently relaxing restrictions on section 60, which does not require a police officer to have a reasonable suspicion of crime before searching someone.

No progress

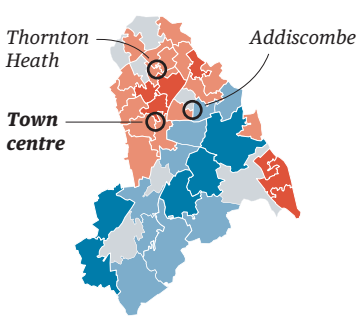
Several areas affected by the 2011 riots are still among the country's most deprived

Deprivation index

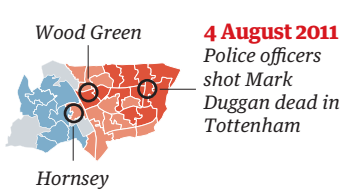
Most deprived — *Least deprived*

Croydon
The town centre, Thornton Heath and Addiscombe are in or bordering on areas of high deprivation and were affected by the disorder

○ *Areas affected by the riots*



Haringey
Tottenham, where the riots originated, still contains several areas among the most deprived 10% nationally



4 August 2011
Police officers shot Mark Duggan dead in Tottenham

Source: 2019 English indices of multiple deprivation, MSOA level/areas identified by the Home Office as 'affected by the disorder of 6 to 11 August 2011'

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Every weapon seized is a potential life saved. Stop and search helped remove 11,000 dangerous weapons last year – including knives, machetes, and firearms."

Racial disproportionality in the system has actually grown since 2010-11, according to data collated by monitoring organisation StopWatch.

In 2010-11, police in England and Wales stopped and searched 115 out of every 1,000 black people, compared with 17 per 1,000 white people – meaning black people were 6.7 times more likely to be targeted. But in 2019-20, black people were 8.9 times more likely to be searched than white people.

A 2015 paper found that the rioters "were most likely to come from economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods", yet many of the areas most affected by the 2011 riots remain among the country's most deprived, according to Guardian analysis.

Low-level deprivation data shows that 74% of people living in Manchester in 2010 lived in the poorest 30% of the population. That was consistent with the 76% living in the most deprived areas in 2019, with similar pictures emerging in the other four areas analysed.

Andrew Neilson, director of campaigns at the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Looking back on something like the riots after 10 years, one of the questions that you naturally think about is 'will this happen again'... my answer to that question would be 'very much so, yes'."

▼ *Residents watch as firefighters put out a fire after the riots in Tottenham in August 2011*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY

'Mark Duggan was a catalyst' Reflections on clash between young people and the police

'The police sent the most negative of signals to those outside'
Stafford Scott
Community organiser, who was at a gathering led by Mark Duggan's family

There was a gathering of about 40 people, mainly young women, because it was led by the mother of Mark Duggan's children, Simone Wilson. We went along to a police station and expected the police to have anticipated our arrival. We sent messages to them. We agreed the women should go inside because we didn't want the police to feel threatened. The police said they couldn't speak to them because the IPCC was investigating the matter, but that was incorrect.

When the women left, the police drew down the shutters. That sent out the most negative of signals. People started to use social media to tell others about the disrespect shown to the Duggan family, how his parents were waiting to hear official confirmation [that Mark had been killed]. As the day wore on, it built up and up. [In February 2012, the police and the IPCC publicly apologised to the Duggan family and acknowledged it was their responsibility to deliver the death message.]

I understood the young people's frustration. Absolutely. But I didn't understand why they decided to loot. I was on Broadwater Farm in 1985. There was no looting. The young people, myself included, took anger on those who created the anger, the police. But in 2011 too many young people lost their minds. It was an uprising in my mind. So I went home.

There are similarities to 1985. Then we tried to leave the estate to protest at the station and they wouldn't allow us. The feeling was the same; we were being denied our right to be heard. And we know what Martin Luther King says about voiceless people; riots are the language of the voiceless.

'Too many lost their minds. It was an uprising'
Stafford Scott

'A lot of young people felt aggrieved and left behind'
Rev Betsy Blatchley
Former vicar of St Luke's, Hackney

We were aware of what had happened in Tottenham. There were around six shops starting to close and this real sense something was going to happen in Hackney. I'd walked down to meet Rob Wickham, then the vicar of St John's in Hackney. He said we should walk towards Mare Street to have a look. It became clear there was now a real confrontation between the police and young people. We tried to calm things down as much as possible.

When I came back that evening, there was a car set on fire and a shop completely looted and wrecked. The next day, there was still a lot of anxiety and unrest. Talking to one fairly well educated, well off anarchist, I felt there was a degree of stirring things up as well.

David Cameron said it was criminality, pure and simple. I thought, it's not simple at all, it's very complex. I can never condone violence or damage to property, but the anger and frustration came out of a lot of different things, with the Mark Duggan case a catalyst. A lot of young people felt aggrieved.

One young man, a member of my congregation who wasn't involved in Hackney, had just received some very bad personal news and admitted to kicking a window in. He was accused of stealing but he always maintained he didn't. I wrote a quick character reference for him and he was sentenced to three months in a young people's unit. He really tried to turn things around and do everything right, but I just thought this was a young black British man who now had a criminal record and how that was going to affect his life.

'Local authorities hid behind the barricades and let cities burn'
Derrick Campbell
Former government adviser on violent crime

I was one of the people advising David Cameron. We were trying our best to put the genie back in the bottle. I met people from the crime fraternity and community leaders from churches, mosques and gurdwaras, to create a collective approach as civic leaders to "turn this thing off". I was critical of the local authorities, who, in my view, hid behind barricades and let their cities burn, and the media who I felt were culpable of exacerbating the disturbance.

Young people felt subjected to unacceptable levels of overpolicing. The shooting of Mark Duggan was said to be the reason for the disturbances, but that was simply the spark. We were working for years within the community and many felt abandoned and forgotten. All of that frustration, coupled with the sense of injustice and reduced opportunities, created the perfect storm. We also knew there were people who saw an opportunity and were deliberately agitating. They mobilised their networks and created the rapid spread of disorder. Young people who had never been involved in crime before got caught up in the moment, and they are now paying a heavy price.

'Kids were running wheelie bins up to Carphone Warehouse'
Sami Goldbrom
Station commander at London fire brigade in Tottenham

I was a junior officer at Islington fire station. I was in the office around 10 o'clock and I saw on BBC News a burning building and riots. Then saw it was in Tottenham. Our lights came on, the bells went down and we were sent to a holding station.

We drove down Green Lanes in Haringey, where there are 24-hour Turkish fruit and vegetable shops. Loads of the guys who worked there were standing with baseball bats [to protect their community assets]. Right behind the shopping centre was a burning car. We started putting the car out and I asked my driver to send a message that we didn't need further fire engines. He said: "Sam, have you seen that shop over there is alight?"

There was mass looting; kids taking wheelie bins out of people's front gardens, running them up to Carphone Warehouse and throwing stock into them. Above Wood Green shopping centre is an estate, with about 500 houses and flats. It was four of us dealing with a fire that needed about 16 to 20 people. The cavalry did eventually turn up. What I saw those kids doing was a sign of the times. **Aamna Mohdin**

Commentary
David Lammy

Tories' failures risk letting a spark ignite society again

Every riot needs a spark. In 1985, I was a teenager when the Broadwater Farm riot took place just yards away from my home. It was lit by the death of Cynthia Jarrett, who suffered a stroke after police officers searched her home. Ten years ago, the riots that again began in Tottenham were ignited by the death of Mark Duggan, who was shot by the police.

The destruction that followed in both cases was horrific, as peaceful protests were hijacked by violent criminals. In 1985, PC Keith Blakelock was killed. In 2011, eight police officers in Tottenham were hospitalised and more than £200m of damage was caused nationwide.

I will never forget walking up Tottenham High Road on the Sunday after the night before and seeing bricks through windows, alongside burned-out cars and shopfronts, and parents standing on the street in their pyjamas comforting their children. In both cases, the peaceful majority of local residents could only watch as their shops, homes and businesses were senselessly turned into ashes by the flames of the mob.

The trail of petrol that allowed the summer 2011 rioting to spread to thousands of people across London, the Midlands, Merseyside, Manchester, Bristol, Yorkshire and beyond was something new. This was the first set of riots where social media – particularly via the then-popular BlackBerry Messenger – was used to organise the chaos.

In the 10 years since my constituency and many others went up in flames a succession of Conservative prime ministers have failed to take the action needed to shield us from the sparks or dampen the fuel that create riots.

The then-prime minister, David Cameron, commissioned the riots, communities and victims panel to produce a report outlining the steps needed to stop it happening again. The panel's report made 63 recommendations, including calling on the government to provide greater support for families, address youth unemployment, improve school attainment, improve police relations and tackle reoffending by young people.

However, the government failed to formally accept or reject any of them – and only a handful were ever implemented. Since then, a succession of reports that address unfairness – including deaths in police custody (the Angiolini review), racism in employment (the McGregor-Smith review) and racial bias in the justice system (my own) – have repeated many of the same points. But they too have been mostly ignored.

Instead of acting to strengthen the fabric of society's fire blanket to reduce the risk of riots, over the past decade the government has decimated police forces, youth services and local authority budgets. While BlackBerry Messenger no longer exists, we are more addicted to our smartphones than ever, trapped in echo chambers served up by social media's algorithms.

Our nation's divides – between rich and poor, young and old, city-dwellers and townspeople – are widening at an alarming rate. Once again, Tottenham is at the centre of this hardship, with the fastest-growing rate of unemployment in the country.

> *Over the past decade the government has decimated police forces, youth services and local authority budgets*

Communities such as mine are scarred twice every time a riot happens. First by the physical damage to homes, shops and possessions, and the violence committed against their family members and friends. Then, after the TV crews have left, the shop windows have been replaced and the streets cleared of rubble, they are hurt again: the residents will wake up in the relative calm knowing that the place they live will always be remembered for the damage caused there instead of what the place has created.

No one wants to see a repeat of 1985 or 2011 in Tottenham, elsewhere in London or in any other part of the UK. Boris Johnson should know the pain caused by rioting. In 2011, when he was London's mayor, he was booed and heckled in Clapham Junction over dissatisfaction at his poor leadership during those difficult August days.

I say this with deep regret: by failing to implement the measures designed to tackle society's dissatisfaction, alienation and fragmentation, Johnson risks letting a spark set fire to the fuel all over again.

David Lammy is the Labour MP for Tottenham, shadow lord chancellor and shadow justice secretary

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Holyrood may flag up legislation that has been altered to protect Queen's interests

Severin Carrell
Rob Evans

The Scottish parliament is to consider changes to the way it handles new legislation that has been amended to protect the Queen's interests.

A Holyrood spokesperson said officials may change the rules to make it much clearer that new bills had been altered, after the Guardian revealed at least 67 pieces of legislation had been vetted by the Queen's officials.

In a further development, Humza Yousaf, the Scottish health secretary, said the Scottish government could ask the Queen for permission to publish her correspondence if there was sufficient public and political demand to do so. Some Scottish National party politicians and activists are furious about the extent of royal influence in Scotland, but Yousaf warned that publication would happen only if the Queen's officials agreed.

"We would have to obviously speak to the royal household about that; there would be implications in that respect," he told BBC Scotland. "But of course if that's something parliament, the public, want us to do, to examine and explore that, then we will examine and explore that."

It is unlikely the Queen's officials would agree to that level of transparency, despite a anger over the Guardian's disclosure this week that Scottish ministers had agreed to amend a green energy bill after lobbying from her lawyers.

The Queen vigorously protects a longstanding convention that her communications with government ministers are kept secret. So too does the Scottish government: it has repeatedly refused to publish royal correspondence, claiming it would damage the public interest to do so, and has introduced strict rules on releasing information affecting the royal family.

It changed a bill in February to prevent Balmoral, one of the Queen's private estates, from being subject to compulsory purchase powers to allow low-carbon heating pipe networks to be installed across her land.

MSPs say they were not told that change was made after her Scottish lawyer secretly intervened. The Scottish government has since refused to release that correspondence, arguing it had to protect the Queen's "appearance of political neutrality".

Investigations by the Guardian suggest other pieces of Holyrood legislation have been changed after interventions by the Queen's lawyers and officials under a process known in Scotland as crown consent.

67

Bills vetted by the Queen before Scotland's parliament could pass them, as revealed by the Guardian

A Holyrood spokesperson said applying crown consent was the responsibility of ministers but that the Scottish parliament would now review its handling of such bills. "The parliament will give consideration to how to make the signifying of crown consent more transparent," she said.

It is thought that could involve a new requirement that ministers or the parliament issue a declaration before a bill is debated that it has been amended in consultation with the Queen's officials or lawyers.

Supporters of the change argue it would allow MSPs to question ministers about the arguments in favour of the change, and increase the chances that it could be rejected by MSPs.

The Scottish Liberal Democrats, who uncovered the Queen's intervention with the heat networks bill, have tabled questions challenging the policy and asking Nicola Sturgeon's government to name all acts that have been affected by crown consent.

They have also asked ministers to publish all correspondence from the Queen's solicitors and officials when the procedure is used in future.

▲ *Mushrooms are popular motifs in goblincore, described as 'cottagecore for people who actually spend time in nature'* PHOTOGRAPH: ETSY

◀ *Jennifer Connelly as Sarah with the Fireys in the 1986 film Labyrinth, which is popular with Goblincore fans*
PHOTOGRAPH: EVERETT COLLECTION/ ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Chaos, dirt and mud Goblincore aesthetic steps out of the shade

Ellie Violet Bramley

Mushrooms, toads and snails represent for many people the more unpalatable side of the natural world. But online a blossoming aesthetic is giving the danker side of nature its moment in the sun.

Goblincore is about "chaos, dirt and mud", according to the trends expert Sabrina Faramarzi, with influences ranging from David Bowie in the 1980s cult movie Labyrinth to the Twilight Saga of books and films. Trappings include moss, animal skulls and earthworms, with clothing and paraphernalia linked to the look selling increasingly well online.

On Etsy there has been a 652% increase in searches for related items in the past month compared with the same time last year. Individual sellers attest to this - at the Divine Occult Shop there has been a dramatic increase in sales of elf ear cuffs, while goblincore is the top search term at the Mushroom Babes, which sells mushroom art.

Fungi and toads feature on a Goblincore T-shirt

"I've been tagging my pieces as goblincore for over 18 months but recently it seems anything frog, snail, moss or mushroom-related has exploded," says Jane Geloso, the owner of the Palm Tree Etsy shop. Moss quartz earrings are her fastest-selling product.

The hashtag has more than 498m views on TikTok. The user @froggiecrocs, AKA Parker, whose more than 90,000 followers tune in for his goblincore content, says the movement "romanticises the ugly, lesser appreciated parts of the natural world". The goblincore subreddit's 19,000-strong membership has increased by 395% year-on-year, with one recent poster hoping for an exchange of their "tiny mice and vole bones in vials" for other goblincore items.

According to Amanda Brennan, the senior director of trends at XX Artists, goblincore originated "sometime in the 2010s, but started picking up in spring 2019 and hit full steam in 2020 as people stumbled upon it during the pandemic". Now, she says, "Google Trends is predicting it to be on the rise again." People have differing reasons for coming to it. For Geloso it was "the previously overlooked creatures such as snails being celebrated, and as a vegan that made me so happy". For Georgia McGain-Harding, the illustrator behind the Mushroom Babes, "it is accessible. Almost anyone can go outside and find a plant or a snail and take a minute to appreciate it."

According to Brennan, it can be tied to queerness. She says: "There's something incredibly freeing about goblincore. Mushrooms are huge in the community and some species of fungi have thousands of sexes - it's just about vibing and existing, not fitting into a mould."

A close cousin to cottagecore, a trend for a stylised, agrarian way of life and its aesthetic - prairie dresses, jam tarts, thatched cottages and strawberry motifs - goblincore is, says Brennan, more "rough around the edges".

"Goblincore is cottagecore for those that actually spend time in nature," says Faramarzi. Members of the community "know that nature is not sunlit wheat fields but gnarly forests and chaotic animals."

Brennan thinks goblincore's "spooky and cosy nature" will only make it more popular in autumn. Plus, she believes it can "feel good and safe ... everyone's feeling a little scattered, people just want to let things go and vibe. Why not do it while laying in the grass and picking out cool mushrooms?"

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Floorshow for families Visitors to the Tate Modern in London cover the floor of the Turbine Hall with doodles, drawings and scribbles, transforming it into a work of art as part of a project by the artist Ei Arakawa. Thousands of people of all ages have taken part in the Please Draw Freely event, a free programme of art-inspired activities for families, which continues to 29 August.

PHOTOGRAPH: GUY BELL/ALAMY

Hopes for new leads in search for woman who disappeared in 2001

Kate Connolly
Berlin

Twenty years since Louise Kerton disappeared after travelling to Germany to stay with her boyfriend's family, her father is still looking for fresh leads.

Phil Kerton is hoping publicity to mark the anniversary may trigger memories or encourage police in Germany, the UK or Belgium - which she is supposed to have travelled through via rail and sea - to reopen the case.

"We'd just like to know what happened. Maybe somebody remembers something. I've kept the same mobile phone number in the hope she might one day call, however remote that possibility is," he said.

Louise, 24, failed to turn up following a five-week break with her boyfriend Peter Simon's family in the village of Strassfeld, near Bonn, where she had gone after failing her nursing exams.

Simon's mother, Ramana, said she had dropped Louise off at Aachen train station on 30 July 2001, from where she planned to take a train to the Belgian port of Ostend, and from there a catamaran to Dover.

However, no witnesses have been found who saw Louise at any stage of the journey. There is speculation as to whether she ever got on the train.

A popular German podcast that concentrates on cold cases took up the cause last year, prompting renewed interest in the disappearance in Germany.

Simon, who is half German, and who shared a home with Louise in Broadstairs, Kent, had travelled two days ahead of his fiancée from Germany to the UK to pick up some building materials the family had ordered. He went to Dover port on the evening of 30 July when she was scheduled to arrive.

▲ *Louise Kerton went missing 20 years ago after a holiday in Germany*

Louise's sister Francesca, whom the boyfriend subsequently telephoned, said he reacted strangely when she didn't turn up.

"He cried, and said she must be dead, whereupon my daughter, Francesca, said: 'Why don't you consider the possibility she might turn up on the next ferry?'" Phil Kerton recalled. Another sister, Angela, said in the following days Simon told her Louise's ghost had appeared to him.

At his home in New Ash Green near Sevenoaks, Kerton, now 76, is surrounded by memories of Louise. When his daughter vanished, he and his wife, Kath, put up missing person posters around the ports and stations of Dover, Ostend and Aachen, retracing the route Louise was supposed to have taken.

The case generated considerable publicity at the time, not least because Louise had been at the same school as Lucie Blackman, the 21-year-old flight attendant who was murdered in Japan in 2000 and with whom Louise was apparently friendly.

In the initial weeks after Louise's disappearance, police in Kent, Belgium and Germany were slow to act, in Kerton's opinion. Louise was over 18, and Kerton believes that from the officials' point of view there was no reason to think anything suspicious might have happened to her.

Police did take an interest in Simon's older brother, Michael, who had once been acquitted for murder in the UK.

Kent police said the enquiry into the disappearance was not their responsibility and to contact German police; police in Aachen said they had passed the case on to state police but that it is not an active investigation.

Bob Moffat, a former superintendent with Scotland Yard whom the Kertons hired as a private detective in late 2001, said two decades on the case "remains one big mystery".

Moffat believes it was his presence and that of Dai Davies, a former head of royal protection whom the Kertons also hired, that put the pressure on German authorities to search the Simons' house, as well as nearby gravel pits, in late 2002. Nothing was found. The Simons have always insisted that no member of their family had anything to do with Louise's disappearance.

Kath died of stomach cancer 10 years ago without ever learning what happened to her daughter. "We live in hope of one day learning the truth," said Kerton.

Retrial for man acquitted over film of Grenfell Tower model on a bonfire

PA Media

A man who filmed a video of a cardboard model of Grenfell Tower being burned on a bonfire will face a second trial, the high court has ruled.

Paul Bussetti was accused of sending a "grossly offensive" video on WhatsApp, after widely shared footage filmed in a friend's garden in November 2018 prompted outrage.

Bussetti, then 47, was found not guilty after a two-day trial at Westminster magistrates court in August 2019. But yesterday the high court quashed Bussetti's acquittal and ordered a retrial after the Crown Prosecution Service brought an appeal.

The prosecution at the original trial argued that the footage, in which cardboard figures burned as the model went up in flames, was racist in showing black and brown characters representing victims of the Grenfell Tower blaze, which killed 72 people in 2017. Bussetti said the characters were images of his associates.

Near the end of the trial, Bussetti's lawyers said a second video of the bonfire existed of which they were not previously aware, meaning there was no way to know which footage had been uploaded and gone viral. The then chief magistrate, Emma Arbuthnot, said she could not be sure he had filmed the video that was widely seen.

However, in his ruling ordering a retrial, Lord Justice Bean said the trial judge should have found that the two videos of the bonfire were similar. "It may be that the sound quality of Mr Bussetti's video was not as good as that of the video which we have seen, if it was indeed not the same one, or the camera angle slightly different, but that is of minimal significance."

Bean, sitting with Mr Justice Dove, also rejected Bussetti's lawyers' argument that the prosecution's case was only about racism.

Bussetti faces a retrial at Westminster magistrates court in front of a different judge.

▲ *Paul Bussetti's acquittal in 2019 has been quashed by the high court*

Eyewitnessed
Pictures of the week

▶ *An emotional Tom Daley on the podium after winning the Olympic men's synchronised 10m platform diving final with Matty Lee. It was Daley's first gold in four Games stretching back to Beijing 2008*

OLI SCARFF/AFP/GETTY

▲ *Torrential rain on Wimbledon Common, south-west London, brings an end to a spell of hot weather enjoyed – and endured – in many parts of the UK*

AMER GHAZZAL/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

◀ *Final touches are made to waxwork figures of Little Mix before their unveiling at Madame Tussauds in London*

PETER NICHOLLS/REUTERS

◀ *A caiman in the Pantanal region of Brazil. They are used to seeing humans, allowing the photographer, Leighton Lum, a closeup shot*

PHOTOGRAPH: LEIGHTON LUM/ CATERS NEWS

▲ *Strong winds fan a forest wildfire in the Turkish district of Silifke, on the Mediterranean coast. Homes and hotels were evacuated*

SEZGIN PANCAR/ ANADOLU AGENCY/ GETTY IMAGES

▲ *Emmanuel Macron is garlanded with flowers and seashells on a visit to Manihi atoll in French Polynesia*

LUDOVIC MARIN/AFP/ GETTY IMAGES

◀ *Music fans listen to Wigan band the Lathums during the Tramlines festival at Hillsborough Park, Sheffield*

CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY

World

Hong Kong jails protester for nine years under new security powers

Helen Davidson
Taipei

The first person charged and tried under Hong Kong's draconian national security law has been jailed for nine years after he was convicted of secession and terrorism for crashing his motorbike into police officers while flying a protest flag.

Tong Ying-kit, a 24-year-old former waiter, was convicted on Tuesday by a three-judge panel appointed by Hong Kong's leader to hear national security cases. On Thursday, he was sentenced to six and a half years for the secession offence and eight years for terrorism, with two and a half years of the latter sentence to be served consecutively.

The landmark case comes amid a continuing crackdown on almost any form of opposition to China's rule over Hong Kong. On Thursday, a trial began against a radio DJ accused of sedition – under rarely used colonial era laws – for comments made during the 2019 protests.

Yesterday, police revealed they had arrested an 18-year-old for posting calls to boycott advertisers on a pro-Beijing TV station.

After a 15-day trial, Tong was found guilty of terrorism for crashing his motorcycle into three riot police, and of inciting secession for carrying a flag on the vehicle bearing the protest slogan: "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times".

The incident took place on 1 July 2020, less than 24 hours after the national security law was enacted, as thousands of Hongkongers took to the streets in protest and were met with a heavy police response.

Tong maintained the collision was accidental. In sentencing, the judges found his crimes to be serious and secessionist in nature and not mitigated by his status as breadwinner for his family, or his remorse, given he had pleaded not guilty.

"We consider that this overall term should sufficiently reflect the defendant's culpability in the two offences and the abhorrence of society, at the same time, achieving the deterrent effect required," the sentencing said.

Much of Tong's trial was spent on arguments over the meaning of the "Liberate Hong Kong" slogan, which was ubiquitous during mass protests in 2019.

The ruling sets a steep precedent for cases of speech crimes under the national security law, with the judges finding the slogan to be secessionist because it was "capable" of being interpreted as such.

The judges also determined that even though Tong's case was "not the worst of its kind" because he had acted alone in making what they saw to be a "general call" for secession without any elaborate plan, it still met the threshold for a serious crime with a statutory penalty of five to 10 years in jail.

Legal analysts warned it would drastically add to Hongkongers' fears in the wake of the national security law's introduction.

"It's a strong message to everyone in Hong Kong that ... in a particular circumstance or a politically sensitive context, if you show any slogans or expression not in favour of the government they will be interpreted as capable of inciting secession, and endangering national security," said Eric Lai, a Hong Kong law fellow at the Georgetown Center for Asian Law.

Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific director, Yamini Mishra, said: "The sentencing of Tong Ying-kit to nine years confirms fears that the national security law is not merely a tool to instil terror into government critics in Hong Kong; it is a weapon that will be used to incarcerate them."

Tong's sentencing followed the start of the trial against Tam Tak-chi – a former radio host who has been in jail since September. Tam is facing eight counts of uttering seditious words and six other charges related to comments while manning street booths at the 2019 mass protests.

Since the introduction of the national security law, more than 128 people have been arrested for related alleged offences.

Additional reporting **Jason Lu**

▲ *Tong Ying-kit was the first person to be tried under new security law*

▶ *A child gets a Covid swab test at a drive-through testing complex in Jerusalem. More than 57% of the Israeli population has had two jabs*

PHOTOGRAPH: MENAHEM KAHANA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

'I'm tearing my hair out'

New Zealand ex-pats struggle to get places in quarantine facility

Tess McClure
Christchurch

In the age of coronavirus, New Zealand can seem like an idyll: a tightly sealed hermit kingdom, recently rated the best place to survive global societal collapse, and one of the last countries in the world to evade incursions from the Delta variant. But the walls of fortress New Zealand are not only successful at keeping out Covid-19.

With demand for government-required quarantine greatly exceeding the places, desperate New Zealanders are going to huge lengths to try to secure entry to the country. For many, the emotional and psychological toll is enormous.

> *'I'm looking 24/7. You just keep refreshing it in the hope something will come up'*
>
> **Alan Rowlands**
> *In Dubai*

It is 1.15am in Dubai, and Alan Rowlands is once again at his computer. The ritual of endlessly refreshing a booking screen in the hope of securing a spot in managed isolation has consumed all of his waking moments for the past three weeks. "It's so demoralising," he said. "There's just nothing."

Rowlands and his wife are in Dubai. Several weeks ago his employment contract ended unexpectedly – and with it his visa. Soon he will become an illegal overstayer, and on top of having no income, he will face significant fines for his visa violation.

New Zealand has protected its Covid-free status with strict border controls, requiring returnees to spend two weeks in a government-run managed isolation and quarantine facility [MIQ].

Comeback king?
Lula hopes for return to power in Brazil
Page 32

'A lot of excitement'
Samoa welcomes first female PM
Page 34

Israel
Pfizer booster shot offered to fully jabbed over-60s

Associated Press

Israel's prime minister has announced that the country will offer a coronavirus booster shot to people over 60 who have already been vaccinated.

Naftali Bennett's announcement makes Israel, which launched one of the world's most successful vaccination drives this year, the first country to offer a third dose of a western vaccine to its citizens on a wide scale.

"I'm announcing this evening the beginning of the campaign to receive the booster vaccine, the third vaccine," Bennett said in a nationally televised address on Thursday. "Reality proves the vaccines are safe. Reality also proves the vaccines protect against severe morbidity and death. And like the flu vaccine that needs to be renewed from time to time, it is the same in this case."

The decision comes amid rising infections and signs that the vaccine's efficacy dwindles over time.

Anyone over 60 who was vaccinated more than five months ago will be eligible. Bennett said the country's new president, Isaac Herzog, would be the first to get the booster. Bennett, 49, said his first call after the news conference would be to urge his mother to get her booster shot.

Neither the US nor the EU have approved Covid booster shots. It is not yet proven if a third dose helps and, if so, who needs one and when. Boosters have been deployed in some countries with the Chinese and Russian vaccines.

But Bennett said a team of expert advisers had agreed, by a 56-1 margin, that it made sense to launch a booster campaign. Israel used the Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine on its population. Preliminary studies have indicated the jab's protection against serious illness dropped among those vaccinated in January.

Israel carried out one of the world's most aggressive and successful inoculation campaigns, reaching a deal with Pfizer to purchase enough vaccines for its population in exchange for sharing its data with the drugmaker. More than 57% of its 9.3 million citizens have had two doses of the Pfizer jab, and over 80% of its over-40s is vaccinated. But the health ministry recorded 2,165 new cases on Thursday, and Israel has experienced a sharp rise in cases of the Delta variant.

The World Health Organization's officials have urged wealthier countries to share jabs with poorer nations, instead of using them as boosters. Israel itself has been criticised for not sharing more of its vaccines with the Palestinians.

2,615
New cases in Israel on Thursday - with the Delta variant likely to increase demand for booster jabs

▲ *Mounted police officers enforce restrictions near Sydney harbour*

Australia
Sydney braces for another month of lockdown

Helen Sullivan
Sydney

The leader of New South Wales has announced another month of Covid restrictions, telling the Australian state to prepare for things to get worse, not better.

Gladys Berejiklian, the premier of New South Wales, told Sydney its lockdown would continue until the end of August, causing many residents of Australia's largest city to wonder if life could return to normal before Christmas. "We know we've put in the hard yards for five weeks and we don't want to waste all the good work that we've done by opening too early and then having the virus spread again," said Berejiklian.

The changing rules have added to a sense of confusion and exhaustion across the city. The Delta variant is proving enduringly difficult for Australia to suppress with restrictions, and the path out of Covid restrictions seems to lie with vaccines.

"I don't think anyone can deny that the vaccination rate is absolutely key to how we live life in NSW", Berejiklian said on Tuesday.

Just under 18% of Australians have had two doses of a Covid vaccine. Owing to a series of mis-steps by the government, Australia has stockpiles of AstraZeneca that many citizens are reluctant to take, and not enough Pfizer to go around.

On Wednesday, economists at ANZ bank predicted that the lockdown would continue "at least until September". The prime minister, Scott Morrison, said he hoped that enough people would be vaccinated by Christmas so that "we would be seeing a very different Australia".

Thousands of police officers and hundreds of troops have been deployed across greater Sydney to enforce tighter restrictions. They include leaving home only to buy food or essential goods; exercise; essential work and medical care, as well as wearing masks indoors.

The stay is time-consuming and often expensive in itself - but expats say the true barrier is securing a booking at all. At present, all available dates are booked. New spaces made available after cancellations disappear in seconds.

The system does not distinguish between people who have been trying to book a space for months and those booking for the first time - the spoils go to the fastest fingers. "I'm on there 24/7," Rowlands said. "You have to just keep refreshing it and refreshing it and refreshing it, in the hope that something will come up."

Rowlands has tried a variety of methods: initially, he signed up for bots - online services that scan for available dates and send alerts when they arrive. Each time one came up it disappeared before he could click through. He approached people branding themselves as "MIQ assistants" - whom you pay to watch the site constantly, or run computer scripts to book on your behalf. Three turned him down. They were all overwhelmed with work with significant waiting lists.

His problem is shared by thousands of overseas New Zealanders who, in recent months, have found passage home increasingly hard to secure. Online, a cottage industry has sprung up to meet the demand, with one site charging up to NZ$2,415 (£1,200) for their services. The Guardian also viewed advertisements on Fiverr, where a range of sellers were charging between $150 and $300 to secure a space - one of whom had a waiting list of 152 people.

One woman has elderly parents in Switzerland but was now unable to leave the country to visit them. "It is an absolute disgrace they can't return unless paying a ridiculous amount to absolute strangers who then also hold your passport number and information," she said.

Facebook support groups have sprung up, with people swapping tips and strategies for securing a spot. Over time they have become a source of emotional and mental health support. Many say the process has taken a toll on their mental health.

"It's shattering," Rowlands said. "I'm literally tearing my hair out. Then I get people saying: 'Oh well, you know, maybe you need to go to another country'. Where am I going to go?"

Cherie Brown, a lecturer based in Japan, is 65 and is trying to return home to retire. For now, she has been sitting refreshing the site every seven seconds. "Faster than that and the system will identify you as a bot and block you," she said. She has been self-isolating at home for nearly 18 months.

Prof Tava Olsen, a University of Auckland academic specialising in supply chain management, said research showed queues caused psychological stress. That toll was exacerbated, she said, by uncertainty, length of time and unfairness - such as queue-jumping - all of which were present in the booking system.

▲ *Soldiers guard the entrance to an Auckland hotel used as a managed isolation and quarantine facility*

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment said in a statement: "MIQ has served New Zealand well, helping to bring more than 158,000 people here, while protecting the freedoms that we all now enjoy.

"Demand for space in managed isolation facilities is always high, and there is finite capacity within the MIQ system, and that's for good reason - Covid-19 is raging around the world and we need to keep New Zealand safe."

The spokesperson said they had implemented measures to prevent bots making bookings, and that if people chose to employ third parties to book "we advise they make sure it is a reputable person or company".

Claire Sisam, a lawyer in Barcelona, has been attempting to secure a spot for three months. "I don't want to sound dramatic but I cry about it sometimes," she said. "I haven't seen my parents since February 2020."

Peru's new president dashes hopes of moderates by appointing far-left PM

Dan Collyns
Lima

A day after being sworn in as Peru's president, Pedro Castillo has appointed a far-left politician and member of his Marxist party, Guido Bellido, as prime minister, ending expectations of a moderate government.

At a ceremony that began nearly three hours late, Castillo swore in an incomplete cabinet that included several figures from the far left and only two women. He did not appoint a finance minister, and Pedro Francke, the favourite for the post, was seen leaving the venue minutes before the event began.

▲ *President Pedro Castillo, left, with new prime minister Guido Bellido*

The departure of the former World Bank technocrat, who had calmed investor fears during the lengthy vote count after the runoff vote in June, raised questions about whether he had walked or was pushed out.

The absence of a finance minister is likely to cause uncertainty in the Peruvian markets, which are already spooked by Castillo's administration. The appointment of an insider from his Perú Libre party to head the cabinet will cause further alarm.

Castillo's appointment of Bellido at a ceremony in the Andean region of Ayacucho on Thursday prompted anger and disappointment among centrist politicians who had supported his narrow win over his far-right rival, Keiko Fujimori. Bellido, 42, a native of the Cusco region, is being investigated for alleged "apology for terrorism", a crime in Peru. In an interview with local media in April, he defended members of the Shining Path, the Maoist rebel group that killed tens of thousands of Peruvians in the 1980s and 90s in an attempt to seize power.

He has also expressed homophobic and misogynistic views on social media, attacking local politicians known to be homosexual or advertising what he considers to be promoting a "pro-gay agenda", sometimes mixing his comments with a radical leftwing stance.

Castillo's choice has alienated potential allies. The Purple party, which has three seats in Peru's congress, said it could not support Bellido. It said he did not believe in "democracy, human rights, and the fight against corruption and terrorism", and would not give him its vote of confidence. Castillo's party has only 37 out of 130 seats in congress, and the appointment of Bellido and his cabinet will need to be approved by the opposition-led chamber where centrist and rightwing parties are likely to oppose his appointment.

Peru has had four presidents and two congresses in the past five years of political turmoil. The new chamber got off to a petulant start, flouting protocol on Wednesday when it prevented the outgoing caretaker president, Francisco Sagasti, from entering the building to hand over the presidential sash to Castillo.

"So ends the calamitous first day of Pedro Castillo's government," tweeted Gonzalo Banda, a political analyst and columnist. "Worst start, almost impossible."

Even the leftwing newspaper La República criticised Bellido's appointment in an editorial that urged Castillo not to "betray the trust of a society that mainly voted for change" in favour of the proposals of a "tiny, outdated and delusional faction".

The Perú Libre party is led by Vladimir Cerrón, a neurosurgeon who admires Venezuela's government.

Brazil

'To see Lula in power is everything we want'

Tom Phillips
Rio de Janeiro

Anazir Maria de Oliveira has a simple message for the man they call Lula. "Comrade, I want you back," said the 88-year-old union veteran and black activist as she celebrated the return of her "guru" to Brazil's political fray.

Until a few months ago, Lula – full name Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva – seemed to have reached the melancholy twilight of a mythical political career. The former factory worker rose to become one of the world's most popular leaders before a dramatic fall from grace when he was jailed and barred from office.

But the quashing of corruption convictions against Brazil's first working-class president has given believers such as Oliveira the tantalising hope that the septuagenarian politician could make a comeback. Five months after Lula's political rights were restored, polls suggest that in next year's election he would thrash the far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, who is facing mounting anger over his response to a Covid outbreak that has killed more than half a million Brazilians.

◀ *Dona Zica, a veteran trade unionist, wants Lula to win, but accepts it will be a hard contest*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN LIMA/THE GUARDIAN

"Seeing him in the presidency again is everything we want ... I'm heart and soul Lula," enthused Oliveira, or Dona Zica as she is known in Vila Aliança, the favela where she lives on Rio's deprived western limits.

Lula, a two-term president from 2003 to 2010, has yet to formally announce what would be his sixth presidential campaign since he first sought to become Brazil's leader in 1989, aged 44. In a recent interview the 75-year-old stopped short of confirming his plans but said he had been inspired by Joe Biden's election at 78. "I'm a boy compared to Biden," he joked.

▲ *Lula, at 75, says he is inspired by Joe Biden's success in America*

John D French, author of a new biography charting Lula's rise from unionist to president, said he had no doubt Lula would run – and was well placed to win. "He's the Pelé of international presidential electoral politics – nobody has a record like his anywhere in the world," said French, recalling how Lula or his anointed candidate had come first or second in six successive elections going back to 1998.

Lula lost that year's contest to the centrist intellectual Fernando Henrique Cardoso but won a historic landslide four years later, telling voters "hope had overcome fear". Members of Lula's Workers' party (PT) are pushing a similarly upbeat message now, as Brazil reels from a coronavirus-driven health and economic catastrophe that has killed more than 550,000 people.

"The fact is [Lula] represents a moment when things went well, when Brazil felt it was moving forwards, when things were happening, when the minimum wage was going up, when your children could go to school, when 10m houses were built," said French. Bolsonaro, in contrast, was widely associated with today's "suffering, crisis and desperation".

Many conservatives are horrified by the thought of Lula's return and some on the left are wary too, even if they concede his political dominance may mean he is best positioned to defeat Bolsonaro.

Ciro Gomes, a former Lula minister who is now his main leftwing rival, called a third Lula presidency an "awful" prospect. "What is it that Lula wants to do at the age of 78 [sic], that he didn't do during the four terms he managed to win for himself or for the representative he put forward?" Gomes asked, referring to Lula's successor, Dilma Rousseff, who won elections in 2010 and 2014.

Gomes claimed voter fury over "the economic and moral debacle" of past PT governments – when Lula associates, including his chief of staff and finance minister were jailed for corruption – had paved the way for Bolsonaro's election. He argued Lula's involvement in the 2022 vote threatened to return Bolsonaro to office by creating an election "in which Bolsonaro calls Lula a crook, and Lula calls Bolsonaro a murderer".

There is far greater excitement among PT devotees, who have started attending anti-Bolsonaro protests in bright red T-shirts bearing the slogan: "Lula 2022." A helium-filled Lula caricature has towered over recent opposition rallies in Rio while in the north-eastern city of Fortaleza, one *Lulista* hung a banner from his window describing the leftist's resurrection in biblical terms: "Thy will be done; Lula 2022 presidente".

Dona Zica, a retired cleaning lady and campaigner who keeps a stash of PT paraphernalia in her immaculately neat home, was born, like Lula, into rural poverty. After a childhood harvesting peanuts and corn, she moved to Rio in 1948, four years before Lula's impoverished family set off for São Paulo on an open-back truck.

She said Bolsonaro's defeat was not assured. She believed many Vila Aliança residents regretted voting Bolsonaro in 2018, having lost jobs or relatives to a pandemic their president has trivialised. One neighbour recently apologised to Dona Zica for backing Bolsonaro – but other locals remained loyal.

"If Lula does run in 2022, it won't be an easy election," Dona Zica said. "I'll tell you one thing, though: things can't stay the way they are. Poor Brazilians have been abandoned by the government."

Widow of assassinated Haitian leader suspects 'oligarchs' were involved

Tom Phillips
Latin America correspondent

The widow of Haiti's recently assassinated president has said she suspects his murder was engineered by wealthy Haitian "oligarchs" who have yet to be apprehended.

Martine Moïse, who survived the 7 July assault in which her husband, Jovenel Moïse, was shot dead, told the New York Times she was unconvinced that Haitian police – who have detained more than 20 suspects – had identified those who ordered and bankrolled the murder.

"Only the oligarchs and the system could kill him," Moïse, who was in the bedroom with her husband at the moment he was gunned down, was quoted as saying.

"I would like [the] people who did this to be caught, otherwise they will kill every single president who takes power," she added. "They did it once. They will do it again."

Those comments – her first to a newspaper since the assassination – echoed recent remarks from a senior Haitian minister who said he believed the "big fishes" behind the president's murder remained at large.

"There are more powerful people behind this," said the elections minister, Mathias Pierre.

▲ *Martine and Jovenel Moïse during his investiture ceremony in 2017*

Haitian police allege the assassination was carried out by a group of Colombian mercenaries – 18 of whom were captured and three killed – who stormed the presidential compound in Port-au-Prince in the early hours of 7 July after posing as US Drug Enforcement Administration agents.

Police claim one key conspirator was Christian Emmanuel Sanon, a Florida-based pastor with an apparent plan to become Haiti's leader. He was arrested on 11 July, and this week authorities said they were also searching for the Haitian supreme court judge Wendelle Coq Thélot in connection with the crime.

But many in Haiti, among them members of the dead president's family, doubt the plot stops there. Speaking at Moïse's funeral in Cap-Haïtien last week, his son Joverlein reportedly said his father had been "living among traitors". Martine Moïse told mourners her husband had been "abandoned and betrayed".

She told the New York Times of the terrifying moment the killers entered the bedroom she shared with her husband of 25 years, guns blazing. "The only thing that I saw before they killed him were their boots. Then I closed my eyes, and I didn't see anything else."

The first lady, who was shot in the elbow as the attackers entered the room, said she was giving serious thought to running for the presidency. "President Jovenel had a vision and we Haitians are not going to let that die," she added.

◀ *A Pride march in Auckland in 2019. New laws mean that those who perform conversion therapy could be sent to jail*
PHOTOGRAPH: HANNAH PETERS/GETTY

'Harmful' conversion therapy to be illegal in New Zealand

Tess McClure
Christchurch

New Zealand has introduced legislation to ban conversion practices, saying the practice is harmful and has "no place in modern New Zealand".

Conversion therapy refers to the practice, often by religious groups, of trying to "cure" people of their sexuality, gender expression, or LGBTQI identity.

"Those who have experienced conversion practices talk about ongoing mental health distress, depression, shame and stigma, and even suicidal thoughts," the minister of justice, Kris Faafoi, said as he introduced the legislation yesterday. "Conversion practices have no place in modern New Zealand."

The legislation makes it an offence to perform conversion practices on anyone aged under 18, or with impaired decision-making capacity, with a sentence of up to three years' imprisonment. It also makes it an offence to perform conversion practices that cause "serious harm," irrespective of age. That carries a sentence of up to five years' imprisonment.

Conversion therapy is legal in many parts of the world, including the UK and many states in the US. A report by the United Nations Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity found conversion practices caused "significant loss of self-esteem, anxiety, depressive syndrome … and suicide attempts".

It said the practices violated UN conventions against torture, and recommended a global ban. Health bodies including the American Psychological Association have concluded there is no evidence that conversion practices are successful in changing sexuality or gender identity.

> ***'This has driven so many queer people into a life of pain'***
>
> **Shaneel Lal**
> *Activist*

Activist Shaneel Lal, a survivor who has campaigned against conversion practices in New Zealand, said they broadly welcomed the bill and it demonstrated "potential for real change". Conversion practices, Lal said, have "driven so many queer people into a life of pain and misery and death and [thinking that] God will never forgive them for it. Every single story that I've heard of conversion therapy, victims have questioned whether it is worth living."

But Lal also raised concerns with the bill's wording, and some of its provisions. They said the "serious harm" wording "implies that it is OK to cause harm, if it is not serious harm" and raised concerns that survivors may struggle to gather the evidence required to demonstrate that serious psychological harm had been done to them.

'Baby God' doctor to pay damages after using own sperm

Leyland Cecco
Toronto

Hundreds of victims of a disgraced Canadian fertility doctor, including more than a dozen children conceived using his sperm, are expected to share a proposed C$13.375m (£7.707m) class-action settlement – the first of its kind in the world.

On Wednesday, an Ontario court certified a class action suit against Ottawa-based Norman Barwin. The legal action was launched in 2016.

For years Barwin was a highly sought after fertility doctor – nicknamed "Baby God" for his success rate – and was even awarded the Order of Canada. But nearly four decades ago, couples began to question his methodology.

In 1989, Davina and David Dixon sought Barwin's help to conceive. They grew suspicious after their daughter, Rebecca, did not resemble her parents. When she developed coeliac disease – in spite of nobody else in the family suffering from the illness – her parents approached Barwin for a DNA sample.

The doctor refused to comply, but the Dixons were able to compare Rebecca's DNA with that of another of Barwin's patients – and found a match. At 25, she learned that Barwin was her biological father.

"I was in shock. Something inside me shifted. It made me feel like my existence was something to be ashamed of," Dixon told the Ottawa Citizen in 2019.

Barwin is alleged to have told couples that the male partner's sperm would be used. Instead, they were unknowingly given random samples, and in some cases Barwin's own sperm. Barwin did not notify his patients of the errors, leaving them to discover years later the truth about their children's paternity.

Under the proposed settlement, former patients and children will be eligible for up to C$50,000 damages. A judge must approve the settlement before any money is made available.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario suspended Barwin in 2013 after he admitted to inseminating four women using the wrong sperm. He resigned his medical licence in 2014. In 2019, Barwin was deemed incompetent by the college, which described the former doctor's behaviour as "beyond reprehensible".

"It is the most egregious violation of a patient's trust," said Carolyn Silver, the college's senior counsel. The college ordered him to pay costs of C$10,370.

The civil lawsuit also calls for a DNA database to be set up to help children identify their father or discover any siblings.

All change in Samoa

First female prime minister settles in

Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson
Maina Vai *Apia*

The prime minister's office in Apia, overlooking the harbour in the capital of Samoa, has just been vacated by the man who had held the job for 22 years. The bookshelves are still empty, but the room is filled with bunches of flowers sent by well-wishers keen to congratulate the new incumbent.

This week, after the most contentious election in the Pacific country's history and three months of political turmoil and legal battles, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, the first woman to hold the country's most senior role, moved in.

In her first face-to-face interview with foreign media, Fiame told the Guardian there was "a lot of excitement" among women and girls after her victory. "I was asked: 'How important was it? Did I see my appointment as something important for women and girls?' I said: 'Of course it is.' In the sense, if you see someone in that position, it makes it something that can be done."

▲ *Fiame is a high chief of special status on the island of Upolu, top*

The milestone is particularly significant in the Pacific, which has the lowest rate of female representation in politics anywhere in the world, with just 6% of all MPs being women regionally. Fiame is only the second woman to lead a Pacific Island country, after Hilda Heine, the former president of the Marshall Islands.

Asked which world leader she most admires, Fiame pointed to another female leader. "I quite like the German lady: [Angela] Merkel," she said. "I think she's an excellent leader. She's very focused, she conducts herself, you know, as an ordinary citizen. She's not one for pomp and ceremony."

On Samoa's relationship with China, she said there was "a window" to review Samoa's programme with Beijing, noting that there were China-funded projects under way that were not a key priority for her government. Its influence has grown in Samoa in the past 20 years, especially in infrastructure development. China has built and funded the national hospital, the main court building and schools across the four islands. Fiame said that the China issue in the Pacific should be viewed in the context of global politics.

"Having a relationship with China is not a new thing. China's been a good partner for us," she said. "Samoa needs to focus on its own relationship with China. Of course, we know what's happening in the global context ... the competition between the larger powers and so forth. Before it was the US and Russia and the west versus the east. Now it's seemingly America and China."

▼ *Fiame Naomi Mata'afa has faced legal challenges since her Fast party won Samoa's elections in April*

PHOTOGRAPH: RUDY BARTLEY/THE GUARDIAN

While her office is still mostly empty, one wall is filled with portraits of past prime ministers - all of them male - including a photograph of her late father, Fiame Mata'afa Faumuina Mulinu'u II, who served as Samoa's first prime minister in 1959 and was re-elected after it became independent in 1962.

> ***'Did I see my appointment as something important for women and girls? Of course it is'***
>
> **Fiame Naomi Mata'afa**
> *Prime minister of Samoa*

Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, 64, is a high chief of special status from Lotofaga on the island of Upolu. She entered politics in 1985 as a member of parliament. She was previously the country's deputy prime minister and last year defected from the Human Rights Protection party, which had ruled Samoa for 39 years, to join the Fa'atuatua i le Atua Samoa ua Tasi (Fast) party founded in June 2020.

Although the election took place in April, Fiame has only just concluded her first week leading a new government after Samoa was wracked by political turmoil and legal challenges to the results.

A ruling by the country's court of appeal last week declared Fast's victory was legitimate, as was the ad hoc swearing in ceremony of her and her MPs that they conducted in May, when they were locked out of the parliament building by the Speaker of the House.

Fiama says there was a "perfect storm" of factors that led to the election upset, including concerns over legislation introduced by the previous government around land ownership and the dismantling of the justice system. Plus, she imagines that some people might have just felt the previous prime minister, Tuila'epa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi - who at the time of the election was the world's second-longest serving prime minister at 22 years in the job - had been in power for long enough.

"Sometimes when something's been there for a long time, I know, in politics, it just changes for the sake of change," she said.

Fiame identified Covid-19 as the greatest threat to Samoa. So far the country has had one case, which was contained. On her priorities moving forward, she said her goal was to empower and protect the people of Samoa through upholding the rule of law, improving health and strengthening the education sector.

"We want to enable people to build their livelihoods," she said.

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Russian rocket misfire pushes space station out of position

Agencies

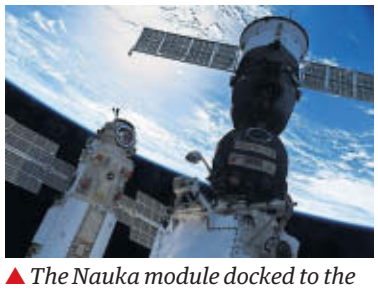
Russia's troubled Nauka laboratory module caused a fright when its rockets accidentally fired a few hours after docking with the International Space Station, briefly throwing the station out of position. Personnel aboard the ISS had to fire thrusters on the Russian segment to counter the effect.

The module started firing "inadvertently and unexpectedly, moving the station 45 degrees out of attitude", Nasa said on Twitter. "Recovery operations have regained attitude and the crew is in no danger."

Russia's Roscosmos space agency attributed the issue to Nauka's engines having to work with residual fuel in the craft, according to Tass news agency.

The Nauka module blasted off last week from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, carried by a Russian Proton rocket, and is Russia's first docking of an ISS module in 11 years.

Earlier, Roscosmos showed the addition to its segment of the ISS docking with the nadir (Earth-facing) port of the Zvezda service module at 13.29 GMT. "There is contact!!!" tweeted Roscosmos's chief, Dmitry Rogozin. It will take several months and multiple spacewalks to integrate the module with the space station.



▲ *The Nauka module docked to the International Space Station*

The launch was closely watched by the European Space Agency because the module was travelling with the European Robotic Arm, the first robot arm that will be able to work on Russia's ISS segment.

Nauka - which means "science" in Russian - will be primarily used for research and storing laboratory equipment. It will also provide more storage space and improved living conditions for cosmonauts of the Russian ISS sector.

Launched in 1998 and involving Russia, the US, Canada, Japan, and the European Space Agency, the ISS is one of Russia's few remaining collaborations with the west.

In April, Russia said it was considering withdrawing from the ISS programme and is planning to launch the first module of an orbital station in 2025. It has announced several projects but, as the Kremlin diverts funding to the military, analysts question their feasibility.

Sharing news that 'causes public fear' banned by Thailand

Rebecca Ratcliffe
Navaon Siradapuvadol *Bangkok*

The Thai government has outlawed sharing news that "causes public fear", even if such reports are true, as officials face mounting criticism over their handling of the pandemic.

On Thursday, the government tightened an emergency decree imposed more than a year ago that initially targeted false news. The latest move bans people from distributing "information causing public fear", or from sharing "distorted information causing misunderstanding which affects national stability".

The measures have been widely condemned by media groups and rights experts as an attempt to shut down negative news reports and silence debate. Sunai Phasuk, senior researcher on Thailand in Human Rights Watch's Asia division, described it as a "serious blow" to press freedom in the country, where only 5% of the population has been fully vaccinated.

"I think the government realises it is now facing a credibility crisis because of this disastrous response to the Covid situation, but instead of trying to find better solutions, more efficient solutions, it chooses to gag anyone from speaking about its failures," said Sunai. "This provision doesn't care about accuracy or whether it is true or false."

Under the regulations, if false content is spread online, the country's broadcasting regulator will contact internet service providers to identify the individual's ISP address and block their internet access.

Internet providers who fail to comply will be deemed to have breached the requirements of their operating licences, and action will be taken against them.

Sunai said he feared the measures would be used against online reporters and critics who used social media to share political news and commentaries that did not flatter the government.

Online, images have circulated of people dying on the street, fuelling public anger towards the government. Officials have warned the public over publishing such images.

Tipanan Sirichana, of the Office of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, said people who violated the emergency decree or the Computer Crimes Act while commenting on the Covid situation could face fines or imprisonment. They should check the source of social media images before sharing them, she said.

Deputy police spokesman Pol Col Kissana Phathanacharoen said that while "quite a few" images shared online had shown Covid victims who had died on the streets, there were also "many [instances of] distorted information out there". One image circulated online was of a drunk person, he said.

"Authorities have been working around the clock with the ministry of digital economy and society to crack down on those who have malicious intent," he added. He said the emergency measure would not be used to target truthful reporting. "If you share real information, but that information causes chaos to society, that's absolutely fine," Kissana said.

Over recent weeks, officials have targeted online influencers. The teenage rapper Danupa Khanatheerakul, known as Milli, was accused of defaming the prime minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha. Yuthlert Sippapak, a prominent film director, is also reportedly facing a complaint, while Miss Grand Thailand 2020, Patcharporn Chantharapradit, said she had received a police summons.

5%

Proportion of Thai adults who are fully vaccinated. The government's action on Covid has been criticised

▲ *The Greek government has sent 186 police officers to the popular party island of Mykonos*
PHOTOGRAPH: VISIONS OF OUR LAND/GETTY

Greece moves police to island hotspots over virus concerns

Helena Smith
Athens

Greece has begun deploying police units to holiday island hotspots as the country's tourism season moves into high gear.

Authorities moved to beef up police presence on party islands such as Mykonos and Ios as concerns mounted over local entrepreneurs failing to comply with health measures aimed at curbing the pandemic.

"The Delta variant has meant that every country is dealing with the fourth wave now and not as expected in November," the Greek tourism minister, Haris Theoharis, said. "While hotels and family-type venues are implementing protocols diligently, there's more congestion than we would like to see in bars, especially among the younger crowd … so we are trying to ensure some balance is kept."

About 186 officers have been sent to Mykonos alone, compared with 56 stationed there at this time last year.

On Thursday an additional 30 police officers, backed up by security officials and undercover agents, were dispatched to Ios, the 11-mile-long Cycladic island popular with younger tourists drawn to its bars.

The Greek deputy civil protection minister, Nikos Hardalias, said Mykonos and Ios were "one step" away from authorities imposing further restrictions, and that the situation on the islands of Zakynthos, Tinos, Lefkada, Santorini, Paros and Rhodes was also worrying.

Greece's south Aegean islands were marked dark red on the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control's Covid map on Thursday, meaning all but essential travel to and from the region is discouraged. The cluster of 13 islands includes Mykonos, Santorini and Rhodes.

> *'There's more congestion than we would like in bars'*
>
> **Haris Theoharis**
> *Greek tourism minister*

Arrivals have soared by 130% since last year when the tourist-dependent nation experienced a 75% drop in visitors – even if they still pale next to 2019 when Greece attracted a record 33.1 million people. Tourism revenues last month rose by more than 400% compared with June last year, said Theoharis.

"We have made up for some lost ground … about 140,000 visitors from the UK have flown in since 19 July. They are coming in big numbers though there is still some way to go. Britain is an important market."

But with the highly transmissible Delta variant also in the ascendant, industry officials speak of "managing the unmanageable" as new problems emerge daily.

Additional reporting **Reuters**

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Embassy row

Career diplomats critical of Biden's ambassador choices

Daniel Strauss
Washington

Joe Biden is sticking to tradition as he slowly fills out the vacancies in the ranks of ambassadors across the world, focussing on mixing career diplomatic officials with figures with strong ties to the president and the Democratic party.

Among Biden's expected picks is Caroline Kennedy - a former US ambassador to Japan, daughter of the former president and longtime Biden friend, ally and donor - to be ambassador to Australia. He has chosen the Los Angeles mayor, Eric Garcetti, who was a prominent Biden surrogate on the presidential campaign trail, to be ambassador to India, despite a relative lack of foreign policy experience. And the president is also widely expected to name the controversial former Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel as ambassador to Japan.

These choices, which are expected to be put forward for confirmation in the coming weeks, have answered a question hanging over Biden's presidency: how he would approach filling out the ambassadorial ranks and follow through on his vow to re-engage the world as president.

Biden's selections come despite pressure from the progressive wing of his party to depart from the status quo, which has meant new presidents give plum roles to top donors and high-profile figures with strong ties to the president.

Senator Elizabeth Warren, Biden's former progressive rival for the Democratic presidential nomination, is among those who have strongly argued that career diplomats and foreign affairs experts should get ambassadorial posts regardless of how much money they donate.

Biden's appointments have left some career diplomats frustrated.

"America's influence in the world is at a historic low so the notion that we're going to send movie moguls and fashion designers and political donors to repair it is antithetical to everything that Biden has talked about," said Brett Bruen, a former foreign service officer and director of global engagement during Barack Obama's presidency.

Bruen added that the trend among Biden's political ambassador picks is that "they all have a personal connection".

"This isn't how it should work. The qualifications for representing the United States should be based on national security criteria, not on a personal relationship to the president," Bruen said.

In the past few days Biden has nominated Jeff Flake, the former Republican senator from Arizona, to serve as ambassador to Turkey, and Tom Udall, the former Democratic senator from New Mexico, to be ambassador to New Zealand. He has also picked Cindy McCain, the wife of the late senator John McCain of Arizona, to be ambassador to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation.

According to the American Foreign Service Association's (AFSA), as of yesterday, out of the 45 ambassadorial nominations Biden has made, 48.9% are career appointments and 51.1% are non-career appointments. There are a total of 189 positions to be filled.

Some observers have noted that Biden's high-profile appointments have long CVs, such as Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the pick for ambassador to the UN, or Jane Hartley, a former ambassador to France who is Biden's choice to be ambassador to the UK.

Career officials interviewed by the Guardian also noted that as important as experience is, closeness to the president is often also seen as a key asset.

"That's what the countries want," said Adam Ereli, a former ambassador to Bahrain. "They want someone who can pick up the phone and talk to the president."

The Biden administration has been comparatively slower than its predecessors to fill key ambassadorships, even as in other areas of the federal government the president's team has moved swiftly to nominate and install judges or key officials.

"It's hard to understand why it's the middle of July and a lot of ambassadorships are not nominated yet," said Eric Rubin, the president of the AFSA. "And honestly if the White House says that's because of vetting, then the question is why has every other administration managed to do that faster?"

> *'The qualifications should be based on national security criteria'*
>
> **Brett Bruen**
> *Ex-foreign service officer*

▲ *Michelle and Barack Obama will be joined for the former president's party by A-list guests including George Clooney and Oprah Winfrey*

Back to Barack's Celebrities to join Obama for 60th bash

Rebecca Klein

Looks like former president Barack Obama is gearing up to throw the bash of the summer.

The 44th president is reportedly pulling out all the stops for his upcoming birthday. Obama, who turns 60 on Wednesday, will be inviting friends to celebrate with him this weekend on his estate on the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. The guest list includes Oprah Winfrey and George Clooney, according to the Hill. Guests are reportedly being asked to test beforehand for Covid-19.

Obama and family bought the house, which sits on nearly 30 acres, on Martha's Vineyard in 2019 for $11.75m, according to the Vineyard Gazette.

The Obamas are no strangers to star-studded birthday parties. Five years ago, the president's 55th birthday party at the White House included guests such as Magic Johnson, Stevie Wonder, Ellen DeGeneres and Paul McCartney.

The White House formally announced the event the day of the party, according to the New York Times. "The guest list includes a large number of family members and friends to mark the occasion. The private event will be paid for with the family's personal funds," said a statement. On this latest outdoor gathering, a source told the Hill, "It's going to be big."

In recent months, Obama has been busy expanding his influence in the world of entertainment. Last week it was announced that he and Bruce Springsteen will be releasing a book based on a podcast they made with Spotify. The book, like the podcast, will be titled Renegades: Born in the USA.

In May, the former president also joined footballer Marcus Rashford in a Zoom meeting arranged by Penguin Books to discuss activism. "The thing I want young people to see is that even in the highest reaches of power, where I'm sitting with world leaders and we're trying to design a programme to deal with climate change or end a war or address a major world economic crisis, it's still just humans," Obama said in the call.

The former president also heads a production company with his wife, Michelle, which has been preparing a slate of projects with Netflix.

◀ *The birthday celebrations will be hosted at the Obamas' house on the island of Martha's Vineyard, which was bought for $11.75m in 2019*

PHOTOGRAPHS: LANDVEST; CHELSEA LAUREN/BAFTA/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; MICHAEL KOVAK/WIRE IMAGE; JORDAN STRAUSS/INVISION/AP

FTSE 100	All share	Dow Indl	Nikkei 225	£/€	£/$
-46.12	-23.88	-119.18	-498.83	1.1725	1.3903
7032.30	4030.24	34965.35	27283.59	-0.0034	-0.0072

Financial

Payback time for Treasury as NatWest returns to profit

Kalyeena Makortoff
Banking correspondent

The Treasury is in line for bumper payouts after NatWest Group returned to profit and announced plans to return £3bn to stockholders through dividends and share buybacks over the next three years.

NatWest, which is majority owned by the taxpayer, said it planned to pay dividends worth £347m at 3p a share after recording a £2.5bn profit in the first half of the year as the British economy recovers from Covid-19.

The UK government still holds a 54.7% stake in the company, more than a decade after its state bailout during the 2008 financial crisis, meaning at least half of the dividend - £190m - will go to the exchequer.

Taxpayers could be in line for an even larger payout, however, as NatWest revealed plans for a £750m general share buyback - whereby the bank purchases shares held by its investors - this year. It also plans to distribute at least £1bn a year to shareholders for the next three years.

It came as the bank returned to profit in the second quarter, having swung to a loss of £1.3bn last year during the Covid crisis. Pre-tax profits for the three months to the end of June jumped to £1.6bn, easily beating consensus estimates of £861m.

Profits benefited from improving economic forecasts as lockdown measures were relaxed, which allowed the bank to reduce the pile of cash it had put aside to cushion the blow of potential loan defaults due to Covid by about £605m.

Analysts had expected NatWest, which put aside £2.1bn to cover bad debts during the same period in 2020 at the height of the Covid recession, to release only £84m.

"These results have been driven by good operating performances across the group, underpinned by a robust loan book and a strong capital position," the chief executive, Alison Rose, said, adding that the economic outlook had driven the release of cash. "While we see the potential for a more rapid recovery, we will continue to take an appropriate and conservative approach as the government schemes wind down and the economy reopens."

NatWest significantly increased its forecasts, saying it expected the British economy to grow at its fastest rate since the second world war. The bank forecasts UK GDP growth of 7.3% for the whole of 2021, up from previous estimates of a 4.8% rise. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate is expected to hit 5.3% for the year, down from the 11.7% predicted by the bank in December. "Credit quality continues to remain good, defaults remain low. We're seeing consumer spending, particularly in debit card and credit card spending, coming back to pre-Covid 19 levels," Rose said.

£2.5bn
Profits made by NatWest in the first half of the year as the economy recovered from the pandemic

Despite the improving outlook, NatWest cut its banker bonus pool by 20% for the first half of the year to £142m, down from £179m a year earlier. Its rivals Lloyds and Barclays announced this week they were increasing bonuses in light of their stronger performance.

"We'll look at our bonus at the year-end based on our performance," Rose said. "I think what you can see for the half-year results is we're making good progress on the targets that we have set."

The government announced plans earlier this month to gradually sell its NatWest shares over the next 12 months, in a move that will cut taxpayer ownership to a minority stake. The Treasury is aiming to sell off its remaining £12.6bn stake by 2025-26.

NatWest's chairman, Howard Davies, said the bank would probably seek shareholder approval to launch another targeted buyback aimed solely at reducing the government's holding by another 4.9%.

"We will renew approval for that at the next AGM," he added.

Eurozone beats growth forecast to come out of recession

Larry Elliott
Economics editor

Italy and Spain have helped drive the eurozone out of recession after a stronger than expected 2% expansion in the second quarter of 2021, official data has shown.

The 19-nation single currency area beat forecasts of a 1.5% increase in gross domestic product despite a disappointing performance from the bloc's powerhouse economy, Germany.

Figures from the EU's statistical agency, Eurostat, showed the eurozone growing at an annual rate of 13.7% in the April to June period, with this year's bounceback in activity a stark difference from the slump in output caused by Covid lockdowns in the same period of 2020.

Growth in the second quarter of 2021 followed a decline of 0.6% in the final three months of 2020 and a further 0.3% drop in the first quarter of this year, as the eurozone was hit by fresh waves of the pandemic.

Germany was expected to post growth of growth in the second quarter after a decline of 2.1% in the first three months of the year but managed only a 1.5% expansion after its manufacturing sector was affected by disruptions to supply chains caused by a shortage of computer chips.

But Italy and Spain, the third and fourth biggest economies in the single currency area, grew faster than City economists anticipated. Spain bounced back from a 0.4% decline in first-quarter output to record growth of 2.8% in the three months to June, while Italy's 2.7% expansion was double the 1.3% pencilled in by analysts.

Of the eurozone's four biggest economies, France had the weakest growth in the second quarter after a flat performance in the first three months of the year, with 0.9% growth between April and June.

Eurostat said higher energy prices caused eurozone inflation to rise from 1.9% in June to 2.2% in July - the highest annual rate since October 2018 and slightly above the European Central Bank's 2% target rate.

Andrew Kenningham, the chief Europe economist at the consultancy Capital Economics, said: "We expect another strong number for eurozone GDP in the third quarter, perhaps a little over 2% quarter on quarter, which would bring the economy close to, but below, its pre-pandemic level."

Figures published on Thursday showed that the US economy had returned to its pre-pandemic level.

Deliveroo to withdraw from Spain in face of 'rider law'

Jasper Jolly

Deliveroo has announced plans to pull out of Spain only months after the government promised a law to give gig economy workers greater employment rights.

Deliveroo, which is headquartered and listed in London, said remaining in Spain would require too much investment compared with its other markets, given the scale of its operations in the country.

The takeaway app company blamed its relatively small market share, saying that "achieving and sustaining a top-tier market position in Spain would require a disproportionate level of investment with highly uncertain long-term potential returns".

A spokesperson for Deliveroo said Spain's employment rights law was not the determining factor, but added that it had resulted in an earlier withdrawal from the country.

Spain's government announced plans in March to legislate to give workers at food delivery companies and other online platforms more employment rights after a landmark legal ruling, as the first EU country to do so. Known as the "rider law", the changes will mean a worker is presumed to be an employee rather than self-employed contractor. The changes will also force food digital platforms to inform delivery riders about how computer algorithms and artificial intelligence affect their working conditions.

Deliveroo said its withdrawal from Spain was subject to a month-long consultation with affected employees, beginning in September, with its services in the country halting in October.

The firm indicated the move would not have a significant financial impact, with less than 2% of its gross sales in Spain. Deliveroo operates in 12 markets, including Australia, Belgium, France, Hong Kong, and Italy, but Britain and Ireland account for half of its revenues.

Although the company did not explicitly mention the Madrid government's changes as it announced the move yesterday, the Spanish reforms have been seen as a direct challenge to the business models of companies such as Deliveroo, which rely on farming out delivery jobs to workers who are classified as independent contractors.

"The decision to propose ending our operations in Spain is not one we have taken lightly," said Hadi Moussa, Deliveroo's chief business officer for international. He said employees would be supported throughout the consultation period.

▲ *Deliveroo said its operations in Spain would end in October in a move linked to new rights for riders*
PHOTOGRAPH: BLOOMBERG

▲ *Travellers looking for tests on the government website are frustrated by confusing prices and availability*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID RUSHEN/SOPA IMAGES

Watchdog inquiry into 'wild west' of traveller Covid tests

Zoe Wood

Most of the cheapest Covid tests for travellers listed on the government website are not actually available to holidaymakers who plan to go away this summer, with critics saying consumers are at the mercy of a "wild west" marketplace.

The Advertising Standards Authority told the Guardian it was investigating after receiving complaints from consumers about what it described as "inconsistent pricing".

Private companies offering tests to travellers are listed on a government website for consumers to search, and results appear in order of price, with the cheapest options at the top.

At first glance, packages seem to be available for as little as £23. However, analysis of the deals advertised by the first 50 companies on the list shows that of the 36 offering on-site tests or click-and-collect packages, the cheapest options for travellers, two-thirds could not be bought or no appointments were available until September.

Analysts at the consultancy Fideres who conducted the research said companies appeared to be offering a "smattering" of low cost on-site tests in order to jump to the top of the list of 400-plus providers.

The cheapest two-swab postal kit, which would be required by travellers returning from an amber list country, cost £78, it found.

"The government is reporting prices that are a small fraction of what most consumers pay, without actually checking if these low prices are available," said Paul Vella, a Fideres associate. "Not only does this mislead consumers, it can actually steer them into using more expensive providers."

Unvaccinated holidaymakers returning to England from an amber list country must take a test before travel and book PCR tests for days two and eight of a 10-day quarantine when they return. If they are fully vaccinated, they only have to do one post-return test.

English holidaymakers can shop around for the best deal but the rules governing tests in the other home nations are different. In Wales, for example, travellers pay a set price and the test is provided by the NHS.

Fideres found that names at the top of the government list had the biggest gap between their advertised and actual prices within the top 50.

The government's decision to list companies in order of price, regardless of accessibility, meant they were encouraged to offer at least one extremely low cost service, said Vella.

It is not just the price of tests giving consumers a headache but the sheer difficulty of getting hold of them. Providers include the labs themselves and established resellers as well as recently formed companies that industry insiders say are little more than a website and phone number.

On Tuesday, Fideres tried to book the cheap on-site or click-and-collect test packages advertised by the 36 firms in the top 50. For August it was only possible to do this at a dozen of the companies, with attempts to book on some websites simply reaching a dead end. Where there was availability, it was usually in just one location.

> ***'The government is reporting prices that are a fraction of what most consumers pay, without checking if they're available'***
>
> **Paul Vella**
> *Fideres consultancy*

Yesterday morning CK Doctors Covid Travel Clinics was second on the list with a £23.50 supervised test. But the option is available only on Mondays and there are no slots available at its Bradford site until September. Anglia DNA, listed third, advertised a travel package for £24 but the test site is in Norwich and the booking system does not work for dates in August.

CK Doctors Covid Travel Clinics said it had no plans to stop advertising the deal, and the availability of tests was a capacity issue. Anglia DNA said there were a number of products at the low price points available on its website but availability was "highly dynamic".

While there are 421 companies listed on the government portal, the supply of tests and processing is done by only a handful of labs, with seven handling about 75% of the market. The rock-bottom prices being advertised are often below cost.

Testing firms are worried that the system is damaging the industry. Avi Lasarow, chief executive of Europe, Middle East and Africa at the testing firm Project Screen by Prenetics, is calling for the government to police it more closely.

"The government's list of holiday Covid test providers is like the wild west, with cowboys not playing fair with holidaymakers," he said. "It is clearly trying to monitor and measure providers to enforce higher standards. But this needs to now include a review of pricing and service policies ... to further ensure consumers are getting a reliable end-to-end service."

Drug firm that raised prices by 6,000% paid shareholders £400m

Rob Davies

A pharmaceuticals firm that inflated thyroid drug prices by up to 6,000% over a decade paid out more than £400m to shareholders and directors during the same period.

London-based Advanz Pharma, and its former private equity owners HgCapital and Cinven, were fined a combined £100m by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on Thursday.

Advanz and its subsidiaries were found to have charged "excessive and unfair prices" between 2009 and 2017 for liothyronine tablets, primarily used to treat hypothyroidism, which affects at least two in every 100 people and can lead to depression, tiredness and weight gain.

Patients were left with no option but to pay private doctors for prescriptions, and forced to hunt for cheaper tablets over the internet.

At the same time, Guardian analysis has found, the company rewarded investors and directors handsomely via a complex system of dividend payments and intra-company loans involving offshore entities.

During the period the CMA found that drug prices were inflated, Companies House filings show that dividends were paid to entities controlled from Luxembourg or Jersey.

The company sells a range of drugs, meaning revenues were likely generated by a variety of products, including but not limited to liothyronine, during the period.

The shareholder payouts were channelled through Mercury Pharma Group, part of the Advanz Pharma network of companies and one of the firms fined in the CMA's crackdown.

Between 2009 and 2012, Mercury Pharma Group paid £44.4m in dividends while under the ultimate ownership of Hg Capital.

In 2012, fellow private equity group Cinven bought Mercury from Hg and merged it with Amdipharm, which it had purchased that year, combining them under the control of a Jersey-based entity called Amdipharm Mercury. Under this new entity, Mercury paid a £12.8m dividend.

▲ *Patients taking liothyronine were forced to go private or stop treatment*

Cinven sold Amdipharm Mercury to Canadian drugs company Concordia Healthcare in a £2.3bn deal in 2015, but the Jersey-based structure remained in place. Now under Concordia's control, Mercury paid dividends of £240.3m in 2016 and £85.4m in 2017 to the Canadian firm's London-based subsidiary Concordia Investment Holdings (UK) Limited.

This firm paid no income tax over the period, instead claiming tax credits worth a combined £42m.

It was able to do so in part because it made significant losses over the three years, partly due to £344m in debt interest it paid on £1.47bn in loans with an interest rate of 10.5%.

As well as paying the Jersey entity hundreds of millions of pounds in interest, Concordia Investment Holdings (UK) also paid it dividends worth a combined £65m.

Concordia Healthcare changed its name to Advanz Pharma in 2018.

Over the eight-year period covered by the CMA's fine for inflating drug prices, Advanz Pharma also handed significant payouts to senior managers. A subsidiary paid directors, who never numbered more than three people, about £21m over the period.

A spokesperson for Advanz said: "We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency in all our dealings with all applicable authorities, including all tax authorities.

"The payment of dividends by a UK company to a Jersey company does not carry a tax benefit for any party since dividends are not tax deductible for the UK payer in any circumstances. Under UK tax law, no tax is required to be withheld from dividends paid by a UK company regardless of who receives the dividend, and dividends are not taxable on receipt in both the UK and Jersey. Given this, the dividends did not create a tax benefit.

"The level of interest deducted by CIHUKL [Concordia Investment Holdings (UK)] for UK tax purposes is in accordance with the law and HMRC has agreed our taxes for the periods."

On Thursday, the CMA said it had fined Advanz, its subsidiaries, Cinven and Hg a combined £100m. Advanz was fined almost £41m, while Hg and Cinven will pay penalties of £8.6m and £51.9m respectively.

The CMA found in 2017 that Advanz had taken advantage of limited competition in the market to bring in sustained price hikes for liothyronine of more than 6,000% in the space of 10 years. The repeated price increases led NHS spending on the tablets to soar from £600,000 in 2006 to as much as £30m by 2016.

The NHS dropped the tablets in July 2015, causing patients to stop treatment or pay for them privately.

The Guardian approached Cinven for comment. Hg declined to comment.

▼ An Amazon fulfilment centre. The company's sales have averaged $1.2bn a day in the past quarter

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS RATCLIFFE/BLOOMBERG

Big tech The threat from a handful of firms that made billions during the pandemic

Dominic Rushe

Big tech provided us with some startling numbers this week. In the past three months Amazon's sales have averaged more than $1.2bn (£860m) a day. It took the company less than four seconds to earn the $52,000 the average American makes in a year. Apple is sitting on nearly $200bn in cash, more than this year's expected sales of Covid-19 vaccines.

The coronavirus shook the world economy but it has given the US tech giants a historic bonanza. In back-to-back corporate earnings releases, Google, Apple and Microsoft all reported record-breaking quarterly sales and profits. Facebook doubled its profits and reported its fastest growth in five years. In three months, the US's five largest tech companies made combined profits of over $68bn.

It didn't start that way. As the pandemic raged across the US last April, Amazon's founder, Jeff Bezos, warned of "the hardest time we've ever faced" and said shareholders should "take a seat." The company planned to spend $4bn or more in the next three months on coronavirus-related expenses, wiping out its profits for the quarter. Shareholders needn't have worried. On Thursday the company announced a $7.8bn profit after sales that topped $100bn for the third quarter in a row.

Money has poured in as coronavirus supercharged the shift to online working, shopping and automation. Critics worry that if the trend continues we will enter a future where our lives are controlled by a handful of super-rich, super-powerful corporations directed by a generation of plutocrats with wealth unseen in human history. This week, the combined fortune of the richest seven billionaires, all of them big tech titans, passed $1tn for the first time, according to the Institute of Policy Studies' (IPS) inequality tracking project.

▲ Jeff Bezos warned of hard times last year but Amazon has flourished

"We are looking at a Blade Runner future, a world where a handful of companies will dominate all economic activity," said Chuck Collins, senior scholar at IPS. "This is not just bad for the economy, it's bad for consumers, for communities, for competition. There is real harm here."

When a company is as dominant as Amazon is in online retail, Google in search or Facebook in social media, competition gets ever harder, he said. Their huge cash piles mean they can buy out – a favorite Facebook tactic – or copy new entrants, investors will shy away from putting cash into potential competitors, entrepreneurs will aim to sell out to the giants rather than take them on.

As well as all that cash comes political power and the means to fight any official or government that challenges them. "We are creating a political and corporate oligarchy that is fundamentally against a healthy democracy and competition," Collins said.

Academics have long warned that the structure of the digital economy was likely to create a "winner takes all" scenario. Now there are clear signals that governments around the world are waking up to that threat. Europe in particular has challenged big tech's dominance and its globe-spanning ability to avoid paying taxes.

▲ Apple shop in Shanghai: the firm is sitting on nearly $200bn in cash

The US has been slow to catch up. But the Biden administration has made appointments that suggest the easy ride is over. In June, prominent big tech critic Lina Khan was named chair of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the government body that oversees antitrust law and consumer protection. During her confirmation hearings, Khan said she saw a "whole range of potential risks" around the tech companies. "One that comes up across the board is that the ability to dominate one market gives companies, in some instances, the ability to expand into adjacent markets."

The Biden administration has also added Tim Wu, a Columbia University professor, to its National Economic Council. Wu has long warned that the dominance of a handful of huge tech companies threatens to return the US to an economy unseen since the late 1800s when "robber-barons" controlled swathes of industry. "Extreme economic concentration yields gross inequality and material suffering," Wu wrote in his 2018 book, The Curse of Bigness: Antitrust in the New Gilded Age.

Other threats loom. The Teamsters, one of the US's largest unions, is funding efforts to get Amazon workers unionised after the company crushed earlier efforts. And the FTC and state attorneys general across the US have active investigations into the big tech companies.

Even some of tech's biggest winners seem worried. Ten years ago Marc Andreessen, co-founder of Netscape, the once dominant web browser, and an investor who has backed companies including Facebook, Twitter and Skype, wrote – largely positively – that "software is eating the world."

"Over the next 10 years, the battles between incumbents and software-powered insurgents will be epic," he wrote. "Joseph Schumpeter, the economist who coined the term 'creative destruction', would be proud."

Now he doesn't sound so sure. Talking to the Substack writer Noah Smith this month, he said: "We went from being pirates to being the navy. People may love pirates when they're young and small and scrappy, but nobody likes a navy that acts like a pirate. And today's technology industry can come across a lot like a navy that acts like a pirate."

Data protection
Amazon fined £635m

Amazon has been hit with a record €746m (£635m) fine by Luxembourg's data protection watchdog, the company disclosed in a stockmarket filing this week.

The fine was imposed on a subsidiary of Amazon in Luxembourg on 16 July, the retailer explained, on the grounds that "Amazon's processing of personal data did not comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation".

The GDPR regulation requires companies to seek people's consent before using their personal data or face steep fines. The sanction would be the largest ever levied under the legislation. Amazon said the decision was "without merit" and that it intends to defend itself "vigorously". Dominic Rushe

Money

Pension gap

How to boost your savings pot and plug the divide

Women on average retire with less than half the retirement income of men. **Harriet Meyer** meets three women bucking the trend

Women are still facing retirement with substantially less saved in their pensions than men. Low pay is a major contributing factor to the gender pension gap, as women often take part-time positions or become self-employed to manage family commitments.

On average, women earn around 16% less than men, according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics.

Time taken out of work to raise a family can also result in broken national insurance records, and years without putting any money into savings at all.

This week, insurer Legal & General published research showing that women have lower pension pot sizes in every age bracket, with the situation "significantly deteriorating" as they approach retirement.

The research, based on data from 4 million L&G pension scheme members, found that the typical gender pension gap is 17% at the beginning of women's careers, and increases to 56% at retirement compared with men.

Meanwhile, the average L&G pension pot for a woman at retirement (£10,000) was found to be less than half that of a man (£21,000).

However, some women are bucking the trend. Here, we speak to women at different life stages who are determined to boost their pension savings in the run-up to, and into, retirement.

Sandra Wrench, 70 – delaying the state pension

Sandra Wrench, from Bedford, doubled her state pension by delaying taking it for seven-and-a-half years, and also paying for some additional pension.

Since May, she's received about £16,000 a year in state pension, in addition to the £11,000 final salary pension she receives from employment.

"This is more than I earned in total when I was working," says Wrench, who worked for the Department for Work and Pensions, with 18 years spent in the state pension department.

"So I knew about the benefits of delaying, and paying for state pension top-ups while this scheme was around," she says.

When she turned 60, Sandra partly retired, reducing her working week to 17 hours. "This way, I could keep going for longer," she says.

As Sandra reached state pension age before 6 April 2016, she was able to increase her entitlement by 1% for every five weeks she postponed starting to take it, under the old system (see the righthand panel for the current rules on delaying your pension).

"I also used inheritance to pay voluntary class 3A contributions for an extra £25 a week additional pension, but this scheme was only available for a few years," she adds. "It was to give those who received the old, smaller state pension the opportunity to increase the amount they received."

By combining delaying her state pension payment with the additional amount, she doubled its value from about £151 a week to £310 a week.

"Women shouldn't leave checking their state pension until the last minute," she stresses. "It's easier to correct any errors sooner rather than later, and there are still ways to increase the amount you get."

> *'I started to look at my pension when auto-enrolment came in and the state pension age rose'*
>
> **Kathy Honeyball**
> *Client relationship manager*

Kathy Honeyball, 54 – maximising her company pension

Kathy is doing whatever she can to boost her pension, with dreams of retiring early.

"I'd like to start phasing my retirement in three years or so," says Kathy, who works as a client relationship manager for an insurer. "Then I'd want to spend more time helping with the grandchildren, or doing something different such as volunteering."

Kathy, who expects to receive her state pension at age 67, has £587,000 saved in defined contribution pensions, also known as money purchase plans. This consists of around £367,000 in the company pension with her current employer, and a couple of other, smaller pots from previous employment.

"I started to take a look at my own pension around the time when auto-enrolment was introduced [in 2012] and the state pension age started to increase," she says, adding that she increased the amount she was paying into her company pension to around 15% of salary, with her current employer contributing a little bit less.

The divorcee lives in Sheffield, and has two sons, aged 26 and 23.

"I think it's important to be in control of your future," she says. "I've got a partner, but we're not married and I've always been financially independent."

By using an online retirement calculator, Kathy has worked out that her pension savings could provide an income of about £24,000 a year from age 60, depending on the investment growth.

Jess Keplinger, 38 – getting a head start

Jess Keplinger knows that taking time out of work to raise her son will have serious effects on her pension pot.

"But I'm lucky, because I learned the value of saving from my parents, and I've built up some retirement savings," she says.

She was working in events management, but since having her son, who is almost three, she's struggled to find a job that was sufficiently flexible to cope with nursery pickups.

"It's a situation so many mums find themselves in," says Jess, from West Hampstead in north-west London. "I'm not able to pay into a pension at the moment,

> *'If I went back into full-time employment I'd see a pension as one of the biggest benefits'*
>
> **Jess Keplinger**
> *Mother*

Going for a song
How to nab cheap theatre tickets
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▲ *Sandra Wrench doubled her state pension by delaying taking it for seven-and-a-half years. She now receives about £16,000 a year*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LEVENE

but I'm working hard juggling a lot at home."

Her husband works in finance, and as the lower earner, she took a career break to raise their son. She's now retraining as a self-employed naturopathic health coach.

Jess has around £100,000 in a self-invested personal pension (Sipp) with Interactive Investor, after consolidating four pensions from previous employment.

"My dad set up a Sipp and Isa for me when I was little, so I had a head start, too," she says.

"I don't know why women aren't told at school about the value of a pension," she adds. "They often bear the brunt of a massive savings gap in their 30s."

Jess manages her pension herself, investing in a range of shares and funds within her Sipp.

"If I went back into full-time employment, I'd see a pension as one of the biggest benefits. When I can, I'll start paying in again."

Retirement
How to take charge of your state pension

Check your national insurance
The full new state pension is currently £179.60 a week. You will need 35 years' worth of qualifying national insurance contributions (NICs) to receive the full state pension, which may consist of earnings-related contributions, national insurance credits (for example, if you were unemployed, ill or a parent or carer) or voluntary contributions. You will usually need at least 10 "qualifying years" on your record to get any state pension.

Check your details at gov.uk/check-national-insurance-record to see: what you have paid, up to the start of the current tax year; any national insurance credits you have received; if gaps in contributions or credits mean some years do not count towards your state pension (that is, they are not qualifying years); and if you can pay voluntary contributions to fill any gaps, and how much this will cost.

If you find there are gaps, check for things such as who is eligible to pay contributions and how it all works. The rates for the 2021-22 tax year are £3.05 a week (£158.60 for a year) for class 2, and £15.40 a week (£800.80 for a year) for class 3. If you are claiming child benefit for a child aged up to 12, or carer's allowance for an adult, you are entitled to NI credits, which count towards your pension entitlement.

Save into a pension (even if you're not working)
You can still save up to £2,880 into a pension each tax year if you are not working, and the state will boost this by £720 through tax relief, which means £3,600 goes into your pot.

If this is affordable, your savings can come out of other accounts or your partner may pay into a pension on your behalf.

Paying in during maternity leave
"If you stop paying in, your employer can stop, too," says Sarah Coles, a personal finance analyst at investment firm Hargreaves Lansdown. "And if you can afford to keep up contributions, you'll pay less because you only pay in a percentage of your maternity pay. But your employer has to continue at their usual level."

Top up your pension
"Women planning to take a career break should try to pay extra into their pension before they stop working, to compensate for the future loss of employer contributions," says Kay Ingram, a chartered financial planner at LEBC Group. Some employers offer to match extra contributions, and tax relief also boosts personal savings.

Make use of free help
There are plenty of free tools and websites that can guide you along the way. Insurer Aviva offers a "Mid-Life MOT" app that can show you where your retirement savings stand and how to fix shortfalls. At retirement, there's the government-backed free guidance service Pension Wise at pensionwise.gov.uk to help understand your options. You can also use one of the many online retirement income calculators, such as Fidelity's MyPlan.

Delay taking your state pension
For every nine weeks you delay (defer) taking your state pension, it increases by 1%, which works out at just under 5.8% for a year. So if you are entitled to £179.60 a week, by deferring for 52 weeks you will get an extra £10.42 a week. (The above applies to those reaching state pension age after 6 April 2016).

If you are healthy and want to stay in work, this could make sense. However, based on those numbers, it would take you 17 years to earn back all of the pension you missed out on by deferring for a year. As former pensions minister Ros Altmann put it, if you go down this road, you need to live for a long time to make up for the time in which you received nothing.

▼ *Make use of free pensions advice from firms such as Aviva or Fidelity*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY

▲ *Starling gained 18,874 customers in the first three months of the year – nearly four times as many as Barclays* PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIAN DENNIS /AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Banks
Starling draws switchers as Tesco plans to shut accounts

App-based lender emerges as biggest winner in new figures, with Virgin Money also making sizeable gains. **Rupert Jones** reports

Starling Bank is proving to be one of the big winners in the battle for current account customers, it emerged this week

And the app-based bank could recruit even more after it was announced on Monday that Tesco Bank is closing all of its customers' current accounts from the end of November.

That announcement comes hard on the heels of one from Marks & Spencer's banking arm, M&S Bank, which is shutting down its current accounts on 31 August.

So, all in all, there will be quite a few people looking for a new current account provider during the coming weeks and months. That's on top of those people who want to switch because they are fed-up with their existing bank or can get a better deal elsewhere.

The easiest way of moving to another bank is to switch using the industry's Current Account Switch Service. This ensures that all direct debits and standing orders and incoming payments such as salary are moved over to the new account. Your new bank will switch your payments and transfer your balance, and your old bank will take care of closing your old account.

Data for the first three months of this year shows that, of the 50 participating banks, Starling enjoyed the largest "net switching gain". It gained 18,874 customers – nearly four times as many as Barclays picked up – and lost 1,105 customers, so the net gain figure was 17,769.

Close behind was Virgin Money with a net gain of 17,495 customers.

These figures only include people who used the switch service – there will be quite a lot of people who aren't included in the data because they didn't use it or this is their first bank.

Founded in 2014, Starling went fully live in 2017 and now boasts 2.37m current accounts. It claims on its website that "someone joins Starling every 38 seconds".

It offers a range of products including a no-monthly-fee current account that comes with a Mastercard debit card. The account lets you do all the things you would expect. It's app-based but you can also manage it from your laptop or computer. One plus point is no fees when you use your card overseas – it uses Mastercard's exchange rate and doesn't add anything on top.

Starling has a 4.3 "excellent" score on Trustpilot, though it is fair to say that there are a number of recent one-star reviews.

The bank's chief executive, Anne Boden, says: "Starling is once again the most popular bank for switches, despite offering no signing-on bonuses ... In a few short years we've become a trusted mainstream bank."

Virgin Money, meanwhile, claims it is now the UK's sixth-largest bank and includes the Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank brands. It says: "The Virgin brand is clearly shining through ... Customers now have a real alternative and are turning their backs on mainstream banks."

You can usually switch your current account to a new provider even if you are overdrawn, though you will need to agree any overdraft facilities with your new bank.

Theatre tickets

As the Covid curtain rises, the price of a show falls

With lockdown rules easing, venues are keen to lure the fans back, prompting a raft of cheap tickets. **Rupert Jones** tells you how to nab some

Fancy being spun around in your seat, plied with six glasses of champagne, blasted by loud rock'n'roll or having dancers virtually sitting in your lap?

Some theatres are ramping up the "immersive" factor as they try to tempt nervous punters to part with their cash and see a show.

In some cases, these seats don't come cheap - however, if you are keen to catch a show but don't want to pay a fortune, you are in luck. As a result of Covid-19, there are stacks of great deals around at the moment, with savings of up to 80% available in some cases, and some venues offering decent seats for as little as £5 or £10.

"There are a hell of a lot of bargains. If you want to go to the theatre, now's the time to go," says Steve Rich, the founder of the website Theatremonkey.com, which focuses on London's West End and features seat reviews and details of deals. "I would certainly say that for the most part, supply is way outstripping demand."

The upside for those happy to take the plunge is that, for some shows, there may never again be a time when you can get a good seat this cheap.

A number of big West End shows have opened recently or are getting ready to bring up the curtain. On 20 August, Back to the Future: The Musical begins previews at London's Adelphi, and tickets start at £19.55 (Marty McFly travels back in time to 1955) and £19.85 (Back to the Future the movie came out in 1985). When Guardian Money looked this week, you could still pick up some £19.55 or £19.85 tickets in the stalls, at the ends of the front rows - however, the website says these seats are close to the speakers, so "we expect sound levels to be very high". Presumably when Marty and his band the Pinheads are rocking out ...

▼*Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cinderella is scheduled to reopen at the Gillian Lynne Theatre on 18 August*
PHOTOGRAPH: TRISTRAM KENTON

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is back in the West End, at the Palladium, starring Alexandra Burke and Jason Donovan, and this week put the majority of tickets for selected July and August performances on sale for £25. These are seats that normally sell for up to £85.

Meanwhile, Disney this week launched a scheme that will let people access £20 seats for shows such as The Lion King at London's Lyceum theatre, which resumed performances on Thursday, and the musical Frozen, which begins previews at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane on 27 August. You can buy a maximum of two tickets for that day's performance. They go on sale at 10am and it's first come, first served.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical, Cinderella, at the Gillian Lynne theatre - which had to be paused while still in preview because of the coronavirus and is scheduled to reopen on 18 August - has lots of ticket options. Those with deep pockets can go for the front stalls seats, which apparently move or revolve in some way - a note on the website says of them: "Your ticket to the ball. In this seat you will be moved in more ways than one." But those typically cost about £100 each. However, there are stalls seats available from £19.50, and there's also a lottery, with £25 tickets available for every performance (there is a weekly draw).

One show that has been selling particularly well is Moulin Rouge! The Musical, which opens at London's Piccadilly theatre in November. Tickets start from £25. However, at the money-no-object end, our eyes were drawn to the "Blue Elephant" ticket package, which includes six - yes, six - glasses of champagne per person and costs from £184.50. It will be interesting to see what alcohol charities think about that. There will also be "can-can" table seats available to buy that will be surrounded on all sides by the action on stage.

One of the best ways to hear about special offers and flash sales is to follow your local or favourite theatre on social media and sign up to any email alerts.

Many theatres run their own schemes: for example, Glasgow's Citizens theatre offers some 50p tickets for full-capacity shows, while Manchester's Royal Exchange does "pay what you decide" tickets.

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Insurance Company refuses payout to widow after husband took his own life

The 49-year-old died eight days before a policy clause ran out, leading the claim for £338,000 to be rejected. **Miles Brignall** reports

Billie Lee-Smith and her husband, Tony, took out the policy when they bought a new house in 2019

The widow of a 49-year-old architect who unexpectedly took his own life has appealed to an insurance company to treat her family "fairly and with compassion" after it used its small print to decline her £338,000 life insurance claim. Had his death happened eight days later, the company would almost certainly have paid the claim.

Billie Lee-Smith, who has two daughters aged 10 and 16, faces having to sell what she thought was her and her husband Tony's dream home. They had taken out the policy with the insurer Aegon, which was designed to pay off their mortgage should anything happen to either of them.

The lawyer who has advised the family described Aegon's stance as "unnecessarily harsh", which has only added to their sense of loss. She believes most other insurers would have paid a similar claim and says she is shocked at the Aegon chief executive's personal refusal to pay out.

However, in his letter, Mike Holliday-Williams said that while the company had a great deal of sympathy for Lee-Smith's plight, it would be unfair to other customers if it paid her claim. The firm said it needed to be consistent in the way it applied the terms and conditions set out in its policies.

Aegon has declined to pay the life-changing claim on the basis of its suicide clause. Its life policies, along with those of most other insurers, have a term that states they will not pay out where the insured person takes their own life within the first 12 months of cover. Lee-Smith's husband died eight days short of the clause's expiry.

Insurers impose such terms to prevent people taking out life cover with a premeditated plan to solve their financial difficulties by taking their own lives. A year is generally considered more than enough time to prevent such claims from arising.

"You would think that a life insurance company would treat people who had been through such a devastating event with some compassion – my daughter was the one to find my husband – but to Aegon it was almost as though we have claimed for a mundane car theft. Trying to deal with this while keeping the family together has been unimaginably difficult," Lee-Smith says.

> ***'You'd think that an insurance firm would treat people who had been through such a devastating event with compassion'***
>
> **Billie Lee-Smith**
> *Aegon customer*

The couple only became Aegon customers when they bought a new home in October 2019, and were advised to upgrade their life cover for their newly increased mortgage. Had they stayed with their previous life cover provider of many years, that policy would have paid out.

Lee-Smith says her husband had no history of mental health problems or depression, and was a successful architect and company director. They had good incomes and at the time had no financial worries. His death came completely out of nowhere, and even to this day she says she has no idea what caused it.

"Looking back on it, I can only assume he suffered a terrible and rapid mental health episode almost akin to suffering a heart attack or similar. If my husband had been trying to game Aegon into making a payout, he would have hardly done what he did. We had paid the full year of premiums, and to refuse to pay out because this happened eight days before the first year was up not only seems unfair but it also fails to take into account the circumstances. I thought that as a society we were becoming more aware of mental health but Aegon's ruling appears completely contrary to that. It's as if his suicide is treated like a crime for which the family are being punished," she says.

Jan Trainor of BTW Solicitors, which specialises in helping individuals turned down by insurers, says she is very surprised at Aegon's stance. She says she is only aware of two other similar cases, and that in those, the insurer eventually paid up.

"The business has not provided any reason as to why it has invoked the suicide clause, and its position seems unnecessarily harsh in the circumstances. This policy replaced a previous one of longstanding, and it is very clear from the facts that there was no attempt to manipulate the company into paying a false claim. Life cover is meant to provide insurance against the unforeseen, and this tragic case very clearly falls entirely into that category. For Aegon to deny this claim because this man took his life eight days too early is appalling," she says.

An Aegon spokesperson says: "We have a lot of sympathy for Mrs Lee-Smith, and our decision has not been taken lightly. Having looked at the claim from every angle, the decision to decline it is based on our requirement to apply the terms and conditions we set out in policies consistently with all customers."

The company has advised her that she can take the matter to the Financial Ombudsman Service, which would review the case.

The problem with that option is that it could take perhaps two years for their claim to be heard – time the family does not have. Now having to manage on Lee-Smith's teacher's salary, it looks unlikely that the family will be able to afford the mortgage payments, unless Aegon makes an about-turn.

"This family tragedy is being compounded by the worry and anxiety over losing our family home. I would struggle to put into words how my life and the lives of my children have changed over these past months. It is something I never thought I would ever have to go through, and I would not wish this upon anyone. The whole reason for having insurance is for devastating life occurrences such as these. In our case it has turned out to be worthless," she says.

In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org or jo@samaritans.ie

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Consumer champions
Miles Brignall

Ryanair wants a fortune to change our flights

I'm sure you will have received many letters about Ryanair during the pandemic, but I'd like your views on our experience.

We decided to take our extended family on holiday to Marseille in July 2020, so we booked flights – more than half with Ryanair and the rest with easyJet. Due to Covid we were unable to travel last July. EasyJet gave us vouchers for their flights; however, our Ryanair flights weren't cancelled so our only option was to change flights to this July, and to pay the extra charges of £1,000.

As this July approached it became clear we couldn't travel as most of the party were not fully immunised. EasyJet cancelled its flights and issued new vouchers. The Ryanair flights were not cancelled, so once again we tried to rebook.

To avoid paying any more, I looked for flights that were well within the price we had already paid, leaving enough credit to pay the flight change fees. I found four to Lisbon, but when I phoned Ryanair to make the changes, I was asked for another £470 payment.

At this point I decided I had had enough and refused. Had I gone ahead, it would have meant I would have paid £1,800 for four return flights to Lisbon – flights that I had just seen on the Ryanair website on sale at £800.

The company said that rebooked flights are priced differently to new bookings. I cannot understand how this is legal – it certainly isn't ethical. As a family we have collectively lost £2,500 to Ryanair, and only wanted £800 worth of flights, but the company wouldn't do it. We feel very badly treated.
ST, *by email*

I can well understand why you are so cross. Ryanair told me that as you booked the original flights before it introduced its "zero change fee" policy, a flight change fee and the difference in fare would apply – hence the extra charges. However, it should be said that last week, Which? reported that passengers who had tried to test the airline's zero change fee were still reporting being overcharged.

▲ *Ryanair asked for hundreds of pounds to move a reader's booking*
PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL HART/ALAMY

As we found last year, Ryanair offers two-tier pricing – the online price for new customers, and the much higher price for those moving flights via its online portal. No explanation of this has been offered. The question as to whether it is legal remains unchallenged, as far as I know. It has certainly upset a great many passengers but, as we know, this is a company that appears to care less than others about such matters.

The simple answer is to always look at Ryanair flights as non-changeable, and accept that it will almost certainly be cheaper just to buy new ones if the worst happens. Meanwhile, if you still want to fly somewhere this summer, Ryanair has said that if you contact its customer services, "the change fee will be waived this time".

BT is trying to charge me to leave its broadband

Can you please help me as BT is chasing me for £348 in early termination fees despite previously telling me that it would forgo these charges. The broadband service provided to my house had always been poor, but after I had open heart surgery four years ago, I needed a service that worked. After repeated attempts by BT to improve matters, I eventually switched to Sky, which improved matters somewhat.

At the time BT said I could leave penalty-free, and staff told me to ignore any bills that were sent. However, the company's most recent letter said it will pass the matter to debt collectors if the bill is not paid with seven days.
AB, *Penzance*

It won't be much consolation to you, but I think BT's customer services are much-improved in recent years – most likely due to the decision to bring its call centre operations back to the UK.

After I got on to BT, it quickly resolved the matter. It says: "We're very sorry for the time it has taken to remove **AB**'s early termination fees. This was due to human error when processing the final bill and closing the account."

We welcome letters but cannot answer individually. Email us at consumer.champions@theguardian.com or write to Consumer Champions, Money, the Guardian, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU. Please include a daytime phone number. Submission and publication of all letters is subject to our terms and conditions: http://theguardian.com/letters-terms

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◀ **Croscombe, Somerset**
£995,000
The Old Manor is in the heart of festival country. It is three miles from Wells which will host its 29th festival of literature in October. Three miles in the other direction is Pilton, home to the five-day Glastonbury festival, which was cancelled this year. The seven-bedroom Grade I-listed property covers 419 sq metres (4,514 sq ft) and is thought to have been built in 1460 for the then treasurer of Wells Cathedral. It still bears the architectural hallmarks of this period with a Tudor chimney pot and roughcast, limewashed walls. *Inigo, 020 3687 3071*

Fantasy house hunt
Homes for the festival season

Compiled by Anna White

▶ **Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire**
£795,000
This 17th-century Grade II-listed townhouse is built of Cotswold stone, with deep sash windows. It has three bedrooms, two reception rooms and one bathroom, but needs modernisation. The property is just off the high street in Bourton-on-the-Water, which sits in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The nearest large town is Cheltenham, where the horse racing festival will take place next March, followed by a jazz festival in April, and there's a food and drink festival in the summer, too. *Strutt & Parker, 01608 653308*

▲ **Netherlee, Glasgow**
£310,000
This two-bedroom ground-floor flat is within a converted mansion in the Glasgow suburbs. Linn Park is the second-largest park in Glasgow and hosts the remains of Cathcart Castle. The oldest park in the city is Glasgow Green, on the north bank of the Clyde, which will host TRNSMT 2021 in September with a lineup including Liam Gallagher and Primal Scream. *Allen & Harris, 0141 620 3393*

▼ **Clapham, London**
From £116,750
The RTRN II DANCE drum'n'bass festival takes place on Clapham Common this August bank holiday weekend. Stumbling distance away is the SO Resi block with one-, two- and three-bedroom flats left for sale. These are shared ownership, meaning an eligible buyer can purchase a 25% share and rent the rest from the local authority, with a deposit of just 5%. *SO Resi Clapham Park, 020 8607 0550*

◀ **Chichester, West Sussex**
£450,000
Chichester's sailing fiesta, the Marina Boat Show, returned in June with onshore and offshore demonstrations, including stand-up paddleboarding, plenty of Chichester Harbour Gin on offer and a flotilla of yachts for sale. The harbour is an area of outstanding natural beauty that straddles West Sussex and Hampshire. In Chichester town centre sits this semi-detached cottage for those who want to be within walking distance of a train station. The three-bedroom property has a surprisingly long garden, but the interiors are far from shipshape. *Charles Peck, 03339 873 557*

Travel

Action station

Exploring the Cotswolds from our village base

Walkers are Welcome is a network of towns that make excellent hubs for hiking. **Sarah Baxter** puts her boots to the test in Winchcombe

On a sunny day, on a hike in the Cotswold foothills, we stumble upon walking royalty. In the graveyard of Dumbleton's Norman church, there he is: Patrick Leigh Fermor. A man who, in the 1930s, strode from Holland to the Bosphorus. Scanning his headstone's Greek inscription in the oh-so-English countryside, we're awed, humbled, envious. Though also aware that you don't have to trek quite that far for a satisfying journey.

On our own five-day, car-free trip to Gloucestershire, my partner and I have walked almost 100 miles - and gotten nowhere. But we've found, among other things, a neolithic tomb, a wife of Henry VIII, a lot of birds and, now, a travel writing legend.

I like a linear long-distance walk, the sense of moving onwards. But with so many of us holidaying at home this year, finding available accommodation in a different place each night is trickier than ever. So to make life easier, we decided to hike to a self-catering cottage and do all our rambles from there. A good plan - as long as you pick the right base.

We opt for Winchcombe. It has an appealing amount of Cotswoldiness: honey stone houses, a pillowy-green setting, tearooms, antiques shops and an oversized church, pimpled with gargoyle-like grotesques. But it also feels like people live here. Among the 60-odd independents is a baker, butcher and deli, hardware store, post office and chemist. And while some Cotswold villages offer little more than cute photo ops, here there are things to do: four pubs, a museum and, on the outskirts, 15th-century Sudeley Castle (where Catherine Parr is buried).

Plus, Winchcombe was one of the first towns to join Walkers Are Welcome, a community-led network of UK towns accredited as excellent hubs for hiking. This means footpaths are reliably maintained and trail information is readily available. Since 2009, an annual walking festival has been held here (1-3 October in 2021) and, 10 years ago, the Winchcombe Way was launched, a 42-mile, figure-of-eight route centred on the town.

▲ *Cotswold sheep in the medieval wool town of Chipping Campden*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID KNIBBS/GETTY IMAGES

To start, we trek to Winchcombe from Cheltenham train station; there is a direct bus, but we're keen to start walking right away. We leave the genteel spa town for the looming escarpment and soon join the Cotswold Way national trail. This leads us over Cleeve Common, the Cotswolds' highest point; a sign warns us not to "obstruct, annoy or molest" any golfers (we don't); belted Galloways graze the scientifically interesting grassland; and a topograph points to the Malverns and Wales. Beyond, we pass the sleeping-giant hump of Belas Knap long barrow before finally reaching Winchcombe. Dinner at the old Lion Inn has been richly earned.

And collapsing into Thimble Cottage, our home for the break, is ideal. It's a little limestone terraced bolthole only a few strides from the church and a couple more from the bakery, and we can drink our post-walk beers either on the garden patio or by the woodburner.

The following day, we buy chunky pasties from the bakery and take the bus north to the medieval wool town of Chipping Campden, with its glorious golden high street. This is the start of the Cotswold Way, which we follow back to Winchcombe, continuing our national trail wanderings in the opposite direction.

It's a classic stretch, all buzzards and skylarks, lambs bleating behind limestone walls and blossom-dappled lanes. Our roaming may be slightly constricted by using one base but, standing by the hilltop folly of Broadway Tower, we can see far and wide - over (so they say) 16 counties on a clear day.

The Cotswold Way also takes us past Stanway, where there's a fine Jacobean manor and a restored watermill. Both are shut when we first pass but, two days later, when we're passing again - this time on the Winchcombe Way's eastern loop - the mill is in action.

> ***There is a bus but we're keen to start walking right away, so trek from Cheltenham station***

"Demand has rocketed since lockdown," the miller tells us as we peek inside to watch the cogs and grindstones pummelling the locally grown grain, much as they have since at least 1291.

This retracing of our steps was unusual. Though we cover 100 miles, we only repeat a handful. Such is the abundance of footpaths around Winchcombe that there are always new routes to follow.

◀ *The Winchcombe Way footpath*
PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN DOREY/GETTY IMAGES

My kinder town
The community where kindness is the ethos
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Slow Snowdonia
Discovering the region by train and bus
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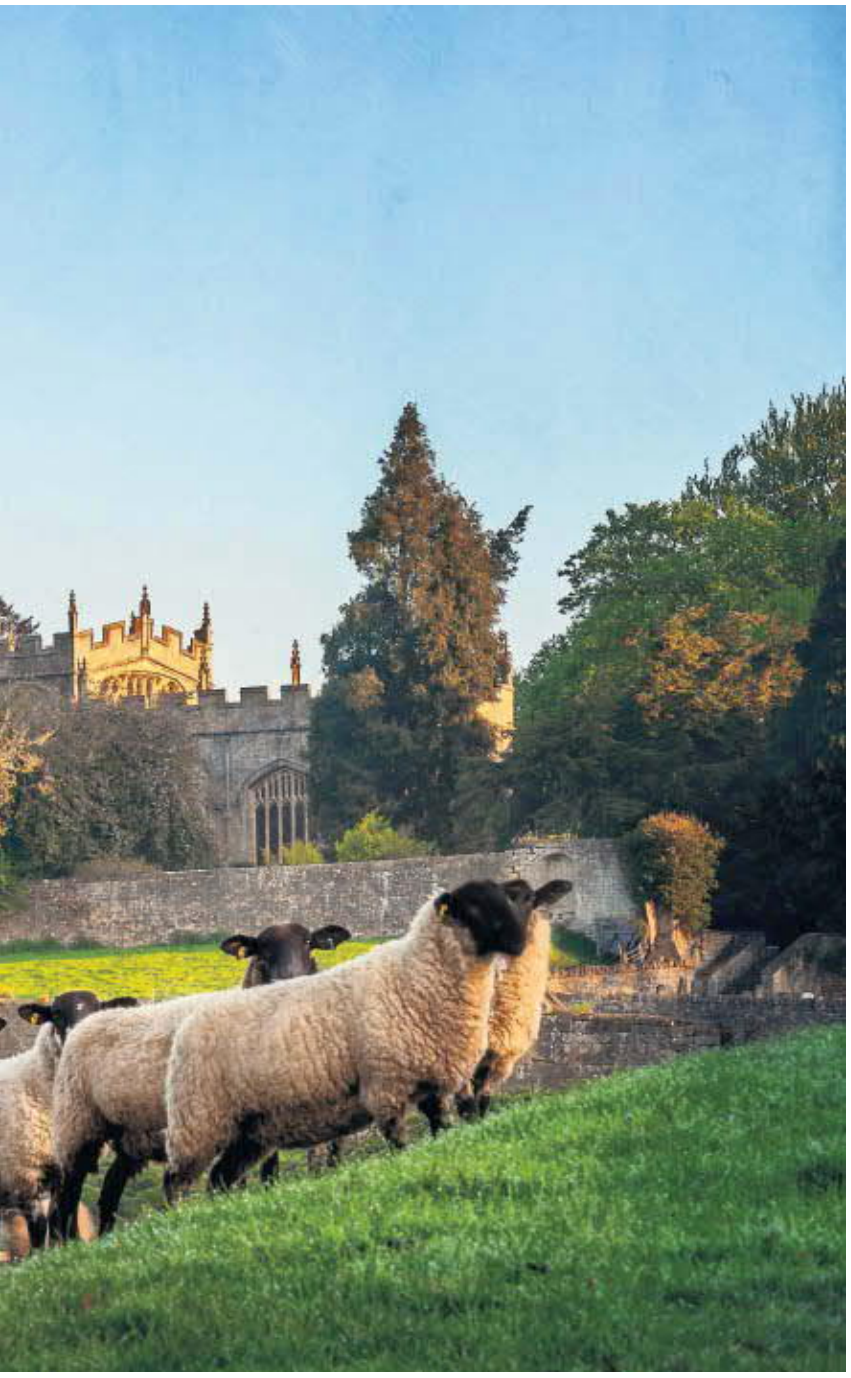

For instance, the Winchcombe Way's western loop treads totally different ground, leading us via wooded slopes and quiet villages off the traditional tourist trail. We climb up Langley Hill and drop to the thatched houses of Gretton. We rest on a bench at Alderton's medieval St Margaret's church, watching gravediggers at work.

This westerly route also leads up and over Nottingham Hill, site of an extensive iron age hillfort, before returning us to Cleeve Common – thankfully right by the golf clubhouse we clocked on day one. I'm in need of a cold drink, and had my mind set on stopping here. Sometimes it's handy to pass the same way. But we're soon breaking fresh ground once more, taking an alternative route across the common's wilder reaches and back, again, to Winchcombe.

On our final day, we return to Cheltenham. It's early when we set off, low sun sparkling on the dewy grass as we hike by Sudeley Castle, following the Windrush Way.

▲ *Winchcombe 'has an appealing amount of Cotswoldiness'*

After a while, this new trail veers east to bucolic Bourton-on-the-Water. Our plan is to peel off south, piecing together other paths, but suddenly it's tempting to follow the Windrush instead. We could bimble to Bourton and ride the bus from there back to Cheltenham … Still plenty of options, all in one place.

● *Winchcombe Welcomes Walkers (winchcombewelcomeswalkers.com) details 20 varied, self-guided walks around the town. Thimble Cottage sleeps four, from £432 a week (sykescottages.co.uk)*

Trailblazing towns

Six more British walking hubs

▲ *Cromer is well placed for exploring the Norfolk Coast Path*
PHOTOGRAPH: MOORHEN/GETTY IMAGES

Cromer, Norfolk

The Norfolk Coast Path links some of the country's best beaches, most vital nature reserves and deepest history (the oldest human footprints found outside Africa were discovered here). The Victorian seaside resort of Cromer (accessible by train) is well placed for exploring this linear trail.

The CoastHopper bus runs between Cromer and Wells-next-the Sea, stopping at handy spots. Disembark at Morston (home to Michelin-starred Morston Hall) to stroll to Blakeney and Cley via sand, seals and salt marshes; at Wells, to reach the beach at Holkham; or at Sheringham, for Norfolk's highest point (almost 105 metres!). Alternatively, the Weavers' Way runs inland from Cromer; follow its first section, past two outstanding Jacobean halls – Felbrigg and Blickling – to the old market town of Aylsham, which is connected to Cromer by bus.

● *sanderscoaches.com, walkcromer.co.uk, bitternline.com*

Kington in Herefordshire and Knighton, Powys

It's tough to pick between this pair of England/Wales border towns: both are Walkers Are Welcome certified; both are on the Offa's Dyke national trail; both feature on other long-distance routes; both are good for exploring the Welsh Marches.

The medieval market town of Kington is below Hergest Ridge, from where there are views to the Black Mountains and Cotswold Hills; spend days hiking up here, along the Arrow valley and along bits of the Mortimer Trail, or attempt Kington's 26-mile Eight Pubs Challenge.

Knighton, a 13-mile walk north of Kington along Offa's Dyke, is surrounded by options, including old drovers' roads and parts of Glyndwr's Way. It's also on the Heart of Wales railway – hop on and off the train to access sections of the Heart of Wales Line Trail.

● *kingtonwalks.org, kingtontourist.info, visitknighton.co.uk*

Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire

At the southern end of the Cotswolds, the wool-weaving town is a gateway to great West Country walking. The Kennet & Avon canal towpath offers flat, waterside strolls (Bath is 10 miles away, via the impressive Avoncliff and Dundas aqueducts). But best is the Bradford on Avon Walking Wheel, a 42-mile network of waymarked trails encircling the town, comprising a six-mile inner wheel and a 22-mile outer wheel, with numerous "spokes" linking the two.

En route lie National Trust properties (15th-century Great Chalfield Manor and Westwood Manor), handsome villages (Monkton Farleigh, Freshford), country pubs and countryside. The annual walking festival takes place from 3-5 September this year.

● *walkbradfordonavon.org*

Kinlochleven, Scottish Highlands

Kinlochleven sits in epic tramping terrain. This village, once a key stop for cattle drovers, is at the end of Loch Leven, sandwiched between the Mamores mountains and the peaks flanking Glen Coe. Indeed, it's currently the only Walkers Are Welcome spot in the Highlands. Walking leaflets can be picked up from Kinlochleven Community Trust HQ; options include a short walk to Grey Mare's Tail waterfall, a trail along the valley to Blackwater Reservoir and a climb up Binnein Mòr (the Mamores' highest Munro).

▲ *The Kennet & Avon canal near Bradford on Avon*

Also, the West Highland Way passes through Kinlochleven – from here it's about 15 miles on foot to Fort William. The bus from Fort William to Kinlochleven stops at Glencoe Junction, opening up more classic hiking country.

● *kinlochleven.org.uk*

Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria

The old market town of Kirkby Stephen, snug in the Upper Eden Valley, is the gateway to quieter Cumbrian trails. From here it's easy to access the less-tramped Howgill Fells and eastern Lake District, as well as the Yorkshire Dales national park, which surrounds this Walkers Are Welcome town.

Arrive by train – Kirkby Stephen is on the scenic Settle-Carlisle line – or via one of the long-distance routes that passes through (including Wainwright's Coast to Coast). Once there, pick and choose: tackle classic fell walks, such as Wild Boar Fell and High Cup Nick; tramp along disused railways; follow the Poetry Path or the Eden Benchmarks (10 stone sculptures along the River Eden). Or amble at will: much of the nearby upland is open access, allowing walkers freedom to roam.

● *walkeden.org, kirkby-stephen.com*

In Tod's country

A walking break around Todmorden

In West Yorkshire's Calder valley, **David Bramwell** finds the industrial past blending with nature and a community run on kindness

I'm back in Todmorden for my fourth visit in recent years, to rewalk familiar trails and strike out on new ones. Here, the Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway, Mary Towneley Loop and Calderdale Way are close by, as is England's highest beach.

"Tod" is a compact town of Victorian sandstone buildings, deep in the Calder valley, with the Rochdale canal running through.

At its centre is the Golden Lion pub (good for Thai food), towards which everything and everyone seems to be forever rolling. The town may lie in the shadow of its better-known neighbour, Hebden Bridge, but which of the two is more eccentric is hard to say.

For more than 10 years, Todmorden residents have pioneered a "sharing, caring revolution". Incredible Edible Todmorden has dotted the centre and the canal towpaths with beds growing herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables, maintained by locals and free to whoever wants to pick them. They've also embraced kindness as their motto. The word rests on the bank of the towpath by the Golden Lion in large, white block capitals. Tod also boasts one of the UK's highest numbers of UFO sightings – that there's a pub meeting for enthusiasts every month may *not* be unrelated.

Those new to the walking in this area may want to begin by simply following the Rochdale canal. Head north-east out of the town for five miles and you'll reach Hebden Bridge. On your return, pick up the Pennine Way to venture high on to Stoodley Pike. A monument dominates the skyline here, built in commemoration of the defeat of Napoleon. Its 39-step spiral staircase to a balcony offers views over the Pennines.

South-west along the towpath to Walsden lie some of the legacies of Tod's industrial past: gleaming metal bridges and an imposing 15-metre brick wall that skirts the canal before you cross the main road and everything becomes more verdant, colourful and sleepy. From Walsden, the Pennine Bridleway goes back over the wiry moorland before dropping down to the Shepherd's Rest Country Inn and the adjacent hamlets of Lumbutts and Mankinholes. From here, join the Calderdale Way and gently wind downhill to Tod's Unitarian church and, inevitably, the Golden Lion.

New to me on this visit are the beautiful hand-drawn arboreal maps in Christopher Goddard's guide The West Yorkshire Woods: The Calder Valley. Route 19 begins by the railway station before climbing to Todmorden Edge and across the valley to the Butt Stones and Blackheath Circle. It also takes in half a dozen small, pretty woodlands, including Ewood Wood.

My one concession to motorised transport for the week is a bus to Heptonstall, a pretty cobble-streeted village high above Hebden Bridge, where Sylvia Plath is buried. While Heptonstall

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▲ *The market town of Todmorden sits in the Upper Calder Valley*

◀ *The beach at Gaddings Dam*

▼ *An Incredible Edible Garden plot in Todmordon*

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM HARDY/ALAMY

has a timeless, sleepy Last of the Summer Wine quality, my walk – No 12 in the OS book South Pennines: Outstanding Circular Walks – is not for the faint-hearted. Skirting a woodland above the deep valley of Hebden Dale, from which the gurgling of a river mixes with birdsong, I cross Popples Common, grassy dales and valleys. Stoodley Pike is often present, punctuating the empty horizon.

After a welcome pint at the New Delight Inn at Blackshaw Head, I descend into the wooded valley of Colden Clough, which would once have shook with the sounds of textile mills; what remains of the buildings and chimneys has long since been reclaimed by the vegetation. It ends with a strenuous climb back to Heptonstall, along a hilltop pathway that requires a head for heights. Here, flat-topped crags overhang the valley far below. The views are spectacular.

On my final day I head to the beach, less than an hour's walk away. From the Shepherd's Rest Inn at Lumbutts, a steep 25-minute climb takes me to the top of the moors and to Gaddings Dam, 800 metres above sea level. Roughly 30 square metres, the dam is surrounded by a wall of stone steps that incline towards the water, and has three small sandy beach areas.

Pipits and swifts skim the water to drink and catch insects. People are swimming, picnicking, sunbathing, kayaking and floating in dinghies. I choose a wide rock ledge by the water to sit on. At weekends in warm weather the beach is very popular; it pays to arrive early. Bring food, something comfy to sit on, something to provide shade and waterproof footwear for going in the water; underfoot is a mix of rocks, stones and – as one bather put it – a "whole lot of squidgy".

I slip into the water and swim to the centre of the dam. Being so high up, isolated and surrounded by empty moorland has a surreal quality to it. My senses, too, are disoriented. Muted conversations carry across the water from every direction, soft and cocooning. "The problem with my legs is that they're too close together," a male voice murmurs out of nowhere.

Before I left for Todmorden, a friend gave me a copy of Benjamin Myers's novel The Gallow's Pole, based on the true story of an 18th-century coining gang in Calderdale. In my accommodation, I'd also discovered a Gallow's Pole-themed circular walk covering local places of interest from the story. I'm a sucker for psychogeography, but the week has run away with me. I have had time for neither. But Todmorden and the south Pennines have again enchanted me. They are filed away. Ready for the next visit.

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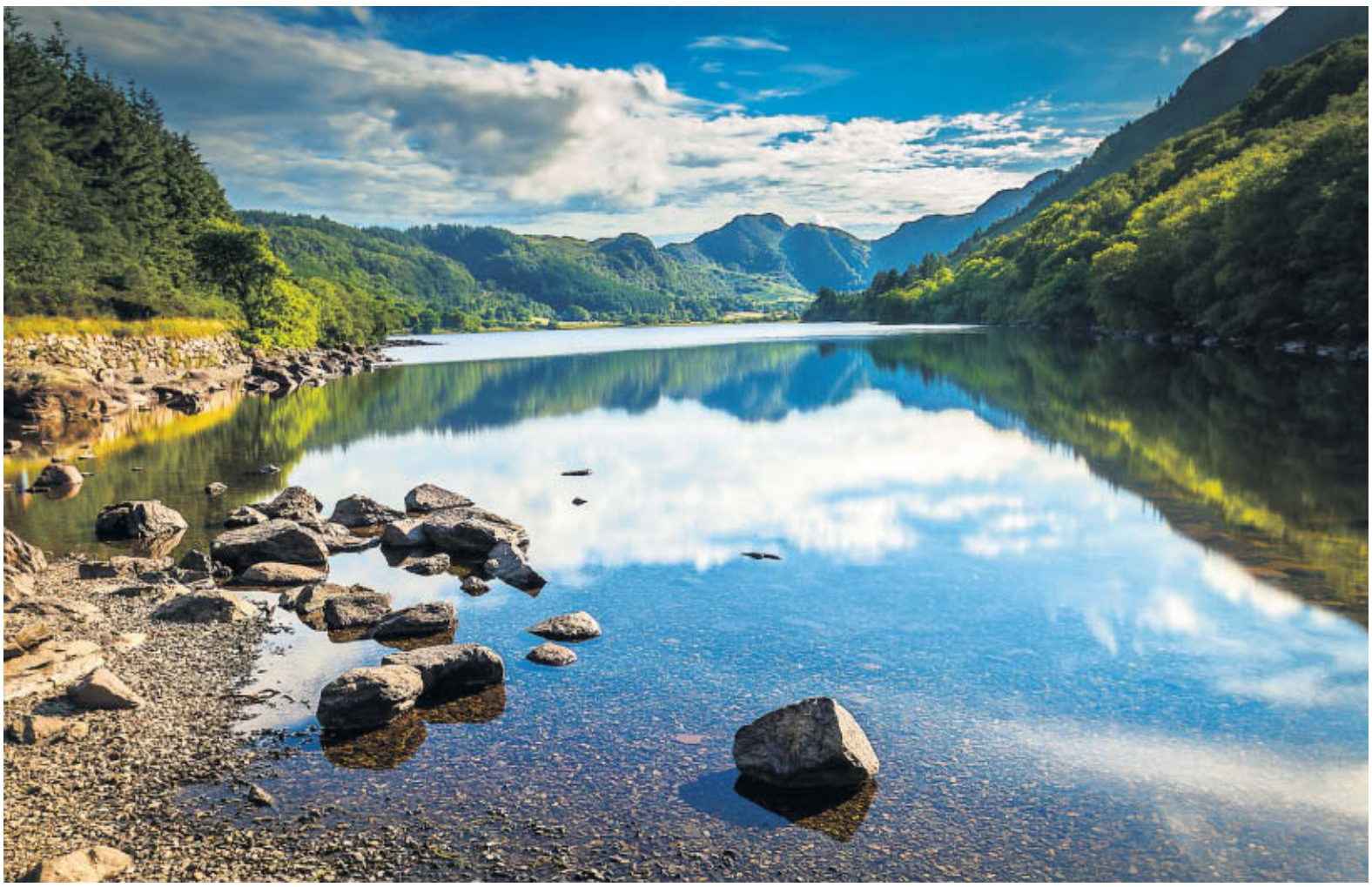
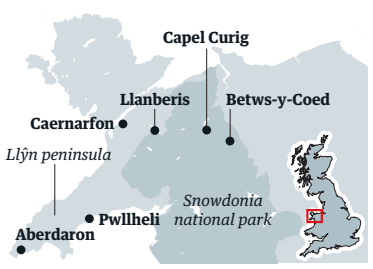


◀ *Llyn Crafnant, on the lower slopes of the Carneddau mountains*
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE ROBINSON/ALAMY

Snowdonia? Make that Slow-donia

A laid-back way to see north Wales



Jane Dunford takes the train and local buses on a break with a new low-carbon specialist that aims to 'make slow travel mainstream'

From the cliffs overlooking Aberdaron, the views of the Llŷn peninsula are dramatic. To the east, families are picnicking and building sandcastles on the vast golden beach below St Hywyn's church; to the west the coastline becomes ever more rugged, laced with hidden, smuggler-worthy coves. It's a Saturday, mid-heatwave, but the coastal path - once used by pilgrims travelling to the abbey on Bardsey Island, two miles offshore - feels serene.

My sense of calm prevails back in bustling Aberdaron village. I avoid ice-cream queues and car park wrangles and head instead to the bus stop. Soon I'm sitting back and marvelling at the Welsh countryside en route back to the royal town of Caernarfon, my base on the north coast.

I'm exploring with Byway, a sustainable, flight-free travel company launched last year that creates personalised trips by train, bus, bike and ferry, mostly to UK holiday destinations, but also in Italy and France. North Wales is new this month.

"Our mission is to make slow travel mainstream," says founder Cat Jones. It seems to have hit the right note with backers, recently securing £1.1m from the government and angel investors, and business is booming.

"There's definitely an appetite for it," Cat continues. "Covid has obviously forced us to stay at home, but people are becoming more interested in travelling sustainably, and supporting local businesses. We take away the hassle and time of planning a trip: we work out connections, book tickets and provide a personal journey guide suggesting things to do and places to eat, so it's all as easy as possible."

> ***There is something liberating about not having to do much research or planning***

Two days previously, amid reports of heavy traffic, breakdowns and jams across the UK, I'm feeling a little smug as my train pulls into Betws-y-Coed, gateway to Snowdonia. (The journey from London takes five hours, including two changes, but offers fine views of countryside and coast.) The station is a welcoming place, with flowerboxes of tumbling blooms, an art gallery on the platform and a shop stocked with local produce. I explore the village a little, nosing around 14th-century St Michael's church, the oldest building in the village, before boarding the S2 bus to cool new hostel The Rocks, 10 minutes away in Capel Curig. The Snowdon Horseshoe magically appears at the end of the road as I near my stop.

It's a warm evening and there's time to stroll to the lakeside at Llynnau Mymbyr for a swim before the short walk to Tyn-y-Coed pub for a pint of Snowdonia and veggie curry dinner. (Plas y Brenin national outdoor centre is on the lake's banks too, offering everything from paddleboarding to climbing adventures.)

I sleep well and breakfast next door at family-run Moel Siabod Café , which is a mine of information for hikers. For those keen to bag the area's main attraction, Pen y Pas, start of the Miner's and Pyg tracks up Snowdon, is just 10 minutes away. The car park is so busy this summer that you have to book in advance but for the car-free, a Snowdon Sherpa bus runs regularly from outside the hostel.

With temperatures predicted to reach 28C, I don't feel guilty about not climbing Snowdon and opt for a gentler, three-hour circular walk from the hostel to Llyn Crafnant, a lake in a valley on the edge of Gwydir forest on the lower slopes of the Carneddau mountains. It's a beautiful route, with rugged hills and forests and views across to 872-metre Moel Siabod and the lake. I see only two couples all afternoon.

There's something very liberating about not having to do much research or planning - itineraries come with suggestions tailored to your interests and draw on local knowledge. Bus timetables, taxi numbers, walking maps and attraction booking details are all on a useful app, which can be updated at any time. The team is contactable via WhatsApp and email while you're away, too, for any additional ideas or support, and they respond quickly when I have a timetable query.

Leaving Capel Curig, I reach Caernarfon in under an hour, changing buses at Llanberis. What with masks and social distancing, travelling by public transport isn't as sociable as it might be, but I chat to a young couple who are backpacking round Wales, and a local gives me a good tip for dinner (tapas at Tŷ Castell inside the ancient town walls).

Caernarfon Castle looks impressive in the evening sunshine and the Black Boy Inn - where I am staying for two nights, also within the walls - is buzzing. Dating from 1522 - when a bed apparently cost fourpence a night, to sleep no more than five - it's one of the oldest inns in Wales and a great base. I wander the castle walls and harbour and watch the sun setting over the sea.

From Caernarfon I could have opted for more castles or adventure activities, or boarded the Welsh Highland Railway, the UK's longest heritage train, which runs for 25 miles to Porthmadog, past the foot of Snowdon. But as I'm interested in the more remote corners of north Wales, the Llŷn peninsula day trip was suggested. Aberdaron is 1½ hours away by bus (with a change in Pwllheli) and provides another total change of scene.

Although I pack a lot in to my short break (a week would usually be suggested for this itinerary), I never feel rushed.

On my last day I stop on the way back to Betws-y-Coed at Llanberis. It's a busy tourist hub in summer (one walking route and the train up Snowdon start here) but suggestions from Byway such as canoeing on the lake or visiting the 12th-century castle or Honey Farm and Winery are tempting. The lake is so pretty that I decide to just stroll and relax by the water's edge. Instead of checking Google Maps, looking out for traffic delays and starting to stress about the long drive home, I sit on the rocks and happily plot a programme of podcasts to listen to on the scenic ride back to London.

● *The trip was provided by Byway (byway.travel), Go North Wales and Avanti. This three-night/four-day itinerary from London costs £375pp based on two sharing, including accommodation (most with breakfast), trains, personalised guide, WhatsApp support, package protections and 100% Covid refund guarantee*

▶ *St Hywyn s church, overlooking the beach at Aberdaron*

▶▶ *Betws-y-Coed station is a welcoming place, with overflowing flowerboxes and an art gallery*

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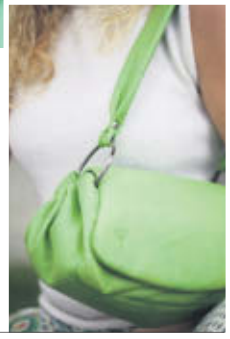

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Puzzles

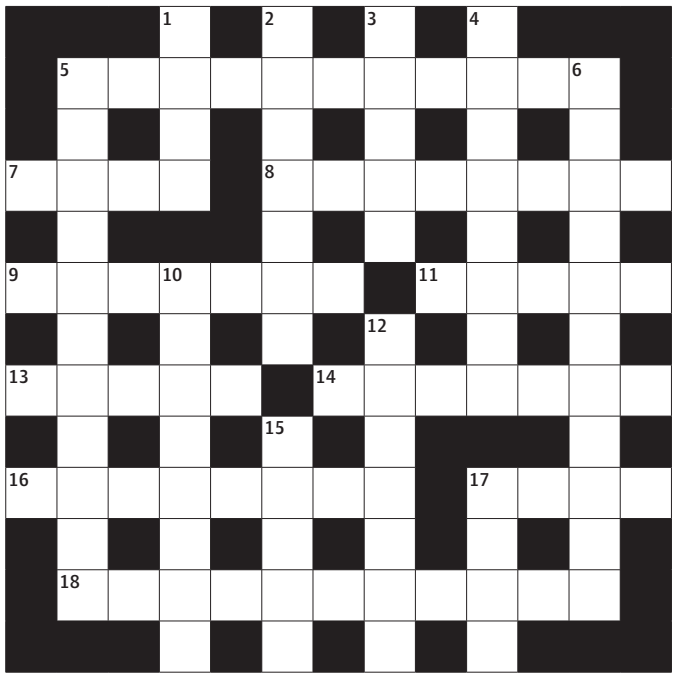
Quick crossword no 15,985

Across

5 Unpleasant clash (11)
7 Air pollution common in big cities (4)
8 Post holder (8)
9 MC on stage and screen (7)
11 Bishop's hat (5)
13 Confused (by life afloat?) (2,3)
14 Term of endearment (3,4)
16 Small stirrer – not Aesop! (anag) (8)
17 Make a reservation (4)
18 Nicest peers (anag) – tenacious behaviour (11)

Down

1 Hitch (4)
2 Outstanding amount to pay (7)
3 Where to write notes, musically (5)
4 Water-based paint (8)
5 What's left to rot in a garden (7,4)
6 Put one image over another (11)
10 (Exert) force (8)
12 A paltry sum of money (informal) (7)
15 It's uplifting (5)
17 Like a skeleton (4)



Yesterday's Quick crossword

Solution no 15,984

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

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Sandwich sudoku

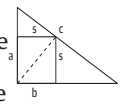
Medium

Place the digits from 1-9 in each row, column and 3x3 block. The clues outside the grid show the sum of the numbers placed between the 1 and 9 in that row or column.

									31
									11
						1			5
	4								10
									18
							3		11
		5							15
									0
									7
19	3	8	6	15	19	0	27	9	

Chris Maslanka Solutions

1 The great Scott referred to is Sir Walter Scott. English is an almost uninflected language; so sense and qualification are conveyed by proximity - where the words are placed in sentences. Guilt by association, as it were. In this example sent in by Hilary Crossley (to whom thanks) it is Allan Little who appears to be 250 years old, which is pushing it - even for a BBC radio presenter.
2 For the difference: $1/x - 1/(x + 1) = 1/([x(x + 1)]$, QED. For the sum: $1/x + 1/(x + 1) = (2x + 1)/[x(x + 1)]$. Can you prove $x(x + 1)$ is not divisible by $2x + 1$?
3 There are several ways of doing this (there always are). Amusingly drawing the diagonal makes it easy to see even though the length of the diagonal doesn't enter the calculation. The two component triangles have area $\frac{1}{2}(sa + sb)$ equal to the whole, $\frac{1}{2}(ab)$; whence $s(a + b) = ab$ and so $s = ab/(a + b)$



4 The fraction of the area occupied by the square is given by $f = s^2/[\frac{1}{2}(ab)]$. This boils down to $f = (2ab)/[a + b)^2]$. Expanding, dividing top and bottom by ab, and putting x for a/b, we get $x + 1/x = (2/f - 2)$. Let $2/f - 2 = g$, and $x^2 + gx = -1$; completing the square (such a useful trick!): $(x + g/2)^2 = (g/2)^2 - 1$; as squares are positive, $(g/2)^2 - 1 \geq 0$, so $g \geq 2$ whence $1/f \geq 2$ and $f \leq \frac{1}{2}$. The square can at most occupy half the triangle. Returning to $f = (2ab)/(a + b)^2$ with $f = \frac{1}{2}$, we find $a = b$. [The result is obvious if you visualise joining two such triangles hypotenuse to hypotenuse; the points at which the squares touch the diagonal do not coincide. To maximise the sum of the diagonals of the two squares these two points must coincide which happens if $a = b$ and we have a square. Then maximising f results in quadrants.]
5 Any advances on 3334444333?
6 384. These cubelets have a face in the surface but not at a corner or an edge. There are 8 x 8 of these per each of the 6 faces of the cube. That is 64 X 6 = (360 + 24) = 384.
Wordplay: Wordpool c), a), c); **Jumblies** THUMBNAILS; **Dropouts** AVIATION; **Wordcentre** SYMPTOMATOLOGY; **Cryptic** ABUSE; **Missing Links** a) fly/past/paper, b) wind/sock/drawer, c) dead/body/language, d) word/search/engine, e) cosmic/dust/bowl, f) gold/medal/lion.

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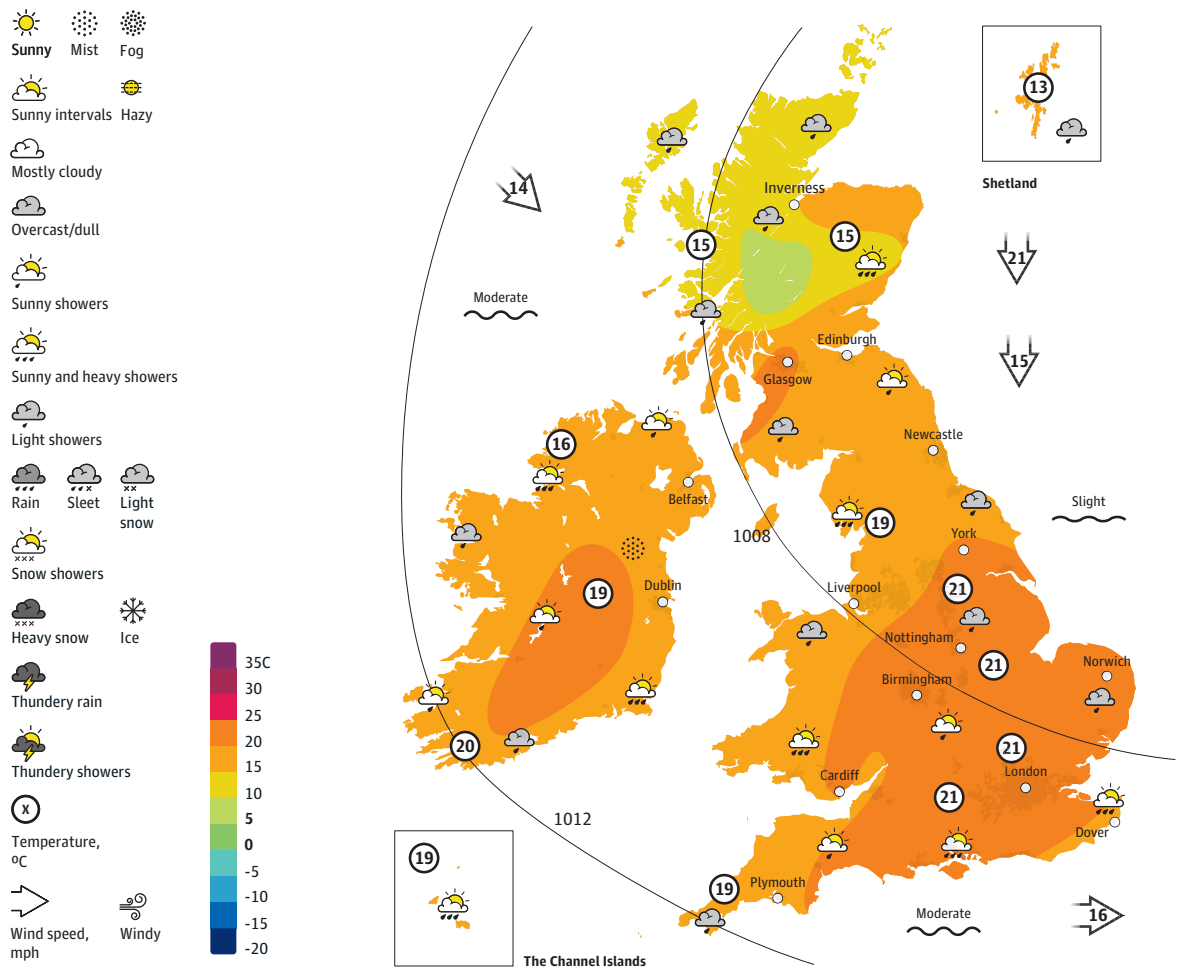
The Guardian Puzzles

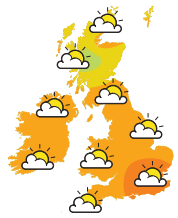
Weather
Saturday 31 July 2021

UK and Ireland Noon today

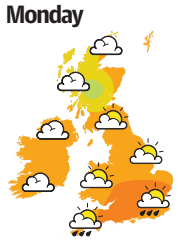


Forecast

Low 12 High 18
Tomorrow



Low 11 High 19
Monday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

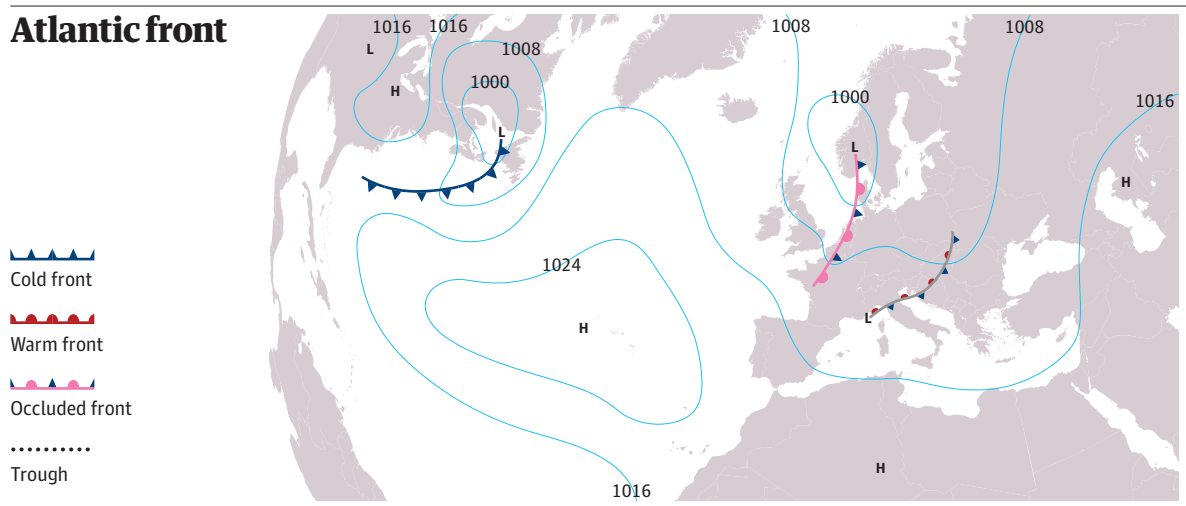
Latest	
27 Jul 2021	416.28
Weekly average	
18 Jul 2021	416.74
30 Jul 2020	414.15
30 Jul 2011	391.57
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Lows and highs		Precipitation	Air pollution
London	14	21	65%	Low
Manchester	11	19	60%	Low
Edinburgh	10	16	55%	Low
Belfast	10	18	55%	Low
Birmingham	13	20	60%	Low
Brighton	14	20	65%	Low
Bristol	14	20	65%	Low
Cardiff	14	20	60%	Low
Newcastle	10	15	65%	Low
Penzance	14	19	65%	Low

Atlantic front



High tides

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Aberdeen	**0706**	3.7m	**1954**	3.4m	**London Bridge**	**0735**	6.2m	**1946**	6.2m
Avonmouth	**0027**	11.2m	**1243**	10.8m	**Lossiemouth**	**0520**	3.5m	**1804**	3.2m
Barrow	**0503**	8.0m	**1730**	7.4m	**Milford Haven**	**0554**	1.9m	**1157**	5.5m
Belfast	**0451**	3.3m	**1730**	3.0m	**Newquay**	**1053**	5.6m	**2320**	5.7m
Cobh	**1113**	3.4m	**2341**	3.4m	**North Shields**	**0911**	4.4m	**2158**	4.1m
Cromer	**0017**	4.1m	**1209**	4.4m	**Oban**	**1105**	3.0m	**2346**	3.1m
Dover	**0451**	5.7m	**1705**	5.9m	**Penzance**	**1026**	4.5m	**2250**	4.5m
Dublin	**0520**	3.6m	**1807**	3.3m	**Plymouth**	**1123**	4.6m	**2329**	4.6m
Galway	**1112**	4.1m	**2329**	4.1m	**Portsmouth**	**0511**	4.0m	**1744**	4.2m
Greenock	**0556**	3.2m	**1829**	3.0m	**Southport**	**0353**	7.8m	**1612**	7.2m
Harwich	**0527**	3.5m	**1735**	3.6m	**Stornoway**	**0027**	4.0m	**1312**	3.5m
Holyhead	**0355**	4.9m	**1631**	4.4m	**Weymouth**	**1131**	0.7m	**2339**	0.7m
Hull	**0556**	2.0m	**1152**	6.6m	**Whitby**	**0943**	4.9m	**2228**	4.5m
Leith	**0832**	4.8m	**2105**	4.5m	**Wick**	**0454**	3.0m	**1739**	2.7m
Liverpool	**0440**	8.1m	**1706**	7.5m	**Workington**	**0506**	7.2m	**1736**	6.6m

Sun & Moon

Sun rises	0522
Sun sets	2049
Moon rises	2356
Moon sets	1350
Last Quarter	31 July

AccuWeather.com

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2021

Lighting up

Belfast	2128 to 0536
Birm'ham	2100 to 0527
Brighton	2047 to 0527
Bristol	2100 to 0535
Carlisle	2115 to 0521
Cork	2125 to 0557
Dublin	2122 to 0541
Glasgow	2126 to 0523
Harlech	2111 to 0535
Inverness	2134 to 0512
London	2049 to 0524
M'chester	2106 to 0526
Newcastle	2111 to 0516
Norwich	2049 to 0514
Penzance	2106 to 0551

Butterflywatch

It looks like an indifferent year for butterflies from where I'm standing although I've seen large numbers of possibly immigrant red admirals around the Norfolk coast.

We won't know the season we are having until we see data from the annual scientific survey and the Big Butterfly Count, which will hopefully beat last year's statistic: 111,628 citizen scientists took part.

The broad picture in Britain is that "common" butterflies are disappearing while rarer "habitat specialists" are rallying because of targeted conservation work.

The heath fritillary's appearance at Victory Wood in east Kent this summer is a stunning example of how we are saving rare species. Ancient woodland was felled and ploughed up here during the 1950s.

The land was bought by the Woodland Trust in 2004. Planting, natural regeneration and wide rides connected the "new" wood to fragments of ancient woodland.

The heath fritillary seemed to be heading towards extinction in the 1980s but dedicated woodland management has revived it.

It is an inspiring example of how if we create sanctuaries or restore old habitat, wild - and rare - species rapidly make it their home.

Patrick Barkham

Around the world

Algiers	33	Lisbon	22
Ams'dam	19	Madrid	27
Athens	37	Malaga	34
Auckland	16	Melb'rne	17
B Aires	13	Mexico C	23
Bangkok	33	Miami	32
Barcelona	27	Milan	28
Basra	46	Mombasa	28
Beijing	32	Moscow	23
Berlin	23	Mumbai	30
Bermuda	30	N Orleans	35
Brussels	20	Nairobi	23
Budapest	30	New Delhi	31
C'hagen	20	New York	25
Cairo	38	Oslo	16
Cape Town	22	Paris	23
Chicago	26	Perth	15
Corfu	36	Prague	24
Dakar	30	Reykjavik	14
Dhaka	32	Rio de J	20
Dublin	19	Rome	30
Florence	36	Shanghai	32
Gibraltar	26	Singapore	31
H Kong	31	Stockh'm	20
Harare	21	Strasb'g	25
Helsinki	23	Sydney	23
Istanbul	35	Tel Aviv	32
Jo'burg	18	Tenerife	25
K Lumpur	31	Tokyo	32
K'mandu	27	Toronto	20
Kabul	33	Vancouv'r	27
Kingston	33	Vienna	27
Kolkata	33	Warsaw	27
L Angeles	28	Wash'ton	27
Lagos	28	Well'ton	16
Lima	18	Zurich	21

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America needs the truth about the storming of the Capitol *Editorials, page 2*

Shaming the unvaccinated feels good, but it will backfire *Emma Brockes, page 3*

The refugee crossings: is this how to respond? *First Dog on the Moon, page 4*

The Guardian Saturday 31 July 2021

Journal

Opinion and ideas

A Deliveroo courier in Cambridge city centre

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT EVANS/ ALAMY

Labour has a plan for young people. It may not be heard

Andy Beckett

Many things have disappeared from British politics since it became mostly about the pandemic. One of the most important has been the idea that the interests and grievances of people under 40 are worth a lot of attention from the main parties. During the Jeremy Corbyn era younger voters enjoyed rare influence, reinvigorating Labour and frightening the Conservatives. Even when that period effectively ended at the 2019 election, Labour beat the Tories among voters aged 18 to 24 by an unprecedented 43 percentage points. The sea of young faces at Corbyn rallies looked like a mass awakening that would have consequences.

Yet since then our politics has aged again. The Conservatives under Boris Johnson have prioritised elderly people and treated the young with contempt. From the culture wars to the chaos in schools, benefits cuts to the climate crisis, the government's message to younger Britons has been consistent: you don't matter. Meanwhile, Keir Starmer's Labour party has followed a milder version of the same strategy, concentrating on the often older voters it has lost.

But the desire of many young people for a different Britain has not gone. Beyond parliamentary politics, even people on the right acknowledge it. Earlier in July, free-market thinktank the Institute of Economic Affairs published Left Turn Ahead, a survey of young people's attitudes. "Younger people really do quite consistently express hostility to capitalism, and positive views of socialist alternatives," it found. The common argument that "they will grow out of it", the survey continued, "is simply not borne out by the data. There are no detectable differences between the economic attitudes of people in their late teens and people in their early 40s." These attitudes may be "a preview" of "mainstream opinion in Britain tomorrow".

Despite this eye-catching conclusion, the IEA's report has received little attention. It doesn't fit the prevailing view on the left and right that Britain is in a conservative phase that still has a long time to run. There is also a widespread assumption that young voters have always been leftwing – that their discontent with the status quo is nothing new.

But that assumption is mistaken. At every general election from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, and again in 2010, as many or more under-45 voters chose the Tories as

Labour has a plan for young people. It may not be heard

Andy Beckett

← Continued from front

Labour. The radicalisation of the young, which has also happened in other parts of Europe and the United States, is a new feature of 21st-century western politics. One reason for this radicalism, despite its lack of electoral success, is that it is rooted in everyday experience – in particular, the modern experience of work. Zero-hours contracts, exploitative internships, graduates stuck in cafe jobs, stagnant wages, precariousness. Work for all but the most privileged young employees is a daily reminder of capitalism's diminishing rewards.

These malign trends affect older workers too – which may be why, at the last election, Labour won more votes than the Tories from working Britons. But older workers may at least have savings or property. Only the under-45s have spent their entire working lives in the "flexible" labour market the Conservatives created and New Labour largely accepted. No wonder many young voters feel alienated from both parties.

So the launch by Labour this week of a "new deal for working people" could be significant. Not just as the beginning of an answer to the charge that Starmer has no policies, but also as a set of possible reforms to Britain's increasingly Victorian work culture, and as a way for Labour to reconnect with the young electorate it needs to remain a viable party in the long term, and have a chance of returning to power.

Given Starmer's caution up to now, Labour's proposals are surprisingly ambitious. They include "the right to flexible working for all workers … from day one of employment" – unless there is a conclusive reason that a job cannot be done flexibly or remotely. Labour envisages work "fitting around people's lives rather than dictating their lives".

The party also wants to create "a single status of 'worker' for all but the genuinely self-employed", and to abolish the qualifying periods for basic employee rights such as sick pay,holiday pay, paid parental leave and protection against unfair dismissal. It wants all workers to "have stable, secure employment", and the right to "disconnect from work at home outside of working hours".

Labour justifiably says these measures would "fundamentally change our economy". The balance of power between employer and employee would be transformed. Yet this idea hasn't provoked the outrage you might expect. The employers' organisation the CBI said it too wants "an inclusive economy", and criticised the proposals only in limited terms, as "overly prescriptive". Labour people involved with the policies see the lack of controversy as a success. One source says: "When we talked about work under Jeremy Corbyn, we sounded too radical and endlessly triggered the rightwing press. It was a disaster. This time, we're not going to lead with our chins."

The broad case for the proposals has been presented by Starmer in studiedly conservative and patriotic language: that a job should provide "dignity and security", and that Labour "can make Britain the best place to work". Thus his party hopes to appeal both to young voters and older ones. "Whether you've got a mortgage on a semi in Barnsley or you rent in Kentish Town," says the Labour source, "you're currently getting done over at work."

The problem with Labour's approach is that inclusivity can become blandness. In confrontational times, as both Corbyn and Johnson came to understand, getting attention and mobilising voters often involves naming enemies. This week, Labour's work policies got far less coverage than the government's cartoonish hi-vis crime measures.

If Labour doesn't win back young people soon, these voters have alternatives. The Greens are already higher in the polls than they have been for years. Protest groups such as Extinction Rebellion have compelling causes and novel tactics. Even the Conservatives could conceivably appeal to the young again: they've done it before.

Young voters have decades to decide their political trajectories. Starmer has far less time.

The Guardian

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'Comment is free… but facts are sacred' CP Scott

US politics

America needs the truth about the storming of the Capitol. But will it listen?

The investigation into the deadly insurrection of 6 January is not one but two processes. The first is an attempt to discover the truth about those events: not only what happened, but who, beyond the members of the mob, was responsible and in what ways. The second is the task of getting people to accept that truth – knowing that many will not.

Senior Republicans initially acknowledged the horror of the events and the culpability of Donald Trump, whose big lie of a stolen election triggered the assault upon the Capitol to stop the peaceful transfer of power. Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader – who is said to have telephoned the president urging him to call the rioters off as they tried to break through his office window – said that Mr Trump bore responsibility. He and others called for a 9/11-style independent commission.

Yet since then they have sought to rewrite history and diminish the attack. They blocked a bipartisan proposal for the commission and pulled all their picks from the House select committee when Nancy Pelosi vetoed the nomination of Jim Jordan and Jim Banks, who challenged the legitimacy of Joe Biden's victory. They vilify two Republicans, Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, who joined nonetheless. And they pretend they did not even listen to the graphic and harrowing testimony of police officers who defended them all against invaders.

In vivid, unforgettable accounts at the committee's opening hearing on Tuesday, the officers laid out the full brutality and viciousness they endured. They also spelled out why a wide-ranging investigation is necessary. As important and disturbing as the institutional failures of policing were that day, no serious inquiry could limit itself to that scope.

"All of them were telling us, 'Trump sent us,'" said one officer, Aquilino Gonell. Another, Harry Dunn, told the committee that when a hitman kills someone, "Not only does the hitman go to jail, but the person who hired them does … A hitman sent them. I want you to get to the bottom of that."

This was not merely a defence against Republican accusations of a witch-hunt. It was a mandate. It demonstrated that politicians have a duty to establish responsibility for the invasion. But the committee's work will only get harder from here, as they decide where to focus, what evidence to pursue and which witnesses to call. Bennie Thompson, the committee's chair, has said he will investigate Mr Trump and depose political allies and key aides: "Nothing is off limits."

Should the committee subpoena them, it will fuel the belief of Republican voters that this is nothing but a partisan attack; a majority think that the election was stolen. Supporters suggest both that the storming of the Capitol was understandable or justified and that it was not significant at all, but an inconsequential incident; "a normal tourist visit". A poll in spring found that while more than half of Americans saw the events of 6 January as an attack on democracy that should never be forgotten, almost three-quarters of Republicans said that too much was being made of it.

Though Mr Trump initiated these beliefs, other politicians continue to cynically stoke them: "Nobody actually believes the election was stolen from Donald Trump. But a lot of them are happy to go out and say it was," Mr Kinzinger observed of his colleagues.

Their behaviour is extraordinary as well as reprehensible: for the sake of their political careers, they seem as reckless about their own safety as they are about democracy's. They presumably count on staying on the right side of any future mob. Far from deterring the committee from pursuing this investigation fully, their actions and rhetoric should provide a spur. Those who have connived in the attack on democracy need to be held accountable. Whatever the verdict of Republican voters, the truth must be written in the historical record.

Rap

The $2m sale of an album shows that Wu-Tang Clan broke new ground in music

When Martin Shkreli was convicted of fraud in 2017, the authorities ordered him to give up his assets, which included a Picasso, a share-trading account and the only existing copy of Once Upon a Time in Shaolin, a double album by the American hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan. This week an anonymous buyer purchased the record to clear the disgraced pharmaceutical executive's remaining $2.2m debt to the US government and committed to Wu-Tang Clan's stipulation that it not be released commercially until 2103.

The sale is a testament to both the artists and their art. The rap group – RZA, GZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Method Man, Inspectah Deck, Raekwon, Ghostface Killah, U-God, Masta Killa and sometimes Cappadonna – emerged in the 1990s and challenged hip-hop's aesthetic principles and its business model. With interests in martial arts, philosophy and mystical Islam, their wordplay set them apart. On their 1997 track Triumph, Inspectah Deck raps "I bomb atomically, Socrates' philosophies and hypotheses / Can't define how I be dropping these mockeries".

Some recoiled from Wu-Tang Clan's depictions of thuggery and sexually explicit language. For the rappers it was a soundtrack to their tough lives. In a 2019 documentary, group members revealed in disturbingly frank interviews how racism, poverty and violence blighted their youth. Art became a form of salvation. Once Upon a Time in Shaolin was born of a realisation that music faced an existential threat. The band wrote in 2014 that their "industry is in crisis. The intrinsic value of music has been reduced to zero. Contemporary art is worth millions by virtue of its exclusivity … By offering [the album] as a commissioned commodity and allowing it to take a similar trajectory from creation to exhibition to sale … we hope to inspire and intensify urgent debates about the future of music."

Wu-Tang Clan had arrived at the same conclusion as the philosopher Walter Benjamin in the 1930s. He questioned whether the spread of photographs of fine art was valuable. In his landmark essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Benjamin zeroed in on the importance of the original, authentic work as being central to art's aesthetic and financial value. Wu-Tang Clan, 80 years later, agreed.

Their stance for years looked brave, if not foolhardy, as streaming became the norm. Two things have made the rappers look prescient. The first is a growing backlash against streaming giants from musicians unhappy with tiny payouts. The second is that non-fungible tokens (though currently very environmentally unfriendly) are able to assign the monetary value of "unique" assets to digital entities such as music files. Wu-Tang Clan convenes more these days for business than music. That is a pity as their art, and appreciation of its worth, represented a witty, insightful path for hip-hop that feels largely forgotten.

An anti-vaccine protest last year in Woodland Hills, California
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MCNEW/GETTY

Shaming the unvaccinated feels good, but it will backfire

Emma Brockes

An email arrived from my cousin this week outlining how bad Covid cases are in her part of South Africa. Delta is surging, she wrote; their friends and neighbours were starting to die. Meanwhile, vaccination rates were terrible, with less than 5% of the population fully vaccinated. After filling me in on the rest of the family news, she assured me that she and her husband were on the waiting list for vaccines – for what it was worth. Her husband, she said, was "convinced they're not safe".

This was information to me. Not that a member of my extended family differed from me in his thoughts about drug trials and government-agency approval, but more broadly: wow, I had no idea my cousin was married to a lunatic.

It was a reflex response. At an odd time in the life of the pandemic, when every step forward is seemingly followed, immediately, by a jump in the numbers and a hasty step back, there is one, cast-iron certainty: that given the opportunity to call someone else crazy, it is almost impossible to turn down.

This consolation is particularly available in the US at the moment, where a third of Americans eligible for the vaccine remain stubbornly unjabbed (in Britain, 88% of those eligible have received at least one dose). That these vaccine holdouts fall demographically along lines of political division has made dismissing them as fanatics even easier. Under-vaccinated populations in the US skew heavily towards traditionally Republican areas in the south and midwest, particularly among those without college degrees.

Articles abound about idiots partying, for example at a lake in Missouri. ("Personally," says an unmasked, unvaccinated bartender serving unmasked, unvaccinated patrons, "I feel like my immune system is doing a good job, so why pump it full of something that we don't really know what it is?") The popular image of the vaccine-hesitant American is of a Donald Trump supporter, his limited capacities further eroded by too much time spent absorbing the work of online conspiracy theorists.

Aspects of this image might well be true. The fact remains, however, that liberal disparagement of the vaccine-hesitant rests on a double standard. If we think of vaccine holdouts as taking their cues not from neutral information but from pre-existing narratives (democrats are bad; government is bad; it's all a hoax), then this is a dynamic we're not entirely free from ourselves. The enjoyment one gets from saying about an anti-vaxxer "these people are nuts", and fitting them instantly into the category of dumb asshole, clearly delivers an emotional dividend that is just as strong as the ones being indulged on the other side.

> Early on in the rollout there was a sense of, 'Big deal, if they're dumb enough to not get the vaccine, then let them get sick'

And the Covid anti-vax demographic isn't entirely clear-cut. Lots of parents who didn't think twice about giving their children MMR vaccines, for example, are on the fence about what to do in the autumn, when the US Food and Drug Administration will almost certainly approve the vaccine for the under-12s. I've heard similarly anxious murmurs from pregnant women getting their shots.

The closest I've come to understanding this mindset arose one afternoon, when I thought about the assurances given to women by the British government during the thalidomide scandal in the 1960s. For a second, I could feel it: the appeal of thinking that the real credulity here is blind faith in the government.

It didn't last. Neither, perhaps, will the tendency among those who are vaccinated to disparage those who remain hesitant, for the simple reason that it will backfire and end up hurting us more. During the first flush of the vaccine rollout in the US, there was a collective sense among the vaccinated population of: big deal, if they're dumb enough to not get the vaccine, let them get sick.

Now, thanks to the latest advances in armchair epidemiology, we understand that if large portions of the population remain unvaccinated, not only will society's reopening be compromised, but it will provide a petri dish for possible vaccine-resistant strains of the virus to develop. "Let them get sick" has evolved into a refrain that was familiar during the Trump years, for different reasons: "My God, these people are going to get us all killed."

Calling them dumb assholes, therefore, while it can feel really good, isn't a helpful strategy in winning people around. This week Kay Ivey, the Republican governor of Alabama, which has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the US, said: "Time to start blaming the unvaccinated." And you understood her point of view. Yet pointing the finger doesn't work. "We all but shamed people," Johnny Taylor, head of the Society for Human Resource Management, told the New York Times this week in reference to private companies' initiatives to persuade hesitant staff to get vaccinated. "But now we're at a point that none of that's working and we've got to close the gap."

Offering people $100 for getting your shot, as President Biden has urged states to do, may work for some people; others may end up being forced to take it. (Biden has announced that the country's entire civilian federal workforce – well over 2 million people – will require vaccination too.)

Meanwhile, I'm trying to push back against the temptation to ask my cousin what's wrong with her husband, and in the process be less shut down myself. "Why does he think that?" I said.

First Dog on the Moon

*

First Dog on the Moon *is Guardian Australia's resident cartoonist, who has covered refugee experiences on many occasions. This is an award-winning cartoon first published in 2012*

Letters

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Established 1906

Country diary

East Dartmoor, Devon

Gardeners, look away now. There are slugs in all directions, scattered by the dozen across the damp ground like wine gums – lemon yellow, apricot orange, pale pear, glossy blackcurrant.

I stoop to check the appearance of the darker individuals, only they are tiddlers compared with the species I am searching for. I press on, following my torch beam beneath the woodland canopy in the Dart Valley. Where the track passes through a stand of oak trees I inspect the mossy tangles of roots and furrowed trunks. This is a good place to look, I'm told by the local entomologist John Walters.

Wandering alone at night in a Dartmoor forest, far from the nearest road, is an unsettling experience. Yet, this is not the first time that I've embarked on such a nocturnal foray. Several years ago, I joined citizen scientists in Borneo on the trail of species unknown to science. Among a number of finds, our Taxon Expeditions group discovered a new kind of rainforest "semi-slug".

But that striped 2cm rarity would be dwarfed by the monster mollusc that lurks in this ancient West Country woodland: the ash-black slug (*Limax cinereoniger*). Capable of growing to over 20cm in length, it is reputed to be the world's largest land slug.

You won't find this hefty critter munching through your lettuces and tender perennials. Instead, the ash-black is a forest inhabitant with an appetite for fungi and algae, typically spotted climbing trees once the sun goes down.

After an hour of searching, my torchlight picks out something resembling a lump of liquorice at the broad base of an oak. Closer examination reveals a tell-tale pale ridge along its lower back, identifying it as the species I seek – my first-ever sighting of an ash-black slug. It gradually unfurls and heads off across the bark, at full stretch exceeding 12cm.

There is something mesmerising about slugs in motion, smoothing the way as they go. Time slows as I watch this impressive specimen gliding silently and serenely onwards, joining the invertebrate night shift – an HGV among the gastropod traffic.

Charlie Elder

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How Gove trashed the legacy of London 2012

Barney Ronay (After the gold rush: World-class public facilities must trump an obsession with topping podiums, 24 July) says "the idea of a tangible legacy [from the London 2012 Olympics] was always flimflam", but one of the most important factors in the Games being awarded to the UK was that we had already put in place the grassroots plan to ensure the legacy years before we even made the bid.

In 2002 the Labour government had created, in England, school sport partnerships (SSPs), based in 450 secondary sports colleges, each of which was responsible for hugely increasing participation in sport in both their own school and a network of local secondaries, each releasing PE specialists for half of every week to help train primary school teachers to widen the sports offer to their pupils and to deliver quality coaching. Identifying talent at the grassroots and nurturing it through to local clubs and on to county, national and Team GB participation was another very firm objective.

The scheme was administered by the Youth Sport Trust, chaired by Sue Campbell; at the same time, as chair of UK Sport, she was also presiding over the funding of athletes in the run-up to the Beijing and London Olympics and Paralympics. So, both development of elite excellence and the grassroots "culture of participation" that Ronay desires were in the same capable strategic hands, and it made a huge contribution to our being awarded the 2012 Games. Sadly, in 2010 Michael Gove and David Cameron dismantled the SSPs, and with them the plans for a sporting legacy.

Good facilities are helpful, but the thing that makes the difference at every level of sport is good coaching. In 2012 the SSP based at my school in Tower Hamlets was twinned with and visited Usain Bolt's secondary school in Jamaica. When we met the great man at his training ground, we were at first astonished to see the relative poverty of the running track and facilities, with weeds growing through the surface, then remembered that it was Bolt's coaches, not fancy facilities, that made the difference. As it could and would have done for vast numbers of youngsters in England if politicians had only had the common sense, and decency, to keep the promise that we had made to the world.

Chris Dunne
Retired sports college head, London

Wild swimming isn't a new fashion and is no threat to wildlife

Wild swimming "the latest fashionable activity" (Letters, 27 July)? Hardly. Seventy years ago I learned to swim in the River Wey, in the company of other local kids (and a lot of water voles and a pair of nesting swans). Forty-five years ago we spent innumerable happy afternoons with our children swimming and splashing in the River Cherwell at Wolvercote – and there were other popular river bathing places in Oxford. Last week I took my granddaughter swimming in the River Chew. Wild swimming is certainly not a new fashion, though it has become riskier with the current levels of pollution in our rivers and lakes (not very beneficial for kingfishers, either).

Pat Simmons
Bristol

● I've been swimming locally for five years. Most of the year I'm accompanied by seals, otters, geese, oystercatchers and a variety of other seabirds. In summer, the campervans roll in. Their owners don't swim, but the wildlife disappears – so don't blame the swimmers for disturbing wildlife.

Paul Williams
Cuil Bay, Argyll

The links between Welsh slate and slavery

Your article (Slate quarries of Wales that 'roofed 19th century world' become Unesco world heritage site, 29 July) did not mention the origins of the finance that enabled the expansion of the slate quarries at the end of the 18th century. In 1781, Richard Pennant inherited the family's estates in Jamaica and in north Wales. He owned four sugar plantations in Jamaica, worked by more than a thousand enslaved workers. The money Pennant generated from sugar and slavery in Jamaica was invested in building road, railway and port infrastructure, as well as expanding the slate industry in Wales, in particular his Penrhyn slate quarry.

Pennant became MP for Petersfield in 1761 and, in 1767, one of the two MPs for Liverpool, Britain's major slave trading port. He was chairman of the West India Committee, an organisation of merchants and plantation owners that campaigned for the continuation of slavery. He frequently spoke in the Commons against abolition of the slave trade.

The Pennant family continued to profit from both slate quarrying in Wales and slave-produced sugar and rum from Jamaica. Penrhyn Castle was built between 1822 and 1833 on the instructions of George Hay Dawkins-Pennant, who had inherited Richard Pennant's estates in north Wales and Jamaica. Under the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, he received £14,683 17s 2d in compensation for the 764 enslaved labourers he claimed to own.

There is already a plaque in memory of the three-year Penrhyn quarrymen's strike of 1900-03. Perhaps the Welsh government might like to consider another plaque in memory of the hundreds of enslaved labourers who were worked to death on the Pennants' Jamaican plantations.

Dr Steve Cushion
Leytonstone, London

Act now to stop abuse of garment workers

I read Hannah Marriott's article (What's the price of fair fashion?, G2, 29 July) and agree that "voting with your wallet [to fix fast fashion labour and environmental abuses] will only go so far ... and won't be possible for many people who are struggling". We welcome her suggestion to write to MPs and CEOs – and there's now something specific you can demand, a simple solution that will tackle a key cause of poor working conditions at its source: a fashion watchdog.

This isn't just about assuaging consumer guilt. During Covid-19, brands cancelled orders and refused to pay suppliers for goods they'd already produced. Millions of workers, most of them women, lost their livelihoods and could no longer feed their families, let alone send their children to school. Those who did retain jobs had to work even harder in Covid-unsafe conditions. This revealed like never before the huge power imbalance between retailers and suppliers all over the world, and how retailers' purchasing practices are driving the abuses workers experience in the garment factories.

MPs on the environmental audit committee recommended that the UK government adopt this watchdog earlier this year, but the Department for Business is still sitting on the fence and being lobbied by retailers who try to pass the buck on to suppliers. Please write to your MP to ask the government to establish a fashion watchdog. It will save lives.

Fiona Gooch
Senior private sector policy adviser, Traidcraft Exchange

Corrections and clarifications

● **Horncastle is about 20 miles from Lincoln, not 2 miles as we had it (Homes for military history buffs, 10 July, page 49), and Tebay Services is in Cumbria, not in Norfolk as an inset map appeared to place it due to a production error ('The service station from heaven', 24 July, page 48).**

● **Bartolomé de las Casas, who went on to oppose enslavement of Caribbean peoples by Spanish colonisers, was mistakenly described as having sailed with Christopher Columbus (The books that made me, 10 July, Review, page 5).**

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com

Chapter 1: a subject to send you to sleep

Nigel Farage should really be given a knighthood for his fundraising efforts (Donations to the RNLI soar after Farage's migrant jibe, 30 July), but unfortunately he wouldn't be able to accept it because he has said he would never take the knee.

Tom Barnard
Little Dunkeld, Perthshire

● I found a surefire strategy to go to sleep (My quest for a good night's sleep, G2, 26 July) when I attempted to read Teach Yourself Bookkeeping many years ago, a skill I needed in my new job. I never got beyond the second page before falling asleep.

James Churchill
Baslow, Derbyshire

● Years ago, I worked for ICI Pharmaceuticals. One day I was tickled to receive a letter addressed to me at ICI "Farmer Suiticles" (Letters, 30 July). I've often wondered what my correspondent thought we might manufacture.

David Stott
Macclesfield, Cheshire

● In Ireland dinner is usually served around lunchtime (Letters, 30 July). I recall asking my uncle on a visit to see him: "How's the dinner, Benny"? He replied: "Ah, it'll do till I get home and have a feed".

Peter Stewart
London

● Obviously the next Time Lord will be one of Matt Hancock's friends (Jodie Whittaker quits Doctor Who, 30 July).

Kevin Fitzgerald
Sea Palling, Norfolk

● By admonishing a family member for "talking with their mouth open", does Adrian Chiles show that he'd make a good teacher of ventriloquism (G2, 29 July)?

Brian Saperia
London

Tony McGrath

Observer picture editor and photographer who worked in trouble spots from Belfast to Vietnam

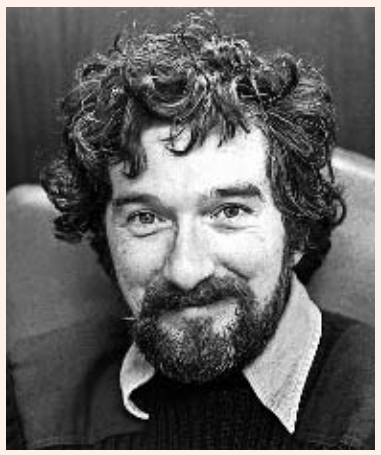
Tony McGrath, who has died aged 80 of acute myeloid leukaemia, was the celebrated Observer photographer whose images of starving children helped to alert the world to the famine in Ethiopia that gave rise to Live Aid.

His heartbreaking picture of a young child, emaciated and dressed in rags, was made into a poster for charity and won McGrath the photograph of the year accolade in the British press awards in 1984. The following year, Bob Geldof's Live Aid concerts in London and Philadelphia galvanised people worldwide to give tens of millions of pounds to the cause.

By then, McGrath was building a Fleet Street reputation as a pioneering picture editor of the Observer after 20 years on the road, capturing war, and its victims, up close and graphically, but with empathy and humanity. Always equipped with five Leicas, each with a different lens, he flew into trouble spots on assignment, shooting in black and white.

When conflict erupted closer to home in the late 1960s, at the start of the Troubles, he was sent repeatedly to Belfast, where he had begun his career, because he was always ready and willing to go. He covered the Bangladesh war of independence (1971) and the Yom Kippur war (1973) and went undercover in the townships to document the lives of black people in apartheid South Africa.

> **He spent 20 years on the road, capturing war, and its victims, graphically but with empathy and humanity**



McGrath, left, in 1976 and his images of, above, a man throwing a firebomb in the battle of the Bogside, Derry, August 1969, and, below, Somalia during a famine in 1979

TONY MCGRATH; JANE BOWN

In Vietnam he came close to joining the scores of photojournalists killed in the war. Details are sketchy because the self-effacing McGrath rarely talked about his battlefield experiences, but the US soldiers he was travelling with came under attack. All of them were killed; McGrath's film and cameras were lost. He escaped unhurt. But for a man renowned for always getting the picture, it was doubly devastating.

Born in Dublin into a Catholic family, with two sisters and three brothers, Tony was surrounded by pictures because his mother, Josephine (nee Urell), ran a photographic printing business. But life became difficult: his father, Francis, a forensic scientist, died when Tony was young. At a Christian Brothers school he was beaten for being lefthanded and dyslexic.

As a teenager, he had two aims: to leave home as soon as possible and to become a news photographer. By the end of the 50s he had moved across the border to work on the Belfast Telegraph as a messenger, but rapidly demonstrated his prowess with a camera.

By the early 60s, he was on his way to London, with offers from the Sunday Times and the Observer. He freelanced for both before choosing the Observer, where he felt more at home.

When the editor, Donald Trelford, appointed him picture editor in 1981, McGrath's mission was to put photography centre stage on a paper known for its fine writing. He already had a glittering array of talent at his disposal, including Jane Bown, Neil Libbert, Eamonn McCabe and Sue Adler, the last of whom, in 1983, became his fourth wife, three previous marriages having ended in divorce. To these he added young photographers such as John Reardon, Roger Hutchings, Judah Passow and Murdo MacLeod, all of whom became star names.

Fastidious, perfectionist, uncompromising, the sometimes

quick-tempered McGrath could be difficult to work with. Invariably suspicious of people's motives, he was always at war with somebody or something. But he could be a charmer too and was adept at playing Trelford in order to nudge a picture into the paper.

All these skills were needed in March 1991, at the end of the Gulf war, when a haunting image of the charred corpse of an Iraqi soldier burned alive in his truck in the desert came over the news agency wire. Those of us who saw the picture, taken by the US photographer Ken Jarecke as Saddam Hussein's invading army retreated from Kuwait, were keen to run it on the front of the Gulf war pages inside the paper, chiefly because, although tens of thousands of Iraqis had been killed, there was little photographic evidence.

Trelford, always wary about upsetting readers over Sunday breakfast, was so relieved that we were not lobbying to put it on the front page of the paper that he said yes. No other paper in Britain or the US touched the picture, which was considered too graphic.

McGrath, who had seen enough bodies on the battlefield, was there to take the flak when the Observer came under fire in the media for its brave decision to show it like it is. He described the covering up of killing by Britain, the US and allies as "dreadful censorship".

Fast, efficient and hard-working, McGrath was equally hard-playing. In the early 90s, in the dog days of Tiny Rowland's ownership, it sometimes seemed as if the Observer's journalists were trying to drink London dry of champagne. On his barstool, the convivial and amusing McGrath was at the forefront.

A bon vivant, he and Sue were generous hosts in their rambling flat in West Hampstead. They shared a passion for opera, Wagner in particular, and art. McGrath had a way with words too and toiled for several years over a novel, about a love triangle set amid the Troubles, but it never found a publisher.

He left the Observer at the end of 1993, soon after the Guardian bought it from Lonrho, and, in 1998, he and Sue emigrated to Australia in search of a new adventure when she was offered work by the Sydney Opera House.

In 2007, they headed for the outback and bought 100 acres of eucalyptus trees on a ridge in the bohemian village of Nimbin in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales. There they designed and built an art gallery-cum-house and began to collect work by young artists.

He is survived by Sue.

Mark Seacombe

Anthony Joseph McGrath, photographer and picture editor, born 16 August 1940; died 11 July 2021

Andy Fordham

Darts champion whose 'Viking' nickname belied a gentleness that made him a fan favourite

Andy "the Viking" Fordham, who has died aged 59, was one of the world's most popular darts players, instantly recognisable with his mane of long hair, thick black beard and 190kg (30 stone) bulk. But the 2004 world champion was never the intimidating figure his appearance suggested.

Fellow players and friends spoke of his abidingly gentle and generous nature, with the promoter Barry Hearn describing him as "a gentleman of whom I have never heard a bad word" and the former world champion John Lowe noting that he was "a true friend of everyone". Even after his top-class playing days were over he was always warmly received at events and regarded as a leading figure in the world of darts.

Born in Erith, south-east London, Fordham was the oldest of four children. His father, Sid, worked as an electrician, and his mother, Maureen, had a series of part-time retail jobs, including with the wholesaler Makro. When the family relocated to another London suburb, Charlton, Andy attended Eaglesfield secondary school, where friends gave him the nickname "whippet" because of his slender physique and his ability as a fleet-footed footballer.

It was football, in Greenwich, that drew him into his future sport, when he was asked to make up the numbers in the club's darts team. Initially he showed no signs of his later prowess, but he enjoyed the game and kept at it.

Working first as an apprentice plumber and then as an electrician's mate with his father, Fordham started to take a wider interest in darts, and idolised the five times world champion Eric Bristow. He began a relationship with Jenny Vallely, a dental nurse (they eventually married in 2000), and started to show real aptitude at the dartboard when the couple took over the running of the Queens Arms pub in Woolwich.

He reached the semi-final of the British Darts Organisation's world championship in 1995, where he lost to the eventual champion, Richie Burnett, and repeated the feat the following year with defeat to Steve Beaton, who would also go on to take the title. Twice more Fordham lost in the semi-finals, to Ronnie Baxter in 1999 and two years later to Ted Hankey.

He had won other tournaments around Europe, including the 1999 BDO World Masters, and became known as "the Viking" after his fellow player Bobby George came up with the moniker during a television commentary. By now a firm fan favourite, he finally laid to rest his nearly-man tag in the 2004 BDO World Championship when he came from behind to win an epic semi-final clash against the defending champion, Raymond van Barneveld, before winning the title to rapturous acclaim by defeating Mervyn King in the final.

However, a massively unhealthy lifestyle was beginning to take its toll on Fordham. By now managing the Rose pub in Dartford, Kent, he admitted to drinking heavily to control his nerves, downing prodigious amounts of booze before matches, and his weight ballooned. "Looking back, I realise I was an alcoholic, but I couldn't stop myself," he said. "I thought I was in control, but I wasn't. On an average day I'd have up to 25 bottles of lager and half a bottle of spirits. And I'd be eating badly, with takeaways and kebabs and doing no exercise."

Ten months after winning his world title, Fordham collapsed while playing Phil Taylor, the reigning champion of the rival Professional Darts Corporation, in a hugely hyped match at the Circus Tavern in Purfleet, Essex, which was being covered live on Sky TV. Perhaps affected by the pressure, he was certainly unable to cope with the heat on stage under the TV lights, and was forced to drop out of the best of 13 set match when losing 5-2. It proved to be the moment when his career as a top-class professional ended.

"I'd never played there before, and the heat was so intense," said Fordham. "I just got to the stage where I couldn't focus properly on the board." Taylor was more explicit, telling his rival that he had to change his lifestyle or it would cost him his life.

Doctors agreed. He lost about three stone while appearing in Celebrity Fit Club on ITV but then collapsed with chest pains after playing in a first-round match at the 2007 BDO World Championships. Suffering breathing difficulties, he had litres of fluid drained from his lungs and was also told that he was suffering from cirrhosis of the liver and would die unless he stopped drinking.

Heeding the warnings, he quit boozing and lost about 100kg in an attempt to become fit enough to resume his playing career. But although he had sporadic success - including playing well enough to qualify for the 2015 PDC Grand Slam of Darts - he was never able to attain the level of brilliance he showed in earlier years.

He continued to face more health problems attributed to years of drinking, including a blocked bowel that required surgery in 2020. This year he was hospitalised once more when he contracted Covid-19, and he died in hospital after suffering major organ failure.

He is survived by Jenny, their two children, Raymond and Emily, siblings John, Julie and Tracy, and eight grandchildren.

John Rawling

Andrew Fordham, darts player, born 2 February 1962; died 15 July 2021

Fordham in 2004, the year he won the BDO World Championship after an epic semi-final clash with Raymond van Barneveld STUART ATKINS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Birthdays

Today's birthdays: Victória Azárenka, tennis player, 32; **Kenny Burrell**, jazz guitarist, 90; **Dean Cain**, actor, 55; **Evonne Goolagong Cawley**, tennis player, 70; **Jonathan Dimbleby**, broadcaster, 77; **Lord (John) Dyson**, former master of the rolls and head of civil justice, 78; **Emilia Fox**, actor, 47; **Frank Gardner**, BBC security correspondent, 60; **Fergus Henderson**, chef and restaurant owner, 58; **Sherry Lansing**, film producer, 77; **Andrew Marr**, writer and broadcaster, 62; **Conor McGinn**, Labour MP and shadow security minister, 37; **Lynne Reid Banks**, novelist and children's writer, 92; **Fatboy Slim (Norman Cook)**, DJ and record producer, 58; **Wesley Snipes**, actor, 59.

Tomorrow's birthdays: Prof Dame Janet Beer, vice-chancellor, University of Liverpool, 65; **Derek Birdsall**, graphic designer and typographer, 87; **Karen Carney**, footballer, 34; **Chuck D**, rapper and producer, 61; **Oliver Dowden**, Conservative MP, secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport, 43; **Adrian Dunbar**, actor, 63; **Joe Elliott**, musician, 62; **David James**, footballer, 51; **Micheál Martin**, taoiseach, 61; **Sir Sam Mendes**, theatre and film director, 56; **Bastian Schweinsteiger**, footballer, 37; **Prof Laurie Taylor**, sociologist and broadcaster, 85; **Ed Vulliamy**, journalist and writer, 67; **Honeysuckle Weeks**, actor, 42; **Prof Alex Wilkie**, emeritus Fielden professor of pure mathematics, University of Manchester, 73.

Announcements

Deaths

BARKER, Professor Andrew, FBA, 1943 - 2021.
Eminent classicist.
The funeral will take place at Oakley Wood crematorium, afternoon of Friday 6 August.

DODD (nee ANDREWES), Georgina. We are so very sad to announce the death of Georgina Dodd, nee Andrewes, on Friday 23 July, aged 61. She fought a long battle with cancer with enormous bravery and a spirited joy in life. She was an inspiring teacher, a published author, a volunteer with VSO in Africa and a producer and presenter for BBC World Service. A wonderful and intuitive mother and loving partner, she leaves her husband, Daniel, and children, Maddie, Alex and Rosa. We all love her deeply and will miss her forever.

PEYTON JONES, Jeremy, died 22/7/21 leaving Claire, Miranda, Patrice and Lois bereft of a wonderful husband & father. Composer, sailor, teacher & friend, forever missed. All welcome to thanksgiving service 10/8/21, allsaintspeckham.org.uk/jeremy/.

REYNOLDS, Susan Mary Grace, peacefully at home on 29 July, aged 92. Distinguished historian and much loved sister to Felicity and aunt to Lucy, Katie, Hugh, Hilary and Ian.

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

Other lives

Elaine Wilson

Artist whose ceramic sculpture and collage explored how women looked at the world – and are looked at

There is a wonderful photograph of my friend, the artist Elaine Wilson, who has died aged 61 of cancer, in which she lies flat on her back in long grass, her blue eyes staring into the lens. How women look at themselves, and are looked at, was a theme she returned to again and again in her work.

Gun Women, a series of clay sculptures she began in 2008, were fired to look like fragile, decorative figurines. Angelic assassins, they peer down the barrel of their handguns, daring us to look at them, more Thelma and Louise than Meissen.

Born in Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire, to Sheila (nee Colquhoun), a teaching auxiliary, and John Wilson, a sales manager, Elaine attended Hamilton academy, then Duncan of Jordanstone School of Art in Dundee in 1981, and took an MA at the Royal Academy in London, leaving with a gold medal.

In 1982 she was included in New Contemporaries at the ICA, London, and in 1985 travelled to Italy, where she exhibited at the Besonte gallery in Florence.

The following year she joined the teaching staff at City and Guilds of London Art School, and two years later Kingston University created a role for her as a practising artist and ceramics technician. Alongside the two jobs, she continued to make and exhibit her own work. In 1995, during a residency at the European Ceramics Workcentre in the Netherlands, Elaine explored the decorative ceramics traditions that she would subvert in her Gun Women.

A travel award in 2001 enabled her to return to Italy. Inspired by effigies of female saints, she began a series of collages that combined photography with traditional female veils and decorations. Her work featured in shows around the UK, including Prime at the Royal Society of British Sculptors in 2002 and the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 2006.

A fellowship at Newcastle University in 2009 culminated in Spoiled, a solo show at the Hatton Gallery. This was accompanied by a monograph, Mirror (2010). She was also included in the book New Directions in Ceramics (2015) by Jo Dahn. Her final solo show, Corp-A-Corps, was at Arthouse1, in south-east London, in 2018. In the show, mysterious, architectural forms stood on perilous stilts, observing the world through peepholes.

Outside work, anything that involved sensible footwear Elaine generally avoided. Glamour was as essential to her as the heavyweight books she devoured. Her intellect might have been intimidating, had it not been for her fun-loving exuberance and huge heart.

Elaine is survived by her sister, Lorna, and brother, Alistair.

Mary Downes

Elaine Wilson, above, and, clockwise from right, her Gun Women clay sculptures; her final show, Corp-A-Corps, at Arthouse1 in south-east London, 2018; and In Clover, 2006, resin and mixed media

Mike Don

Underground magazine editor and co-manager in the 70s of the largest radical bookshop outside London

Mike Don, who has died aged 77, was a founder and editor of Mole Express, an underground magazine published in Manchester from 1970. He described it as somewhere between a community paper and the underground publications Friendz and It, based in London.

Mole Express covered local politics, the counterculture, and music- and drug-related issues. Its readership ranged from local activists to followers of the Manchester music scene.

In 1974, he joined me and others in a collective to take over the management of Manchester's Grass Roots bookshop. In the three years that followed, we took the shop from the backroom of a semi-derelict building on Oxford Road to a city centre location, turning it into the largest radical bookshop in Britain outside the capital.

Mike had a great memory, an important asset for handling a diverse and changing stock in an age without accessible computer technology. He had a wide range of contacts both on the left and within countercultural networks.

Radical bookshops attracted unwanted attention from the far-right. We encountered threats and occasionally violence. On one celebrated occasion Mike was able to engage a known far-right activist in a conversation about their shared interest in rockabilly music, thereby diffusing confrontation.

Mole Express folded in 1977 and he then launched City Enquirer, where he delved into the inner workings of Manchester city council and Greater Manchester police. He was a fine investigative journalist who had no interest in a mainstream media career.

In 1982 he left Grass Roots bookshop and started a mail order, and later online, secondhand book business, Dreamberry Wine, initially specialising in science fiction. He ran this from his home in Moss Side, Manchester, until he became ill at the end of last year.

Mike was born in Edinburgh to a single mother. He excelled academically and studied geology at Edinburgh University and then as a PhD student at Manchester University. It was at Manchester in 1968 that he met activists in a shared house and became interested in leftwing politics. His wit and repartee was renowned to the end.

Rick Seccombe

Maggie Moss

Teacher and author with a love of plants and bugs who pioneered butterfly monitoring in cities

My sister Maggie Moss, who has died aged 69 of cancer, was a teacher, author and ecologist, and a keen advocate of butterfly monitoring in an urban setting.

Her interest in plants and bugs lasted all her life. Over the years she taught me to look at all things creeping, opening up a world of bugs, beetles and parasitic wasps.

It struck Maggie that monitoring butterflies only in the countryside was missing a trick. In 2017, in Bristol, she created an urban butterfly transect to measure, by weekly survey, changes in the numbers and variety of butterflies in a set area. She also initiated a conference programme looking at urban issues such as verge mowing management.

Maggie was a member of Ashley Vale Allotment Association, and the allotment's first wildlife officer. With students from the University of the West of England she renovated a large pond. A motion-sensitive camera was installed which revealed night-time visitors: badgers, foxes and deer.

Born in Wantage, Oxfordshire, Maggie was one of three daughters of Rachel (nee Bailey) and Basil Moss. Our family moved to Redland, Bristol, where our father, a vicar, became a parish priest, then canon of Bristol Cathedral, and Maggie went to Fairfield school.

Later we moved to Dulwich, south London. Maggie went to Mary Datchelor girls' school, Camberwell, then Loughborough College of Education, qualifying in 1974. Having taught at Weston All Saints primary school in Bath for some years, in 1978 she travelled overland, on her own, to India. The resulting increase in confidence and self-reliance remained with her.

Maggie collaborated with our sister, Gemma, to write the groundbreaking Handbook for Women Travellers (1987). Translated into three languages, it offered practical advice on how to stay safe and be culturally sensitive. She subsequently worked with Tourism Concern to establish the Himalayan Tourist Code (1988).

Maggie met Mike Manson in 1979 at Bristol Polytechnic while training to be a careers adviser, and they married in 1984. She worked for Avon Careers Service with excluded young people and latterly as an outreach worker for further education colleges. She retired in 2015 as schools liaison officer for St Brendan's sixth form college in Bristol.

Maggie's love of other cultures was broadened by travels to Ethiopia, Mali and Iran. She always took string with her to do "cat's cradle", an aid to help her connect with local women and children.

Maggie is survived by Mike, their children, Hannah and Matthew, and by Gemma and me.

Jill Moss

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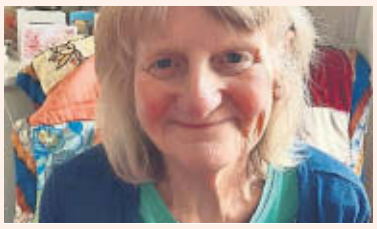
@guardianobits



Penny Walker

Peace activist who worked tirelessly to make Coventry a welcoming place for refugees and asylum seekers

My friend Penny Walker, who has died aged 70 of cancer, was a campaigner for non-violence who in 1998 set up the housing co-operative Coventry Peace House. Over the years its activities expanded to include an education trust; a centre teaching bike mending and selling recycled bikes; and a community space with a night shelter for destitute refugees.

Penny's work included liaising with Coventry council, police and health services – she was widely known and respected. I met her through my work as a member of the Coventry lord mayor's peace committee.

In 1998 Penny began the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre with a clothes exchange that last year helped 4,000 individuals. She truly lived out her values, with compassion, positivity, energy and commitment. She helped Coventry to become a welcoming city for refugees and asylum seekers.

Born in Hadleigh, Suffolk, Penny grew up in the village of Lindsey. Her father, James Thoroughgood, was a teacher and a wartime conscientious objector, and her mother, Elsie, was a secretary. On leaving Sudbury girls' school, Penny was expected to go to university but decided she wanted to help people. At 17 she went to Gretna Green with a friend, Philip Walker, and they got married, so that she could not be made to go home.

Over the years, as well as bringing up their two children, Penny worked as an occupational therapist and a house parent at a residential school, and gained a diploma in counselling. She was an activist with the Green party and the whole family travelled overland to India for nine months in the 1970s. Penny and Philip later separated.

Penny spent some time studying the idea of community, and in 1997 she lived for a year in a caravan in the peace camp beside the Alvis tank factory in Coventry. The following year, with colleagues, she set up Coventry Peace House in a row of empty houses in the city.

After her "retirement" in 2011, Penny settled in Leicester, where she wrote about her neighbourhood of South Highfields and the history of the peace movement, in books including We Are South Highfields (2012). Penny also chaired East Midlands CND; and she was arrested demonstrating against drone bombing in Afghanistan.

Penny had many good ideas, but she also made these events actually happen, sometimes by raising money, but always by co-ordinating and encouraging others.

Philip predeceased her. She is survived by her children, Mel and Charlie, and grandchildren, Brooke and Lilly.

David Fish

Richard Greenhall

Oxford neurologist committed to the values of the NHS with a special interest in Parkinson's disease

My friend Richard Greenhall, who has died aged 77, was an accomplished neurologist with a special interest in Parkinson's disease. He became a consultant in the department of neurology at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, in 1977 at the unusually early age of 33.

He was born in Birmingham, the son of George Greenhall, a dental mechanic, and Elsie (nee Bromwich), a housewife. Richard attended King Edward's school, Birmingham, where he was head boy and met his future wife, Elizabeth Reiner, then head girl of the associated girls' school, when arranging school dances.

Richard went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he studied medicine. After clinical training at St Thomas's hospital in London, he worked as a junior doctor in London, Bristol and Oxford. In 1969 he married Elizabeth. They lived and worked in Oxford, bringing up three children.

As well as his clinical practice Richard taught medical students at Oxford University and helped develop neurology services in Oxford and the surrounding area. His commitment to the NHS was such that he not only refused to practise privately but had recently refused private treatment for his own debilitating leg injury. Nye Bevan was his hero.

His colleague Professor Kevin Talbot has described Richard as a "jobbing" neurologist who put patients first, and was never particularly motivated by seeing his name in print. In a career of more than 30 years he published only a handful of papers, but his positive influence on the culture of Oxford neurology is a far greater legacy.

"Even the most junior neurology trainee felt valued," said Professor Talbot. "Regular Friday after-work debriefing sessions at the Royal Oak across the road from the Radcliffe Infirmary – obligingly facilitated by the hospital switchboard operator with a pager message to attend meeting on 'Oak ward' – were an opportunity to benefit from the wider curriculum of cricket, music, politics and neurological gossip."

Proud of the Welsh roots of his father's family, and with a cottage in Powys, Richard escorted guests using seasoned railway knowledge to rugby internationals in Cardiff and football matches at West Bromwich Albion. A champion grower of broad beans, and admired for his fine woodworking skills, he fashioned a dinner table from a fallen Cymric beech tree around which he and Elizabeth gathered friends for delightful feasts and engaging conversation.

Richard is survived by Elizabeth, their children, Owen, George and Ruth, and five grandchildren.

Joseph Winkelman

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Mike Dyble

Marketing director on Manchester's Olympic bids who helped secure the Commonwealth Games in 2002

If you watched any television in the last 50 years, you probably saw an advert made by my grandpa, Mike Dyble, who has died after a sudden brain haemorrhage, aged 84.

You probably still remember it too. Perhaps it was the Hippo and Duck double act for Silentnight; or perhaps the Solvite stuntman, soaring across Miami beneath a helicopter, held in place only by the power of Solvite wallpaper paste. Mike had a knack for ideas that stuck.

He was born in Garston, Liverpool, the son of Bertram Dyble and Mabel (nee Owens), local newsagents. As a child, he spent his evenings reading comics taken from the shop, though he had to return them in pristine condition for sale the next day. Perhaps it was from those experiences that he developed his signature talents: frugality and entrepreneurship, combined with a strong visual imagination, and a flair for audacious, even zany narratives.

Mike met Pauline Davies at a scout dance, and they married in 1961. After studying art at Liverpool College, he found his calling in the world of 1960s advertising, in Manchester, which was to become his home for the next 60 years.

Alongside Ken Bowden, Geoff Hayes and Win Higenbottam, he founded the marketing company Bowden, Dyble & Hayes, known as BDH, in 1964. The company was soon on the rise, with a series of breakthrough ads in the new medium of television. By the 80s, it was the UK's biggest regional advertising agency, employing more than 200 staff.

The quartet sold the business in 1988, but more ambitious projects were to come when Mike became international marketing director for the 1996 and 2000 Manchester Olympic bids. Although these were ultimately unsuccessful, he helped secure the Commonwealth Games in 2002.

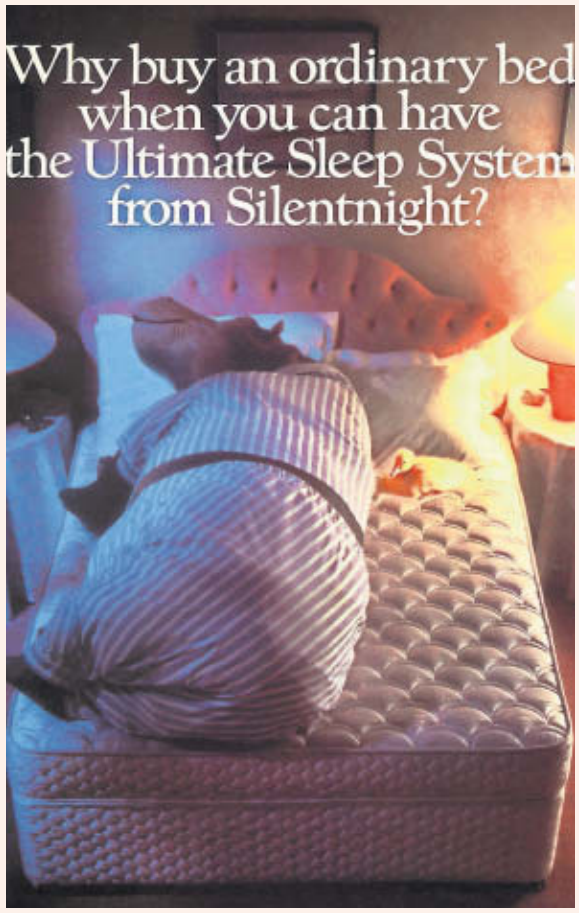
> **"From reading comics taken from his parents' newsagents shop he developed a flair for zany narratives**

The lasting legacy was Manchester's changing image on a global stage – the ultimate rebranding – as the city emerged from the grey haze of industrial decline newly self-confident.

In his later years, Mike continued to live up to his reputation as "the nicest workaholic you'll ever meet", to quote his longtime colleague Pat Cadwallader. He worked tirelessly for numerous charities, including Manchester City Art Gallery, Bauer Media's Cash for Kids, Gaddum, which provides health and well-being services in Greater Manchester, Manchester Settlement, and the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry.

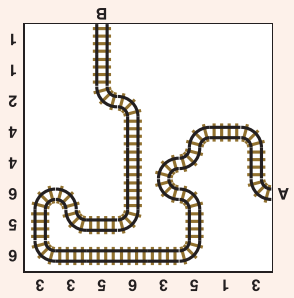
He continued to enjoy tennis, skiing and playing football with his grandchildren well into his 80s. Mike is survived by Pauline, their four children, Mark, Amanda, Jacqueline, and Nigel, and eight grandchildren.

Jake Dyble



▶ *Hippo and Duck double act: a 1980s magazine advert for Silentnight beds, devised by Mike Dyble at his Manchester agency BDH*
RETRO ADARCHIVES

Solutions

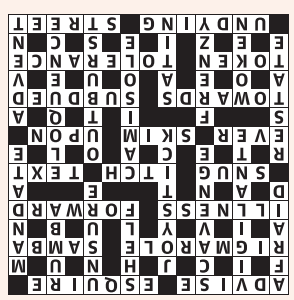


Train tracks

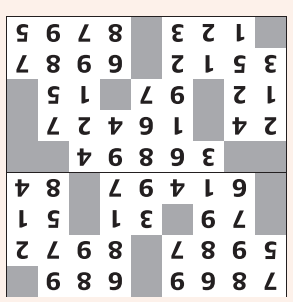
EXCELLING
Word wheel

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

Suguru



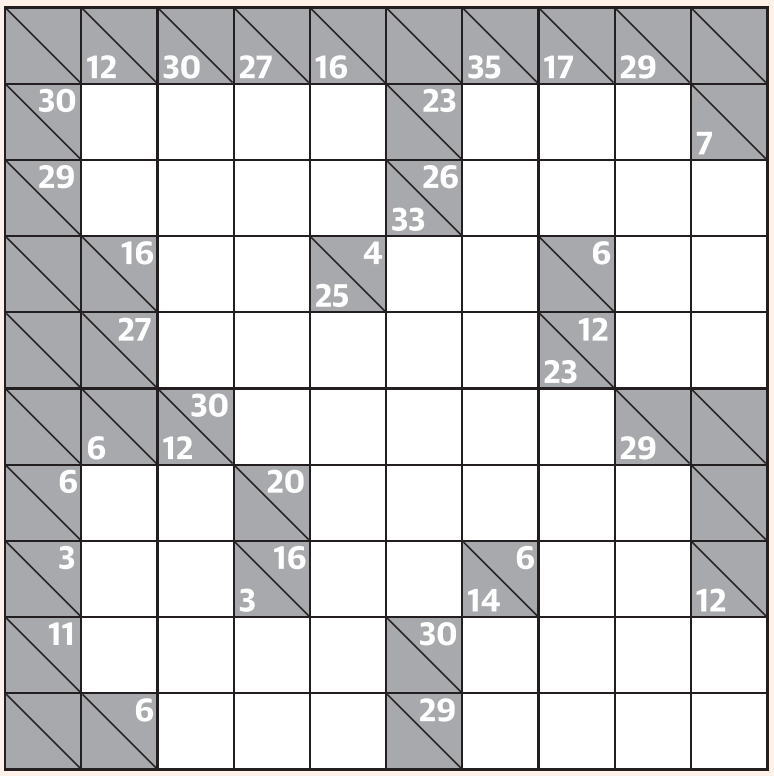
Codeword



Kakuro

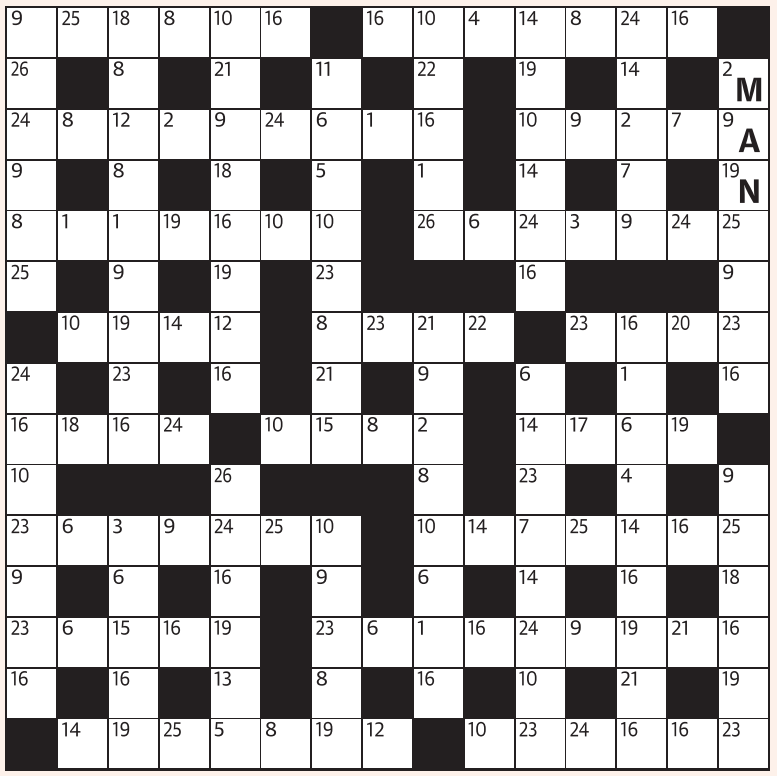
Kakuro

Fill the grid so that each block adds up to the total in the box above or to the left of it. You can only use the digits 1-9 and you must not use the same number twice in a block.



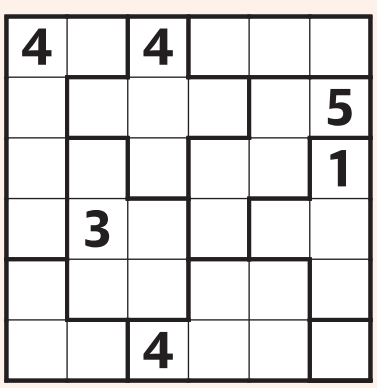
Codeword

Crack the code to fill in the crossword grid. Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. A number of letters have been decoded to help with the identification of other letters and words in the grid.



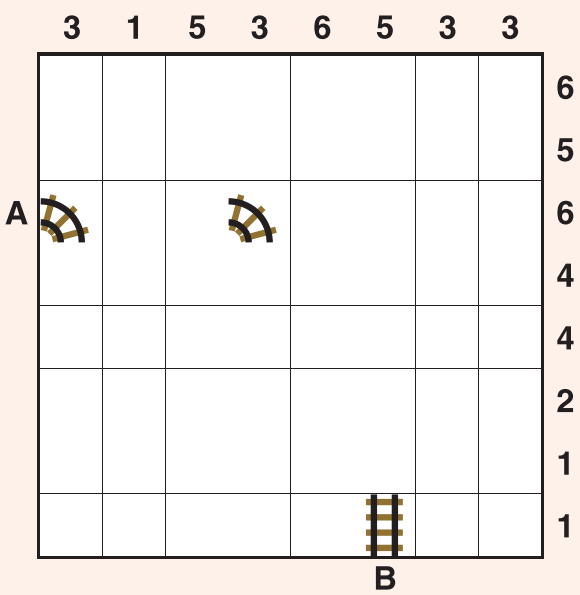
Suguru

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.



Train tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.



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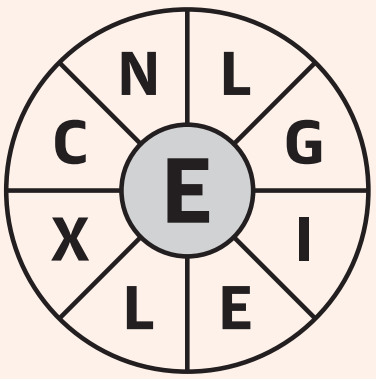
Word wheel

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-19. Good-16. Average-12.



Puzzles

Sudoku

The normal rules of Sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9.

Easy

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

Medium

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

Expert

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

Futoshiki

Hard

Fill in the grid so that every row and column contains the numbers 1-5. The "greater than" or "less than" signs indicate where a number is larger or smaller than its neighbour.

□	< □	□ >	□	□
∨		∨		
□	□ >	□	□	□
	∨			∧
□ >	□	□	□	□
∧	∧			∨
□	□	□	□ >	□
∨			∨	
2	□	□	□	5

Kids Word search

Find all the listed French words in the grid, reading in straight lines, up, down or diagonally, either backwards or forwards.

BEAU, BELLE, BONJOUR, CHAT, CROISSANT, FILLE, FRERE, GARCON, MADAME, MERCI, OUI, POMME, ROUGE, SOEUR

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

Kids Countdown

Can you work out the answers to the sums below?

Easy	Medium	Hard
5	**43**	**97**
+ 23	- 37	+ 50
÷ 4	× 13	*6/7 of it*
× 9	- 29	- 57
- 36	÷ 7	*Third of it*
÷ 3	+ 41	+ 92
+ 11	*3/4 of it*	*20% of it*
÷ 10	- 27	+ 79
+ 22	× 8	*Half of it*
÷ 8	- 24	- 35
Answer	Answer	Answer

Solutions

Kids Countdown

Easy: 3
Medium: 48
Hard: 16

Sudoku *Easy*

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

Sudoku *Medium*

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

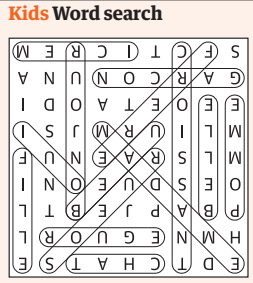
Sudoku *Expert*

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

Futoshiki

4	< 5	3	> 2	1
∨		∨		
1	4 >	2	5	3
	∨			∧
3 >	2	5	1	4
∧	∧			∨
5	3	1	4 >	2
			∨	
2	1	4	3	5

Kids Word search



Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku
Easy

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

Medium

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

Codeword

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

Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 28,511

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

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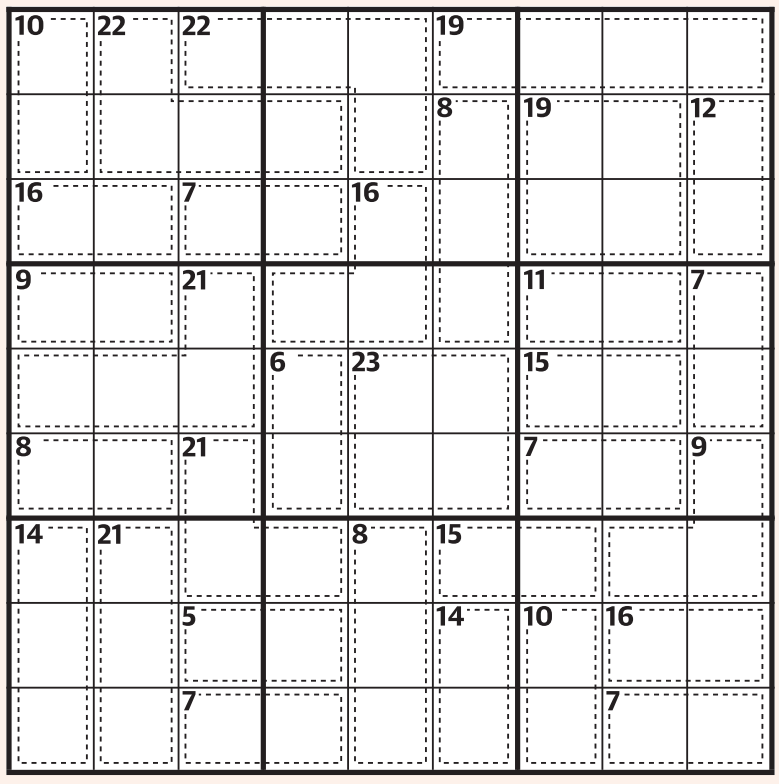
Killer sudoku

Hard No 773

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.



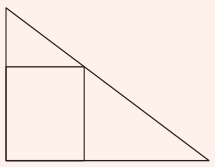
Chris Maslanka's puzzles

Pyrgic puzzles

1 This week the last illiterate straw to break the back of Pedanticus's toleration was Radio 3's pronouncement that "250 years after his birth, Allan Little takes a fresh look at (Sir Walter) Scott's life and legacy". Why?

2 Show that the difference of the reciprocal of two consecutive whole numbers is always the reciprocal of a whole number but the sum of the reciprocals of two whole numbers never is.

3 Garabaggio's latest "masterpiece" (currently on show at Rogues' Gallery on Poppycock Terrace) is a right-angled triangle with a snugly fitting square in it. It's not Art but it makes a decent thought-piece. If the sides of the triangle are a, b & c, with a ≤ b < c, what is the side, s, of the square?



4 For what shape of right-angled triangle is the fraction of the right-angled triangle occupied by the square a maximum? What is the value of that fraction?

5 In a string of 3s and 4s only, the 3th digit after a 3 can't be a 3 and the 4th digit after a 4 can't be a 4, what is the longest possible unextendible string of finite length?

6 A 10-inch cube is painted red and sliced into 1,000 1-inch cubes. How many of the resulting cubes have just one red face?

email: maslanka@easynet.co.uk
Twitter: @ChrisMaslanka

Wordplay

Wordpool
In each case find the correct definition:

KANTELE
a) female Cantor
b) roof over verandah
c) Finnish plucked string instrument
d) counterweight

COQUELICOT
a) poppy red
b) poached egg
c) the sound of a cockerel
d) seashells

BAUSOND
a) test adherence of tiles by tapping
b) unit of builder's noise
c) having white spots on dark background
d) wild boar

Jumblies
Rearrange the letters of THIN ALBUMS to make a word.

Dropouts
In each case replace each asterisk with a letter to make a word:
*V*A*I*N

Wordcentre
Identify this (OK, not very frequent!) 14-letter word from its centre:
****TOMATO****

Cryptic
Offensive words for sailor to use (5)

Missing Links
Find a word which follows the first word in the clue and precedes the second in each case making a fresh word or phrase. E.g. the answer to *fish mix* could be *cake* (fish*cake* & *cake* mix) and to *bat man* it could be *he* (bat*he* & *he*-man)...
a) fly paper
b) wind drawer
c) dead language
d) word engine
e) cosmic bowl
f) gold lion

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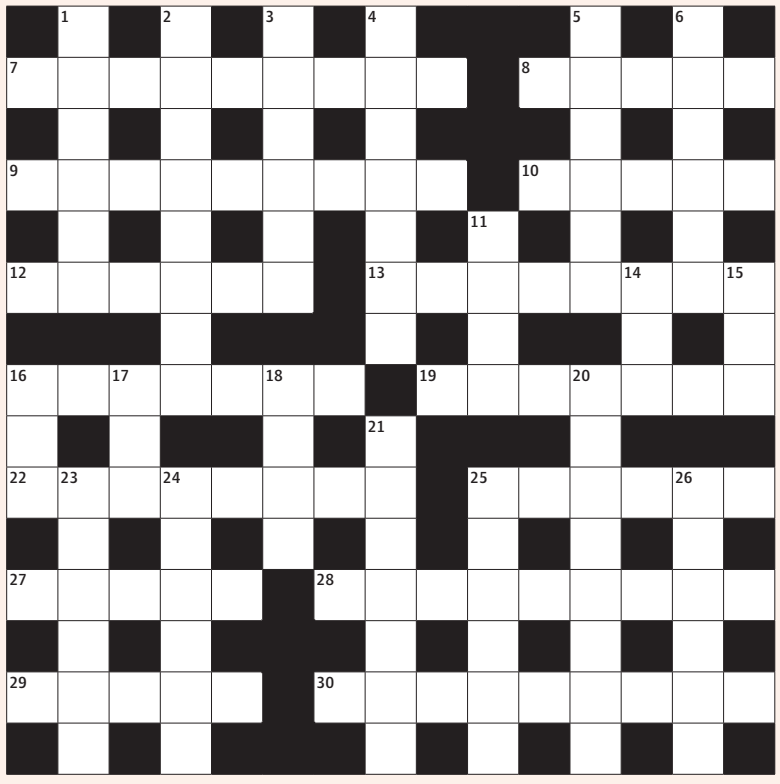
Guardian cryptic crossword No 28,512 set by Picaroon



Across
7 Fool in underwear during time inside home (9)
8,10 Opener from Sabbath isn't safe, Christian rock (5,5)
9 I'll leave the strings vibrating, more than one forte (9)
10 See 8
12 One member of English rock group, one going on record (6)
13 Jersey, perhaps, odd – it's worn by relative (8)
16 See 18
19,25 Flash car carrying hip, grand rock group (7,6)
22 See 27
27,22 Number of England fans, tolerance-wise, needing reform (5,8)
28 He's in a spy novel, like work of 19 25? (9)
29 Some rock singer, when paired with 4 (5)
30 More refined Conservative right to block maverick (9)

Down
1,4 One enters playing trill etc, kind of rock singer (6,7)
2 Notice earth and mire around rider? (8)
3 Scallywag upholding British accent (6)
4 See 1
5 Drinkers are in this state in empty town (6)
6 Trainee put in ground nuts, at first (6)
11 A pair of Frenchmen love contents of magazine (4)
14 Clay changed to this mineral in boxes (3)
15 Name of the game (3)
16 One who cures fish from the south (3)
17 Twelve months in port (3)
18,16across Line dancing by rock singer (4,7)
20 Ladies on staff hiding hotel's way to dodge tax? (8)
21 Vocabulary of large person once idolised (7)
23 A woven fabric to suit oneself (2,4)
24 Rare bird stopping and starting tours round east (3-3)
25 Writer's special name for rock once (6)
26 King, say, in shelter raised part of crown (6)

Sport

Feud in Cape Town

Springboks step up protests as Lions set sights on series win

Pages 14-17 →

Tokyo 2020

British Made eXcellence

Shriever and Whyte race away with a gold and a silver

Page 2 →

Asher-Smith on fast track Dina: I can step up pace for 100m final

Page 4 →

Stokes to step away

All-rounder takes break for 'mental wellbeing'

Sachin Nakrani and Tony Paley

Kevin Pietersen and Gary Lineker are among the leading sporting figures to show support for Ben Stokes after the England all-rounder decided to taken an indefinite break from cricket with immediate effect "to prioritise his mental wellbeing".

The England and Wales Cricket Board announced yesterday evening that Stokes will play no part in the forthcoming Test series against India. As well as stepping back for the sake of mental wellbeing, the 30-year-old is also seeking to rest his injured left index finger, which has not fully healed since his return to competitive cricket this month.

"Ben has shown tremendous courage to open up about his feelings and wellbeing," said the managing director of England men's cricket, Ashley Giles, in a statement. "Our primary focus has always been and will continue to be the mental health and welfare of all of our people. The demands on our athletes to prepare and play elite sport are relentless in a typical environment, but the ongoing pandemic has acutely compounded this.

"Spending significant amounts of time away from family, with minimal freedoms, is extremely challenging. The cumulative effect of operating in these environments has had a major impact on everyone's well-being. Ben will be given as long as he needs and we look forward to seeing him playing cricket for England in the future."

As well as coping with life in bio-secure bubbles during the past 16 months - which he has done with the Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League as well as with England's Test and limited-overs squads - Stokes has also had to deal with the death of his father Ged in December after he had suffered from brain cancer during the final year of his life.

Stokes has thrown himself into cricket this summer, featuring for Durham in the T20 Blast and for the Northern Superchargers in the Hundred, as well as this month captaining a makeshift England side to a 3-0 one-day series victory over Pakistan after the first-choice squad had to go into isolation.

It has been full-on schedule, with more to come in the form of the Test series against India, and Stokes has ultimately decided to take a total break. He will be

13 →

Shriever and Whyte take different paths in their rides to glory

Duo who have known each other for a decade win gold and silver medals for GB

Tumaini Carayol
Ariake Urban Sports Centre

Beth Shriever and Kye Whyte were around 12 years old when they first met on the youth talent teams in Great Britain's BMX system. In the time since, they have gone their separate ways on their own unique, testing paths and then converged again as training partners and professionals in Manchester. They have seen each other at their worst, through tears and doubt, and constantly lent one another a helping hand.

And now, on the biggest stage, they have also triumphed together. After a delirious day of BMX racing, Shriever, 22, and Whyte, 21, emerged as Great Britain's first ever BMX medallists within minutes of each other as Whyte clinched a silver medal in the men's race just before Shriever closed off a day of dominance by becoming the Olympic champion in the women's event.

It marks a moment of validation for both after the unique paths they have blazed. Only a few years ago, despite being the 2017 world junior champion, Shriever was working part-time as a teaching assistant in a primary school in Essex while training on the side. Following a UK Sport decision that only male BMX riders would be supported after Rio, she required money from crowdfunding simply in order to travel to competitions. She has since rejoined British Cycling and trains in Manchester with Whyte, where she is the only female rider in the squad. "I never thought I would even be here," she said.

Meanwhile, Whyte hails from Peckham in south London and his formative years were spent at Peckham BMX Club, where his father was a coach, his mother a secretary and he and his elder brother, Tre, built international BMX careers. He wears his pride for Peckham on his sleeve and before the event he frequently spoke of his determination to bring something back. Now he will.

As he set the course in Tokyo alight, back home friends, family, coaches and many more convened at the club in the early hours of each morning to watch him. When he called in yesterday morning and tried to speak to them all, he found himself on the verge of tears and could not utter a word.

> ***'I could not stand up. The lactic acid, I've never felt anything like it'***
>
> **Beth Shriever**
> *BMX gold medal winner*

Even before the medal rush, it had been some day. BMX racing is furious, dynamic fun. But there are also perilous risks involved, a fact that was made clear when two competitors, including the defending men's gold medallist Connor Fields, were carried off the course in stretchers after sustaining injuries in brutal crashes.

Both Whyte and Shriever said they were unfazed by the danger in their sport. "If you're scared, you might as well pack your bags early," said Whyte. "Because you're not gonna ride properly if you're scared to crash. I said to my brother this morning: 'Nothing's stopping me, I'm prepared to crash.'" He says that his brother responded: "Chill, g." On the morning of an Olympic final, he was not quite ready to relax: "Nah, I don't care," he wrote back. "I'm going to war."

Their battles were entirely different spectacles. Whyte overcame two "crap" starts in his first two runs, but found his groove by winning the third semi-final heat of three. He finished his final with a time of 39.167sec after establishing his second place spot and then rapidly closing the gap on the eventual winner, Niek Kimmann of the Netherlands holding him off in the gold medal spot by just 0.144sec.

Shriever, meanwhile, was in fantastic form from the off and her flame endured throughout. She dominated her semi-finals, breezing through all three by large distances and she had established herself as one of the superior riders going into the final.

Once she arrived there, Shriever repeated her form again under pressure, creating a clear lead early on. She was tracked all the way by Mariana Pajón of Colombia but she maintained her composure and held on to take the gold medal with the time of 44.358sec, winning by just 0.09sec.

As Shriever dismounted from her bike, Whyte sprinted over to her and lifted her into the sky. However, in those first moments after her win she could barely move: "I had nothing left at the end. I left it all on the track," she said. "I honestly could not even stand up. The lactic acid in my legs, I've never felt anything like it before." The result of pushing her body to the limit was a glistening gold medal and the distinction of being the best in the world.

But for the pair – a black BMX rider from Peckham and the only woman in her training setup – this is also an opportunity to help shape the sport in their images. "It's amazing," said Shriever. "We've created history. Inspiring the next generation, inspiring more girls to get involved. Like Kye was saying, I'm the only girl in the programme. To get a few more girls coming in, to get them involved would be amazing."

As he departed the stadium following the medal ceremony, Whyte said that he was even happier for Shriever than himself. He listed many of the struggles he has seen her endure, from dislocating her shoulder during hard training, to the stress her dreams inflicted on her. "Even before we left out here, her starts weren't that great," he said. "I gave her a little hand. She was crying, I said: 'Beth, you're flippin' rapid. You're actually very fast.' She's gone and proven it. Nothing I can say. From the first race, I knew she was going to win."

Women's BMX racing

1	Beth Shriever	GB
2	Mariana Pajón	Col
3	Merel Smulders	Neth

Men's BMX racing

1	Niek Kimmann	Neth
2	Kye Whyte	GB
3	Carlos Alberto Ramirez Yepes	Col

Team GB's day of BMX supremacy

Beth Shriever stays ahead of Mariana Pajón in the women's BMX final, winning the gold medal by 0.09sec NAOKI MORITA/ AFLO/ SHUTTERSTOCK

◀ *Kye Whyte (No 5) on his way to a silver medal in yesterday's men's BMX final*
MATTHEW CHILDS/ REUTERS

Kye Whyte picks up Beth Shriever after her historic triumph

Scott adds silver to his medley of medals and eyes piece of history

Versatile Scot can become first Briton to reach podium four times in one Games

Andy Bull
Tokyo Aquatics Centre

Three events, three finals, three medals. Yesterday morning Duncan Scott won a silver in the men's 200m individual medley, to go with the silver in the 200m freestyle and the gold in the 4x200m freestyle relay he won earlier this week. Add in the two silvers he won in the relays in 2016, and he is now the most successful British Olympic swimmer since the Edwardian era. One more and he will be the first British athlete in any sport to win four medals at one Olympics. Given that he still has two events left, the men's medley relay and the mixed medley relay, there's every chance he will do it, too.

Not that Scott is worried about any of that right now. He is so busy he hardly has time to stop and talk, let alone think about all the records he has a chance of breaking. When you do get a word with him, you can tell he is having the time of his life. His only regret was that he was not able to win an individual gold medal. He was beaten by his teammate Tom Dean in the 200m freestyle and by China's Wang Shun in the medley, but he got over both disappointments pretty quickly. "Initially I was really gutted," the 24-year-old said, before he broke into a grin. "But I've had enough time to think about it a bit more and let it sink in."

When Scott does get a chance to look back at it all, he will see that this individual medley final was one of the great races. For four successive Games, it belonged to Michael Phelps. He won it in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016, which means there are some swimmers competing here in Tokyo this week who were not even born the last time anyone else had a look-in, and others who have spent their entire careers waiting for this, a first chance to swim in an Olympic final without having to race someone who cannot be beaten. There were some of the greatest medley swimmers of all time in this race, all waiting for this opportunity.

Scott was not one of them. Glasgow-born, he did medley swimming as a junior but swam it at a major championships for the first time in 2018. Apparently his regular event programme of the 100m freestyle, 200m freestyle, 4x100m medley relay, 4x100m freestyle relay, and 4x200m freestyle relay was not busy enough, so he decided to fill the gaps in his schedule by taking on the most technically demanding event in swimming, one that requires mastery of all four strokes and the turns and transitions between them.

On the starting blocks, Scott had Kosuke Hagino, the former world swimmer of the year, Michael Andrew, the US champion, and Laszlo Cseh, who won his first of his six Olympic medals in 2004, on one side, and Wang, who finished third behind Phelps in 2016, and Daiya Seto, the world champion, on the other. Every single one of them had a better personal best in this event than Scott. Or they did, anyway. "There's not many who are quicker now," Scott said. His time of 1min 55.28sec was the seventh-fastest in history. The man is a natural-born racer. Switzerland's Jérémy Desplanches took the bronze.

Scott was even happier for his friend Luke Greenbank, who won bronze in the 200m backstroke. They have been on swimming teams together since 2014 and he knows how much Greenbank has been through. Now 23, he won bronze in this event at the Youth Olympics in 2014 but struggled to make the transition into senior swimming and went through a miserable few years. The bronze here was a reward for sticking with the sport. The two of them will likely both be on Great Britain's team for the men's 4x100m medley tomorrow. For Scott, it will be his 10th race of the week. It is a lunatic schedule.

"I think some people would find that quite challenging, yeah," Scott said, "and it is something I've had to get better and better at, probably since the last Olympics really, trying to park one swim and move on to the next. You have to manage yourself physically but I think it's toughest mentally, really, because it's really draining."

The secret, he said, is to "get out of the building really sharp, try not to do too many questions with the media, because it's really important that you try to minimise your time in the arena and the environment". And with that, he was gone, off to the training pool to begin his warm-down. You could count the hours till he would be back again.

War of words in the pool *Page 6* →

Men's 200m ind medley

1 **Shun Wang** CHN
2 **Duncan Scott** GB
3 **Jérémy Desplanches** SUI

▼ *Duncan Scott said: 'Initially I was really gutted' about taking silver*
HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Jamaica's sprint queen pulls away

Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce impresses with a time of 10.84sec while slowing down well before the line
MATTHIAS HANGST/ GETTY IMAGES

Fraser-Pryce leads charge to hint at sprint fireworks

Asher-Smith safely through to 100m semi-finals as heats bring string of fine times

Sean Ingle
Tokyo Olympic Stadium

When the question came, shortly after Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce had eased through her 100m heat in a time so jaw-droppingly fast it would have won silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics, the Jamaican world champion did not flinch. Do you think you can go 10.5sec in the 100m final? "Sure," she replied. "It's definitely a super-fast track."

Such a time would put her within a hair's breadth of Florence Griffith-Joyner's 33-year-old world record. And yet, watching Fraser-Pryce run 10.84 while slowing down long before the finish, it seemed an entirely reasonable response.

Yet, more remarkably still, two athletes - Marie-Josée Ta Lou (10.78) and Elaine Thompson-Herah (10.82) - went even quicker. That was despite Ta Lou looking over her shoulder at one point and Thompson-Herah coasting for the last 30m.

That was not all. Six women crashed through the 11-second barrier. Another 22 set personal bests. Ten national records fell. Sprint heats are usually about loosening limbs and conserving energy. This was a sustained assault on the senses - and the record books.

Some suggested it may be down to the Mondo track in Tokyo, which is among the fastest in history. Others also pointed to the new spike technology. Whatever the reason, it made for a startling opening morning. More - much more - is likely to come in tonight's 100m final.

Ta Lou said afterwards: "I'm in shock actually. I really didn't expect to run that fast. I didn't run it ... but then 10.78sec. Wow."

When asked whether it was a lightning fast track, Ta Lou nodded. "Yeah, I can say that because I ran 10.78, easy."

The sentiment was shared by Britain's Daryll Neita, who blasted to 10.96, her first time under 11 seconds. "It's going to be a very fast championship, let's put it that way, it feels amazing," she said.

The good news for British supporters is that more is clearly lurking in the tank. "I don't want to say it, but it felt like it could have been better," she added. "Although I am obviously really grateful and really happy for that first round, executing and getting a PB."

What of the great British hope Dina Asher-Smith? The 25-year-old is the third favourite with the bookies but she did not look entirely fluent in coming second behind Teahna Daniels in 11.07. But afterwards she insisted she was conserving her strength for the battles ahead.

"It felt good, it felt good to be out here and to finally get my Olympics under way," she said. "I think the track was fast but to be honest today was just about making it through to the next round safely. And I do have another level - of course I do, it's the Olympics."

It is all shaping up to be a battle royale, with no less a luminary than Usain Bolt suggesting the 100m women's final will eclipse the men's race at these Games. On this evidence, it's hard to disagree. And as Fraser-Pryce wryly commented afterwards: "It's long overdue."

Earlier the growing buzz about the young British middle distance talent was reflected as all three 800m women made the semi-finals. Jemma Reekie looked particularly impressive, dipping under two minutes in winning her heat in 1min 59.97sec, while Keely Hodgkinson negotiated a potentially tricky test to qualify second in 2:01.59, behind the American Raevyn Rogers. Alex Bell also squeezed through as a fastest loser.

"I'm through and that's the main thing," said Reekie. "It was a little bit

▲ *Dina Asher-Smith pledges to find 'another level' in the semi-finals*

Women's 100m final
1.50pm today
TV BBC One

messy and I was a little bit all over the place but that's job done."

The Scot, who has a genuine shot at a medal, also took time to praise the volunteers who clap the athletes – and the atmosphere inside the largely empty 68,000-seat stadium. "It's quite good because the volunteers are making it feel special, they are clapping us coming out of the call room and they're just so happy to have us here, it feels like there are people here watching," she added.

However the US phenomenon Athing Mu, who turned 19 only last month, still looks the one to beat after winning her 800m heat in 2:01.10.

But there was less joy for Britain's 3,000m steeplechaser Zak Seddon, who last week expressed his frustration about being confined to his room after coming into close contact with a Covid-infected passenger. Seddon, who finished 14th in his heat, said: "It's not been great and mentally it's been hard here, there, and everywhere. But rules are rules and if I want to show up here and run at the Games I have to abide by them."

Cheers and tears
Barega takes gold in opening night drama

Andy Bull
Tokyo Olympic Stadium

The first night of Olympic athletics opened with a big-screen video montage of Usain Bolt's greatest moments. It was an odd choice, another reminder of something else the competition was missing, along with the 60,000-odd fans. Their absence, on top of what was a pretty limited programme of events, made the occasion feel distinctly underwhelming.

Still, there was an Olympic debut for a new event, a little drama, caused by a handful of disqualifications, a first gold medal, won by Ethiopia's Selemon Barega in the men's 10,000m, one astonishing run by the Netherlands' Sifan Hassan in the women's 5,000m, and, this being the Olympics, a sprinkling of tears, too.

Barega won the 10,000m in 27min 43.22sec. He took advantage of some strange tactics by the Ugandan trio of Stephen Kissa, Jacob Kiplimo and the world record holder, Joshua Cheptegei. Kissa took the race out with such gusto that he had a 10-second lead over the rest of the field after the first four laps. He stayed in front until he finally dropped out, spent, after 6,000m. He explained later he was trying to sacrifice himself for his teammates, but for some reason they decided not to go with him. "I thought they were going to follow me," Kissa said, "but I looked around and they weren't there."

Cheptegei took the race on after Kissa dropped out but ended up jostling with Kiplimo as they took turns trying to chase down Barega, who had streaked past them on the penultimate lap. Cheptegei said later that he had been struggling with a tendon injury, and that he didn't want to risk aggravating it for something as trivial as an Olympic gold medal. "I was just saying that maybe I need to consider health first rather than to break myself and go out for a long time."

The tears were shed earlier on, by Great Britain's Eilish McColgan, who finished a disappointing 10th in the second heat of the women's 5,000m. McColgan broke the British record in the event back at the start of the month, when she ran 14min 28.55sec at the Diamond League in Oslo, and was planning to do it again in the final here. But she was spiked by another runner on the penultimate lap, stumbled and never recovered.

"Every single 10 metres I was getting clipped and clipped and clipped," McColgan said, "and I was saying: 'Stop, stop, stop.' I think I even swore at one point. And even [Gudaf] Tsegay, the Ethiopian, was saying: 'Stop, stop, stop,' because I think they were clipping her as well.

"But I felt good, it wasn't like I was struggling, and I thought: 'Right, we've got 800m to go here, just get into next gear,' and then with 600m to go the girls came around me, I got clipped once, panicked, and then got clipped three times, and mentally I just lost it, that last 600m it was like I was trying to run a marathon, my legs had totally gone. And at that point you're just so disappointed because you can see that your Olympics is slipping away."

McColgan finished in 15:09.68. "If someone told me that would be my time I'd have thought I'd have lost a leg," she said. "I felt like I could finish in the top five, and that would have been a great achievement for me, so to be so far off that, I'm just so upset, and I really feel like I've let my family down, because they've just put so much into this."

McColgan was not the only athlete left distressed by the race: Burundi's Francine Niyonsaba thought she had qualified for the final, then found out she had been disqualified while doing her press interviews. "No, no, no," Niyonsaba repeated, in disbelief.

> *'That last 600m was like I was trying to run a marathon'*
>
> **Eilish McColgan**
> *5,000m runner*

It was a cruel blow. Niyonsaba won silver in the 800m behind Caster Semenya at Rio in 2016 but was forced to moved up to the longer distance because she is intersex and World Athletics have ruled that that means she and other athletes like her have an unfair advantage in races between distances of 400m and one mile. The only way Niyonsaba would have been allowed to compete is if she had taken measures to restrict her naturally high testosterone levels. She chose to switch events instead.

It was not the night's only disqualification. The USA, favourites for the mixed 4x400m relay, were eliminated after they botched a baton handover. They had not had much of a chance to practise, because of Covid restrictions, but did not make an excuse of it. "We come out and we got as prepared as possible," said Elija Godwin. "Mistakes happen, we are human, we can make mistakes and if at the end of the day we get disqualified, I'll hold my head up high because I know we competed our best."

Then there was Hassan, who took the night in her stride. She ambled along at the back of the pack, then sprinted through to first place on the last lap, and finished in 14min 47.89sec. Hassan is attempting an audacious treble at these Games, in the 1500m, 5,000m and 10,000m. Like pretty much everyone else on the night, she struggled with the extreme heat and humidity; the difference between her and the rest was that unless she had said it herself you would never have guessed.

PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS

▲ *(Clockwise from top) Sifan Hassan makes a flying start in her treble bid; Selemon Barega on his way to 10,000m gold; heartbreak for Eilish McColgan*

Guidelines for transgender athletes 'not fit for purpose'

Sean Ingle
Tokyo

The International Olympic Committee has admitted that its current guidelines for transgender athletes are not fit for purpose – and says it plans to release new guidelines within the next two months.

In a notable shift the IOC's medical and science director, Dr Richard Budgett, said the science had moved on – and stressed that a new framework for sports would also focus on safety as well as fairness. However, he made clear that inclusion remained important and it would be up to each sport to find the "sweet spot" between safety, fairness and inclusion.

The IOC's announcement comes as the transgender weightlifter Laurel Hubbard prepares to make history on Monday when she will become the first openly trans woman to compete in a solo event at an Olympic Games, in the women's super-heavyweight category.

Hubbard qualifies having met international weightlifting rules following the IOC's 2015 guidelines, which allow her to compete without surgery provided she takes medication to lower her testosterone to below 10 nmol/l for 12 months.

However, Budgett accepted that the 2015 guidelines were no longer backed by science. "I absolutely accept that, things move on," he said. "At the time the 10 nanomoles per litre was set because we thought that was the lower level for men. We know now that they go down to seven and women can be higher as well. Agreeing on another number is almost impossible and possibly irrelevant. You can debate that endlessly."

Instead Budgett said the IOC would put in a framework for individual sports federations to make their own decisions but stressed there was no "one size fits all" for sports.

"There is some research but it depends on whether you are coming from the view of inclusion as the first priority or absolute fairness to the nth degree being the priority," he said. "If you don't want to take any risks at all that anyone might have an advantage, then you just stop everybody. I think the threat to women's sport has probably been overstated."

Budgett also indicated that he accepted it was fair for World Rugby to ban trans women at elite level because of the safety dangers, while national federations allowed transgender players to compete at club level.

"It may be the right thing to do in many sports, because it is at the most elite level in their case that they are concerned about safety. As you come down from that level you can start to prioritise inclusion more than safety. You can understand it. I think there is a legal element to this as well. They have really prioritised safety."

American silver medallist sparks war of words with doping claim

Ryan Murphy makes his comment after finishing behind Russia's Rylov

Andy Bull
Tokyo Aquatics Centre

A storm broke out at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre yesterday morning when Ryan Murphy, the USA's silver medallist in the 200m backstroke, spoke out against the sport's doping problem and said he was "swimming in a race that's probably not clean". Almost any other time, this would have been an admirably honest thing to do, but the problem was Murphy had only just lost to Evgeny Rylov, representing the Russian Olympic Committee, and the comments came across as an accusation. Rylov, 24, won both the 100m and 200m backstroke this week, the 200m with an Olympic record time of 1min 53.27sec.

"I've got about 15 thoughts, and 13 of them would get me into a lot of trouble," Murphy said after the race. "It is a huge mental drain to go through the year knowing that I'm swimming in a race that's probably not clean, and that is what it is. The people that know a lot more about the situation made the decision that they did. I don't have the bandwidth to train for the Olympics at a very high level and try to lobby the people that are making the decisions that they're making the wrong decisions."

An hour later, Rylov and Murphy were sitting alongside each other during a frosty press conference, in which Murphy insisted that he wasn't accusing Rylov of anything, and Rylov was made to say on record that he is not doping. Great Britain's Luke Greenbank, who won the bronze, was there, too, and also found himself being drawn into it.

"To be clear, my intention is not to make any allegations, congratulations to Evgeny, congratulations to Luke, they did an incredible job and they're both very talented swimmers who work very hard and have great technique," Murphy said. Asked again if he believed the race was clean, Murphy replied: "One of the things that's frustrating is that you can't answer that question with 100% certainty, and I think over the years that's come out, so I can't answer that question. I don't know if it was 100% clean and that's because of things that have happened in the past."

> *'I don't know if it was 100% clean because of things in the past'*
>
> **Ryan Murphy**
> *USA*

Greenbank backed him up. "It's obviously a very difficult situation not knowing whether who you are racing against is clean, but I think it's something that's part of the sport, it's a frustrating situation but I've just got to keep my mind on my race and the things I can control," he said. "Obviously there's a lot of media around certain nations in this Olympics, and obviously it's frustrating seeing that as an athlete, knowing that there was a state-sponsored doping programme going on and that more could have been done to tackle it."

Rylov, who is one of 330 Russian athletes who have been cleared to compete for the ROC team at these Games, said: "I have always been for clean competition. I am always tested. I will fill out all of the Adams forms," referring to the World Anti-Doping Agency's anti-doping administration and management system. "From the bottom of my heart, I am for clean sport. I am devoting my whole life to this sport. I don't even know how to react to that. Ryan didn't accuse me of anything so I'd rather not react to what he said."

The Russian press supported their man by pressing Murphy to comment on whether or not the US sprinter Justin Gatlin should have been allowed to compete at the Olympics again despite his two doping violations. "The US has always been completely transparent in terms of how often people are drug-tested, if they tested positive, and what they tested positive for, and so there are checks in place," Murphy said. "That's an individual scenario, and I don't think that's comparing apples and apples, to use an American phrase."

While Murphy did not want to accuse Rylov, he was not about to back down from his broader point about the sport. "At the end of the day I do believe there is doping in swimming, that is what it is," he said, before talking about his sport's governing body.

"I met the new Fina executive director at the Olympic trials and we were talking about Fina and things they wanted to do to help push the sport forward. He asked me for my take and I was like: 'OK, Fina needs to be more transparent on the drug-testing side, and on the financial side.' And he said: 'OK, we are working on it, it's going to be hard, and it's going to take a long time to clear this sport of doping.' So when we hear that from the top, that's tough to hear."

ROC's success makes 'absent' Russia even more present

A team of 335 has raised eyebrows but finger-pointing from Britain and the US merely invites dark chuckles

Barney Ronay
Tokyo

We will ROC you! Let's face it, the retro cold war touches dripping away at the back of Tokyo 2020 were always likely to run hot at some point. In the end it took a particularly ticklish men's backstroke 200m to turn the tap.

The presence of 335 Russian Olympic Committee athletes at these Games has seemed to surprise those who had assumed the ban for state-sponsored doping might have restricted Russia's physical presence in some way. Or indeed that Russia's athletes would have to compete in Japan as something other than Russia, beyond a few shifts in branding and a change of song.

Except, apparently not. Right now it is hard to remember a Games where Russia – who have been punished but feel no guilt, and who technically aren't here at all – have seemed more insistently present.

From the start there has been something seductively slick about the staging of the Russian Olympic Committee, also known as ROC, also known as Russia (Not Russia) and, increasingly, as just Russia.

The first really high-profile ROC gold medal of the Games, the men's all-around team gymnastics, was greeted with scattered chants of Ross-iy-a in the media hall. And beyond that, "We Will ROC You" has been the battle cry, a phrase popularised by, among others, the rapper Timati – best known for recording a song with the chorus "my best friend is President Putin" – and now apparently official policy of the Russian foreign ministry.

This week a short film was released on social media showing ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova punching and kicking a martial arts dummy with the word "Press" on it, before signing off with a Queen-derived We Will Roc You riff.

As the men's 200m backstroke gold medallist Evgeny Rylov took some questions from his British and American competitors yesterday morning, forced in his own victory

A spat behind the masks

Ryan Murphy (left) and the Russian gold medallist Evgeny Rylov pose despite the former's explosive comments
STANISLAV KRASILNIKOV/TASS/GETTY

press conference to deny he was a doper, it was possible already to hear the machinery of that Russian counter-thrust kicking into gear, the tireless bots of Russian Olympic Swimming Response Twitter firing up, hashtagged, for completeness, with the #wewillROCyou brand.

The insinuations from Rylov's fellow swimmers were unkind and, like it or not, unfounded. But that confused response is also a mark of how hard it has been for competing athletes to live in the shadow of this, not to mention a measure of the staggering mismanagement of this entire situation by the International Olympic Committee.

Chuck in the colours on the podium, the non-flag in the emblem, the sight of officials and hangers-on wandering around with Russia-branded bits of kit, and a tendency for the Games PA to simply introduce the ROC team as "Russia", and this has become a remarkable sporting PR coup, powered by that darkly humorous love of doublethink.

As Colonel Korn notes in Catch-22: "To act boastfully about something we ought to be ashamed of. That's a trick that never seems to fail." Welcome to Tokyo 2020, where just being Russian is a kick right now.

It will of course be tempting to see a kind of Bond-era black and white picture here, systemic Russian chicanery versus the flawed but righteous transparency of the west. But there are some things worth remembering as the ROC's podium presence peaks at the midpoint of these Games.

First it is worth recalling how we got here, the laugh-out-loud sporting gangsterism that led to Russia's current (not a) ban. The details of the Sochi-era cheating are still startling, from the hole in the wall of the doping lab, with its late night clean urine deliveries, to the comical scratches on the sample bottles as Russian "scientists" forced them open with sharp objects.

Perhaps you're wondering why ROC only has 10 competitors in the athletics? Three years ago, on top of all of this, the governing body of Russian athletics faked an alibi for an athlete who had missed a drugs test, leading to this (strikingly lenient) extra sanction. To repeat: this was the governing body. We will, indeed, ROC you.

And yet, there are of course shades of nuance even here. For a start, the tendency of Britain and the US to present themselves as flawlessly clear-sighted, the ultimate guardians of sporting morality, will draw dark chuckles elsewhere.

◀ *Athletes parade behind the Russian Olympic Committee banner at the opening ceremony*

Would it be tactless to mention British cycling at this point, and the view the rest of the world takes of this medal factory? The bags of urine tossed at the Tour de France? What is the difference in principle, if not scale, a Russian might ask, between Russia's programme and a national team cycling doctor found guilty of ordering sachets of testosterone? And by the way, how does the US feel about Alberto Salazar's ban for doping? Russia may be guilty, shameless, and laughably bad at covering its tracks. But it doesn't hold the monopoly on the first of these things.

Plus the urge to attack and disparage individual Russian athletes is misguided. The ROC silver medal that kept Helen Glover and Polly Swann off the podium on Thursday has already led to a shrill response from opportunist politicians, eager to trash whatever was left of the idea of British chivalry in defeat. What, in all seriousness, are these twentysomething Russian athletes supposed to do here? Refuse to compete? Revolt against despotism? Beg for a harsher ban?

Would it be tactless to mention British cycling, and the view the world takes of this medal factory?

The wider point is that Russia is not making a mockery of its ban, as the formulation would have it. The ban mocks itself. The current ruling is a pantomime, a matter of arguing over lettering, of Tchaikovsky podium concessions, of guidance that forbids "the name Russia" on outfits, except, you know, if it's just an R. This is an act of mendacity and obfuscation. It has put athletes on all sides in a ludicrous, unsustainably awkward position.

The real question is: what led us here? Why are we being subjected to this charade? What is the backstory to this leniency from the IOC via the court of arbitration for sport? What information, what leverage, what mitigation are Thomas Bach and his colleagues able to see that is not visible to the rest of us? Perhaps one day this will be clear.

In the meantime we have the current oddity, a Games that has become to some extent a PR coup for the (here but not here) Russian state. Perhaps at this point it is worth remembering the words of Vladimir Putin on being presented with the unvarnished details of Russia doping transgressions.

"Sadly now we see the politicisation of sport," was Putin's response, a reply of such mind-boggling misdirection it is impossible not to laugh. The picture may not be as clear as the usual flag-waggling oppositions might have us believe. But these Games have already given us a little too much laughter in the dark.

Shooter takes aim at IOC after Iranian 'terrorist' wins

Sean Ingle
Tokyo

The Korean marksman Jin Jong-oh has criticised the International Olympic Committee for allowing a member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to compete and win a gold medal in the 10-metre air pistol event, saying: "How can a terrorist win first place? That's the most absurd and ridiculous thing."

In comments reported by the Korea Times, the six-times Olympic medallist added it was "pure nonsense" to allow Javad Foroughi to compete in the Tokyo Games given his membership in a militia of the IRGC, which was labelled a terrorist organisation by the US in 2019.

The campaign group United for Navid, set up after the execution of the Iranian wrestler Navid Afkari after he protested against the regime, has also urged the IOC ethics commission to launch an immediate investigation. It also warned that the IOC was "complicit in promoting terrorism and crimes against humanity" if it failed to act.

"We consider the awarding of an Olympic gold medal to Iran marksman Javad Foroughi not only a catastrophe for Iranian sports but also for the international community, and especially the reputation of the IOC. The 41-year old Foroughi is a current and longtime member of a terrorist organization," it said in a statement.

"The IRGC has a history of violence and killing not only of Iranian people and protesters there, but also innocent people in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. It is a designated foreign terrorist organization by the United States.

"We call for an immediate investigation by the IOC, and until an investigation is completed the suspension of any medal award."

The 41-year-old Foroughi, who has said he served in Syria as a nurse between 2013 and 2015, delivered a military salute on the podium.

In an interview before the Games he said he first tried pistol shooting in a hall located under the building of the hospital he was working in as a nurse. He had never seen a pistol before but, after being instructed on how to use it, was able to score approximately 85 points from 10 shots.

The Iranian paper Javan hailed his performance, calling it: "An unexpected medal ... won by a Guards nurse who is at the same time a defender of health and of the shrine."

▲ *Iran's Javad Foroughi won gold in the 10-metre air pistol event*

▼ *The men's eight celebrate bronze, Britain's second medal of the regatta*
DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

Gröbler 'destroyed souls', claims medallist

Fallout over rowing failures continues with Bugajski criticising former coach

John Ashdown

The inquest into British Rowing's dismal Tokyo display began in earnest after a solitary bronze on the final day of competition at the Sea Forest Waterway meant Britain's rowers registered their worst Olympic performance for 49 years.

The debate is likely to reach into the heart of the culture at the organisation and focus on the decision to allow Jürgen Gröbler, who had coached eight gold-medal crews for Great Britain over seven Olympics, to leave a year before these Games. The German's legacy, though, is not wholly positive, with Josh Bugajski, a member of the men's eight who won bronze yesterday, saying in the aftermath of the final that the German coach "destroyed the souls" of those he took against.

"I'm going to be brave and say something that the crew don't want me to say. I cracked open a bottle of champagne when Jürgen retired," Bugajski told the Telegraph and the Times.

"I had a very dark three years under him. And I think I would be a coward if I didn't say that on behalf of the guys who are stuck at home, because they got a darker side of Jürgen and aren't in the team.

"There were some people he just took a disliking to. What he did to them was destroy them – destroy their soul, destroy everything they had. He had complete power."

Bugajski's crewmate Mo Sbihi, on the other hand, described Gröbler as a winner who "knew how to elevate people" and there is little doubt that the German, who started his career with British Rowing by coaching Sir Steve Redgrave and Sir Matthew Pinsent to golds in 1992 and 1996, helped the organisation get the most out of its funding from UK Sport.

The £24.6m it received over the Tokyo Olympic cycle was more than any other sport yet Britain's rowers failed to pick up a gold medal for the first time since the 1980 Games in Moscow and their contribution to the medals table is poorer than any since the 1972 Games.

British Rowing's performance director, Brendan Purcell, told the BBC the event had proved "heartbreaking for the athletes" but added that "significant changes" would be made in order to return to winning ways at the Paris Games in 2024.

UK Sport's chief executive, Sally Munday, said that, like all sports, the performance would be reviewed but saw plenty of positives. "I totally understand why people would ask the question about the two medals, but I think we need to put this into perspective of the bigger picture for rowing," she told the PA news agency.

▲ *Josh Bugajski (left) said Jürgen Gröbler gave him 'a dark three years'*

"They made eight finals, which is more than any other nation, and had six fourth-place finishes, and they have got probably the youngest and least experienced squad that they have had in the last 20 years. And I think you need to put all of that in context.

"I think there's huge promise for rowing in Paris in three years' time. I'm confident British Rowing will have a look at how they are going to convert those fourth-place finishes into podium places, and I think they have got the knowledge and expertise to do that."

Dame Katherine Grainger, who won medals at the last five Olympic Games, was also keen to emphasise the positive. "If you look at the medal haul, it's very small compared to especially the last two, three, four Olympic Games, and it is disappointing on some level," she told the BBC. "But, at the same time, we knew after Rio there was the biggest change we have ever seen from not just athletes – I think we only had eight athletes coming to this Games who'd ever been to a Games before. We've never had anything like that."

The double Olympic champion James Cracknell, meanwhile, was less conciliatory. "We got three gold, two silver in Rio. We come away from Tokyo, £27m of investment in British Rowing, with one silver and one bronze," he said. "At a time when the national budget is under pressure from so many different areas, is that a good return on investment?"

The men's eight of Bugajski, Jacob Dawson, Tom George, Sbihi, Charles Elwes, Oliver Wynne-Griffith, James Rudkin and Tom Ford were at least able to double the medals tally on the final day, taking third behind New Zealand and Germany and adding to the silver won by the men's quadruple sculls on Wednesday.

Page bounces her way to bronze and a second Olympic medal

Bryony Page claimed her second Olympic medal on the bounce with bronze in the women's **trampoline** event at the Ariake Arena. The Crewe-born 30-year-old, who won a surprise silver in Rio in 2016, scored 55.735 to finish behind the Chinese pair Zhu Xueying and Liu Lingling.

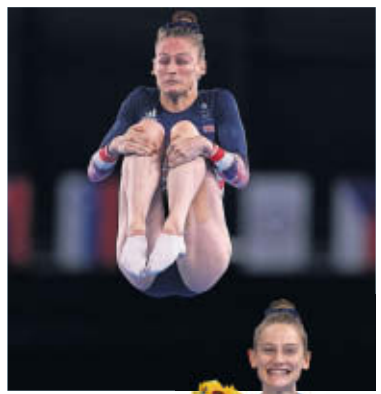
Her British teammate Laura Gallagher failed to make the final but Page had qualified in third place after her two routines. She led with the two Chinese athletes still to go but a pair of strong routines ensured the Briton had to be content with bronze.

Caroline Dubois is through to the quarter-finals in the women's lightweight **boxing** after a points win over Rashida Ellis of the USA, while two medals have been guaranteed in the men's events. Pat McCormack will pick up at least a welterweight bronze after a victory over Bobo-Usmon Baturov, and Ben Whittaker will do likewise after his light-heavyweight win over Brazil's Keno Machado.

In the K1 **canoe slalom** there was disappointment for Britain's Bradley Forbes-Cryans, two penalties meaning the Scot finished in sixth place. The Czech Republic's Jiri Prskavec took the gold.

Team Ireland's Rory McIlroy managed a second-round 66 in the **golf**, with an eagle, five birdies and two bogeys, to move on to seven under overall, four shots behind Xander Schauffele of the United States, the leader. Shane Lowry sits alongside his compatriot after backing up his first-round 70 with a six-under 65 yesterday, while alongside them on the leaderboard is Britain's Paul Casey, whose round was halted after the 17th hole because of dangerous weather in the area for the second day in a row.

Team GB's men's **hockey** team drew 2-2 with Belgium, the world's No 2 side and gold medal contenders, to secure third place in their pool. Rupert Shipperley put GB ahead with his first Olympic goal in the second quarter but Tom Boon equalised early in the third. Liam Ansell restored Britain's lead within a minute only for Thomas Briels to equalise just before the end of the third quarter. GB's quarter-final, probably against India, will be tomorrow. **Staff and agencies**



▲ *Bryony Page on the trampoline before she was presented with the bronze medal*

Zverev smashes Djokovic's plan for golden slam

Tumaini Carayol
Tokyo

Novak Djokovic's pursuit of the golden slam has come to an end as he suffered a startling collapse against Alexander Zverev before eventually losing 1-6, 6-3, 6-1 in the semi-final of the Tokyo Games. Zverev, the fourth seed, will face Karen Khachanov in the gold-medal match after the Russian Olympic Committee athlete defeated Pablo Carreño Busta 6-3, 6-3.

Djokovic, the world No1, had enjoyed a productive week up until yesterday, reaching the singles semi-final with a virtuoso quarter-final display against Kei Nishikori as he won 6-2, 6-0. He then reached the mixed doubles semi-final alongside Nina Stojanovic, offering himself the chance of winning two medals.

He seemed to be moving at a similar pace yesterday as he breezed through the first set 6-1 before breaking serve at 2-2 to generate the first break of the second set. But Djokovic immediately lost his serve to love, along with 12 of the following 13 points, and it began a downward spiral that he was unable to halt.

From his set and break lead, Djokovic lost eight games in a row to trail 0-4 in the third set. As Djokovic floundered, his forehand betraying him, he unsuccessfully resorted to flitting to the net and shortening points.

Across the net each mini-battle won by Zverev imbued the German with more confidence as he served well on big points and confidently hit through his forehand. As Djokovic's shoulders slumped, Zverev nailed a backhand down-the-line winner to hand Djokovic his first defeat in 23 matches.

"I was leading a set then a break and he managed to turn the match around. He served huge, was attacking and I was not getting any free points on my first serves," said Djokovic. "And I missed a lot of first serves from 3-2 in the second. To play someone of his quality, of his level, it's just too tough to win a match."

Djokovic will face Carreño Busta in the bronze medal match before his attention shifts to the US Open where he will be attempting to win his fourth grand slam title of the year.

▲ *Novak Djokovic's game collapsed after being a set and a break up*

White treble not enough to save Team GB

Great Britain 3
White 57, 66, 115

Australia 4
Kennedy 35, Kerr 89, 106, Fowler 103

Suzanne Wrack
Ibaraki Kashima Stadium

The teenage substitute Mary Fowler and Chelsea striker Sam Kerr were the heroines as Australia earned a place in the Olympic semi-finals with a 4-3 defeat of Team GB in extra time.

"We are devastated," said Team GB's manager, Hege Riise "It's hard to lose a game like this. We were well prepared. We [played] most of the game quite well. We created a lot of chances. We should have finished a few of them. Now it's just hard."

Manchester City's Ellen White had scored twice to put Team GB 2-1 up after the former Tottenham defender Alanna Kennedy had given the Matildas the lead but an 89th-minute goal from Kerr took the game into the extra half-hour. Teagan Micah saved a Caroline Weir penalty moments before the 18-year-old Fowler put Australia ahead and Kerr sealed the victory, heading her fifth Games goal from close range. A later third from White was not enough to turn the game.

"Tired, excited, proud," Kerr said. "Always believe. I was playing on one leg for a long time, I've got a sore butt but I have confidence that my team will get it to me." She said of her equaliser: "An amazing goal, that's my job as a striker."

Kerr was boosted by the absence of her Chelsea teammates in Team GB's starting XI: "That was a win for me – I would rather not play against girls that know me and what I'm going to do. That was a mental win for me when I've seen that, especially as Fran Kirby is the best player in the world for me at the moment."

Australia had burst out of the blocks but the pressure was short-lived, with Team GB settling into the pace of a game far beyond what they had experienced in the tournament.

In the home of the Kashima Antlers, who welcome an average of 20,000 fans to games in a town with a population of 67,120 and where the Brazilian Zico scored 35 goals in 46 games between 1991 and 1994 and is now technical director, Team GB began to up the pressure.

The midfielder Keira Walsh smashed a long-range effort off the bottom of a post and the woodwork denied Team GB again, Rachel Daly hitting a post before the rebound from Lauren Hemp was saved on to the same post by Micah.

Australia punished a wasteful Team GB. From a corner won by Kerr and taken by Arsenal's Steph Catley, one of seven of Australia's starting XI signed to a Women's Super League club for next season, Kennedy rose highest to head home, sparking a touchline dash from their manager, Tony Gustavsson.

Half-time gave Team GB a welcome opportunity to regroup. Riise's players had come from behind to draw with Canada but they went into that game knowing a quarter-final had been secured, and this was a new test.

In the 57th minute their patience paid off. A mazy run from Hemp gave her enough space to look up and send a cross into the middle, where White waited to send a header looping over Micah and into the far corner.

Less than 10 minutes later the Manchester City forward had her fifth of the tournament. Her flicked-on header fell to the defensive pair, Avi Luik and Kennedy, but the latter, under pressure from Hemp, back-heeled straight to White, who fired into the far corner. Daly gripped White's head in celebration and kissed her forehead in almost religious fashion in the cathedral-like quiet of the stadium.

A blow to the head for Little left the Scotland midfielder bleeding and heavily bandaged and, as the clock ticked down, an audacious Hemp attempted to chip the goalkeeper from the halfway line. But one should never take one's eyes off Kerr. With just over a minute of normal time remaining, a ball over the top from Emily van Egmond fell teasingly in front of Kerr and the unmarked forward chested it down, turned and fired past Roebuck.

The ice vests the Team GB players placed around their necks before extra time made it look as if they were donning lifejackets on a sinking ship.

Micah saved well twice in quick succession as Team GB continued to push forward, first from Walsh's edge-of-the-box pile-driver, then from White at a tight angle, before Team GB's collapse began. With Little off injured, Weir stepped up in the 102nd minute to attempt to convert a soft penalty won by Nikita Parris but it was poorly struck and Micah parried.

Australia responded at once in stunning fashion, Fowler unleashing into the top corner via a deflection off Lucy Bronze. One minute after the break Kerr added her second, outjumping Steph Houghton to head in. Kirby's cross with five minutes to play was headed in by White for her hat-trick – her sixth goal of these Games and her ninth goal in her past nine tournament games – but for Team GB it was not enough.

Team GB	Australia
4-3-3	**3-4-3**
Roebuck; Bronze🟡, Houghton, Williamson, Stokes (Bright 58); Little (Scott 80), Walsh (Ingle 97), Weir; Daly (Kirby 58), White, Hemp (Parris 97)	Micah; Carpenter, Kennedy, Luik (Gielnik 80); Raso (Logarzo 88), Van Egmond, Yallop, Catley; Foord (Cooney-Cross 80), Kerr🟡, Simon (Fowler 80)
Subs not used	*Subs not used*
Telford, Stanway	Williams, Polkinghorne, Brock

Referee Salima Mukansanga (Rwanda)

All eyes on the ball

The former Tottenham defender Alanna Kennedy opens the scoring for Australia HENRY ROMERO/ REUTERS

'I'm devastated' Top scorer would give up goals for gold

Suzanne Wrack
Ibaraki Kashima Stadium

A crushed and tear-stained Ellen White said she "would have given up every single goal to win a gold medal", after Team GB suffered a bruising 4-3 defeat by Australia in extra time of their Olympic semi-final. Team GB had come from behind to lead until an 89th-minute goal from the Chelsea striker Sam Kerr forced another 30 minutes.

"I'm devastated," said White, who scored six goals across the tournament including a hat-trick in the defeat by the Matildas. "I really thought we could win the game. I thought we played some amazing football. I really thought that with this group of players we would go on to win gold. So yeah, absolutely heartbroken but I couldn't be more proud of the team and the staff."

Cancellations forced by the pandemic meant that Team GB played one warm-up game, once they were in Japan for the Games. Hege Riise had been given the manager's job only in March after the former England head coach, Phil Neville, left for Inter Miami.

"We haven't been together very long but the relationships, the connections, the family-like feel, it's been amazing," said White. "It's a horrible feeling but I wish Australia the best of luck in the next round." The Australians will face Sweden, who beat the hosts, Japan, 3-1 in the semi-finals.

"We were so close," White said. "That's why we love and hate football at the same time. I can't fault anybody; we gave absolutely everything in 90 minutes and then extra time."

After her two goals had put Team GB in front White said they felt "good" but she added: "It's just those fine margins in football. We'll have to regroup as players and go again."

▲ *Ellen White said defeat showed 'why we love and hate football'*

How do you do that? "That's a good question. How do you do that?" she reflected. "I'll be laying on the sofa for a few weeks. It's hard. I don't know how many times you can get knocked down and get back up again but I love football.

"It's hard, it's challenging but it's the love for the game and the want and the will to win trophies, the want to be the best player and the want to play international tournaments and play for your club. I'm not saying it's a walk in the park because everyone is heartbroken in there but I know everyone will get back up again and strive to be better."

'It was weird: before we started my mind went blank. Like a state of flow'

Matty Lee is now back home in Leeds having become a household name thanks to his diving gold with Tom Daley in Tokyo. Interview by Jonathan Liew

'Breathe. Just keep breathing." It's the last dive of the Olympic final, and Matty Lee's mind is racing. He's thinking: "Oh my god, you could get an Olympic gold medal." And he's thinking: "If you mess this up, you might not get anything." He feels the adrenalin coursing in him, his focus beginning to wander. But he's also planned for this. He knows what to do.

Lee and Tom Daley are in the gold-medal position, with a minuscule margin of 1.74 points over Cao Yuan and Chen Aisen of China. Daley knows this. Lee does not. During competitions Daley keeps a close eye on the scoreboard, calculates the gaps in his head, knows what is required at all times. Lee, on the other hand, "doesn't like to mess with that sort of stuff. I can't handle it".

To get to the 10-metre platform, you need to climb four flights of steps. When one team dives, everyone moves up a flight. "I remember being at the bottom of the 10m stairs," Lee says. "And I remembered a situation like this before. It was the World Series in London in 2019, and I was actually beating Tom until the last dive. But I was too busy thinking about the end product – I'm about to get a medal in front of a home crowd – and forgot what I actually had to do. I messed up the dive."

The dive Lee and Daley have chosen is their hardest of all: a front four-and-a-half somersaults in tuck position. "You start at the back of the board, and you do a little hop and a skip towards the end," Lee explains. "And it was weird: right before we started, my mind just went blank. Almost like I had no control. It was like a state of flow. Whatever was going to happen, happened."

'We just clicked. He was my idol when I was a young diver. Now I'm really proud to call him my mate'

For a sport that demands rigorous physical conditioning, relentless training and complete command of the emotions under the highest pressure, one of the most striking things about diving is how little of it is in your control. Your opponents might pull off perfection. Your partner might mess up. And then comes the greatest variable of all: yourself, and what happens in those 32 feet of clear, terrifying air.

Matty Lee and Tom Daley dive for gold

'When I put the medal in the tray all the Japanese security people went crazy and started clapping'

Lee is back home in Leeds now, a gold medal in his hand, his life changed forever. Daley, who has remained in Japan for the individual competition and is keen for his partner to get the credit he deserves, has urged him to "soak it all in". Through the jet lag and euphoria Tokyo already feels like a strange fever dream: a panoply of vivid images that still makes little sense to him. "You just you don't think it will actually happen," he says. "And then it did. And it feels like I'm watching someone else."

A diving partnership, with its intimacy and fetishisation of small details, is a little like a marriage. Daley jokingly refers to Lee as his "work husband", and since they teamed up in 2018 it has been a marriage of minds as well as bodies. "We just clicked," Lee says. "There is genuinely not a bad bone in his body. He was my idol when I was a young diver. Now I'm really proud to call him my mate."

But it was at the pool where their relationship really blossomed. Naturally similar in height and build, over brutal weeks and months they would build and drill a bulletproof routine that would withstand the pressure of an Olympic final. "During the whole competition, me and Tom didn't say a single word to each other," Lee admits. "We were that much in the zone. Nothing was fazing us. That's what all the training is for. By the time we get to competition, all that's left is the counting. I say: 'Ready.' Then Tom says: 'One, two, three, go.'"

All that remains is you, the deep blue and your demons. And there are always demons in a sport like this, jumping off a concrete platform the height of a four-storey building into an uncertain fate. Lee nods with recognition at the mention of Simone Biles, a champion athlete crushed between the wheels of self-doubt,

▲ *Matty Lee and Tom Daley celebrate after their dramatic victory was confirmed*

external pressure and extreme physical danger.

"Like, it's so scary," he admits. "I remember a session not long ago in London, before we flew out to Tokyo, where I literally didn't know if I was going to make the dive. Which is a horrible feeling. I've never experienced the pressure that Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka have been through. But it's very sad to see them getting so much hate and negativity. With a physical injury, no one bats an eyelid. But as soon as you say it's your head, they don't believe you."

Happily, by the time Lee has embarked on his final dive at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre, he is no longer thinking anything at all. "I did my hop and skip off the board, and felt really light," he remembers. "I jumped into my tuck shape, and when I was spinning I felt comfortable. Then I saw the water and knew I was going to be upright. As soon as I hit the water, I knew I did a good one." They both had, to the tune of 101.01 points: about as close to perfection as it is reasonable to expect.

But if anybody was capable of producing an even more perfect riposte, it was the brilliant, mysterious Chinese, who hadn't been seen in competition all year. "Damn it, that was very good," Lee remembers thinking as they hit the water in perfect unison. "They probably have got us there." The wait – a minute that felt like hours – was excruciating. Then, finally, the verdict. Cao and Chen: 101.52. Great Britain had won gold by 1.23 points.

After which, the memories blur a little. There were generous words from the Chinese, raucous congratulations from everyone else, a medal ceremony, doping control, interviews, celebrations, calls from jubilant family members at home. It was nightfall when Lee finally returned to the athletes' village with his precious cargo. "You have to go through security every time," he explains. "And when I put the medal in the tray all the Japanese security people went crazy and started clapping. That was a really nice moment."

Now back at home, Lee is in no rush to map out his future. Paris in 2024 is a long way away, but he insists: "I'm 23 years old, I've easily got another Olympics in me." And as for Daley? "I honestly have no idea. But it would be great to do another Olympics with him. I would love that."

'At times I have struggled ... but there is a sense of achievement'

Alice Deering prepares to line up as Britain's first black female representative in swimming on Wednesday

John Goodbody

Alice Dearing did not relish her first open water race. For pool swimmers, the experience is often unnerving: choppy water, no lanes, competitors frequently colliding, difficulty in judging where rivals are and, above all, there is the cold.

Dearing remembers those 2014 trials in Portugal for the British junior team with a shudder. "I was blissfully unaware how hard it was. The water temperature was 14C. There were no wetsuits. I weighed only 45kgs. It was raining. I was in survival mode. It was the worst experience I have ever had in swimming. But I thought if I can survive that, then I can survive anything."

She did and subsequently she has flourished, beginning with the European junior title that year. When Dearing plunges into the sea off Tokyo for the 10km race next Wednesday, she will not only have a chance of a place on the podium but will also be the first black female swimmer to have represented Britain at the Olympics.

The 24-year-old says she owes much to her mother, who is from Accra in Ghana and herself a keen swimmer. For the early-morning training session drop-offs at the Royal Wolverhampton School, the alarm went off at 4am before pick-up at 7.30pm following academic work and a second session. As Dearing recalled on the Tough Girls podcast: "Sometimes now I wonder how we did it. But my Mum saw potential in me. Whenever I had a wobble, she would encourage me and say leave it for a week or so. It is difficult when you have friends going to parties and other things going on in life.

"At certain times I have really struggled in sport. I would lie if I said I had sailed through. But there is a sense of achievement from swimming when you get a personal best or complete a hard training session."

Five years ago in Rio Dearing was enraptured, when watching at home, she saw the black sprinter from the United States, Simone Manuel win four medals, including two gold. Manuel was the first black female swimmer to win Olympic gold. Dearing pointed Manuel out to her mother because she had become aware how few black elite swimmers there have been. In Britain the last black male Olympian, Paul Marshall, was in the 1980 team.

Dearing herself had "a very positive experience in swimming" but admits to odd exceptions, saying that when she began training, she got some stares and in an earlier interview with the Guardian, revealed that a rival coach had once used the N-word to describe her.

Dearing became a co-founder of the Black Swimming Association to promote the activity among communities during the Covid-19 lockdown. As a pioneer she hopes her successors will not be asked the same questions about the lack of diversity and wants her presence in Tokyo to encourage wider participation.

'Whenever I had a wobble my Mum would encourage me to leave it for a week or so'

"I think all of the people in the aquatic centre are very much behind wanting to make swimming diverse and inclusive," she says. "It's just a shame it's been so many years where black people have been excluded."

Andi Manley, Dearing's coach at Loughborough University, where she is completing a master's in social media and political communication, has prepared her for Tokyo with 10 two-hour sessions, up to 70km a week. He describes them as "challenging but bearable". All training is done in the pool because of the need to accustom the body to a sustained, measured pace. He says: "We aim to make the need to average one minutes 12 seconds per 100 metres as comfortable as possible." For the final hectic finish, sprinting ability is required, so there are plenty of 50-metre repetitions.

Manley appreciates how Dearing has "bought into the programme. Some swimmers just like to be told what to do. But Alice wants to be involved in the planning side, making suggestions about sessions."

Whatever happens in Tokyo, simply being picked for the Games has been hugely gratifying. "My mum never stopped smiling all week. She has been my rock, my taxi, my bank. My success is her success."

◀ *Alice Deering will compete in the women's 10km marathon swimming event in Tokyo on Wednesday*
IAIN MCGUINNESS/ALAMY STOCK IMAGES

'My mind and body are not in sync' – Biles opens up

Tumaini Carayol
Tokyo

Simone Biles has provided more details on the mental block that has stopped her from competing in the team and all-around gymnastics finals at the Tokyo Olympics. Biles, who withdrew from the team finals because of concerns about her mental health, opened up her Instagram story to questions about her mental block and provided detailed answers.

Initially accompanying Biles's story were videos of her training yesterday morning in which she twice attempted her double twisting double somersault dismounts off uneven bars into a foam pit. In the first video Biles completed only half a twist before losing herself in the air and landing on her back. The second attempt was only fractionally better, with her completing one and a half twists before falling.

"For anyone saying I quit, I didn't quit, my mind and body are simply not in sync as you can see here," she wrote. "I don't think you realise how dangerous this is on a hard/competition surface. Nor do I have to explain why I put health first. Physical health is mental health."

Biles says she has been training in Tokyo at an unspecified location with a foam pit that allows her to attempt her skills safely. Although she is off-sync on her skills in general, she says her mental block is specifically related to twisting. "Sometimes I can't even fathom twisting," she wrote. "I seriously cannot comprehend how to twist. Strangest and weirdest thing as well as feeling."

▲ *Simone Biles withdrew from the team finals over mental health fears*

Biles twists across all of her disciplines and it is usually one of the numerous strengths. Biles said that she has had mental blocks in the past on floor and vault, the apparatus that contain her most dangerous skills, but it currently affects every event she is competing in.

Those problems have previously taken two or more weeks to resolve but it is "something you have to take literally day by day, turn by turn. Literally cannot tell up from down. It's the craziest feeling ever, not having an inch of control over your body. What's even scarier is since I have no idea where I am in the air, I have no idea how I'm going to land or what I'm going to land on – head/hands/feet back."

In addition to the women's all-around event, which she withdrew from, Biles qualified for all four event finals. The first day of the three-day event finals is tomorrow, with the vault and uneven bars final.

Watching brief

Highlights

9.30am/10am
Sevens with golden chance

Great Britain's women came from behind in their quarter-final against the USA yesterday to seal a spot in the sevens semi-finals. The outcome of that overnight tie against France, who are unbeaten in the tournament thus far, will determine whether the British side feature in the bronze medal match at 9.30 or the gold medal match at 10. The form guide suggests a GB v New Zealand final – if that happens, it would be a repeat of their pool game earlier in the tournament that New Zealand won 26-21 after trailing by 21 points.

Jasmine Joyce in action in Britain's quarter-final sevens win over the USA

6.33am and 7.33am
Wilson on the water

While attention has been with the swimmers at the Aquatics Centre or on the rowers at the Sea Forest Waterway, away from the spotlight the sailing competitions have been quietly progressing in Enoshima Yacht Harbour. Today sees the medal races in the RS:X event, otherwise known as windsurfing. Britain's Emma Wilson lies in silver medal position after the 12 points races and could overhaul China's Yunxiu Lu with double points on offer today. In the men's event Tom Squires is sixth but silver and bronze remain in reach.

11.24am
Artingstall in medal match

The British featherweight Karriss Artingstall came through a nailbiting quarter-final to secure at least a bronze but the 26-year-old will not be satisfied if her campaign ends there – she takes on Japan's Sena Irie this morning with the winner guaranteed gold or silver. Earlier Luke McCormack and Galal Yafai, also medal hopes, continue their campaigns in the men's lightweight and flyweight events respectively .

12.45pm
Can GB seal spot in last eight?

Great Britain are the defending champions in the women's hockey but have not had things all their own way in the pool stage, winning two and losing two so far. They do, though, go into their final group game against Ireland today knowing that a draw will be enough to secure a quarter-final spot. Their 1-0 defeat by the Netherlands, ranked No 1 in the world, in their last outing suggests the side are not far off the best. "Overall, 75% of the time we've been really pleased with how we've played," said Hollie Pearne-Webb, the captain. "The finer details are where we need to sharpen up."

11.30pm
The final fairway

The final round of the men's golf tournament gets under way this evening with the weather muddying the waters when it comes to the medals. After two days of play Xander Schauffele led the way at the Kasumigaseki Country Club, though his lead was a narrow one. Home hope Hideki Matsuyama was three shots off the lead. Paul Casey, Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry were all in contention.

Medal table

		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	15	7	9	31
2	Japan	15	4	6	25
3	United States	14	14	10	38
4	ROC	8	11	9	28
5	Australia	8	2	10	20
6	Great Britain	5	7	6	18
7	South Korea	4	3	5	12
8	France	3	5	3	11
9	Germany	3	3	7	13
10	Italy	2	7	10	19

Look out for...
McIntosh on target

Seonaid McIntosh became the first British woman to win a gold medal in the 50m rifle three positions (kneeling, prone and standing) at the annual world championships in 2019. Her sights will be trained on gold at 8am today.

32°

Today

Archery	Men's individual	**06:45** Quarter-finals **07:45** Semi-finals **08:30** Bronze medal match **08:45** Gold medal match
Athletics	Men's long jump Women's 100m Men's 100m Men's discus Women's 800m Mixed 4x400m relay	**11:10** Qualifying **11:15** Semi-finals **13:50** Final **11:45** Round 1 **12:15** Final **12:50** Semi-finals **13:35** Final
Badminton	Men's doubles Women's singles	**10:00** Finals **10:00** Semi-finals
Baseball	Men's pool stage	**Group B 11:00** South Korea v USA
Basketball	Men's pool stage	**Group B 09:20** Australia v Germany **Group A 13:00** USA v Czech Republic
Beach volleyball	Men's Women's	**07:00** Preliminaries **12:00** Lucky losers **07:00** Preliminaries **12:00** Lucky losers
Boxing	Men's fly Men's light Women's middle Women's feather	**09:00** Round of 16 **10:03** Round of 16 **10:51** Quarter-finals **11:24** Semi-finals
Diving	Women's 3m springboard	**07:00** Semi-finals
Fencing	Women's team sabre	**06:30** Placement **10:30** Bronze medal match **11:30** Gold medal match
Football	Men's quarter-finals	**09:00** Spain v Ivory Coast **10:00** Japan v New Zealand **11:00** Brazil v Egypy **12:00** South Korea v Mexico
Handball	Women's pool stage	**Group B 06:15** ROC v France **11:30** Hungary v Spain **Group A 08:15** Brazil v Sweden **13:30** Norway v Netherlands
Hockey	Women's pool stage	**Group A 10:30** Germany v Netherlands **12:45** Republic of Ireland v Great Britain
Judo	Mixed team	**09:00** Finals
Rugby sevens	Women's	**08:30** Placings **09:30** Bronze medal match **10:00** Gold medal match
Sailing	Women's RS:X Men's RS:X	**06:33** Medal race **07:33** Medal race
Shooting	Mixed team trap Women's 50m rifle	**06:05** Gold medal match **08:00** Final
Trampolining	Men's	**06:50** Final
Volleyball	Women's group stage	**Group B 06:20** Argentina v Turkey **13:45** China v Italy **Group A 08:25** Serbia v Brazil **11:40** Japan v South Korea
Water polo	Men's pool stage	**Group A 06:00** USA v Hungary **10:20** Italy v Japan **11:50** South Africa v Greece **Group B 07:30** Croatia v Serbia
Weightlifting	Men's 81kg Men's 96kg	**07:50** Group A **11:50** Group A

Overnight into Sunday

Athletics	Women's hammer Women's steeplechase Women's long jump Women's shot put Men's 400m	**01:10** Qualifying **01:40** Round 1 **01:50** Qualifying **02:35** Final **02:45** Round 1
Badminton	Mens singles	**05:00** Semi-finals
Baseball	Men's	**04:00** Knockout stage
Basketball	Women's pool stage	**Group A 02:00** Canada v Spain **Group C 05:40** Argentina v Japan
Beach volleyball	Men's Women's	**01:00** Round of 16 **01:00** Round of 16
Boxing	Women's fly Men's feather Men's welter Men's middle Men's light heavy Men's super heavy	**03:00** Quarter-finals **03:30** Quarter-finals **04:03** Semi-finals **04:18** Quarter-finals **04:51** Semi-finals **05:24** Quarter-finals
Cycling (BMX)	Men's freestyle Women's freestyle	**02:10** Final **02:10** Final
Equestrianism	Individual eventing Team eventing	**23:45 Sat** Cross-country **23:45 Sat** Cross-country
Fencing	Men's team foil	**01:00** Eliminations **02:45** Quarter-finals **05:40** Semi-finals
Golf	Men's stroke play	**23:30 Sat** Round 4
Handball	Men's pool stage	**Group B 01:00** Portugal v Japan **03:00** Egypt v Bahrain
Hockey	Men's	**01:30, 04:00** Quarter-finals
Sailing	Women's 470 Mixed Foiling Nacra 17 Men's 470	**04:05** Heats **04:05** Heats **04:15** Heats
Shooting	Men's 25m rapid fire pistol	**00:30** Qualification
Swimming	Men's 50m freestyle Women's 50m freestyle Men's 1500m freestyle Women's 4x100m medley Men's 4x100m medley	**02:30** Final **02:37** Final **02:44** Final **03:15** Final **03:36** Final
Table tennis	Men's team Women's team	**02:00** Round of 16 **02:00** Round of 16
Tennis	TBC	**TBC**
Volleyball	Men's pool stage	**Group A 01:00** Poland v Canada **Group B 03:05** Brazil v France
Water polo	Women's pool stage	**Group A 06:00** Netherlands v v Canada
Weightlifting	Women's 76kg	**05:50** Group B
Wrestling	Men's Greco-Roman 60kg Women's freestyle 76kg	**03:00** Eliminations **03:00** Eliminations

The world record in the combined snatch and clean-and-jerk in the men's 96kg category (final today at 11.50am) – that's about the same weight as 4,000 bananas

In brief

Rugby sevens

GB face France for final spot after flying past US

Great Britain's women will play France today for a place in the Tokyo Olympics sevens final. A 21-12 victory over the United States put them into the semi-finals, which means they have at least matched their performance at the Rio Games five years ago. It was a dominant display that saw Jasmine Joyce score the opening try after just 38 seconds. Holly Aitchison converted, and then added the extras after Abbie Brown touched down as Britain built a 14-point lead going into the interval. Joyce's second try early in the second half, again converted by Aitchison, gave the United States a mountain to climb. Fiji and New Zealand will contest the other last-four encounter after the former knocked out defending Olympic champions Australia 14-12. "The grit and determination we showed was unreal," said Britain's Celia Quansah. **PA Media**

Hockey

Argentina fight back to set up Germany clash

Reigning Olympic champions Argentina have reached the quarter-finals of the men's hockey tournament, sending New Zealand packing with a convincing 4-1 win. Argentina will now go on to play Germany who secured a 3-1 victory over the Netherlands. Argentina, who went into yesterday's game knowing that they had to win to advance, pulled level shortly after New Zealand had opened the scoring in the first quarter. They then took a 2-1 lead by half-time before two more goals after the break. Argentina are joined in the knockout rounds by Spain, who scored a last-minute equaliser against group winners Australia, which gave them the draw they needed to advance. Spain's quarter-final match will be against Belgium, while in-form Australia will take on the Netherlands. **Reuters**

Badminton

China's favourites upset in final by teammates

China won gold and silver in mixed doubles badminton yesterday after Wang Yilyu and Huang Dongping beat favourites Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong 21-17, 17-21, 21-19. After world No 3 Wang and Huang pulled off a rare win over their top-ranked compatriots, both pairs were euphoric up on the podium. "I feel blank," said Wang, "It was easier because it was our teammates – we didn't have as much of a psychological burden." **Reuters**

Formula One *Hungarian Grand Prix*

Red Bull went 'below the belt' with Hamilton attack

Giles Richards
Hungaroring

Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen may want to do their talking on the track at this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix but their teams remain firmly entrenched in opposition as the verbal sallies continued to fly yesterday at the Hungaroring.

After the Mercedes and Red Bull drivers clashed at the British Grand Prix, the tension of a fiercely fought championship ratcheted up a level.

On Thursday Red Bull's request for a review into the drivers' clash at Silverstone was rejected by the FIA stewards. The incident in which Verstappen was knocked out of the race in an 180mph crash after Hamilton clipped him attempting to pass at Copse left Red Bull furious, with their team principal, Christian Horner, accusing the world champion of dirty driving. The Dutch driver also blamed his Mercedes counterpart while Hamilton, although given a 10-second penalty for being predominantly at fault, insisted he would repeat the move again if given the chance.

By the time the stewards made their decision Mercedes had clearly had enough and on Thursday issued a scathing statement condemning "a concerted attempt by the senior management of Red Bull Racing to tarnish the good name and sporting integrity of Lewis Hamilton".

As the cars took to the track in Budapest yesterday the two team principals remained uncompromising. Verstappen had repeatedly accused Hamilton of being disrespectful and the Mercedes principal, Toto Wolff, surely chose his words carefully as he explained the rationale behind the team's Thursday statement.

"We wanted to bring a little bit of respect back to the discussion," he said. "We understand emotions can run high and it is always a matter of perspective and perception but we felt that line was overstepped.

▲ *Max Verstappen was quickest in yesterday morning's practice session*

"Everybody needs to decide whether they want to apologise. We felt the comments made during and after the race and in witness statements and in the meeting itself [with the stewards] were below the belt. But it's not up to me nor would Lewis want to demand any apologies."

Horner denied that his team's presentation to the stewards had been a personal attack on Hamilton but would not back down from the position he had held since Silverstone, that Hamilton had been at fault. "I am entitled to an opinion on that incident, as is everybody else," he said. "We had a driver that needed to be taken to hospital after an accident that would have knocked out your average human being. We have lost a car under a budget-cap for something the stewards didn't deem to be Max's fault."

On track there was little to choose between the two teams. Verstappen was quickest in the morning session, six hundredths up on Valtteri Bottas's Mercedes, with Hamilton in third just over a 10th down. In the afternoon Bottas led the timesheets, just two-hundredths in front of Hamilton and Verstappen two-tenths back in third.

Qualifying
Live 2pm today, Sky Sports F1; highlights 5.30pm, Channel 4
Grand Prix
Live 2pm tomorrow, Sky Sports F1; highlights 6.30pm, Channel 4

Stokes takes break 'to prioritise his mental wellbeing'

Continued *from page 1*

replaced in the squad that takes on India by Somerset's Craig Overton. The first Test begins at Trent Bridge on Wednesday.

"It was quite interesting because when he got asked a question about his finger the other night, his response was not your normal response ... it was like there was something more," said Pietersen. "I hope he's OK – he's a fabulous cricketer, one of the best in the world at the moment."

Writing on Twitter, Lineker said: "Wishing @benstokes38 a speedy recovery. When our sporting heroes open up about their mental health problems it will help others realise they are not alone with theirs."

There has also been support for Stokes from the former Sri Lanka batsman Kumar Sangakkara. He said: "It must be a tough time for Ben and his family. It won't be a decision made easily but it brings into focus the level elite players play at – your coping mechanism can only deal with so much.

"Different individuals deal with things differently, some are able to cope with it and some aren't, and over time you can reach a point where you need a break. But the fact is he has to be OK."

Stokes is the latest high-profile athlete, following the likes of Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles, to prioritse mental wellbeing over competition and his decision to do so brings into focus the pressures facing England cricketers, which is somewhat timely given that is to be the subject of key talks between the ECB and Cricket Australia over whether families will be allowed to accompany the players to the Ashes this winter.

The Australian government has limited the number of overseas arrivals, with thousands of its citizens unable to return, amid a slow roll-out of the vaccination programme. England's Test squad, and in particular the players who feature in all formats, could go up to four months without seeing their families because of the series taking place three weeks after the Twenty20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates and Oman is set to finish in November.

A joint statement from the ECB and PCA said: "All stakeholders are committed to putting player and staff welfare as the main priority and finding the right solutions that enable the England team to compete at the highest possible standard that the Ashes series deserves.".

> ***'Over time you reach a point when you need a break'***
>
> **Kumar Sangakkara**
> *Former Sri Lanka batsman*

Results

Olympics

ARCHERY

Women: Individual: 1/8 Eliminations: E Osipova (ROC) bt B Pitman (GB) 6-0
Bronze match: L Boari (It) bt M Brown (US) 7-1
Gold match: An S (Kor) bt E Osipova (ROC) 6-5

ATHLETICS

Women: 100m: Round 1: Heat 1: 1 Teahna Daniels (US) 11.04sec; **2** D Asher-Smith (GB) 11.07; **3** M Ahoure (IvC) 11.16; **4** Ge M (Chn) 11.20; **5** S Kora (Swi) 11.25; **6** M van Hunenstijn (Neth) 11.27; **7** J Lloyd (Ant) 11.54; **8** A Simwaka (Maw) 11.68
Heat 4: 1 M-J Ta Lou (IvC) 10.78sec; **2** D Neita (GB) 10.96; **3** C Emmanuel (Can) 11.18; **4** L Dorcas Bazolo (Por) 11.31; **5** M Mihalinec Zidar (Svn) 11.54; **6** AG Tenorio (Ecu) 11.59; **7** A Clarke (StK) 11.71
Heat 6: 1 B Okagbare (Nga) 11.05sec; **2** A Philip (GB) 11.31; **3** T Gaither (Bah) 11.34; **4** K Tsimanouskaya (Blr) 11.47; **5** MI Perez (Sp) 11.51; **6** N Ngoye Akamabi (Con) 11.52; **7** AN Alias (Mal) 11.91
800m: Round 1: Heat 4: 1 R Rogers (US) 2min 01.42sec; **2** K Hodgkinson (GB) 2:01.59; **3** M Moraa (Ken) 2:01.66; **4** N Desta (Eth) 2:01.98; **5** L Butterworth (Can) 2:02.45; **6** A Wielgosz (Pol) 2:03.20; **7** S Cleirigh Buttner (Ire) 2:04.62; **8** N Waliwarsha (Sri) 2:10.23
Heat 5: 1 R Mary Almanza (Cub) 2min 00.71sec; **2** D Rodriguez (Uru) 2:00.90; **3** R Arafi (Mor) 2:00.96; **4** A Bell (GB) 2:00.96; **5** C Bisset (Aus) 2:01.65; **6** D Sclabas (Swi) 2:03.03; **7** S Maloney (StV) 2:07.89; **8** D Tavares (STP) 2:16.72
Heat 6: 1 J Reekie (GB) 1min 59.97sec; **2** A Wilson (US) 2:00.02; **3** C Wang (Chn) 2:00.05; **4** S Kuivisto (Fin) 2:00.15; **5** E Bello (It) 2:01.07; **6** N Romero (Sp) 2:01.16; **7** G Gajanova (Svk) 2:01.41; **8** E Cherotich Tuei (Ken) 2:08.08
5000m Round 1 Heat 1: 1 S Hassan (Neth) 14min 47.89sec; **2** A Jebet Tirop (Ken) 14:48.01; **3** S Teferi (Eth) 14:48.31; **4** E Taye (Eth) 14:48.52; **5** L Kasait Rengeruk (Ken) 14:50.36; **6** Y Can (Tur) 14:50.92; **7** K Schweizer (US) 14:51.34; **8** S Teferi (Isr) 14:53.43; **9** R Hironaka (Jpn) 14:55.87; **10** A Seccafien (Can) 14:59.55; **11** LE Galvan Rodriguez (Mex) 15:00.16; **12** K Hagitani (Jpn) 15:04.95; **13** J Judd (GB) 15:09.47; **14** C Buscomb (NZ) 15:24.39; **15** P Chesang (Uga) 15:25.72; **16** L Rodriguez (Sp) 15:26.19; **17** J-A Staehli (Can) 15:33.39; **18** R Davies (Aus) 15:50.07; **19** S Chelangat (Uga) 15:59.40
Heat 2: 1 G Tsegay (Eth) 14mins 55.74secs; **2** H Obiri (Ken) 14:55.77; **3** N Battoclettti (It) 14:55.83; **4** E Cranny (US) 14:56.14; **5** K Bjerkeli Grovdal (Nor) 14:56.82; **6** N Tanaka (Jpn) 14:59.93; **7** R Schneider (US) 15:00.07; **8** R Daniel (Eri) 15:02.59; **9** A-E Markovc (GB) 15:03.22; **10** E McColgan (GB) 15:09.68; **11** J Blundell (Aus) 15:11.27; **12** E Chebet (Uga) 15:11.47; **13** D Scott (SA) 15:13.94; **14** K van Buskirk (Can) 15:14.96; **15** I Batt-Doyle (Aus) 15:21.65; **16** D van Es (Neth) 15:47.01; **17** M Yankurije (Rwa) 15:55.94;
DNF K Lukan (Svn); **DSQ** F Niyonsaba (Bdi)
Shot Put: Qualification: Group B: 1 Gong L (Chn) 19.46m; **2** Song J (Chn) 19.23; **3** V Adams (NZ) 18.83; **4** A Dongmo (Por) 18.80; **5** S Gambetta (Ger) 18.57; **6** D Thomas-Dodd (Jam) 18.37; **7** E Dereli (Tur) 17.81; **8** S McKinna (GB) 17.81; **9** A Aquilla (US) 17.68; **10** A Marton (Hun) 17.59; 11 M Cervenkova (Cz) 17.33; **12** A Espinoza (Ven) 17.17; **13** P Guba (Pol) 16.98; **14** S Mitton (Can) 16.62; **15** G Arcanjo (Br) 16.46; **16** S Shatirishvili (Geo) 15.31
Men: 10,000m: Final: 1 S Barega (Eth) 27min 43.22sec; **2** J Cheptegei (Uga) 27:43.63; **3** J Kiplimo (Uga) 27:43.88; **4** B Aregawi (Eth) 27:46.16; **5** G Fisher (US) 27:46.39; **6** M Ahmed (Can) 27:47.76; 7 R Kwemoi (Ken) 27:50.06; **8** Y Kejelcha (Eth) 27:52.03; **9** R Kipruto (Ken) 27:52.78; **10** M Amdouni (Fr) 27:53.58; **11** Y Crippa (It) 27:54.05; **12** A Kifle (Eri) 28:04.06; **13** C Mayo (Sp) 28:04.71; **14** M Scott (GB) 28:09.23; **15** W Kincaid (US) 28:11.01; **16** J Klecker (US) 28:14.18; **17** A Aizawa (Jpn) 28:18.37; **18** I Kimeli (Bel) 28:31.91; **19** P Tiernan (Aus) 28:35.06; 20 W Langat (Ken) 28:41.42; **21** J Wanders (Swi) 28:55.29; **22** T Ito (Jpn) 29:01.31; **23** K Tuntivate (Tha) 29:01.92;
DNF S Atkin (GB); S Kissa (Uga)
High Jump: Qualification: Group A: 1 M Essa Barshim (Qat) 2.28m; **1** D Lovett (Can) 2.28; **3** H Kerr (NZ) 2.28; **4** S McEwen (US) 2.28; **5** G Tamberi (It) 2.28; **6** I Ivanyuk (ROC) 2.28; **7** T Gale (GB) 2.28; **8** D Nabokau (Blr) 2.25; **8** A Protsenko (Ukr) 2.25; **10** T Eto (Jpn) 2.21; **10** Wang Y (Chn) 2.21; **12** F Ferreira (Br) 2.21; **13** D Thomas (Bah) 2.21; **14** A Glebauskas (Lit) 2.17; **14** LE Zayas (Cub) 2.17; **16** M Sawe (Ken) 2.17; **NM** Lee HW (Mal)
Mixed: 4x400m Relay: Round 1: Heat 2: 1 Poland 3min 10.44sec; **2** Netherlands 3:10.69; **3** Jamaica 3:11.76; **4** Great Britain 3:11.95; **5** Italy 3:13.51; **6** Ukraine 3:14.21; **7** Brazil 3:15.89; **8** India 3:19.93

BADMINTON

Mixed Doubles: Bronze match: Y Watanabe & A Higashino (Jpn) bt Tang CM & Tse YS (Hkg) 21-17 23-21
Gold match: Wang YL & Huang DP (Chn) bt Zheng SW & Huang YQ (Chn) 21-17 17-21 21-19

BASKETBALL

Women Preliminary Round: Group B USA 86 Japan 69, France 87 Nigeria 62
Group C Belgium 87 Puerto Rico 52, China 76 Australia 74

BOXING

Men: Welter: Quarter-final: P McCormack (GB) bt B-U Baturov (Uzb) 4-1
Light Heavy Quarter-final: **B Whittaker** (GB) bt K Machado (Br) 3-2
Women: Light: Last 16: C Dubois (GB) bt R Ellis (US) 3-0

CANOE SLALOM

Men: Kayak: Final: 1 J Prskavec (Cz) 91.63sec; **2** J Grigar (Svk) 94.85; **3** H Aigner (Ger) 97.11; **4** F Oschmautz (Aut) 98.79; **5** M Smolen (US) 99.12; **6** B Forbes-Cryans (GB) 100.58; **7** B Neveu (Fr) 101.18; **8** L Delfour (Aus) 102.33; **9** E Holmer (Swe) 148.59; **10** David Llorente (Sp) 150.08

CYCLING

Women: BMX racing: Final: 1 B Shriever (GB) 44.358; **2** M Pajon (Col) 44.448; **3** M Smulders (Neth) 44.721; **4** F Stancil (US) 45.131; **5** L Reynolds (Aus) 45.401
Men: BMX racing: Final: 1 N Kimmann (Neth) 39.053; **2** K Whyte (GB) 39.167; **3** C Ramirez (Col) 40.572; **4** S Andre (Fr) 40.676; **5** A Campo (Ecu) 40.705

DIVING

Women: 3m Springboard: Preliminary 1 Shi T (Chn) 350.45pts; **2** Wang H (Chn) 347.25; **3** J Abel (Can) 332.40; **4** P Ware (Can) 330.10; **5** S Mikami (Jpn) 317.10; **6** H Hernandez (US) 309.55; **7** Kim S (Kor) 304.20; **8** A Vazquez Montano (Mex) 294.30; **9** E Qin (Aus) 292.80; **10** N Dhabitah Sabri (Mal) 291.60; **11** M Heimberg (Swi) 289.95; **12** E Gullstrand (Swe) 289.65; **13** M Poliakova (ROC) 288.55; **14** T Punzel (Ger) 287.00; **15** K Palmer (US) 279.10; **16** I Jansen (Neth) 278.75; **17** H Enomoto (Jpn) 277.85; **18** A Smith (Aus) 272.05; **19** G Reid (GB) 268.15; **20** Ng YY (Mal) 251.95; **21** L Lira (Br) 244.35; **22** S Mew Jensen (GB) 243.25; **23** V Kesar (Ukr) 238.20; **24** A Pysmenska (Ukr) 232.30; **25** J Vincent (SA) 228.90; **26** M Bouter (Rsa) 216.15; **27** AC Munoz (Mex) 190.35

EQUESTRIAN

Eventing Dressage Team and Individual Day 1:
Individual: 1 O Townend (GB) (Ballaghmor Class) 23.60pts; **2** Tian AH (Chn) (Don Geniro) 23.90; **3** J Krajewski (Ger) (Amande De B'Neville) 25.20; **4** L Collett (GB) (London 52) 25.80; **5** K Tomoto (Jpn) (Vinci De La Vigne) 25.90; **6** F Vogg (Swi) (Colero) 26.70; **7** F Mirza (Ind) (Seigneur) 28.00; **7** L Romeike (Swe) (Cato 66) 28.00; **9** T Viklund (Swe) (Viscera) 28.10; **10** C Six (Fr) (Totem De Brecey) 29.60; **11** J Campbell (NZ) (Diachello) 30.10; **12** P Dutton (US) (Z) 30.50; **13** J Price (NZ) (Grovine De Reve) 30.70; **14** A Zelenko (Blr) (Carlo Grande Jr.) 31.00; **14** M Cybulska (Pol) (Chenaro 2) 31.00; **16** M Tosi (Br) (Glenfly) 31.50; **17** S Rose (Aus) (Virgil) 31.70; **18** K McNab (Aus) (Don Quidam) 32.10; **19** L Siegl (Aut) (DSP Fighting Line) 32.60; **20** T Tanaka (Jpn) 32.708
Team: 1 Great Britain 49.40pts; **2** Sweden 56.10; **3** Japan 58.60; **4** China 59.10; **5** Germany 59.30; **6** New Zealand 61.00; **7** France 62.70; **8** Switzerland 62.80; **9** USA 63.50; **10** Australia 63.80; **11** Brazil 67.50; **12** Poland 71.50; **13** Ireland 72.30; **14** Italy 72.50; **15** Thailand 80.60

FENCING

Men: Epee: Team: Bronze match South Korea bt China 45-42
Gold match Japan bt ROC 45-36

GOLF

Men: Leading second-round scores (par 71, second round suspended due to adverse weather, due to restart Saturday 7.45am local time) **131** Xander Schauffele (US) 68 63; **132** Carlos Ortiz (Mex) 65 67; **134** Sepp Straka (Aut) 63 71; Guillermo Mito Pereira (Chi) 69 65; Alexander Noren (Swe) 67 67; **135** Shane Lowry (Ire) 70 65; Rory McIlroy (Ire) 69 66, Jazz Janewattananond (Tha) 64 71; **136** Sebastian Munoz (Col) 67 69; Guido Migliozzi (It) 71 65; Rory Sabbatini (Svk) 69 67; Jhonattan Vegas (Ven) 66 70; 137 Thomas Detry (Bel) 70 67; Antoine Rozner (Fr) 68 69; Viktor Hovland (Nor) 68 69; Adria Arnaus (Sp) 68 69

GYMNASTICS

Women: Trampoline: Final: 1 X Zhu (Chn) 56.635pts; **2** L Liu (Chn) 56.350; **3** B Page (GB) 55.735; **4** R Maclennan (Can) 55.460; **5** M Uyama (Jpn) 54.655; **6** N Ahsinger (US) 54.350; 7 S Kochesok (ROC) 54.290 **8** DN Loza (Mex) 48.345

HOCKEY

Men: Pool A Australia 1 Spain 1; Japan 3 India 5; Argentina 4 New Zealand 1
Pool B Canada 4 South Africa 4; Germany 3 Netherlands 1; Belgium 2 Great Britain 2
Women: Pool A South Africa 1 Germany 4; Ireland 0 India 1

JUDO

Women: +78 kg: Bronze medal A: A Kindzerska (Aze) bt Xu S (Chn) 10-0
Bronze medal B: R Dicko (Fr) bt K Sayit (Tur) 10-0
Final: A Sone (Jpn) bt I Ortiz (Cub) 10s1-0s3
Men: +100 kg: Bronze medal A: T Riner (Fr) bt H Harasawa (Jpn) 10s1-0s3
Bronze medal B: T Bashaev (ROC) bt Y Khammo (Ukr) 10-0
Final: A: L Krpalek (Cz) bt G Tushishvili (Geo) 10s2-0s1

ROWING

Men: Eight: Final A: 1 New Zealand 5min 24.64sec; **2** Germany 5:25.60; **3** Great Britain 5:25.73
Women: Single sculls Final A: 1 E Twigg (NZ) 7min 13.97sec **2** H Prakatsen (ROC) 7:17.39; **3** M Lobnig (Aut) 7:19.72; **4** V Thornley (GB) 7:20.39

RUGBY SEVENS

Women: Pool A Great Britain 31 Kenya 0; New Zealand 33 ROC 0
Pool B Fiji 41 Brazil 5, Canada 0 France 31
Pool C China 29 Japan 0, Australia 12 USA 14
Placing 9-12 Canada 45 Brazil 0
Quarter-finals New Zealand 36 ROC 0; Fiji 14 Australia 12; USA 12 Great Britain 21; France 24 China 10

SHOOTING

Women: 25m Pistol: Final: 1 V Batsarashkina (ROC) 38pts (winner via shoot-off); **2** Kim M-j (Kor) 38; **3** Xiao J (Chn) 29; **4** A Kostadinova (Bul) 28; **5** Wu C-Y (Tai) 23; **6** A Korakaki (Gre) 18; **7** D Vennekamp (Ger) 10

SWIMMING

Men: 200m Backstroke: Final: 1 E Rylov (ROC) 1min 53.27sec; **2** R Murphy (US) 1:54.15; **3** L Greenbank (GB) 1:54.72
200m Individual Medley: Final: 1 Wang S (Chn) 1min 55.00sec; **2** D Scott (GB) 1:55.28; **3** J Desplanches (Swi) 1:56.17; **4** D Seto (Jpn) 1:56.22; **5** M Andrew (US) 1:57.31; **6** K Hagino (Jpn) 1:57.49; **7** L Cseh (Hun) 1:57.68; **8** L Clareburt (NZ) 1:57.70
Women: 200m Breaststroke Final: 1 T Schoenmaker (SA) 2min 18.95sec; **2** L King (US) 2:19.92; **3** A Lazor (US) 2:20.84; **4** E Chikunova (ROC) 2:20.88; **5** K Corbett (SA) 2:22.06; **6** M Renshaw (GB) 2:22.65; **7** A Wood (GB) 2:23.72; **8** F Lecluyse (Bel) 2:24.57
100m Freestyle: Final: 1 E McKeon (Aus) 51.96sec; **2** SB Haughey (HK) 52.27; **3** C Campbell (Aus) 52.52; **4** P Oleksiak (Can) 52.59; **5** S Sjoestroem (Swe) 52.68; **6** F Heemskerk (Neth) 52.79; **7** A Hopkin (GB) 52.83, **8** A Weitzeil (US) 53.239

TABLE TENNIS

Men: Singles: Bronze match: D Ovtcharov (Ger) bt Lin YJ (Tai) 13-11, 9-11, 6-11, 11-4, 4-11, 15-13, 11-7
Gold match: Long M (Chn) bt Fan Z-d (Chn) 11-4, 10-12, 11-8, 11-9, 3-11, 11-7

Team GB and Belgium are both through in the men's Olympic hockey

TENNIS

Men: Singles: Semi-finals: A Zverev (Ger) bt N Djokovic (Ser) 1-6 6-3 6-1; **K Khachanov** (ROC) bt **P Carreño Busta** (Sp) 6-3 6-3
Doubles: Bronze match: M Daniell & M Venus (NZ) bt A Krajicek & T Sandgren (US) 7-6 (7-3) 6-2
Doubles: Gold match: N Mektic & M Pavic (Cro) bt 6-4 6-4; M Cilic & I Dodig (Cro) bt 6-4 3-6 10-6
Mixed Doubles: Semi-finals: E Vesnina & A Karatsev (ROC) bt N Stojanovic & N Djokovic (Ser) 7-6 (7-4) 7-5; **A Pavlyuchenkova & A Rublev** (ROC) bt **A Barty & J Peers** (Aus) 5-7 6-4 13-11

Cricket

FOURTH WOMEN'S T20 INTERNATIONAL

Malahide Ireland v Netherlands. Match delayed by rain with Ireland 95-1, Netherlands still to bat.

ROYAL LONDON ONE-DAY CUP

Group A Radlett Middlesex v Hampshire, match abandoned due to bad weather without a ball bowled.
Hove Sussex 209-7 (T Head 52). Kent 50-1 when match abandoned due to bad weather, no result.
Group B
Derby Derbyshire v Glamorgan, match abandoned with a toss due to bad weather.
Welbeck Nottinghamshire 92-2 v Somerset. No result, match abandoned due to bad weather.
The Oval Northamptonshire 31-1 v Surrey. No result, match abandoned due to bad weather.

THE HUNDRED

Women Phoenix 140-4. Brave 141-2. Brave beat Phoenix by eight runs.

Tennis

TRUIST ATLANTA OPEN (Georgia, US)

Second round: C Norrie (GB) bt N Kyrgios (Aus) 6-1 6-4; **E Ruusuvuori** (Fin) bt B Paire (Fr) 4-6 6-4 3-0 ret; **J Isner** (US) bt J Sock (US) 7-6 (8-6) 6-4; **C O'Connell** (Aus) bt J Sinner (It) 7-6 (9-7) 6-4

Fixtures

Football (3pm unless stated)
Carabao Cup
First round Bournemouth v MK Dons
Cinch Scottish Premiership
Dundee v St Mirren; Hearts v Celtic (8pm); Rangers v Livingston (1.30pm); Ross County v St Johnstone
Cinch Scottish Championship
Arbroath v Inverness CT; Morton v Dunfermline; Partick v Queen of South; Raith v Hamilton
Cinch Scottish League One
Airdrieonians v Montrose; Clyde v Dumbarton; Cove Rangers v Falkirk; East Fife v Queen's Park; Peterhead v Alloa
Cinch Scottish League Two
Albion v Edinburgh City; Annan Athletic v Forfar; Elgin v Stranraer; Kelty Hearts v Cowdenbeath; Stenhousemuir v Stirling

Rugby union
Lions Tour South Africa v British & Irish Lions (5pm)

Cricket (2.30pm unless stated)
Third T20 international West Indies v Pakistan, Providence (4pm)
The Hundred
Men Superchargers v Invincibles, Headingley (6pm); Fire v Originals, Sophia Gardens
Women Superchargers v Invincibles, Headingley; Fire v Originals, Sophia Gardens (11am)

South Africa

British & Irish Lions

Today 5pm **Second Test**

South Africa		British & Irish Lions
W le Roux Verblitz	15	**S Hogg** Scotland
C Kolbe Toulouse	14	**A Watson** England
L Am Sharks	13	**C Harris** Scotland
D de Allende Munster	12	**R Henshaw** Ireland
M Mapimpi Sharks	11	**D vd Merwe** Scotland
H Pollard Montpellier	10	**D Biggar** Wales
F de Klerk Sale	9	**C Murray** Ireland
S Kitshoff Stormers	1	**M Vunipola** England
B Mbonambi Stormers	2	**L Cowan-Dickie** England
F Malherbe Stormers	3	**T Furlong** Ireland
E Etzebeth Toulon	4	**M Itoje** England
F Mostert Heat	5	**AW Jones** Wales (c)
S Kolisi Sharks (c)	6	**C Lawes** England
P-S du Toit Stormers	7	**T Curry** England
J Wiese Leicester	8	**J Conan** Ireland
Replacements		**Replacements**
M Marx Spears		**K Owens** Wales
T Nyakane Bulls		**R Sutherland** Scotland
V Koch Saracens		**K Sinckler** England
L de Jager Sale		**T Beirne** Ireland
M van Staden Bulls		**T Faletau** Wales
K Smith Jubilo		**A Price** Scotland
H Jantjies Stormers		**O Farrell** England
D Willemse Stormers		**E Daly** England

Venue Cape Town Stadium
Referee Ben O'Keeffe (NZ)

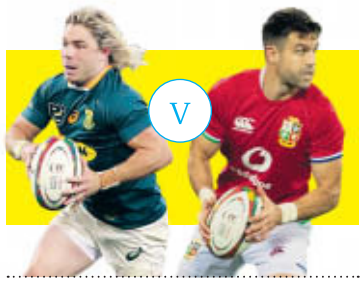
Last two meetings

2021 South Africa 17 Lions 22
The Lions' superior fitness and the home side's lack of match play was crucial in the second half

2009 South Africa 9 Lions 28
Two Shane Williams tries at Ellis Park in Johannesburg ended an eight-year wait for a Test victory.

Key clash

Faf de Klerk v Conor Murray
In a crucial switch Murray's experience and more structured, patient approach has been favoured by Warren Gatland in place of the more attack-minded Ali Price for this match.



Stats

2
Only twice since 1900 have the Lions won their first two games of a Test series against South Africa

3
The Lions are unbeaten in their last three Tests, their best run since a six-game spell in the 70s

Weather

21°

Follow the action

TV Sky Sports Main Event
Radio Talksport
theguardian.com Join Niall McVeigh for minute-by-minute coverage from Cape Town at 4pm

Erasmus outburst means that rugby's reputation is on line as well as series

South Africa's vociferous complaints about officials favouring the Lions have been out of all proportion

Robert Kitson
Cape Town

No one needs telling that a hugely significant, revealing game of rugby union is fast approaching. For both South Africa and the British & Irish Lions the practical implications of success and failure are obvious enough to require few Shakespearean speeches. Even more crucial, perhaps, will be whether the two sides can salvage what remains of the sport's honour at the end of a uniquely dispiriting week.

Even beneath a clear blue Cape sky, there is an unusually rancorous feel in the air. Whether by accident or design – and regardless of the series outcome – rugby has been thrust into a cancel culture-style war which will have no long-term winners. When a World Cup-winning coach goes viral on social media with an hour-long video monologue blaming unfair refereeing for handicapping his side, what price the immutable oval-ball values of sportsmanship and respect?

The reaction in South Africa to the unprecedented bleating from Rassie Erasmus – and his good mate Jaco Johan – following the Springboks' 22-17 first Test loss has been almost as startling. Rare has been any hint of impartiality or acknowledgment that referees might be human and that not every call massively favoured the Lions. The recurring suggestions that a black South African captain was basically ignored while the visiting skipper Alun Wyn Jones was indulged are also serious and, potentially, even more divisive.

It is all a million miles away from the feelgood glow of South Africa's 2019 Rugby World Cup triumph when the sight of Siya Kolisi hoisting the Webb Ellis Cup into the late evening sky in Yokohama was truly an image for the ages. Maybe therein lies the root of the problem. Could it be that Erasmus has grown so accustomed to winning that, having been involved in virtually no international rugby since then, he simply cannot countenance the possibility of a sudden descent?

When Mzwandile Stick insists the Lions started it he is grasping the wrong end of his surname

Either way, smart individuals such as Erasmus and Boks' assistant coach Mzwandile Stick appear in danger of losing the plot. Whether or not they were hard done by in the first Test – and the decision not to sin-bin Hamish Watson in the second half was definitely a let-off for the Lions – the subsequent reaction has been way over the top. When Stick insists the Lions started it all – by querying the eve-of-series appointment of a South African, Marius Jonker, as TMO – he is grasping the wrong end of his surname.

So far removed is all this whinging from the uplifting traditions upon which Lions folklore is based that, at first, it makes you want to weep. The next emotion is a sincere sense of sadness that it has come to this. If we are honest something like this has been brewing in a sport where

The confrontations of the first Test are likely to be repeated after a week of controversy and criticism surrounding the refereeing
DAVID ROGERS/GETTY IMAGES

Dan Biggar will start at fly-half after passing concussion protocols

half a dozen different penalties could conceivably be awarded at every breakdown. With the camera angles immediately available to the TMO also now vital, the margins for players are tighter than ever. Hence the increasing temptation for a tech-savvy coach to package up a few clips and invite the ever-impartial jury of social media to turn a molehill into Table Mountain.

No one, to be clear, is completely exonerating World Rugby; this was always going to be a tinderbox of a series and not being able to whistle up a neutral TMO replacement after the original choice pulled out was tempting fate. It is only fair, too, to speculate that, had the Lions lost the first Test, the conversations with today's referee, Ben O'Keeffe from New Zealand, might have been slightly different in tone.

But the Lions did not lose, opening up the traditionally brutal scenario of an embattled Springbok side caught between Cape Town's most famous rock and a depressingly hard place. Win the second Test and, for the first time since Jeremy Guscott joyously bisected the distinctive black-and-white uprights in Durban with his drop-goal in the second Test in 1997, the Lions will have chiselled out an unbeatable 2-0 series lead.

Not without good reason, then, did the Lions forwards' coach Robin McBryde reveal that his pre-match reading is a book called Ja-Nee written by Dugald Macdonald, the former South Africa No 8. Macdonald won just one cap for the Boks but his debut coincided with the second Test of the 1974 Lions series when the touring side, as now, were 1-0 up.

The match was dubbed the most important game in South African history and encouraged a furious physical response, not least in the third Test which subsequently become known as The Battle of Boet Erasmus. It was the match in which the Lions activated their infamous '99' call to offer collective protection to any players set upon by their opponents. Amid the chaos, the lock Gordon Brown punched his opponent Johan de Bruyn so hard he dislodged the latter's glass eye, prompting 30 players and the referee to pause hostilities and collectively start looking for it.

While history now records that the Lions won both games - 28-9 and 26-9 respectively - and disciplinary excesses are now more heavily punished, McBryde does not foresee the modern Boks settling meekly for second best. "They will go back to that physical nature," predicted McBryde. "It's what they did in 1974 after losing that first Test and I'm sure that's what they'll be looking to do on Saturday: to get stuck into us. It's not going to be easy, is it?"

With the Lions adamant Dan Biggar will start at fly-half and that each stage of his return-to-play concussion protocols has been properly undertaken, it is also a short-odds bet that South Africa will again seek to make inroads via contestable high kicks and a forward-dominated 6-2 bench, banking on the Lions conceding kickable penalties and wilting under more of the self-inflicted pressure that hampered their efforts in the opening 40 minutes of the series.

The reality, though, is that both sides still have improvement left in them. If the score is still close with 20 minutes remaining, the Lions hope their collective fitness will again be evident and deliver just their third victorious series in South Africa since 1896. "We believe we can go out and put in a performance that will win us the test match and the series," insisted Stuart Hogg, quietly encouraged by the motivational influence of both Jones and Owen Farrell this week. If O'Keeffe's refereeing barely receives a mention afterwards, so much the better.

▼ Siya Kolisi believes he was treated differently to Alun Wyn Jones
GAVIN BARKER/BACKPAGEPIX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Captain Kolisi claims referee Berry showed him a lack of respect

The Springboks continue their attacks on the standard of officiating they are seeing

Gerard Meagher
Cape Town

The South Africa captain Siya Kolisi has made the remarkable claim that he was shown a lack of respect by the referee Nic Berry during last Saturday's defeat by the British & Irish Lions as the Springboks lashed out at the touring side, accusing Warren Gatland of "destroying the dignity of the series".

Doubling down on Rassie Erasmus's outburst over perceived injustices from officials as the extraordinary war of words intensified before today's second Test, Kolisi agreed with his director of rugby that he was treated differently to the Lions captain Alun Wyn Jones. The Springboks assistant Mzwandile Stick then took a swipe at Gatland for making his anger known about the appointment of the South African TMO Marius Jonker last week. Earlier, Rugby Australia slammed Erasmus for an "unacceptable" attack on Berry, labelling his rant as "against the spirit and values of the game".

The British & Irish Lions, meanwhile, have insisted they have received assurances from today's referee Ben O'Keeffe that he will not be affected in the second Test against South Africa following Erasmus's comments. Erasmus is under investigation by World Rugby after a video of him launching an hour-long diatribe about some of the decisions made by Berry, who will be one of O'Keeffe's assistants today, emerged on Thursday. Kolisi could also face disciplinary action from World Rugby.

Despite the governing body's investigation and palpable anger from Rugby Australia, however, the Springboks stuck to their guns. Kolisi said: "I didn't feel respected at all. I didn't feel I was given a fair opportunity. I didn't feel I was given the same access to the referee [as Jones] and there is proof if you watch the game again, you will definitely be able to see." Asked to expand on his claim, Kolisi simply replied: "Did you watch the video?"

Erasmus and South Africa have stepped on the offensive this week, after Gatland's anger at Jonker's appointment, rather than a neutral replacement when the New Zealander Brendon Pickerill withdrew, last week. Yesterday Stick said: "If Rassie got into trouble because of what he said on social media, then the gentleman that challenged the integrity of the game at the beginning, when the TMO was challenged, I think that is something that really destroyed the dignity of the series. And it also challenges the integrity of World Rugby."

The Lions, for their part, have largely sought to avoid engaging with Erasmus this week but the assistant coach Robin McBryde has spoken of his dislike for "openly challenging decisions by the referee" with Stuart Hogg launching a charm offensive and describing O'Keeffe as "one of the best referees I've had to deal with".

> ***'I didn't feel as if I was given the same access to the referee'***
>
> **Siya Kolisi**
> *South Africa captain*

World Rugby's public response to Erasmus on Thursday was to say that his comments had been noted and that they would be raised with the South African union. Rugby Australia, however, has come out firing, insisting, "there is no place for abuse of match officials in Australian Rugby, with Rugby Australia committed to promoting a fair, safe and inclusive rugby experience for all participants, officials and fans. Rugby Australia believes the recent actions are unacceptable and against the spirit and values of the game".

Rugby Australia's chief executive, Andy Marinos, added: "Match officials form the very fabric of our game - simply, the game would not exist without them. As a highly regarded and respected international referee appointed by World Rugby, the attack on Nic's integrity, character and reputation is unacceptable."

Erasmus's frustrations centre on what South Africa perceive is a lack of respect shown by the officials towards Kolisi compared to Jones as well as the time it took to receive feedback from World Rugby about an array of decisions he felt went against his side.

His comments have also been seen in some quarters as an attempt to put additional pressure on the officials today but as the Lions seek to wrap up the series they have been put at ease by O'Keeffe, Berry and Mathieu Raynal, who will also act as an assistant today.

"We had a good meeting with the referees, as Ben O'Keefe said himself, we're aware there's a lot of stuff out there on social media, but that's not going to affect anything," said McBryde. "That's just a sideshow. We had a positive discussion with the referee. Everyone realises they're in a tough place. They've got a tough job to do. But we were really happy with Nic Berry last Saturday and I don't think it will be any different this weekend either.

"When you're openly challenging decisions by the referee, it's not really my cup of tea. Traditionally rugby has prided itself on being able to rise above that and showing respect to the officials. No back chat. Right from a very young age players are taught that you can't speak back to the referee. Hopefully that will continue."

Hogg was glowing in his praise of O'Keeffe, having had prior dealings with him when acting as Scotland's captain. Even before the video emerged, Erasmus appeared to attempt to hit back at the Lions' fury over Jonker's appointment by insisting he would never bring attention to the fact that both O'Keeffe and Warren Gatland are New Zealanders. But Hogg said: "In the short time I've been Scotland captain Ben O'Keeffe has been one of the best referees I've had to deal with. He almost coaches you round the field at the same time. When we ask questions he's very calm in his answers and is good at communicating.

'That's a reason why a large majority of his games when he's involved are allowed to flow."

Gatland a man of few words whose teams do his talking on the pitch

The undemonstrative Kiwi could become the first to coach three Lions tours in a row without losing a series

Robert Kitson
Cape Town

Twenty-eight years have passed since Warren Gatland's first encounter with the Lions as a Waikato player. His home province took the Lions to the cleaners and back, beating them 38-10, and that winning habit has remained a steady theme down the years. Over the course of the 57-year-old Gatland's coaching career, the other constant has been people's tendency to underestimate him.

There is something about his gait and demeanour that recalls the film The Usual Suspects when – spoiler alert – the real identity of the criminal mastermind Keyser Söze is belatedly revealed. Even before his foot operation after a bad fall while cleaning the windows of his holiday home in New Zealand before the 2013 Australia tour, Gatland has never aspired to be a whippet-trim tracksuit coach from central casting. Not until it is too late do opponents glance up at the scoreboard and realise they have been had.

Finally, though, the undemonstrative Kiwi is in danger of having his cover permanently blown. Win one of the next two Tests and he will have a decent claim to be the most effective Lions coach in history. Not even Sir Ian McGeechan, Jim Telfer or Carwyn James presided over three successive Lions tours without losing a series, as Gatland is within touching distance of doing. As head coach his record – P7 W4 D1 L2 – is remarkable and only a late long-range penalty denied the 2009 Lions when he was their forwards coach.

On top of all that sit the four Six Nations titles and three grand slams with Wales, whom he also helped steer to two World Cup semi-finals, plus the domestic glory years with Wasps. His teams invariably punch above their weight, as the other home unions have regularly discovered. "He's up there with the best coaches in world rugby," says Scotland's Stuart Hogg, who has played under Gatland on three Lions tours. "The thing I like best about Gats is that you never quite know where you sit with him. He challenges you on a daily basis and brings the best out in everybody because of the mindset he's got.

"Our training sessions have been between 25 and 50 minutes but he's happy as long we make them as intense, fast and accurate as we can. He's done an incredible job but I know he's not finished. He wants to get everything out of everybody to make sure we're successful in the next couple of weeks. Then he can enjoy a glass of red and chill out, I reckon."

In the early days, some mistook this laidback demeanour for apparent laziness. Most of the time, though, he was listening and watching. Even before the years he spent sitting on the All Blacks' bench behind Sean Fitzpatrick, he has always been able to spot a decent rugby player in a crowd. Only the other day, for example, he was revealing on why he had preferred Jack Conan to other candidates at No 8. "Some people look for the spectacular stuff. It's not something I do. I looked at all the things he did well and the fact he doesn't make many mistakes." Getting the basics right is non-negotiable for any Gatland side.

Shrewd recruitment, few frills, train smart, share a beer together … the blueprint has not changed much over the years. Where some clubs insist on prioritising expensive new training grounds, Gatland has long since recognised that bonding over a pint in a backstreet pub can be just as

Story so far P7 W4 D1 L2

Gatland's Lions Test record

2013 Lions win series (2-1)
Australia **21** Lions **23** *Brisbane*
Australia **16** Lions **15** *Melbourne*
Australia **16** Lions **41** *Sydney*

2017 Series drawn (1-1)
New Zealand **30** Lions **15** *Auckland*
New Zealand **21** Lions **24** *Wellington*
New Zealand **15** Lions **15** *Auckland*

2021
South Africa **17** Lions **22**
Today 5pm, Sky Sports
7 Aug 5pm, Sky Sports

All games Cape Town

BILLY STICKLAND/INPHO/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Warren Gatland 'is up there with the best coaches in world rugby', says Scotland's Stuart Hogg

Prop pressure
'The Beast' backs Boks to exploit weaknesses spotted in Furlong

Martin Pengelly

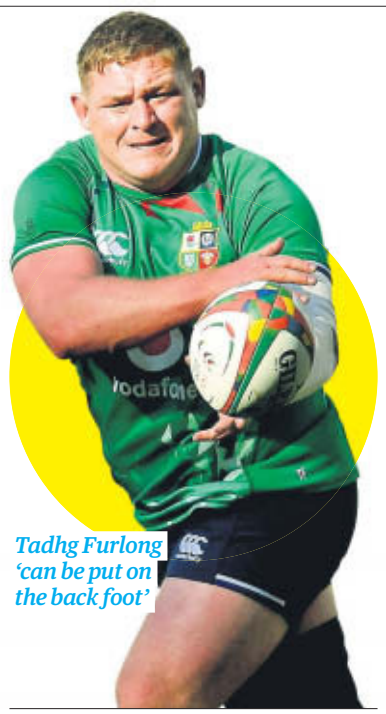
The British & Irish Lions' tighthead prop Tadhg Furlong has "weaknesses that can be exploited" by South Africa's Steven Kitshoff in today's second Test, according to Tendai Mtawarira, a man who knows a lot about the intense pressure of scrummaging in a Lions-Springboks Test with a series on the line.

The world champion known as "the Beast" made his name by destroying England's Phil Vickery in the first Lions Test of 2009. But he had a tougher afternoon against Adam Jones of Wales in the second Test, as the Lions came roaring back. "I think it was probably the most physical game I ever played," Mtawarira says, by video from KwaZulu-Natal.

"You know, there were just *bodies* … five guys were sent to hospital from the Lions side. It was brutal."

Jones was one of those broken Lions, his shoulder smashed out of joint. The Lions scrum thus neutralised, the Springboks won the game and the series. Fast forward 12 years and a ferocious forward effort won the first Test for the Lions. Now South Africa must not lose if they are to avoid a third Lions series defeat.

Coach Jacques Nienaber has picked two new props and a bigger No 8. "I think they're very good changes," Mtawarira says. "Kitshoff, stepping into that No 1 jersey, he's playing his 50th cap. It's going to be a lot to run out in front of the team. The guys are going to be super-emotional and ready to fly. But that's not going to get them home. They have to be accurate and take the chances they get."



Tadhg Furlong 'can be put on the back foot'

The Lions have also swapped out a prop, Mako Vunipola of England in at loosehead for Rory Sutherland of Scotland. But Mtawarira looks at the other side of the scrum, where he thinks Ox Nché, now out injured, had the edge on Furlong last week.

To Mtawarira, the Leinster and Ireland man who he propped against in defeat in Dublin in 2017 is "one of the most gifted tightheads out there. He does his job on the scrummage really well and he gets around. But I think he's got a few weaknesses that can be exploited.

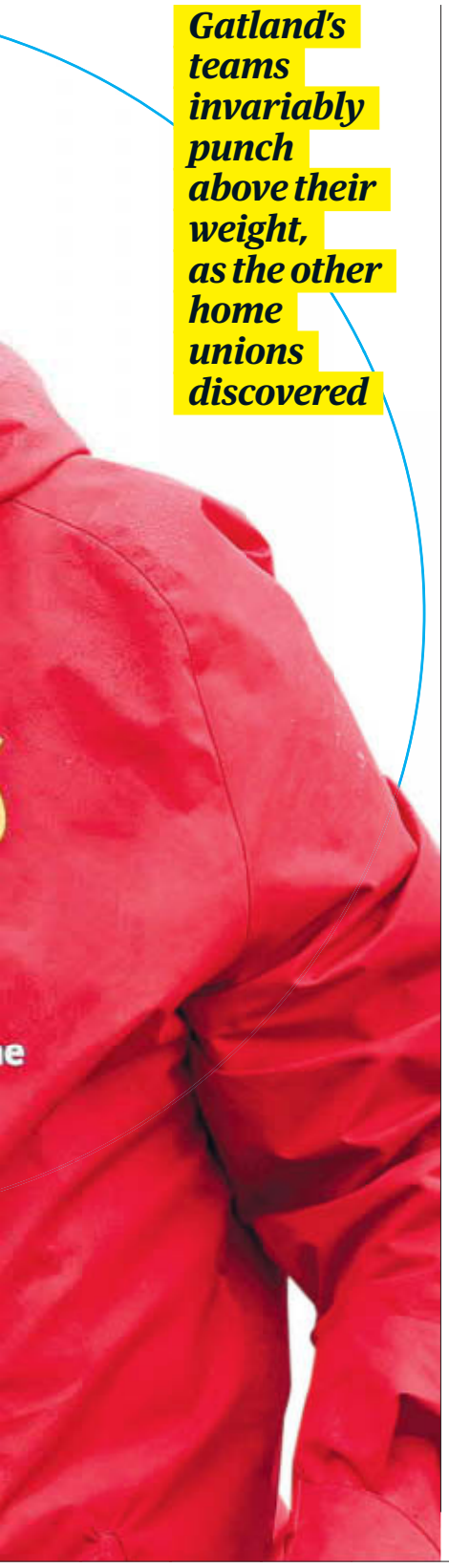
"I thought Ox in that first half actually had him in a few scrums. You could see that the pressure was starting to mount and probably with another few scrums there would have been a few penalties. But Ox got replaced at the break."

Asked to identify Furlong's weaknesses, Mtawarira says: "He's got a good shape when he scrummages on his own terms but if you upset his process then you can get him on the back foot and that's one thing that Ox was doing really well, especially on the engagement.

"You have to make sure that you get the ascendancy from there and not give him an inch, and that's what Ox did and then [Furlong] got into a bit of an uncomfortable position and he broke his bind probably twice. That [should be] an automatic penalty, because you're under pressure and that's why you kind of try and swing your arm to try and block the loosehead from going forward.

"So yeah, I think Furlong can be exposed. But we're gonna have to be very accurate to do that."

Mtawarira also sees Springbok weakness in the mauls, from which



Gatland's teams invariably punch above their weight, as the other home unions discovered

the Lions mined a try and the penalty that sealed the win, as a weakness to be fixed.

"We don't like historically to concede a maul try," he says. "That should never happen, especially in South Africa. For them to do that on us was a major turning point."

The huge lock Eben Etzebeth, he says, must help subdue Maro Itoje.

"Itoje is probably one of the best players of this generation, super-talented, a game-changer. He can carry, he's good in the lineout, he can steal possession. He's a great leader.

> **'Itoje is one of the best players of this generation, a game-changer'**
>
> **Tendai Mtawarira**
> *Former South Africa player*

So yeah, I think we ought to try and contain him. It's a big task. He gets in [scrum-half] Faf [de Klerk]'s face and tries to frustrate him.

"That plays a key role in winning. Those frustrations will lead to mistakes. So kudos to him and hopefully we just don't allow it this time, in the second Test."

In short, Mtawarira sees a recipe for 2009 in redux, if in reverse: the Lions trying to kill the series, the Springboks fighting for life, a ferocious Test even without fans to turn the Cape Town Stadium into the Colosseum.

Of late, the Boks have made a habit of lobbing a "bomb squad" of big forwards into the fray in every second half, to blast tiring opponents. Today, many such players will be on from kick-off.

"We have to go for an explosive start," Mtawarira says with a laugh. "I think the ferocity of the game will be just as good as when a crowd is in the stadium."

valuable. Experience has also taught him what really matters to players on tour. "He's massive on families," Hogg says. "We've had photos in our rooms, we've had messages on team selection ... just tiny little bits and pieces that make all the sacrifices worthwhile. He knows that if we were living in a normal world they'd all be here supporting us. If you get a happy, healthy human you get an even better rugby player and that's something he's massive on. That's very much appreciated by us as players."

Resilience has also long been a part of the mix, although the force of the media blowback took him aback when he dropped Brian O'Driscoll for the final Test in 2013. At times on the 2017 tour of New Zealand he also had to dig deep in the midst of a concerted campaign in sections of the local media to cast him as a clown. Given his nationality, he felt seriously aggrieved and took no little satisfaction in showing up to the final press conference after the drawn series in a red clown nose.

As someone who along with his wife, Trudi, had to cope with the tragic death of their first-born child, aged only four months, during his earliest coaching days in Galway, not even this bizarre, Covid-affected tour has shaken his increasingly well-developed sense of perspective. "He's been calm," says the England flanker Tom Curry. "He doesn't say a whole lot, but when he speaks, everyone listens."

On the eve of a potentially hardcore second Test, this week's messages have been characteristically straightforward. Gatland has simply told his players to prepare as if they are 1-0 down in the series. Boom. Clear, concise, clever. Given the abbreviated nature of modern tours, it is the ideal Lions modus operandi. One last push and the car salesman's son from Hamilton will have roared past almost every other coach in the game's history.

Under pressure

Erasmus's mauling of officials suggests that he feels he has lost control

Ugo Monye

The very best coaches in the world love to have control over everything. We see it with Eddie Jones and England all the time and when those coaches feel like they lose control, they act. Rassie Erasmus evidently feels like control has been lost, that Warren Gatland has seized the initiative and that he has had to respond. This week, just as he wants his players to, he has gone on the front foot. And how.

I almost see it as an acknowledgment that the Lions have outplayed South Africa in the press and Rassie has been desperate to change that. Clearly he perceives there to have been a lack of respect shown towards his players by last week's officials. He sees the British & Irish Lions as being treated like royalty compared to the Springboks and he has taken unprecedented action in an attempt to put that right. He repeatedly used the word "respect" but I'm not sure you gain any more respect by coming out in the media, slamming referees and putting pressure on them. Sometimes you reap what you sow.

Addressing his hour-long monologue, he has almost certainly brought the game into disrepute – players can be sanctioned for a lot less – and I fully expect World Rugby to throw the book at Rassie because this kind of thing cannot be allowed to happen again. But having said that, Rassie will not care in the slightest if he achieves his goal.

For Rassie, all that matters is winning and if he can exert influence in any way possible, he will. He will be more than happy to take a fine or a ban if he thinks he can put pressure on the referee and his assistants this weekend – that will be a case of job done. It is a last roll of the dice for Rassie because losing a series 2-0 to the Lions is unthinkable as far as he is concerned.

For his players, of course they'll be scratching their heads and it will be a bit of a distraction because they'll be constantly asked about it. But Rassie will have warned them and he has credit in the bank after how he transformed the Springboks into a World Cup-winning team. Speaking to people who have been involved in the South Africa setup in the last couple of years, Rassie has a great emotional connection with his players and they must have faith in his methods this week and realise that Rassie's ploy has been to create a media frenzy.

This wasn't just a series of complaints about Nic Berry's performance – for World Rugby's eyes only, it was an attempt to ensure everyone is talking about refereeing decisions and to test the mettle of Ben O'Keeffe, who takes charge today. To that end, Rassie has achieved his goal.

For the record I thought Berry made some peculiar decisions. I cannot work out how Robbie Henshaw's knock-on to Duhan van der Merwe wasn't a penalty and I was extremely surprised that Willie le Roux's try was not given. But this is the first time we have ever seen such a public autopsy of so many decisions.

I would love to see an hour-long video of Erasmus analysing the performance of his coaches and his players. Because Berry did not decide to switch the South Africa front row at half-time and he certainly wasn't dropping high balls in the backfield. In addition, the South African bomb squad failed to live up its billing and the Springboks' discipline was a problem, which allowed the Lions to take control.

> *He has almost certainly brought the game into disrepute. Players can be sanctioned for a lot less*

Ultimately we have one of the most technical sports in the world. There are multiple bodies flying around at great speed, there are, on average, around 300 rucks per match and at the vast majority of those you could make a case for three or four different reasons to award a different decision. It all comes down to interpretation. The question now is how does O'Keeffe referee this game now because he has a nigh-on impossible job.

The best refereeing performances are those which you don't really pick up on but there is absolutely no way that O'Keeffe and his officials will not be scrutinised at every turn. If he gets decisions wrong in South Africa's favour then Erasmus's video will be seen to have worked. Vice versa and the perception will be the opposite but one thing is for sure, O'Keeffe, his assistants and TMO Marius Jonker cannot live in the shadows today and it's such a shame that in the biggest Test of the year, after all the difficulties getting to this point, with the series on the line, all we are talking about is referees.

It is so easy to blame referees and officials because they are a faceless body and as I say, I really wasn't that impressed with Berry's performance. Looking at the bigger picture, there is definitely scope to use technology more effectively and efficiently to help referees and there are innovations such as using two referees, one in each half of the pitch. Ultimately, however, we have to make sure that hour-long videos dissecting each and every decision that goes against your team cannot become a regular occurrence and accordingly World Rugby must show a firm hand.

Rassie Erasmus posted a lengthy tirade online

Rangers and Gerrard can canter to title with rivals in disarray

Celtic's new manager has looked disillusioned and frustrated before a ball has been kicked in the league

Ewan Murray

▼ *Celtic's players trudge off the pitch after their defeat at Midtjylland*
JEFF HOLMES/PA WIRE

Celtic must rue the part they have played in the ludicrous modern-day promotion of pre-season friendlies. On the same weekend as West Ham swaggered to a 6-2 win at Celtic Park, Rangers defeated Real Madrid at Ibrox. In football terms, neither result is remotely relevant; these outcomes did, however, fuel the narrative of Glasgow's green half being in disarray as those in blue seek to turn last season's title win into a period of dominance.

When the real stuff started, Midtjylland followed the trend set by Ferencvaros, Cluj and AEK Athens by bundling Celtic out of the Champions League at the qualifying stage. Less than a decade after reaching the last 16, Celtic are consistently unable to get into the competition. One of Celtic's key assets, Kristoffer Ajer, has reached the heady heights of Premier League newcomers Brentford and another, Odsonne Édouard, is being pursued by Brighton.

As the Scottish top-flight season begins today, Ange Postecoglou's immediate aim does not involve turning Celtic into credible title challengers. The illusion of a two-horse race – as exciting as the Premiership gets – should prevail for a few months at least owing to the general paucity of opposition to the Old Firm. Rangers excelled domestically in the last campaign, a side worthy only of the Europa League's last 16 made to resemble Brazil of 1970 at home. Steven Gerrard's sat 25 points clear of Celtic who, despite total capitulation, were 14 ahead of Hibernian. Supporters of other clubs may laugh at Celtic's plight but it is a grim – largely economic – reality that they can sleepwalk into a top-two finish.

Steven Gerrard's side finished 25 points clear

Last season's final table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Rangers	38	32	6	0	92	13	+79	102
Celtic	38	22	11	5	78	29	+49	77
Hibernian	38	18	9	11	48	35	+13	63
Aberdeen	38	15	11	12	36	38	−2	56
St Johnstone	38	11	12	15	36	46	−10	45
Livingston	38	12	9	17	42	54	−12	45
St Mirren	38	11	12	15	37	45	−8	45
Motherwell	38	12	9	17	39	55	−16	45
Dundee United	38	10	14	14	32	50	−18	44
Ross County	38	11	6	21	35	66	−31	39
Kilmarnock R	38	10	6	22	43	54	−11	36
Hamilton Ac R	38	7	9	22	34	67	−33	30

Promoted from Championship Hearts, Dundee

Postecoglou must somehow and quickly stem an incessant flow of negativity towards his club while preserving his reputation. Celtic's new manager is not to blame for this troubled scene – albeit his striking comments over recruitment failings weren't exactly good for the brand – but has it within his gift to lift the mood. Whether he can do that as those in the background scramble around – again – for new players remains to be seen. The first Old Firm match, which will determine so much in terms of attitudes at least, is only four weeks away. For now at least, Celtic are not remotely equipped to go toe-to-toe with their oldest foes. Postecoglou has looked disillusioned, frustrated and agitated even before a league ball is kicked.

It is amusing now to witness concerted criticism of Celtic's hierarchy. If anyone dared to point out that the club lacked appropriate strategy during a run of nine titles in succession, they were ridiculed. Tanking Ross County and Hamilton – which was lapped up by supporters, oddly excited about competitive non-events – concealed planning issues that came to the fore when Rangers finally delivered a serious challenge. Postecoglou could be the man to turn things in Celtic's favour – it is far too early to judge the Australian – but he has been dealt a dreadful hand by the club. Dermot Desmond, Celtic's key shareholder, is typically silent when he should be explaining to supporters how on earth it came to this. Dominic McKay, the new chief executive, used Postecoglou's June unveiling to deliver bland corporate soundbites.

Supporters of other clubs may laugh at Celtic's plight but they can sleepwalk into a top-two finish

Gerrard's extended thoughts on the season will not be known so long as the Rangers manager dedicates so little time to the media. The club will begin the season with minimal coverage owing to a standoff over a plan to charge thousands of pounds for access. Gerrard, in fairness, can depict limited engagement with the press as perfectly successful given the emphatic nature of last season's title triumph. Nonetheless, this does not augur well for the long-term reputation of the club.

The former Liverpool captain is on record as stating – correctly – that Rangers must improve in domestic cups. Callum Davidson guided St Johnstone to two trophies last season; Rangers' title win meant Gerrard has claimed one from a possible nine.

Gerrard has elevated Rangers to a position where it would be an almighty shock if they did not retain the league. Being the hunted rather than the hunter requires a psychological switch but that should not be beyond Gerrard, who at base level understands the demands of a major club. Questions remain over Rangers' off-field position – Champions League qualification would help – but on it they are in rude health. This Rangers team are stable and have assets. Crucially two or three of those players could be sold without much impact on domestic strength. It is logical to assume the career plans of Ryan Kent, Glen Kamara, Alfredo Morelos and others do not end in Glasgow.

The joust between teams who can finish no better than third is at least interesting. Hibs' fragility was shown in the latter stages of cup competitions last season but there is no current reason to believe they are not the favourites for that particular race. Hearts, back in the top flight, should challenge their city rivals but are in need of defensive reinforcement. Aberdeen's likely trajectory under Stephen Glass is difficult to predict but anything less than a meaningful push for third would represent underachievement.

In theory, the division should be boosted by the presence of Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow derbies for the first time since 2004-05. After an embarrassing delay, the Scottish Professional Football League even found a title sponsor. That branding should be attached to another Rangers championship canter. If it isn't, Postecoglou will have performed an epic turnaround.

Surgery to keep Rashford out until October

Simon Peach

Marcus Rashford will have an operation to resolve his longstanding shoulder injury in the coming days and is set to miss the opening months of the season.

The Manchester United forward played with the issue for much of last season and it is understood he wanted surgery straight after featuring for England at Euro 2020. But Ole Gunnar Solskjær said no firm decision had been made, the manager saying on Wednesday that it needed to be decided "what's best for him and best for the club".

United confirmed yesterday that Rashford would have surgery, which is expected to keep him out until October. United said in a statement: "Following consultation between Marcus, the manager, club medical staff and specialists, Marcus will undergo surgery imminently to resolve his shoulder injury. He will now focus on his rehabilitation in order to return as soon as possible."

United start their Premier League season at home to Leeds on 14 August and England have five World Cup qualifiers during the period Rashford could miss. **PA Media**

Football In brief

Survey

Over 90% of female fans face sexist abuse online

More than 90% of female fans have witnessed sexist abuse being directed at other women online, according to a survey. Data gathered by Her Game Too, a campaign group seeking to make football a more respectful environment for women and girls, exposes the level of misogyny which still exist. The group surveyed 371 female football fans, with 91.9% saying they had seen online abuse being directed at other women, while 63.1% said they had been abused online themselves. The survey also found that 58.4% had experienced sexist abuse in person. Niall Couper, from the Fair Game group, which partners with Her Game Too for more sustainable governance of football, said: "These statistics are horrific. It needs to be addressed and that's why we're calling for new robust equality standards." **PA Media**

Liverpool

Alexander-Arnold extends Anfield deal

Trent Alexander-Arnold has signed a contract extension until 2025. "It's the only club I've ever really known, so to be extending for a longer amount of time is amazing," said the 22-year-old, who came through Liverpool's academy and has been a crucial part of their success under Jürgen Klopp, winning the Champions League and Premier League in successive seasons. **PA Media**

Leicester

Albrighton agrees to stay at club until 2024

Marc Albrighton has signed a contract extension with Leicester until 2024. The 31-year-old winger joined the club from Aston Villa and was part of the team that won the title in 2016. **PA Media**

Brighton rock
Arsenal sign White in £50m five-year deal

Nick Ames and David Hytner

Arsenal have completed the signing of Ben White from Brighton in a £50m deal that makes him their third-most expensive arrival of all time, and will now turn their attention to persuading two senior players to stay at the Emirates.

White had been one of Mikel Arteta's top summer targets and his ability to pass out from defence, as well as step into midfield, was seen as a key component in speeding up Arsenal's game in possession. Although the 23-year-old centre-back effectively replaces David Luiz, he is more than a decade younger and appears yet to reach his ceiling. He will take the No 4 shirt and has signed a five-year contract.

The club have not lost hope that Héctor Bellerín and Granit Xhaka, both of whom are keen to move, will join White in this season's squad and are preparing to offer them new contracts. Bellerín's representatives met Edu, the technical director, this week and were informed Arsenal would like him to extend his deal, which ends in 2023. Internazionale are interested in Bellerín and have proposed a one-year loan with an option to buy next summer; however, Arsenal will entertain only a permanent move or a loan with an obligation to purchase.

A similar situation applies to Xhaka, the subject of a bid from Roma. Arsenal have rejected the offer and will ask the midfielder to agree a contract extension. Xhaka's deal also expires in 2023 and the club are keen to protect themselves, while ensuring two experienced players are retained for at least another year.

White was an impressive performer for Brighton throughout last season, his first in the Premier League, having bided his time upon graduating from their academy. He caught the eye during an outstanding campaign with Leeds in 2019-20, when he played every match in their promotion from the Championship.

"Ben is an intelligent defender who is very comfortable with the ball at his feet and his style fits perfectly with us," Arteta said. "And he is still young, so his age and profile fits with what we are building here."

White won his first England caps in the pre-Euro 2020 friendlies against Austria and Romania. He was selected for Gareth Southgate's final squad and, although he did not feature in any of England's campaign, he is understood to have impressed his teammates in training.

Racing

Battaash fades to final bow as Suesa makes her mark

Greg Wood
Goodwood

Suesa stamped herself as a new force in the sprinting division here yesterday with a three-length defeat of Dragon Symbol in the Group Two King George Stakes but, as François Rohaut's filly moved centre stage, one of the fastest horses of recent years may have taken his final bow. Battaash, the winner of the race for the past four years, faded into seventh after travelling strongly to the furlong pole, and could now retire to his late owner Sheikh Hamdan al-Maktoum's Shadwell Stud near Newmarket.

A final decision is unlikely for a day or two and will be taken by Sheikha Hissa Hamdan al-Maktoum, Sheikh Hamdan's daughter, who has taken charge of his racing interests following his death in March. If Battaash has run his final race, however, the memory of the astonishing speed which secured four Group One wins and six more in Group Twos will endure.

In addition to several explosive performances down Goodwood's straight five furlongs, Battaash is also the first horse since Lochsong, in 1994, to achieve the rare distinction of winning all three European Group Ones at five furlongs: the Nunthorpe at York, the King's Stand Stakes at Royal Ascot and the Prix de l'Abbaye at Longchamp.

Charlie Hills's gelding had an operation on a joint fracture during the winter and finished fourth in last month's King's Stand before yesterday's defeat, his first in five starts over the minimum trip at Goodwood. When Jim Crowley asked for an effort, the turn of foot which carried Battaash to so many big-race wins was missing.

"I think Battaash has done well to get back to the races," Angus Gold, Shadwell's racing manager, said. "He had an injury last year and it took him a long time to come right. He's had issues all his life and I think it's remarkable that he's back with us at all. Jim said that he felt good, the enthusiasm was there. He didn't like the ground but he is a seven-year-old who has had a lot of problems.

"After all the problems he's had and him being seven, why would we go on now? He had such a brilliant year last year. He won three out of three last year and was at the top of the game. Ascot I thought was a good run given how long he had been back in the yard. Today was not so good. I've got to speak to Sheikha Hissa and until I speak to her, I don't know. Obviously Charlie and the team would like to keep him in the yard, but there comes a time for all of us."

▲ *Battaash after the King George Stakes at Goodwood in 2018*

While Battaash was dropping away, Suesa burst clear to beat Dragon Symbol, a decisive reversal of their form at Royal Ascot last month where Dragon Symbol was first across the line in the Commonwealth Cup with Suesa, the 9-4 favourite, well beaten in ninth.

"The ground was bad that day," William Buick, Suesa's rider in both races, said. "And it was over six furlongs, and she had no cover. I learned a lot about her that day. She's full of speed.

"She came back to five furlongs today and travelled so smoothly. She was hard on the bridle the whole way and she has that good kick at the finish."

Battaash's defeat in the King George followed two valuable winners for the Shadwell operation's blue and white colours, as Baaeed continued his rapid progress through the mile division in the Thoroughbred Stakes before Maydanny found a clear run against the rail to give Mark Johnston his sixth success in the Golden Mile.

Baaeed, a son of Sea The Stars, did not see a racecourse until early June but could now be aimed at Group One company on his next start, having eased six lengths clear of El Drama, the Dee Stakes winner in May, on a tight rein.

"Baaeed is in three races, the [Group One] Jacques Le Marois, the [Group Two] Celebration Mile back here and the [Group One] Moulin," William Haggas, Baaeed's trainer, said. "I would like to run in two of them. He has had four races and has been running in decent company against three-year-olds. It's time he took on the better ones in the bigger races."

Commanche Falls can land Stewards' Cup

Greg Wood
Guide to TV races

The last dozen runnings of today's Unibet Stewards' Cup at Glorious Goodwood suggest that winners can come from anywhere, and the fact that Major Jumbo and Meraas, two of the most likely pace-setters, are drawn on opposite sides removes another potential angle to whittle the field down to a manageable shortlist.

Hurricane Ivor and Fresh will be popular after big runs at Ascot last time out while Oisin Murphy's army of fans will home in on Bielsa. The champion jockey's record when riding a handicapper for the first time this year is 31 wins from 144 bets and a 12pc profit at level stakes.

At the likely odds, though, Michael Dods's thriving sprinter **Commanche Falls (3.40)** makes most appeal at around 12-1. He was back to winning form at Hamilton two weeks ago, the runner-up there was touched off in a valuable sprint at York last weekend, and Connor Beasley should be able to settle his strong-travelling partner behind the pace on the stands' side before delivering a challenge inside the final furlong.

Goodwood 1.20 This season **Farasi Lane** has improved steadily and put up his best performance yet in a comfortable win at Sandown last time. He achieved as much there as either of the market leaders, Quintillus and Spirit Of Bermuda, in their latest starts but is around twice the price in the early odds at 10-1.

Goodwood 1.55 Bouncing back from a sub-par run after a break **Power Over Me** won convincingly at Epsom this month, only to lose the race to an objection by the clerk of the scales when Kieran Shoemark weighed in 2lb light. He is off the same mark here, giving his excellent rider a swift chance to make amends.

Newmarket 2.10 A dozen runners for this six-furlong nursery and the outsider of the field at 14-1 make this a race to treat with caution. **Tadita Twitch** seemed to improve for being allowed to dictate when she dropped back to this trip last time, so could be worth a small interest at around 12-1 with Hollie Doyle taking over in the saddle.

Goodwood 2.30 Over this course and distance in May **Prince Alex** was a close second behind Nuits St Georges in a strong time and is 6lb better off now. He found trouble in running at Newmarket next time and with Nuits St Georges heading the market at around 5-1, Prince Alex looks big at around 8-1 to make a winning debut for Michael Bell.

Newmarket 2.45 When making a winning handicap debut over this track and trip last month **Sayyida** responded well and has more scope for further progress.

Goodwood 3.05 A 3lb penalty for a gutsy win in the Hardwicke Stakes at Royal Ascot is unlikely to be enough to stop **Wonderful Tonight** extending her winning streak to four.

Greg Wood's tips

Newmarket 1.00 Calm Skies **1.35** Adaay To Remember **2.10** Tadita Twitch **2.45** Sayyida **3.20** Strawberry Rock **3.55** Great News **4.30** Ranchero **Goodwood 1.20** Farasi Lane **1.55** Power Over Me **2.30** Prince Alex (nb) **3.05** Wonderful Tonight **3.40** Commanche Falls (nap) **4.10** Flying Secret **4.45** Ebury **Doncaster 1.45** Mount Rainier **2.20** High Security **2.55** Poet Of Life **3.30** Finest Sound **4.02** Dream Composer **4.37** Ubahha **Lingfield 5.00** Out Of Sight **5.35** Super Proud **6.05** Firenze Rosa **6.35** Way To Win **7.05** Hajjam **7.35** Makinitup **8.05** Moxy Mares **Hamilton 5.45** Poppy Petal **6.20** Jordan Electrics **6.50** Emaraaty Ana **7.20** Home Before Dusk **7.50** Mi Capricho **8.20** Battle Angel **8.50** Temper Trap

Chess

Carlsen eases into semis but Esipenko stars

Leonard Barden

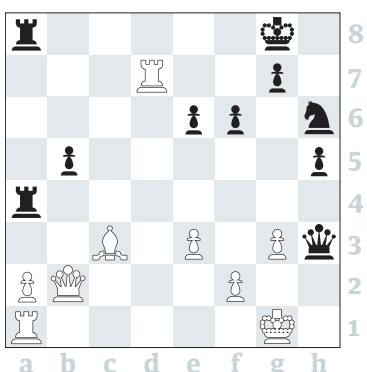
Magnus Carlsen has never won the $1.9m World Cup and his early exit at his last attempt in 2017 still rankles. Despite a few early hiccups, it was soon clear that the 2021 version of the 206-player knockout was made for the No 1 as he sailed through the majority of his matches comfortably while many of his seeded rivals fell by the wayside.

In today's semi-finals Carlsen, who beat Étienne Bacrot (France) 2-0, meets Jan-Krysztof Duda (Poland), who won 1.5-0.5 against Vidit Gujrathi (India). Vladimir Fedoseev (Russia) defeated Amin Tabatabaei (Iran) 1.5-0.5 and and will meet his compatriot Sergey Karjakin, who beat Sam Shankland (US) 4-2 after the American had led 1-0 and 2-1.

Carlsen's round-of-16 match against Andrey Esipenko was an epic. The 19-year-old from Novocherkassk in the Rostov region already made his mark at Wijk aan Zee in January when he took third prize in an elite field, finished ahead of the world champion and defeated him in their individual game. At Sochi their meeting became a more searching test as Esipenko drew both classical slow games and both rapids, fought back to win on demand in impressive style in the second blitz game, and was eliminated only in the second pair of faster blitz games.

Afterwards Carlsen tweeted: "World Cup is as unforgiving as it is exciting! Great match against a most worthy opponent." Esipenko is still rated only 27th in the world, 14 places beneath France's Alireza Firouzja, who is a year younger but has had more opportunities at top level. In style Esipenko is a classical player while Firouzja relies on his tactical skills, like the contrast between Boris Spassky and Mikhail Tal half a century ago or between Vlad Kramnik and Vasyl Ivanchuk in the early 2000s.

3774 Niaz Murshed v Nigel Short, Dhaka v London, inter-cities teams 2012. White to move. White played 1 Bxf6, expecting a resignation. Was he right?



3774 Yes, but it was his own resignation that occurred after 1 Bxf6 gxf6. Only then did White realise that his planned 2 Qxf6 would run into 2...Qh2+! when 3 Kxh2 Ng4+ and 4...Nxf6 leaves Black a piece ahead, while 3 Kf1 Qh1+ 4 Ke2 Rxa2+ 5 Rxa2 Rxa2+ leads to 6 Kd3? Qd1+ and Qxd7 or to 6 Rd2 Rxd2+ 7 Kxd2 Qd5+ both winning easily for Black.

Sport

Alice Dearing

'I thought if I can survive this, I can survive anything'

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ILLUSTRATION: DAVID LYTTLETON

Junk-food cricket

Hula Hoops are only one reason why the Hundred is so difficult to digest

Matthew Engel

When I arrived in Cardiff to report on the new cricket competition, there was a problem with my media accreditation. Always me. A steward asked me to wait, adding that there were 200 people in the press box. "Blimey," I said, "it really is popular."

"No," he replied. "I mean there are two people from The Hundred up there. One of them will sort things out."

There may well have been 200 Hundred people on the spot given the money – £318m has been mentioned – hurled around by the once frugal England and Wales Cricket Board. But things were indeed sorted and I could watch the women's game between Hula Hoops and Pom-Bear, followed by the equivalent male contest.

The teams do have other, official names, the home side being called Welsh Fire, led by Jonny Bairstow, whose forebears might have indeed marched fierily with Glendower had they not been Yorkies. In fact, they fielded not a single Welshman. Hula Hoops are crisps which comprise mainly thin air instead of a crunchy centre, thus making them a fine motif for this event.

At least the products advertised on the shirts are based on reality, spreading some good cheer as well as obesity and unrecyclable waste. The team names are just random word connections confected by the ECB marketing department to link their random players. But I enjoyed finding out what a Pom-Bear is and was sorry the budget did not stretch to bribing God to retime the Mancunian rain and save Wednesday's encounter between the McCoys and the Popchips. I did catch Thursday's game at Lord's when Tyrrells entertained Skips: trust MCC to grab the upmarket brand.

And 10 days into the birth of this new era it is possible to divine some trends. The Hula Hoops crowd was also mainly thin air but that was because the Welsh government still thinks there is a virus going round and restricted capacity to 3,000. But the look of the crowd fitted with observations at better-attended fixtures. The Hundred has not tapped into some new motherlode of fans: the crowds look like the same eclectic mix of people who had been attending the county-based Twenty20 in great numbers since 2003. Perhaps a few more mothers and kids, enticed by the women's matches and cheap or free tickets. But not many. And it takes place in seven different urban centres instead of 17-plus; only cricket thinks you expand by retrenching.

The game is essentially Twenty20, pared down from 120 balls to 100 as if by a sharp shower, and made more complex. This involves the return of the five-ball over, after 132 years, hailed by the ECB as an idea of staggering genius. It makes little difference to the paying spectators except to confuse them: few people watch mini-cricket that closely barring a tight finish; and the Cardiff scoreboards were too full of eye-catching crap to mention the score that often.

Of the gimmicks, nothing original was good and nothing good was original. The Olympics have been scheduling men's and women's events together since 1900. The sub-baseball fripperies involved a total misunderstanding of how baseball works: the sideshows are always at one with the play. And why employ dancing girls if you're targeting mums and kids?

One of the problems is that the ECB has been so arrogantly opaque at explaining its objective. It has pumped out propaganda: endless press releases trumpeting the Hundred. The BBC amplifies this with its inane and craven part-time coverage.

In this vacuum two explanations circulate. One is money, but they are spaffing that. The other is power. Andy Nash, a former board member who went rogue, is certain of that. It fits with the long-term ECB objective of accreting power. "What they are doing is leading to the strangulation of county cricket including Twenty20, and with it English cricket," he says. "These teams have no roots in their communities and will develop no new players. They bet the farm on this, relying on market research. If market research worked, nine out of 10 new products wouldn't fail."

It sprawls across the summer like a wolfhound hogging a small sofa

And this one was never test-marketed. It sprawls across the short high summer like a wolfhound hogging a small sofa. The cricket season was already a shambles with three different forms of the game. Now there are four.

With internal opposition routed, one senses groupthink has taken over Lord's, of the kind that gave the world New Coke, the Austin Allegro and the Iraq war. At the ECB, one can add the infatuation with the no-goodnik tycoon Allen Stanford (serving 110 years) and the decision to abandon mainstream TV 16 years ago, which it is trying frantically to reverse using the BBC to shill the Hundred.

The money theory rests on it having trademarked the name, thinking the cricketing world will forsake Twenty20 and pay for this. An early response came from one influential Indian, the former captain Sunil Gavaskar, who pronounced the format "insipid".

Meanwhile, three troubled entities are locked together in a dance of death: the ECB, the rotting hulk of the degraded BBC sports department and the junk-food industry, running out of road with TV advertising and joining forces with cricket – just as the game depended on the John Player League and the Benson & Hedges Cup in the dying days of tobacco advertising. C'mon, you Popchips.