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## Headlines friday 23 june 2023

- [Brexit Britons who want to rejoin EU at highest since 2016, survey finds](#)
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- [Exclusive London mayor's office 'banned' from flying EU flag on referendum anniversary](#)



A record number of respondents also think other countries will not follow the UK's example and leave the EU. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/ZUMA Press Wire/Shutterstock

## Brexit

# Britons who want to rejoin EU at highest levels since 2016, survey finds

Data showed 58% would vote to re-enter bloc, while respondents said they trusted the European Commission more than the UK government

[Jon Henley](#) and [Michael Goodier](#)

Fri 23 Jun 2023 04.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 14.27 EDT

Seven years after the [Brexit](#) referendum, the proportion of Britons who want to rejoin the EU has climbed to its highest levels since 2016, according to a new survey.

Both Britons and Europeans are also a lot less likely to think other countries would follow the Brexit example, and Britons are more optimistic about the

bloc's future – to the extent of trusting the European Commission more than their own government.

Data from YouGov's latest Brexit tracker survey found that, excluding those who said they would not vote or did not know, 58.2% of people in Britain would now vote to rejoin.

The percentage is only fractionally down on the 60% recorded in February this year – the highest figure since comparable data began in February 2012 – and has risen more or less consistently since a post-referendum low of 47% in early 2021.

Across most of the EU member states surveyed, support for continued membership has now dropped back to levels it enjoyed before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which sparked a strong surge in pro-European sentiment, the YouGov figures showed.

Asked whether they would vote to remain in the EU or leave in a Brexit-style referendum, 62% of respondents in France and 63% in Italy, which are traditionally among the least enthusiastic EU member states, said they would vote to stay.

Elsewhere in the EU, 87% of respondents in Spain said last month they would choose to remain, along with 79% in Denmark, 70% in Sweden and 69% in Germany.

### [How Britons would vote if there was a fresh EU referendum](#)

A record proportion of respondents in Britain also think other countries are now unlikely to follow its example and leave the EU in the next decade – 42% said it was unlikely, up from 26% three years ago, while 40% said it was likely, down from 58%.

EU member states showed a similar trend, with 45% of respondents in France saying they thought another EU-exit was likely, compared to 55% in February 2020. In Germany the figures were 36% (down from 42%) and in Denmark 29% (41%).

While sentiment towards EU membership has shifted significantly in Britain since the referendum, a slim majority of respondents (51%) say they still think it is unlikely Britain will rejoin the EU at some future point in the future.

Again, however, that figure has been falling more or less consistently – it stood at 62% two years ago – and 29% of respondents in Britain told YouGov in April they think it is likely the country will rejoin – up from 21% in early 2021.

In the EU, people in Italy (61%) and France (54%) were less confident that Britain would rejoin, with Denmark (43%) and Sweden (49%) more positive. In all countries, a higher proportion said they thought Britain's return was likely than did in 2021.

British confidence in the future of the EU has also climbed markedly since just after the referendum. For the first time on record, more British respondents (41%) said they were optimistic about the bloc's prospects than were pessimistic (36%).

### [British people's view on the future of the EU](#)

There was less optimism, however, about Brexit's impact on Britain's economy. About 58% of UK respondents said in April that they thought the country's exit from the EU would have a negative impact – up sharply from 50% two years ago.

Respondents outside the UK were generally less pessimistic about the country's prospects than those inside, and more likely to say that leaving the bloc would have no significant impact either way on Britain's economic performance.

Perhaps most startlingly, the data showed respondents in Britain are now also more likely – albeit by a narrow margin – to say they trust the European Commission (25%) more than they trust their own government (24%).

Trust in the British government has crashed from a high of 40% in April 2021 – just after the UK's successful early Covid vaccine rollout, and as

lockdown restrictions were being eased – while trust in the commission has crept up since 2016.

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# Dissatisfaction with Rishi Sunak's government at near record levels, poll suggests – as it happened

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City Hall will instead use blue and yellow lights to express solidarity with the capital's residents who are from the EU. Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

[London](#)

## London mayor's office 'banned' from flying EU flag on referendum anniversary

Exclusive: A change in planning rules has stopped the EU flag from being raised, say City Hall sources

[Daniel Boffey](#) *Chief reporter*

Thu 22 Jun 2023 19.01 EDT Last modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 04.56 EDT

Ministers have been accused of criminalising the flying of the [European Union](#) flag on government buildings in England after London's City Hall was told it could be prosecuted for displaying it on the anniversary of the Brexit referendum.

Seven years after the referendum on leaving the EU, the Greater [London](#) authority (GLA) had planned to fly the flag on Friday but officials were advised that under the latest regulations they would need to secure permission from the local authority.

Without so-called advertising consent from Newham council, City Hall, which is the headquarters of the GLA and is where [Sadiq Khan](#), the capital's mayor, is based, would have been liable to criminal prosecution under the amended town and country planning (control of advertisements) regulations.

There is no such consent required for flying the flag of any country in England.

Also exempt are the flags representing the Commonwealth, the United Nations, sports clubs, the NHS, specified award schemes such as eco-schools and the rainbow flag of six horizontal equal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet.

Until 2021 the EU flag had also been among those that did not require permission but the law applying to England was changed as a response to the UK's departure from the bloc on 31 January 2020.

Encouragement was instead issued by ministers at the time to fly the union flag of the UK throughout the year on national government and local authority buildings.

Khan will instead use lights to display the EU flag's blue and yellow colours on the building to mark the anniversary of the Brexit vote.

A City Hall source said: "The mayor is proud to fly flags from City Hall – from the Union flag to the Ukraine flag in recent times. Flying a flag is a way of showing solidarity, expressing our values, and showing pride in the identities we share.

"With over a million people calling London their home from other European countries it's extraordinary that the government has effectively banned the European flag being flown without going through a long and bureaucratic planning process.

“Europeans contribute hugely to our social and economic life, and all we wanted to do was show our gratitude with a small gesture for one day of the year.”

On a 69.7% turnout, 59.9% of Londoners who voted on 23 June 2016 wanted to remain in the EU, compared with 40.1% who voted to leave.

Seven of the 10 areas with the highest share of the vote for remain were in London, including Hackney, Lambeth and Haringey, where more than 75% of votes were to stay in the bloc.

In an open letter to Londoners from one of the 27 EU member states to mark the anniversary of the referendum, Khan writes: “Seven years ago today our country voted to leave the European Union. It was a heartbreaking day for me, and I know it was for many of you too.

“There is no doubt that in the years since, Brexit has caused huge damage to our city and created a great deal of uncertainty for many of you. But you stayed with us.

“Despite the appalling uncertainty over settled status, despite being used as bargaining chips in the negotiations and despite the antimigrant rhetoric coming from this government, you kept the faith and continued to make London your home.”

Khan wrote that he would also back the call from Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, for EU citizens who live and pay tax in the UK to have the right to vote in general elections. The prospect could enfranchise about [5 million EU citizens over the age of 18](#) living in the UK with settled status.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities declined to comment.

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# Isabelle Huppert: ‘When you’re an actor, you keep secrets’

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Eurostar trains in St Pancras railway station, London. Photograph: John Michaels/Alamy

[Eurostar](#)

## Adieu Mickey Mouse: Eurostar's shrinking ambitions seven years on

## from the Brexit vote

When the Channel Tunnel first opened there were visions of seamless pan-European travel from the UK. Now the Disneyland Paris route has been axed and the Amsterdam route delayed, what went wrong?



[Gwyn Topham](#) *Transport correspondent*

[@GwynTopham](#)

Fri 23 Jun 2023 04.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 10.36 EDT

Adieu Mickey Mouse. Tot ziens Amsterdam. Don't even mention Frankfurt – or the night train to Swansea. The early ambitions of [Eurostar](#) have long crumbled like croissants – and now even the remaining places where cross-Channel trains managed to make it are slipping off its map.

The [last direct train for Disneyland Paris from Britain has departed](#), after the London St Pancras to Marne-la-Vallée service ended this month. The Amsterdam route, so [long awaited and wildly oversubscribed](#), is set to be suspended as station renovations in the Dutch capital clash with border requirements exacerbated by Brexit. The train straight to the Mediterranean, to Marseille via Avignon and Lyon, was lost during Covid and will not return.

## [Eurostar network interactive map](#)

Now, Eurostar trains visit just six of the 13 stations served in summer 2019, with the limited seats from Amsterdam and Rotterdam likely to disappear next year unless the train operator can find a late solution. Eurostar also does not know if the direct ski train to Bourg St Maurice, revived only on a charter basis for winter sports firms post-Covid, will run again.

The firm, majority owned by French state operator SNCF, is still talking about expansion – but not any more on the British side, or to boost direct trains from London. From now on, growth for Eurostar simply means possible connections and onward routes in Belgium and Germany after the merger with Franco-Belgian operator Thalys.

The two clear agents of doom for Eurostar were Covid and Brexit – the pandemic almost killing the service entirely in 2020 when international travel was all but banned; and Britain's exit from the EU making stations unviable due to the [lack of capacity for increased border requirements](#).

Thanks to the bureaucracy of Brexit, London St Pancras's capacity has been cut by a third. Then there is [Kent, where Eurostar stops at Ashford and Ebbsfleet have been scrapped for the foreseeable future](#), leaving behind empty stations and multi-storey car parks.

Yet even as the seventh anniversary of the Brexit vote arrives with a whimper, British ambivalence over Eurostar pre-dates both that and the pandemic, in a long history of dreams ground down into a lesser reality.

## **The early vision**





Francois Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher shake hands at the signing of the Channel Tunnel agreement in Canterbury Cathedral on 12 February 1986. Photograph: David Levenson/Getty Images

The construction of the Channel Tunnel, a project once envisaged by Napoleon Bonaparte, was embraced more enthusiastically on the continental side. While Margaret Thatcher pushed for a road link, the French clamoured to be on a high-speed rail route – one that embarrassed the British when the first trains had to apply the brakes and chug up to Waterloo on conventional tracks in 1994.

Nonetheless, the government initially went so far as to invest in a fleet of sleeper trains, with routes far beyond London – Glasgow, Manchester and even Swansea were to have night services to Paris. But the start of cross-Channel services came up against upheaval in the UK rail industry.



English tunneller Graham Fagg (left) meeting Frenchman Phillippe Cozette as the two sides of the Channel Tunnel met in 1990. Photograph: QA Photos/PA

Labour peer Tony Berkeley, then a civil engineer at Eurotunnel (the Channel Tunnel's then operator), says: "It was at a time when privatisation meant no one really knew who was in charge of running the planned north-of-London Eurostars or the sleeper services."

Mark Smith, the European rail travel expert – whose alias [The Man in Seat 61](#) derives from the best Eurostar seat – says he enjoyed taking the sleepers "from Montreal to Halifax", after Canadian rail eventually bought the rolling stock that never got used on the Channel.

### **Private finance vs state assets**

Britain did eventually catch up with France, with the high-speed line to a magnificently rebuilt St Pancras opening in 2007 – but at a cost. Recouping the investment saw the government sell the high-speed track, HS1, to a consortium of pension funds on a long-term concession. That took, according to Berkeley, a guarantee of public money from Eurostar, including a premium on track access charges. "The costs of going through the tunnel and HS1 are incredibly high," he says. "It's a complete shambles – and the

opposite of what's going on in [Europe](#) with lowering charges to encourage more people back on trains.”



A Eurostar train sits in newly restored St Pancras railway station, October 2007. Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

Competition on the route never started, and growth projections soon proved optimistic: a target of 10 million passengers a year was reached in 2013, 15 years late. With an election looming the Conservative government jumped at the chance to sell its 40% stake to Canadian pension funds for £757m in 2014, leaving the French SNCF in control. That sale was labelled [“value for money for the taxpayer”](#) by the government spending watchdog.

### **The toll of Covid ...**

Treasury bean-counters may have considered it an even more provident sale once the pandemic hit, and Eurostar services were reduced to one, largely empty, train a day each way. [Despite pleas for support](#) and its net zero commitments, the UK government declared itself without any obligation to a French-owned service, while bailing out domestic train services and loaning billions to airlines.



A passenger arrives at the Eurostar departure terminal at St Pancras Station in central London, Britain, 5 May 2020, amid the coronavirus pandemic. Photograph: Will Oliver/EPA

“Without additional funding from government, there is a real risk to the survival of Eurostar ... the current situation is very serious,” Eurostar warned in 2021, amid a 95% collapse in passenger numbers.

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With mounting debt, Eurostar survived but retrenched to core routes. Now, though, demand for travel, as airline fares testify, is intense: but Eurostar has not been able to restore its pre-2020 schedules for reasons that Covid initially masked.

### **... and Brexit**



Tourists at passport control at Gare du Nord train station Paris, France, prior to boarding Eurostar train. Photograph: Paul Quayle/Alamy

Instead of putting on more trains to meet demand, Eurostar has run up against new border constraints, now stamping passports in separate queues – a process so time-consuming that Eurostar can no longer board everyone on time, and deliberately departs with empty seats. About 350 out of 900 seats are normally left unsold on the first services between London, Paris and Brussels, chief executive Gwendoline [Cazenave admitted in January](#). From Amsterdam, a maximum of 250 of 900 could now be filled because of the lack of space at the station for border controls.

“It’s been Brexit, pure and simple,” is how Smith analyses the service’s current woes. “The timetable is still suppressed, and they are not selling every seat because they don’t want to create massive queues at St Pancras.

“They are no longer going for growth and low fares. They are going for the maximum yield on the services they can run and the seats they can sell.”

With HS1 access costs “two or three times higher than the high-speed line in France”, plus border security costs, Smith says, “we’re now in a situation where it costs you 110 quid to get from London to Paris, and then 29 euros for the seven-hour journey from Paris to Milan with two operators competing.”

### **The future**

Despite the current obstacles, Eurostar has been pushing a positive message. Its current focus is completing the integration with Franco-Belgian operator Thalys, allowing it to scale up and possibly offer more connecting journeys to German destinations from London. But the benefits, bar perhaps lower overheads translating into lower fares, appear slight for British travellers.



Passengers queue to board a Thalys train bound for Amsterdam-Central at Gare Du Midi station on 23 May 2023 in Brussels, Belgium. Photograph: Omar Havana/Getty Images

For rail historian Christian Wolmar it has been a perennial frustration. Rather than being a victim of Brexit, it could have helped pre-empt it, had there been local services from Calais to Canterbury, he suggests. “Over 25

years of this, and now we have only trains to Brussels and Paris. It's never been a linkage with Europe in the way that it could have – it could have been a celebration.”

Early safety rules demanding two train sets, or 18 carriages per service, have been a constraint, he says, but there has been a “lack of effort in tackling or challenging these issues” and an “unimaginative approach to what is a major asset and is greatly underused”.

“It's a joke that they are talking about expanding – all they do is ditch destinations,” Wolmar says. “I can't understand that their strategy is to grow without exploiting the tunnel to the full. Or do they now consider the UK a minor branch line off the mainland?”

Maybe so. The UK, after all, [decided to stop the line at St Pancras](#) without the short link to the forthcoming HS2 from nearby Euston station, killing the dream of fast trains from Manchester to Paris for a second time, in 2014.

From the group's head office in Belgium, Europe's booming high-speed rail network must look a better path to success than the obstacle-strewn track to perfidious Albion. Financial results on the pruned Eurostar are expected to show a return to profit. And Cazenave says that, with Thalys, it can serve 30 million passengers a year by 2030. Perhaps, this time, the numbers will come.

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Noh Hyun-soo in Seoul, South Korea, with a replica of the eaten artwork.  
Photograph: Tina Hsu/The Guardian

[Experience](#)[Art and design](#)

## Experience: I ate a \$120,000 banana



There was no alarm protecting the artwork – a banana taped to the wall – and nobody tried to stop me when I peeled it

*Noh Hyun-soo*

Fri 23 Jun 2023 05.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 09.46 EDT

I'd been to Seoul's Leeum Museum of Art years ago, but last April was my first visit to see the artwork *Comedian* by [Maurizio Cattelan](#), which is a banana duct-taped to a wall. It's a work of conceptual art and comes with a certificate of authenticity giving precise diagrams and instructions for its correct display. It was famously sold for \$120,000 at Art Basel Miami in 2019. The banana is changed every few days.

Entry to the gallery was free. There were a lot of visitors, and about 10 people were standing around *Comedian*. The atmosphere inside the museum was calm. Interestingly, when I got close to another artwork to see it more clearly an alarm sounded and the guards stopped me. But when I approached *Comedian*, there was no alarm. So there was nothing stopping me when [I pulled off the tape to remove the banana](#) from the wall and peeled it.

I ate the banana at 12.30pm on Thursday 27 April. I think they exhibited it so that someone would eventually eat it. I wasn't feeling much at the time, but I remember the taste. One of my tutors later asked if the banana was delicious, and I told him it was fresh, fresher than I thought it would be. I ate it as I would normally eat a banana. Nobody tried to stop me.

After I finished, I placed the banana skin under the tape on the wall. Then, a guard said, "excuse me", but didn't try to restrain me in any way. I talked to the guards. They looked embarrassed.

'Hungry' South Korean student eats banana from \$120,000 artwork – video

I've been called an art student, but I'm actually studying religious studies and aesthetics at Seoul National University. I suppose aesthetics is the philosophical study of art, exploring what beauty and art is. Since I was young, I've always liked the Taoist philosopher Laozi's book the [Tao Te Ching](#), which was written about 400BC and can perhaps be translated as

“the way of integrity”. I became more interested in religious and aesthetic experiences as a result – it’s a beautiful book about freedom and nature.

People who know me don’t think it’s a big deal that I ate the banana. I’ve done some strange things, so they’re pretty much immune to anything I do now. For instance, in 2015, I took a leave of absence from university and lived like a homeless person for a month in Seoul railway station. Later that year, I lived in the Mudeungsan, a mountain range in Hwasun County for about two months. I learned about oriental astrology there.

Then for three years from 2017, I snuck into the centres of various cults and learned about the mechanics of how people are enticed to join. I visited different prayer houses and meditation groups. I didn’t believe in them, of course. But I’m interested in religion, even though I don’t have one myself.

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I’d like to be able to tidily explain why I broke those boundaries and did those things, but there is no special reason. They all looked interesting and dragged me in. It’s the same impulse for discovery that drove me to eat the banana.

I'm graduating from university this year. After my studies, I want to create my own art. I'm very interested in artificial intelligence paintings, and it would be fun to express the religious aspects of the east through AI. I believe AI paintings will gradually encroach on all our lives. I am curious and fearful about what the future holds, though artworks driven by philosophical insights inspire me.

It was reported in the press that my banana eating was an act of rebellion or that I was hungry. I think it's up to the public to decide on that. Some people see my banana eating as simply vandalism. Others say it was done for publicity – and I agree. The act of damaging someone else's artwork has made me famous. I was an ordinary person, and now thanks to the “comedy” of eating a banana, I'm in the Guardian.

I'm not familiar with Cattelan's work, other than the banana. I think Comedian can be considered a work of art, apart from the ridiculous price. But there will be different opinions. I've never met him, so I don't really know what he thought of my eating the banana, but I read an article in which his response was “no problem at all”.

As told to Anna Derrig

Do you have an experience to share? Email [experience@theguardian.com](mailto:experience@theguardian.com)

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Vets and virgins ... Weyes Blood, Stefflon Don, Fatboy Slim, Thundercat, Jake Shears and Becky Hill. Composite: Matt Cardy/Getty Images; Neelam Khan Vela; Jessica Van Der Weert; Jessie Lirola; Damon Baker; Daisy Denham

[Glastonbury 2023](#)

## ‘People complained that I had my ass out’: all-star Glastonbury veterans advise festival first-timers

The likes of Fatboy Slim and Sophie Ellis-Bextor are used to the mud and madness, but Cat Stevens, Rick Astley and others are Glasto virgins. We pair them off to discuss what to expect

[Dave Simpson](#)

Fri 23 Jun 2023 00.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 07.02 EDT

### ‘Everyone danced backwards’: Fatboy Slim and Becky Hill

*Norman Cook, AKA [Fatboy Slim](#), first played Glastonbury with the Housemartins in 1986 and has appeared every year since 1996. The chart-topping Brit awards best dance act winner Becky Hill is making her solo debut at the festival.*

**Norman Cook:** When I played with the Housemartins on the Pyramid stage, we thought everyone would have beards and throw mud, but it wasn’t like that. It opened us to a whole different audience. I’ve played countless times since, sometimes five or six shows across the weekend.

**Becky Hill:** I went with Rudimental when I was 19, but I had tonsillitis and spent most of the festival sleeping, so I’m counting this year as my first. I was arguing with my manager about whether to do Eurovision – I didn’t want to get “nul points” and ruin my career – when the call came to do Glastonbury. I’ve spent the price of a house on the show, so I’m very excited. My music taste is cooler than some of the dance music I’ve done. I’m a huge drum’n’basshead; electro, dubstep, house. I want to show people how a female live singer can become a real dance music experience, with massive smileys on stage.

**Cook:** Glastonbury is very visual. On the more “rabbit hole” stages, I might be dressed as the Pink Panther or taking my clothes off. My favourite Glastonbury moments are things like being so high that I decided to play a vinyl record backwards. People did the [Twin Peaks “dwarf dance”](#) backwards! Or playing the Miniscule of Sound, the world’s smallest nightclub.

When Paul McCartney headlined, someone said: “Wouldn’t it be great if he played Live and Let Die next?” Macca was my neighbour and I’d seen his show, so I knew that song was next, but I said I’d text and ask him to play it. This went on all night with different songs. Not only did everyone around me believe that Paul McCartney had a phone on the piano and I was texting him what songs to play, but I was starting to believe it as well.



Becky Hill and Fatboy Slim. Composite: Michael Tullberg/Getty Images

**Hill:** My generation missed out on loads of stuff from the 80s and 90s, like the M25 illegal raves, free parties, trance music. So to see some of that coming back and be part of the plethora of music at Glastonbury is going to be really something. I really wanna see [the queer nightclub] NYC Downlow, where some of my drag performers are on.



**Cook:** Everybody has to wear a moustache on the way in! Communing over music is so powerful and Glastonbury epitomises that. Of all the festivals, it's the one where people aren't going to see individual acts, they're going to see Glastonbury. It's like the biggest cuddle you could ever have, then you end up at the Stone Circle watching the sunrise with everyone playing bongos.

**Hill:** I can't wait!

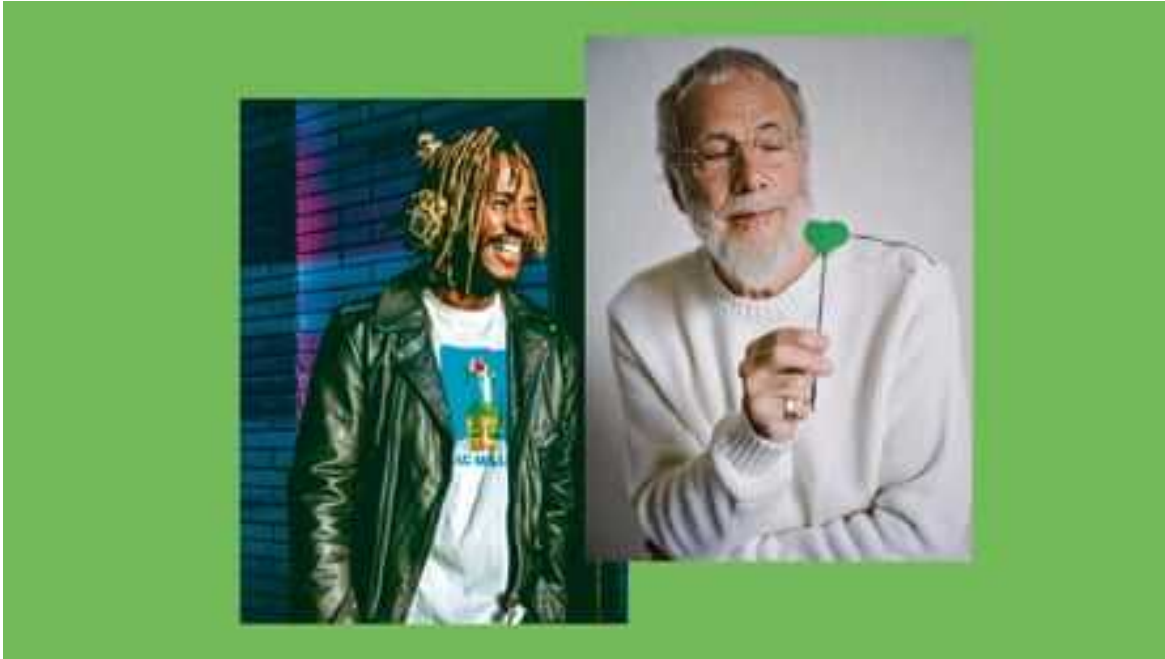
## **'It's like Game of Thrones': Thundercat and Yusuf/Cat Stevens**

*The genre-blurring US bass wizard [Thundercat](#) made his Glastonbury debut in 2017. Yusuf Islam, AKA Cat Stevens, is making his festival debut at 74, sharing the Pyramid stage's hallowed legends slot with Blondie, who will follow him.*

**Thundercat:** Remember that scene from Game of Thrones where the guy is crawling through the bodies? That's what Glastonbury is like. It's a sight to behold. It's massive. It's fantastic. You will feel that energy to the tips of your toes. Getting up there is like drinking espresso.

**Yusuf Islam:** There's gonna be, what, 70,000, 80,000 people in the Pyramid field? I was aware of Glastonbury in the 70s and 80s when it was ramping up, but also scared of it, because it's so huge. I was always disappointed that people sat down when my music came on, but I've learned that festivals are a different experience, a different audience.

I must tell you, man – I love your music. It's beautiful and incorporates all the things I love: funk and jazz and inventiveness.



Thundercat and Yusuf/Cat Stevens. Composite: Carlos G/The1point8; Aminah Yusuf

**Thundercat:** People know your music and who you are. It's timeless. For the TikTok generation, everything is new, so when you're able to pull from different eras, it's going to be magical.

**Islam:** I understand that looking at a grey-haired guy with a beard may not be that attractive, so I've gone deep into visuals. [I watched Dolly Parton do the legends slot](#) with the LED machine turned off and light in her hair, but I'm not Dolly! So I've done something special with animations. I've actually got a clip of me singing [Matthew and Son](#) in 1967.

It's a sight to behold. You will feel that energy to the tips of your toes.  
Getting up there is like drinking espresso

*Thundercat*

**Thundercat:** Talking about timelessness, in a digital world, nothing compares to the live performance. The pandemic reminded everyone that we're actually really fortunate to experience something that can stop you in your tracks.



**Islam:** When you started, was your ambition to make a living or change the world?

**Thundercat:** I always wanted to change the world, in a thoughtful way. As a kid growing up in the age of hip-hop and sampling, I realised that we're part of an engine. I'd hear Warren G and realise he was sampling a Michael McDonald song, so I'd find out who Michael McDonald was. I remember wanting to be part of that, the person that sows a seed and changes something.

**Islam:** When I look back at what I did, in the 60s you could do almost anything. People like the Beatles and the Yardbirds were breaking sound barriers. The Who were punk. In certain clubs, I'd turn round and there was Keith Moon dancing naked! Breaking the rules was the rules. I remember seeing an Orwellian TV show where the future was divided into people who watched television and people who made television, which is why we need Glastonbury! It's a sea of humanity, hearts talking to each other, and that's a beautiful thing.

## **‘The energy feels magically demonic’: Jake Shears and Weyes Blood**

*The former Scissor Sisters frontman Jake Shears returns as a solo artist. The acclaimed chamber-pop singer Natalie Mering, AKA Weyes Blood, has everything to look forward to.*

**Jake Shears:** My first Glasto with Scissor Sisters, in 2004, was one of the most insane days of my life. On the way, our drum tech, Nigel, gave us a pep talk: “This place can change your life and it's yours for the taking.” My life changed over the next 24 hours. We played the Pyramid stage on the Saturday afternoon and it was super fun, then we played the dance tent and the temperature really started climbing. The energy was so intense; it felt magically demonic. I'd met this guy Chris [Moukarbel] in London and invited him to Glasto – I fell in love with him that night, we got engaged in [the after-hours area] Lost Vagueness and were together for the next 11 years. After midnight that night, I couldn't move without people coming up

to me. The next week, the record went to No 1 and ended up becoming the bestselling album of the year in the UK.

Then, in 2010, we played the Pyramid stage before Muse, with people singing the songs back at us as far as I could see, and Kylie did a guest spot. It was just wonderful. I missed the tour bus leaving and slept under a bench, but I didn't care. Glastonbury is a magical place where you can have adventures.



Weyes Blood (*left*) and Jake Shears. Composite: Neelam Khan Vela; Damon Baker

**Natalie Mering:** I've heard nothing but mystical things, that it's a magical, kind of esoteric festival. I've just done Coachella, which might be comparable in terms of size, but doesn't necessarily have that laid-back, hippy desert spirit.

**Shears:** Natalie, what's it like playing festivals with the kind of music you make?

**Mering:** I've been really lucky. I've never had people talking over my music or being subdued. They seem to take a break from the blaring aspects to unwind with my set. Our club shows are so focused and intimate that it's nice to have a more extroverted energy, and shorter [festival] sets mean its

like a very fast-burning star. I'm not gonna suddenly become this extremely rowdy, hands-in-the-air festival band, but between the sad songs there's a lot of humour and banter and they really respond to that.

I missed the tour bus leaving in 2010 and slept under a bench, but I didn't care. Glastonbury is a magical place

*Jake Shears*

**Shears:** I like multiple things to tear off. Last time, there were complaints to the BBC because I had my ass out. But ripping your pants off when you've got something underneath is a great gag.

**Mering:** I played a festival in Italy and a huge windstorm blew up. They were screaming: "Get off the stage!" because we were on the verge of electrocution. It came out of nowhere and was very intense, almost like we'd summoned it with the music.

**Shears:** I was at [Jazz Fest](#) in New Orleans when a hurricane blew through. It was harrowing, but at festivals the fact that anything can happen is part of the fun. We live such mediated lives through screens, so it's really important to be where people are gathering and you're making new friends, but in person.

## **'It's going to feel like gladiators in Rome': Billy Bragg and Benefits**

*The singer-songwriter Billy Bragg has been performing at Glastonbury since 1984 and, as the Left Field curator, invited the Teesside agit-electro act Benefits to make what could be a fearsome debut.*

**Billy Bragg:** In the 80s, it was a big event, but different. There weren't any late bars, but there was a West Indian blues tent where they'd play heavy dub and sell cans of Red Stripe, so you'd feel you were part of something bigger than a rock festival. It still feels like that to me. My brother came last year and spent most of his time in the tango tent, where they were teaching Latin American dancing. Because you can't walk from the site to a railway station, once you're there you have to commit yourself to mother nature. My

memories from the early days are playing football backstage with the Housemartins or the Smiths, or bumping into people I wouldn't normally meet, like [Dr John](#). Now, it has a global reputation.

Kingsley, it must feel very exciting to be playing for the first time.



Billy Bragg (*left*) and Benefits' Kingsley Hall. Composite: Pete Dunwell; Michael Sreenan

**Kingsley Hall (singer, Benefits):** It feels like we're Middlesbrough FC playing the Champions League of festivals. It's seismic, it is. Glastonbury still retains that magic from hippies; David Bowie sitting on an empty stage at 5am in 1971; CND protests or travellers taking refuge; the BBC getting involved; the furore when the fence went up. It evolves all the time, but still has that pull. I've been as a punter. I was there the year a bloke turned up carrying a green door to see Shakin' Stevens.

**Bragg:** When I first played, it was also a big focal point for everybody who opposed Margaret Thatcher. Now, with the [Left Field stage](#), our criterion isn't that acts do political songs, it's that they do songs that reflect the pressure people feel under. Which, obviously, Benefits do really well. They're confrontational, but they draw you in.

The thing about music is that it can't change the world, but it can make you feel the world can be changed

*Billy Bragg*

You have to suss out what mood the audience is in and sometimes events write the script for you. I played in Left Field the morning after the Brexit vote. The tent was packed and everyone was angry. It was probably one of the most incredible gigs I've ever played. Kingsley, the audience will be tuned in to your wavelength. You just need to show them why you're the most important band in Britain today.

**Hall:** For us, it's going to feel like gladiators going into Rome to scrap at the Colosseum. It's exciting, because our performance exists on an edge and has the potential to fall apart at any second. But I like that. It's like being in the swimming pool where your feet aren't quite touching the bottom.

**Bragg:** The thing about music is that it can't change the world, but it can make you feel the world can be changed. And you don't feel you're alone in caring. That's especially so at Glastonbury; there's an emotional solidarity that you can't get online. That kind of mass experience is crucial to our ability to exist as human beings.

## **'The crowd is very diverse and very open': Stefflon Don and Yaya Bey**

*The rapper Stephanie Allen, AKA Stefflon Don, won over a Glastonbury audience in 2019. The US R&B/soul star Yaya Bey is a new addition to the festival.*

**Stephanie Allen:** When I first went to Glastonbury, I couldn't believe the size of it or how long it takes to walk from one side to another. It's a massive deal and when you go in as an artist, you're really giving it your best shot. What does it mean in America, Yaya?

**Yaya Bey:** We hear a lot about it, because it's definitely one of the biggest festivals in the world. Our nearest equivalent is probably Coachella, which

also has a lot of greenery, but perhaps isn't quite as out in the wild as Glastonbury.



Yaya Bey (*left*) and Stefflon Don. Composite: Brandon Almengo; Female Perspective/Alamy

**Allen:** It's also always been perceived as more eclectic than most festivals and has a long tradition with Black music. Kendrick [Lamar] [did it last year](#) and it's a big deal in the hip-hop community for artists coming through. Obviously, I remember the controversy when Jay-Z headlined and Noel Gallagher said [hip-hop doesn't belong at Glastonbury](#). Hip-hop is one of the most influential genres in the world, so saying it doesn't belong there is like saying good music doesn't belong there.

**Bey:** Had that not happened, I don't think I would know Noel Gallagher, because it's not my world.

**Allen:** He got a lot of free promo saying that! If someone films you, the whole world could see you. I'm on the Pyramid stage this year, so I might have a couple of extra dancers. You want to try to stand out and hope people go home and remember you.

It's always been perceived as more eclectic than most festivals and has a long tradition with Black music

*Stefflon Don*

**Bey:** This is my first big show of a European tour, so it's nerve-racking that the first show is the biggest. I find talking between songs helps with any nerves. It helps to ground you and understand who you're playing to. I address a lot of political things. I'm from New York, where [our mayor](#) is a piece of shit and we're in the middle of a [housing crisis](#). So when you talk to the crowd, you get a sense of who isn't politically aligned with you and kind of figure out the boundaries.

**Allen:** Since the pandemic, I feel like people haven't taken their freedom for granted as much. So festivals are becoming part of people's lives now in the way a club on a Friday night used to be. The Glastonbury crowd is very diverse and very open. My advice to you, girl, is: your songs are amazing and you're going to kill it.

## **'It's like the FA Cup final': Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Rick Astley**

*Sophie Ellis-Bextor first played Glastonbury with Theaudience in 1998 and made her solo debut in 2014. Rick Astley plays the Pyramid stage for the first time.*

**Sophie Ellis-Bextor:** This will be my fourth. I was 18 when I first played, so whenever I come back I feel like a tiny part of me goes back in a portal to that moment. I've never played the Pyramid stage before, so I keep picturing myself walking out, seeing that crowd for the first time and feeling that energy. I'm really excited.





Rick Astley and Sophie Ellis-Bextor. Composite: Peter Neill; Victor Boyko/Getty Images for WIBA Academy

**Rick Astley:** I've never been before, but I've dropped my daughter off and been staggered by the size of it and the buildup. Even watching on TV from the couch, you can feel people are getting up there not necessarily nervous, but knowing they've got to get it right. It's like the FA Cup final. They want to leave everything on that stage. There's a sort of mystical element to it. I'm not going to say druids [laughs], but there's something in the soil. Music isn't so segregated as it was, but from a distance I get the feeling everyone's in it together.

**Ellis-Bextor:** I'm looking forward to seeing Blondie, Lil Nas X and Elton John and then we'll disperse in the fields. The magic of Glastonbury is that you can stumble across a new band or someone doing a surprise acoustic set.

I like that little fizz in your stomach ... the element that you can't control can take it to the next level

*Sophie Ellis-Bextor*

**Astley:** There's an audience for everyone. I'm going to play the hits and things that make sense for me to play there. Playing working men's clubs in the 80s, I learned to get a sense of humour about myself or I'd walk off in



tears every night. I once had to go on after a comedian who said he did impressions. Someone yelled: “Well do one of a fucking comedian then!” Tough gigs like that add wire to your spine and mean that you can walk out at Glastonbury all these years later.

**Ellis-Bextor:** It’s not a bad thing to be a bit nervous or out of your comfort zone. I like that little fizz in your stomach and sometimes the element that you can’t control can take it to the next level. People still talk about Radiohead’s amazing set in a monsoon in 1997, which was a gamechanger for them. That could happen to somebody this year.

**Astley:** I’m on at noon, so I’m just hoping somebody turns up! But I’d play to an empty stage to say I’d played at Glastonbury. It’s nice to have every bit of comfort you can, so I’ll take Yorkshire Tea.

**Ellis-Bextor:** I always ask for a gherkin. “No gherkin, no workin’!”

**Astley:** That’s possibly the weirdest thing I’ve ever heard [laughs].

*The Guardian is an [official media partner](#) of the Glastonbury festival. Full details of the lineup and stage times are at [glastonburyfestivals.co.uk](https://www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk). Yusuf/Cat Stevens’ new album, *King of a Land*, is out now, as is Jake Shears’ *Last Man Dancing*, Sophie Ellis-Bextor’s *Hana*, Yaya Bey’s *Remember Your North Star* and Benefits’ *Nails*. Thundercat & Tame Impala’s single *No More Lies* is also out now.*

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## 2023.06.23 - Opinion

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Illustration: Nate Kitch for the Guardian.

[OpinionEconomic policy.](#)

**Britain is the Dorian Gray economy,  
hiding its ugly truths from the world.  
Now they are exposed**

[Aditya Chakraborty.](#)



From Tony Blair to George Osborne, our rulers painted false pictures of success while real wealth and wages withered away

Fri 23 Jun 2023 01.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 08.47 EDT

You know the central conceit of Oscar Wilde's [The Picture of Dorian Gray](#), of course you do. A lad of sun-kissed beauty is presented with a stunning likeness of himself. Disturbed at the notion that he will grow old while the painting doesn't, he locks it away – where it is the portrait that ages and uglifies while Dorian stays boyish and beautiful. But perhaps you've forgotten what happens next.

The story has come to my mind many times, as the foulness of British politics becomes ever harder to ignore. Genteel liberals wonder how their land of cricket whites and orderly queues could be ruled by a grasping liar such as Boris Johnson and I hear a whisper on the wind: *Dorian Gray*. The [New York Times](#) and [Der Spiegel](#) report in bewilderment on a country with pockets of deep poverty and unslaked anger, and again rasps that hoarse voice: *the horror was hidden here all along*.

Now it's all out in the open. In one of the richest societies in human history, inhabitants are starting to twig that by 2030 or thereabouts they will [earn less per head](#) than the Poles they so recently patronised. Whatever the politicians and pundits may argue, this debacle owes nothing to Jeremy Corbyn or Brexit or any supposedly un-British "populism". It is homegrown and has deep roots.

Like Dorian Gray, Britain has for too long presented one face to the world while concealing the awful truth. The author of that novel, Oscar Wilde, was the son of an Irish nationalist and a graduate of Oxford, where he became a fine student of the British upper classes and their mellifluous hypocrisy. He would have recognised much of the mess we're in, because it grew among shadows and cover-ups. From Tony Blair's Cool Britannia through to George Osborne's "[march of the makers](#)", our rulers have trumpeted every false success, while ugly facts have been waved away as anomalies: from the former manufacturing suburbs and towns turned into giant warehouses of surplus people, to the fact that [15% of adults](#) in England are on antidepressants. We're winning [the global race](#), claimed David Cameron, even as the population's life expectancy [fell far](#) behind other rich countries. We shan't stunt future generations with debt, he boasted, as our [five-year-olds](#) became the shortest in Europe.

Or take the housing bubble that politicians pretended was true prosperity – until this week, as the Bank of England hiked rates for the 13th time in a row and the prospect of it bursting began to terrify them. Yet the Westminster classes blew their hardest into that bubble. As soon as estate agents were out of lockdown, Rishi Sunak gave up [£6bn of taxpayers' money](#) for a stamp duty holiday – an act as prudent as pouring petrol on a fire. Many of those he lured up the property ladder will be hardest hit by rising mortgage rates. [Analysis done for me by UK Finance](#) suggests that 465,000 house purchases during that tax break were financed with two- or three-year fixed rate mortgages – the very ones running out right now. In other words, nearly half a million households took the chancellor's inducement; many will plunge into dangerous financial straits; some face losing their homes. They were mis-sold a dream by Sunak. Still, at least the Tories enjoyed a bounce in the polls.



Helmut Berger stars in the 1970 film adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Photograph: Sargon/Kobal/Rex/Shutterstock

“Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man’s face,” Dorian is told by his portraitist Basil Hallward. “If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even ... But you, Dorian, with your pure, bright, innocent face and your marvellous untroubled youth – I can’t believe anything against you.” The picture of Dorian, which would have revealed the grotesque truth, is hidden away. So, too, has the UK avoided admitting its ills. Even now, in a country where patently so little works for people who rely on work for their income, commentators and frontbenchers still blame supposedly all-powerful interlopers: Boris, Nigel, Jeremy. And from Sunak to Starmer, all push growth and jobs as the remedy for what ails us.

Yet growth in this country is falling and not because of Ukraine or Covid or Brexit. Since the 1950s, the growth rate adjusted for inflation has been on a [gentle but insistent downward slide](#). Our economy has become ever more stagnant and dependent on debt. It is fatuous to pretend this is going to turn around through magicking Britain into an AI free-for-all or a jolly green industrial giant. Employment? [One in four employees](#) are on low weekly wages – either because the pay is too low or the hours aren’t enough – while the average real wage has flatlined for many years.



Much of this analysis comes from a new book, [When Nothing Works](#), written by a team of scholars. Although specialising in economics and accountancy, what they have produced is an essential text for understanding British government: the polarised politics of a highly unequal and increasingly stagnant society.

Take the issue at the top of today's agenda: wages. Why can't you and I take home more money? Because of a lack of productivity, politicians will say. Yet the researchers point to how labour has got a smaller and smaller share of economic output since the 1970s.

If the same share of GDP was paid out in wages today as in 1976, the average working-age household would have an extra £9,744 a year. We haven't lost that 10 grand a year through laziness at work but because politicians from Thatcher onwards smashed up trade unions, undermined labour rights, and crowed over the result as a "flexible labour market". What they really created was a low-wage workforce, in a low-growth country ruled by politicians with low ambitions for everyone bar themselves.

"The prayer of your pride has been answered," Basil counsels Dorian, when he finally sees the portrait and its horrific truth. "The prayer of your repentance will be answered also." When Nothing Works will inevitably be termed pessimistic, but it is no such thing. Realism comes from facing who we are and dropping the pretence that a growth miracle is just around the corner. Instead of trying to boost "the economy", it is high time to boost our people: to ensure they have the basics they need to live a life free from indignity and free to flourish. This will come from redistribution rather than growth, from replacing extractive businesses with fair ones. Such ideas will not go down well in SW1, where both Tory and Labour are increasingly hostile to pluralism and brittle in their dogmatism. Self-knowledge is the hardest knowledge, as one of the book's authors, [Karel Williams](#), says. And self-delusion leads eventually to disaster.

Unable to face his loathsome self-image, Dorian slashes that portrait. He is found by servants. "Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled and loathsome of



visage. It was not till they examined the rings that they recognised who it was.”

- Aditya Chakraborty is a Guardian columnist

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‘When David Cameron gave evidence at the Covid inquiry this week, half the seats were not occupied.’ Photograph: UK Covid-19 Inquiry/PA

[OpinionCovid inquiry.](#)

**I watched Cameron and Osborne at the Covid inquiry. They are still in denial about the damage they inflicted on Britain**

[Andy Beckett](#)



No matter how much they may squirm, the link between austerity and Britain's pandemic outcomes is undeniable

Fri 23 Jun 2023 04.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 11.46 EDT

David Cameron's government feels so long ago. Seven years of almost constant Tory turmoil, upheaval in all the other parties, huge strikes and economic crises, the war in Ukraine and the pandemic catastrophe: together, they make Cameron's calm resignation statement outside 10 Downing Street in 2016, and [his jaunty humming](#) afterwards, seem like something from another, less frightening era.

In some ways, the worse things get in this country, the better it is for Cameron's reputation. Even the most [damaging acts of his six-year tenure](#) – from calling the Brexit referendum to imposing austerity to the military intervention in Libya – are steadily disappearing behind the subsequent disasters under Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak. The social liberalism of Cameron's premiership can be overstated: [he only overcame Tory opposition to same-sex marriage with Labour support](#). But his liberalism seems more of an achievement now that his party has reverted to being reactionary.

Meanwhile, some voters and journalists have simply lost interest in his government. When he [gave evidence at the Covid inquiry this week](#), half the seats in the modestly sized hearing room for reporters and members of the public were not occupied. Given how unpopular the Conservatives are currently, being semi-ignored is arguably a kind of victory.

And yet, the dividing line between the Toryism of the [Cameron](#)s, as they were once a little indulgently known, and the more obviously nasty and chaotic Conservatism that has followed is not as solid as anyone tempted to be nostalgic for the Cameron years might imagine. To a significant, yet increasingly forgotten extent, Cameron's premiership was not a contrast to today's Conservatism but its origin.

It was as his home secretary that Theresa May said in 2012: "The aim is to create, here in Britain, a really [hostile environment](#) for illegal immigrants." At the same year's Tory conference, held when [half those in poverty were in working families](#), the chancellor, George Osborne, chose to speak instead about people "[sleeping off a life on benefits](#)". Putting people into crude, socially divisive categories for political advantage was not something the Cameron government invented, but it was a strikingly aggressive practitioner of the strategy. The Conservative victory in the 2015 election, their first outright win for 23 years, ensured that the party would continue to divide and rule.

Both Cameron and Osborne have earned a lot of money, while millions made poorer by their policies have continued to suffer

Osborne is a less polite kind of elite Englishman than Cameron, and so during their government he often played the aggressive role. Yet Cameron's own politics have long mixed mildness with harsher elements. In his Downing Street memoir, defensively titled [For the Record](#) and published during Johnson's premiership, there are some indirect criticisms of unnamed Tories for making the party "less liberal" and less of "a broad church". But there are also passages that may surprise Cameron's centrist admirers, such as Tony Blair and Keir Starmer's speechwriter Philip Collins. On austerity, Cameron writes: "My assessment now is that [we probably didn't cut enough](#)

... The job we started still needs to be finished.” In that crucial respect at least, he thinks his successors have not been rightwing enough.

Since being forced from office by their Brexit blunder, at the young political ages of 49 and 45 respectively, Cameron and Osborne have tried to reinvent themselves. Osborne has become a political commentator on TV, who smiles and laughs knowingly to signal his distance from the partisan scowler he used to be. Cameron, blamed more for Brexit, perhaps because of his [apparent insouciance after the result](#), has been more low-profile, except when exposed in 2021 for [lobbying the government on behalf of the disgraced financier Lex Greensill](#). Both Cameron and Osborne have earned a lot of money since leaving parliament, while millions made poorer by their policies have continued to suffer.

The [duo’s appearance before the Covid inquiry](#) was a rare chance, it seemed, to hold them to account for their overconfident government. It has been widely concluded by authorities on the NHS and public health that [austerity worsened the pandemic](#), and in the hearing room [Cameron sometimes seemed nervous](#). He took frequent sips of water, and punctuated some of his answers with small coughs and stutters.

[Osborne was more prickly](#), listening to one question from the inquiry’s lawyer with his arms tightly folded, and talking over others. But the interrogation of each politician lasted [little more than an hour](#), and neither lost their composure, or conceded that austerity had been an error in any way. On the contrary, they both claimed that it had made the pandemic bailouts possible, by rescuing the government’s finances. It was just the kind of move that Johnson would have made: presenting a contentious or discredited policy as a triumph.

Tories are usually confident in public. But since Cameron’s haughty premiership, despite often being unpopular and apparently out of their depth, and despite presiding over a national decline with few parallels in the rich world, this self-regard has thickened further, into a disdain for scrutiny. It frustrates the party’s enemies, and anyone else who wants to probe the government. “Please, just let me ask my question,” said the Covid inquiry’s lawyer to Osborne, as he talked over her once again.

Time may finally be running out for this version of Conservatism. As Johnson recently discovered, cocky and slapdash Tories may thrive in the theatrical parts of our political system – such as a parliament where members are usually forbidden from calling each other “liars” – but the more patient and factual world of select committees and official reports can be a much less hospitable environment.

The [Covid inquiry hopes to publish an interim verdict](#) on Britain’s “preparedness and resilience” for the pandemic in 2024, also likely to be when the next election is held. The report may make it impossible to continue to insist, as Osborne did this week, that public spending cuts had [“no connection whatsoever”](#) to the inequalities exploited by the virus.

Yet understanding how the Cameron government left us vulnerable to Covid ought to be just the start. From failing to tame the City after the financial crisis to appeasing the Tory far right, from [fragmenting England’s school system](#) to making Truss a minister for the first time, the Cameroons’ mistakes have haunted us for years. Whenever this Tory era ends, they should not be allowed to saunter away from the wreckage.

- Andy Beckett is a Guardian columnist
- This article was amended on 23 June 2023. An earlier headline referenced the Covid “inquest” instead of Covid inquiry.

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‘It was like travelling in time, and has given me some of the happiest moments that I have ever known.’ Photograph: Terry Mathews/Alamy

[Republic of Parenthood](#)[Family holidays](#)

## **The magic of holidays as a new parent? They’re like time travel back to childhood summers**

[Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett](#)





Every child – and every stressed-out parent – deserves a holiday, even if we have to endure the hell of the travel cot

Fri 23 Jun 2023 03.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 04.00 EDT

The people who design travel cots belong in prison. I'm generally in favour of restorative justice and rehabilitation, but for this I'll make an exception.

We are luckier than most, in that the baby will sleep on the hard bit of plywood that's supposed to pass for a mattress, but he does need a few pats on the bum to settle, and unless you are [Stretch Armstrong](#) (a contemporary reference there for you, kids) this is all but impossible. Likewise, lowering the baby (or in our case, large toddler) into the cot, which if you're a woman of average height involves squatting over one of the corners and hoping you don't bash your crotch on it so that your swearing wakes them up, something which definitely hasn't happened to me – ever. Basically, they are designed for babies who are heavy sleepers, and tall men.

If I sound grumpy, it's because we've just been on our first seaside holiday as parents, so travel cots are fresh in my mind. Though I opened with a negative, that first time your child sees the sea – if he or she is lucky enough

to get there – is something very special. I knew he would love it, but I wasn't prepared for how much. I have written before about how parenthood allows you to experience childhood again and, as it turns out, this very British seaside holiday conjured for me many happy memories: of crabbing and paper sandcastle flags and fingers playing with the surface of rock pools, the soft, spongy feel of green seaweed beneath your toes, the roughness and smell of its black counterpart. It was like travelling in time, and has given me some of the happiest moments that I have ever known.

Holidays change when you are a parent. The packing and unpacking of bags feels almost constant. The volume of stuff that you have to bring is astonishing. The timing and smoothness of the journey becomes a lot more important, so when, for example, the air-conditioning is broken (as it was on both train journeys – thanks South Western!) it doesn't just feel uncomfortable but actually dangerous. As for flying, we haven't done that yet, but our NCT WhatsApp group has seen people sharing the minutiae of their journeys – what to do about bottles, which toys to pack to entertain their child, what to do if they have a massive nappy explosion. I'm grateful for this information from the parents braver than I – until quite recently, I couldn't face the prospect.

Mine is a well-travelled generation ([five times more](#) than our grandparents, according to one survey), and not having been abroad much growing up, I was lucky enough to be able to do so in my 20s. But our pre-term baby took a while to adjust to life outside the womb, and we've had a hard time with illness, so we cocooned ourselves for longer than many. There were times during my maternity leave that it felt almost as if we were “wasting” it by staying at home.

A good friend went to 10 countries during her maternity leave – including Argentina and Japan. She works hard and this was their opportunity to travel as a family. Of course, at times I felt jealous, especially over winter, as I pounded the pavements around my house for the thousandth time in the driving rain. But I also thought: all power to her for being so intrepid, though she feels guilty: “I'm waiting for him to be an eco warrior when he grows up and hate us (you have to hate your parents for something).”

We are not the first generation to have travelled – a friend of mine was taken to Tibet as a baby – but I think we are the first generation to take it for granted. Not only that, but we risk our children turning to us and asking us, given the climate emergency, how we felt that we could justify ourselves. So in a way, not fancying a trip to Crete in August with a newborn (something a friend described as “hell”) has been good for our carbon footprint. It’s a shame UK holidays are so expensive. Some London nurseries do day trips to the seaside, but every child deserves a holiday.

As well as being a matter of privilege and finances, I suspect travelling as a parent is down to temperament. I have learned that I am not one of those laid-back, gung-ho mothers. I will probably never take my child backpacking. Even the more remote Greek islands that I love are off limits for now. Yet the seaside trip has made a holiday abroad feel possible. I want a short flight, a nearby airport, [a decent hospital](#) and reasonable temperatures, but I’m starting to feel more optimistic.

That, I am coming to understand, is one of the lessons of parenthood. Things can seem hard, impossible even, and in the moment that feeling gives the impression of being permanent. It never is. When people say “it gets easier”, this is what they mean. Sometimes you try things and they don’t work out, and these setbacks can shake your confidence. But often, like our little seaside trip, they do, and you can feel the world being returned to you, wider and more brimming with potential than before. Holidays may not be the same, but the joy of seeing the sea through your child’s eyes makes up for the fact that you may have opted for a trip to Robin Hood’s Bay as opposed to hiking in Peru. Perhaps the time will come that I feel brave enough. They’ll have to design a better travel cot first, though.

## **What’s working**

I thought [this Novara Media article](#) about the history of National Dried Milk, which fed 85% of British babies in 1974, and the astronomical price of formula, was just the kind of radical thinking and research we need when it comes to infant feeding.

## **What’s not**

We are seeing our first glimpses of toddler tantrums, especially when it comes to the high chair – the baby adopts a stiff starfish position whenever we come near it, but I'm not about to let him eat his dinner while he does yoga poses in the living room (he's throwing some great shapes these days). Any advice appreciated.

- Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett is a Guardian columnist and author

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Friday is employee ownership day, which celebrates businesses, such as the John Lewis Partnership, that are owned by their members. Photograph: Mike Egerton/PA

## [Inflation](#)

# **Why more employee-owned businesses could mean fewer strikes**

[Dame Sharon White](#)

There are 1,300 companies in the UK, including John Lewis, that give their members a stake in the organisation

Fri 23 Jun 2023 01.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 04.15 EDT

Hospital consultants are the latest group of workers to [ballot for strike action](#). In the past year, the UK has lost [3.7m working days to strikes](#); largely public sector workers such as nurses, junior doctors and railway workers but private sector workers at the likes of Amazon and Heathrow too.

The Office for National Statistics reckons that strikes have [depressed growth in the economy](#). People may have changed their spending behaviour or those with children may have been unable to work if teachers were on strike, for example.

Perhaps this level of industrial strife is to be expected when inflation remains worryingly high – with the Bank of England raising interest rates [for the thirteenth time in a row to 5%](#) on Thursday – amid [wages that have been flatlining since 2008](#).

There are strong echoes of the 1970s when oil price shocks led to sky-high inflation. I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s and remember well the three-day week, electricity blackouts and teachers' strikes. The last of these left me and my schoolmates learning at home for weeks at a time.

Is there an alternative to industrial action? If workers felt they had more of a stake – or greater sense of ownership – in the business or the public service they were providing, there could be fewer disputes and more limited industrial action.

Friday is employee ownership day, a chance to mark and celebrate businesses owned by their members, such as the John Lewis Partnership.

Employee ownership has [more than doubled](#) in the past three years. By the end of last year, there were 1,300 employee-owned businesses in the UK. They range from Arup, the design and engineering firm, to Zetter, the recruitment agency.

The top-50 of them generated revenue of £21.7bn last year. Nine in 10 employee-owned businesses reported that employees have some or a lot of say in decisions on working conditions; 85% have some or a lot of say in new working methods.

Different employee-owned organisations have different ways of giving their members a stake; for the [John Lewis](#) Partnership, employees' (or partners') share in any profits that are made by the business. And as an industrial democracy, partners influence how the business is run through their elected representatives in local forums or partnership-wide council. Interestingly,

there is no constitutional ban on trade unions, although – to date – none has been organised.

Another way partners can express their views is through the Gazette – an in-house weekly newspaper that began in 1918. The Gazette has editorial independence and any partner can write in with whatever is on their mind. It does not always make for easy reading but it is an important channel for partners to share what's on their minds.

Membership organisations are clearly not immune from the inflationary pressures affecting all businesses. And the partnership has its own challenging debates about how much more we can do on pay while maintaining a healthy business. A business based on membership does instil a greater sense of ownership in the future. It also operates channels through which employees can voice their concerns.

There is more [robust debate](#) in the partnership during the tougher times than in the good, as befits a business run on democratic lines.

Employee-owned businesses also have the advantage of being able to think longer term, not being driven by short-term shareholder interests, benefiting customers and partners.

Not having outside shareholders also means we have to fund our growth in more imaginative ways, especially a business of the scale of the partnership.

For many years we have relied on the cash we generate, proceeds from asset sales and borrowing. We have also had access to outside capital through joint ventures, such as the one with Ocado that [powered Waitrose home deliveries](#) or our new venture with Ayr supporting [our new “build-to-rent” property business](#). We could look at further opportunities [for external investment](#) in the partnership's transformation, provided these do not fundamentally [alter our employee ownership](#).

Could a partnership model apply to the public sector as well as to the private sector? I think it can. There was famously much debate during the coalition government of David Cameron and Nick Clegg of applying the “John Lewis



model” to the NHS. While it hasn’t been introduced wholesale, there are pockets where a mutual model has been established.

The Minehead medical centre, a general practice based in Somerset, [last year rejected a hospital merger](#), instead becoming an employee-owned trust. It said the decision was in the best interests of patients and the medical staff; a move it believes will “protect the ongoing stability and sustainability of the practice”.

So while employee ownership may not be a panacea, giving workers more of a stake could greatly improve industrial relations and benefit the whole country.

*Dame [Sharon White](#) is chair of the John Lewis Partnership*

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## 2023.06.23 - Around the world

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- [Rust film Weapons supervisor on Alec Baldwin movie charged with evidence tampering](#)
- [Peru Lima's Central restaurant named world's best in boost for local cuisine](#)
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- [Diabetes More than 1.3bn adults will have disease by 2050, study predicts](#)



The US climate envoy John Kerry (left) and the French president, Emmanuel Macron, take part in a discussion during the summit in Paris on Thursday. Photograph: Ludovic Marin/EPA

[Climate crisis](#)

## Governments at Paris summit to finalise climate finance roadmap

Almost 40 leaders to present plans for overhaul of public financial institutions including World Bank

[Fiona Harvey](#) in Paris

Fri 23 Jun 2023 04.03 EDT Last modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 05.00 EDT

Questions over a tax on global shipping and other big sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and how countries should go about setting up a loss and damage fund continue to be the subject of fierce discussion, as governments meet in Paris to prepare an overhaul of global development and climate finance.

Nearly 40 heads of state and government and a similar number of ministers and high-level representatives will finalise a roadmap for the reform of the world's public finance institutions, including the [World Bank](#), and of overseas aid and climate finance.

Governments at the [two-day finance summit in Paris](#) will now be ordered to present concrete proposals on a loss and damage fund, to be directed at the rescue and reconstruction of countries stricken by climate disaster, before the [UN Cop28 climate summit this November](#). This must include proposals for how to fill that fund, including potential new taxes on fossil fuels.

A draft of the roadmap seen by the Guardian, dated 20 June and discussed on Thursday at the first day of the [Paris summit for a new global financing pact](#), sets out six pages of proposals for delivery at carefully choreographed points up to September 2024. It includes items for delivery at future meetings of the G20 summit, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund annual meetings in October, Cop28 and other international meetings, up to the Summit for the Future to be held next September.

Some of these aims have already been partly achieved at the current Paris summit, hosted by the French president, Emmanuel Macron. For instance, the World Bank has agreed to start [suspending debt payments for countries hit by climate disaster](#). However, so far these “climate resilient debt clauses” will only apply to new loan agreements, rather than being applied to existing loans.

Taxes are likely to prove a difficult point. The EU wants more countries to use emissions trading to raise funds for climate action, but some developing countries are less keen on the prospect, which they regard as complex and more suitable for use in advanced economies.

John Kerry, the special envoy for climate to the US president, Joe Biden, said the White House did not have a position on potential taxes on shipping, aviation or fossil fuels. “I support some kind of revenue raising on a broad basis, but this is not administration policy,” he told journalists, in answer to a question from the Guardian. “I personally have supported pricing carbon, but I’m not advocating a tax or a fee or anything at this point. Certainly the

administration is not, but we have to find a way to find more concessionary funding.”

He also indicated that China should be a potential donor to a loss and damage fund. “You’ve got to look at this [fund] and say what’s fair, what makes sense. And people are going to ask themselves all around the world: ‘Do you think that the second largest economy in the world ought to put something into it?’ I can’t imagine people who say no, that doesn’t make sense. So that’s the kind of thing we have to work at. It’s the kind of thing we’ve got to have a discussion about.”

Absent from the draft proposals seen by the Guardian is the commitment to triple the finance available from the World Bank, which has been supported by Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados.

However, if the [changes to the World Bank](#) and its fellow institutions are carried out, then a significant expansion of publicly funded development banks’ ability to lend could follow.

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The proposals range from the highly detailed, including ways of sharing data on developing countries with private investors to help them draw up improved risk profiles on countries less likely to default on debt, to the

broad brush, such as the launch of an independent body to facilitate links between countries and funds so that climate financing works a little more smoothly.

Experts are also asked to come up with a definition of “vulnerable countries”, to target those most at risk from the effects of the climate crisis and least able to build resilience against disaster.

Alex Scott of the E3G thinktank said: “If this [draft roadmap] is what comes out, we and campaigners would be very happy with this. It is a concrete roadmap that would be a clear and credible sign that this agenda for solving problems with the financial system is on its way. It sets actions governments have to take, and there are lots of ideas in here that are needed.”

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The Rust movie set. The films weapons supervisor has been charged with evidence tampering. Photograph: Jae C Hong/AP

[Rust film set shooting](#)

## Rust film: weapons supervisor on Alec Baldwin movie charged with evidence tampering

Hannah Gutierrez-Reed is accused of passing drugs to someone on the day of on-set fatal shooting

*Associated Press*

Thu 22 Jun 2023 23.06 EDT Last modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 12.03 EDT

The weapons supervisor charged with involuntary manslaughter over the shooting death of a cinematographer on the set of the [Alec Baldwin](#) film Rust has been charged with evidence tampering for allegedly passing drugs to someone else on the day of the shooting.



Hannah Gutierrez-Reed “did transfer narcotics to another person with the intent to prevent the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of herself”, the special prosecutors appointed in the case said in a court filing in Santa Fe county, New Mexico. They gave no further details.

Gutierrez-Reed’s attorney, Jason Bowles, called the move “retaliatory and vindictive”.

“It is shocking that after 20 months of investigation, the special prosecutor now throws in a completely new charge against Ms Gutierrez Reed, with no prior notice or any witness statements, lab reports or evidence to support it,” Bowles said in a statement.

Gutierrez-Reed is the sole remaining defendant in the case after prosecutors in April [dropped an involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin](#), who was pointing a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during a rehearsal when it went off, killing her and injuring director Joel Souza in 2021. Prosecutors can still refile charges against Baldwin.

The new charge comes a week after prosecutors alleged in a court filing that Gutierrez-Reed was [drinking and smoking marijuana in the evenings](#) during the filming of Rust and was likely hungover on the day a live bullet was placed into the gun Baldwin used.

Bowles called that allegation “character assassination” from prosecutors with a weak case that the defence has asked a judge to dismiss.

In his own filing on Thursday, Bowles revealed he had been accidentally included on an email sent to district attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies from her lead investigator in the case, who slammed the law enforcement response to the shooting.

“The conduct of the Santa Fe county sheriff’s office during and after their initial investigation is reprehensible and unprofessional to a degree I still have no words for,” Robert Schilling wrote in the email, in which he said he would be stepping down so special prosecutors could use their own investigator.

“Not I or 200 more proficient investigators than I can/could clean up the mess delivered to your office.”

Bowles said in his filing that the email demonstrated the weakness of the case against his client. He said it suggested that the prosecution had been withholding evidence from the defence.

Emails seeking comment from the sheriff’s office and the special prosecutors were not immediately returned when sought by the Associated Press.

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Colours of Amazonia, a dish from the tasting menu at Central in Lima in 2017. Photograph: Nicholas Gill/Alamy

## Peru

# Lima's Central restaurant named world's best in boost for Peruvian cuisine

Peruvian eateries have been a fixture in top 50 list for close to a decade and now one has claimed the crown

[Dan Collyns](#) in Lima

[@yachay\\_dc](#)

Fri 23 Jun 2023 00.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 11.22 EDT

While Peru's archeology heritage began in the 20th century to attract millions of tourists to locations such as Machu Picchu and the Nazca Lines, the country's cuisine remained one of South America's best-kept secrets.

But in the last two decades, Peru's food – a product of its rich range of crops, ecosystems and a particular history – has become a [global brand](#), with restaurants opening in cities from San Francisco to Sydney.

Now, after years of plaudits and prizes, [Central](#) restaurant in Lima has been voted the world's best, crowning the global conquest of Peruvian cuisine.

It is the first South American restaurant to win the title, and three other Lima restaurants were in the top 50, meaning the Peruvian capital took more slots than any other city.

Central's fine dining menu showcases Peru's unique spread of biodiversity by taking diners through "15 different Peruvian ecosystems, categorised by altitude – from 15 metres under the Pacific Ocean to 4,200 metres up in the Andes," according to [World's 50 Best Restaurants](#).

"It's not about being number one, it's not about being the best, it's about what we do every single day. We love what we do," said the restaurant's co-founder and head chef, Virgilio Martínez, accepting the award in the Spanish city of Valencia last week.

His wife and Central's co-founder, Pía León, saw her solo project [Kjolle](#) reach the top 50 this year, making 28th place. The two other Lima eateries on the list were [Maido](#), led by the award-winning Japanese-Peruvian chef Mitsuharu "Micha" Tsumura, at number six, and [Mayta](#) in 47th.



The second-floor dining area and wine cellar at Central restaurant in Lima in 2013. Photograph: Cris Bouroncle/AFP/Getty Images

Fusion is key to Peru's cuisine. Over centuries, techniques brought by waves of incomers – from Spanish invaders to enslaved Africans to indentured Cantonese, as well as Italian, Japanese, and Arabic immigrants – built on a rich foundation of Indigenous food and crops. From the high altitudes of the Andes to the fish-rich Pacific and the Amazonian rainforest, all helped to create uniquely Peruvian cuisines including *comida criolla*, Japanese-Peruvian Nikkei, and Chifa, Chinese-Peruvian fare.

“That’s the fun part of Peru, we don’t reject other cultures,” Tsumura told the Guardian in a recent interview. “We embrace them and we think how to make them much more tasty, or, I would say, we look at how we can apply those flavours, techniques and ingredients to our cuisine.

“That’s what makes us free with Peruvian cuisine and inclusive – not just with food but with music, with art and with many other elements in society. You can see how many countries have built our culture in a very diverse way.”

Born in Peru to a family with roots in Osaka, Tsumura trained as a sushi chef in Japan before returning to Lima and founding Mado with his own brand

of Nikkei cuisine. “An explosion of flavours in your mouth” is how he sums up his restaurant’s culinary experience. “We’re always looking for very intense sensations.”

Tsumura’s flair and Martínez’s honed precision rely on Peru’s rich array of ingredients. First among them, the humble [potato](#). Just a handful of Peru’s 4,000-plus varieties of potato have fed the hungry everywhere from the Americas to Eurasia. [Maize](#) has grown in what is now Peru for six millennia; historians believe it was brought from Central America. The tomato, the basis for Italian cuisine, originated in the country’s Andean valleys.

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“I think all countries have something unique which is theirs,” León said. “In our case, it’s the confidence and security we have with our food.”

One of very few female chefs in the new generation pushing Peru’s gastronomic boom, León knew from a young age that creating in the kitchen was her future. Kjolle, which sits in the same airy building as Central in Lima’s bohemian Barranco neighbourhood, is a “more intuitive concept which doesn’t concentrate on the altitude, rather on the product, which allows us to be a little freer,” she said.

Ignacio Medina, a Spanish-Peruvian food critic based in Lima, said the restaurants' recognition was crucial for Peru as it was facing tough regional competition in the food stakes from Mexico and Argentina. Even so, Peruvian restaurants have been a fixture in the top 50 list for close to a decade.

“Now Peruvian cuisine can become a world trend again,” Medina said. “With this, it regains leadership and re-emerges as a reference point.”

Tsumura believes the enthusiasm Peruvians share for their national cuisine is what unifies and defines them, in a country where gaping racial and class divisions were laid bare by [deadly state repression](#) of anti-government protests earlier this year.

“Peruvian cuisine has always been good, the only problem was actually that we didn't believe it. It's as simple as that,” Tsumura said.

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A restorer works on one of the bronzes – a statue of Apollo in the pose of an archer. Photograph: Guglielmo Mangiapane/Reuters

[Italy](#)

## Rare find of 24 ancient bronzes in Tuscany goes on display in Rome

Statues were unearthed last year in what was a place of worship for both the Etruscans and Romans

[Angela Giuffrida](#) in Rome

Fri 23 Jun 2023 00.00 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 12.07 EDT

A trove of bronze statues buried by mud and boiling water for thousands of years before being found in the ruins of a network of ancient thermal springs in a small town in Tuscany are going on display in Rome.

The 24 bronzes, mostly dedicated to the gods, are the largest discovery of their kind in Italy and were [unearthed last year](#) in the ancient springs of San

Casciano dei Bagni, in what used to be a place of worship for both the Etruscans and Romans.

The statues, which experts believe were commissioned by wealthy families living in the area, include a sleeping Hygeia, the goddess of health, with a snake wrapped around her arm, and one dedicated to Apollo, the god of sun and light.

They once adorned the rim of the oval-shaped baths before being immersed into the water in a spiritual ceremony believed to have occurred in the first century AD.

Entitled Gli Dei Ritornano (The Gods Return), the exhibition at Palazzo Quirinale runs from 23 June until 25 July, before resuming on 2 September until 29 October 2023.

The relics will eventually be displayed in a museum being developed in San Casciano dei Bagni, a hilltop town close to Siena.

Discoveries at the ancient springs, believed to have been built by the Etruscans in the second century BC, have included 6,000 coins, along with an array of votives. These include small figurines depicting the palm of a hand holding money, a penis, a pair of breasts and a child wrapped in swaddling clothes that would have been offered up to the gods and holy water in the hope of bringing conception or general good luck.



One of the statues emerges from the mud during excavations at San Casciano dei Bagni, Tuscany, Italy, in November. Photograph: Jacopo Tabolli/Universita per Stranieri di Siena/EPA

The sanctuary was made more opulent during the Roman period, when it was frequented by emperors including Augustus, and remained active until the 5th century AD before being closed down, but not destroyed, during Christian times. The pools were sealed with heavy stone pillars while the divine statues were left in the water, which was rich in minerals, including calcium and magnesium. The water was considered good for the liver, for treating facial pain and for helping with fertility.

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Academics said diabetes cases would ‘grow aggressively’ in every country and among every age group. Photograph: Peter Byrne/PA Wire

### Diabetes

## More than 1.3bn adults will have diabetes by 2050, study predicts

Number worldwide expected to double, with rises in every country and across every age group

[Andrew Gregory](#) *Health editor*  
[@andrewgregory](#)

Thu 22 Jun 2023 18.30 EDT

The number of adults living with diabetes worldwide will more than double by 2050, according to research that blames rapidly rising obesity levels and widening health inequalities.

New estimates predict the number will rise from 529 million in 2021 to more than 1.3 billion in 2050. No country is expected to see a decline in its diabetes rate over the next 30 years. The findings [were published](#) in The Lancet and The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology journals.

Experts described the data as alarming, saying diabetes was outpacing most diseases globally, presenting a significant threat to people and health systems.

“Diabetes remains one of the biggest public health threats of our time and is set to grow aggressively over the coming three decades in every country, age group and sex, posing a serious challenge to healthcare systems worldwide,” said Dr Shivani Agarwal, of the Montefiore Health System and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

Separately, the UN has predicted that by 2050 the world’s population will be [about 9.8 billion](#). That suggests that by then between one in seven and one in eight people will be living with diabetes.

The research authors wrote: “Type 2 diabetes, which makes up the bulk of diabetes cases, is largely preventable and, in some cases, potentially reversible if identified and managed early in the disease course. However, all evidence indicates that diabetes prevalence is increasing worldwide, primarily due to a rise in obesity caused by multiple factors.”

Structural racism experienced by minority ethnic groups and “geographic inequity” were accelerating rates of diabetes, disease, illness and death around the world, the authors said.

People from marginalised communities are less likely to have access to essential medicines such as insulin, and have worse blood sugar control, a lower quality of life and reduced life expectancy.

The pandemic has amplified diabetes inequity globally. People with diabetes were twice as likely to develop severe infection with Covid-19 and to die compared with those without diabetes, especially among minority ethnic groups, the authors said.

The research outlines how the large-scale and deep-rooted effects of racism and inequity lead to unequal impacts on global diabetes prevalence, care and outcomes.

The negative impacts of public awareness and policy, economic development, access to high-quality care, innovations in management, and sociocultural norms were felt widely by marginalised populations and will be for generations to come, it found.

“Racist policies such as residential segregation affect where people live, their access to sufficient and healthy food and healthcare services,” said co-author Leonard Egede of the Medical College of Wisconsin. “This cascade of widening diabetes inequity leads to substantial gaps in care and clinical outcomes for people from historically disenfranchised racial and ethnic groups, including Black, Hispanic and Indigenous people.”

The structural conditions in the places people live and work have far-reaching, transgenerational negative effects on diabetes outcomes across the world, according to the research.

Dr Alisha Wade, a co-author and an associate professor at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, said: “It is vital that the impact of social and economic factors on diabetes is acknowledged, understood and incorporated into efforts to curb the global diabetes crisis.”

The charity Diabetes UK has previously said that the high number of overweight or obese people – about 64% of adults in England – is translating into [an increase in cases of type 2 cases](#).

The condition is becoming increasingly common among those under the age of 40 and in areas where there are higher levels of deprivation.

The charity said the risk factors of type 2 diabetes were “multiple and complex” and included age, family history, ethnicity and weight.

Chris Askew, the chief executive of Diabetes UK, said: “This important study underlines the sheer scale of the diabetes crisis we’re facing, both in the UK and around the world.

“Your ethnicity, where you live and your income all affect your chances of getting type 2 diabetes, the care you receive and your long-term health, and these are all interlinked.

“The need for concerted cross-government action to address inequalities in diabetes prevalence and outcomes, as well as the underlying conditions of ill health, such as poverty and living with obesity, has never been greater or more urgent.”

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# Rishi Sunak says he is ‘totally, 100% on it’ in battle against inflation – as it happened

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King Charles laughs with Edna Henry at a Buckingham Palace reception to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush. Photograph: Reuters

[Windrush at 75](#)

## King Charles honours ‘immeasurable’ impact of Windrush generation

Comments come in foreword of book of portraits to celebrate 75th anniversary of Windrush crossing

[Alexandra Topping](#) and agencies

Thu 22 Jun 2023 11.05 EDT First published on Thu 22 Jun 2023 03.47 EDT

King Charles has hailed the pioneers of the Windrush generation, saying it is crucially important to recognise the “immeasurable” difference they made to Britain, as the UK marked the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush.

The king joined the descendants of “pioneers” at a service that celebrated the achievements of a generation who were urged to travel to Britain to help with labour shortages in the postwar years only for many of their number to face threats of deportation in their later years.

In a personal tribute in the foreword of a book that accompanies a display of [portraits](#) celebrating the Windrush generation, the king paid tribute to the “indomitable generation”.

“History is, thankfully and finally, beginning to accord a rightful place to those men and women of the Windrush generation,” Charles wrote. “It is, I believe, crucially important that we should truly see and hear these pioneers who stepped off the Empire Windrush at Tilbury in June 1948 – only a few months before I was born – and those who followed over the decades, to recognise and celebrate the immeasurable difference that they, their children and their grandchildren have made to this country.”

[Windrush: Portraits of a Pioneering Generation](#) honours the accomplishments of the Windrush generation and those who followed, and the images are now on public display at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Created by black artists selected by the king, they will also be displayed for two weeks on 500 billboards and 600 shopping centre screens across the UK.

On Thursday in St George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle, the royal family’s place of worship, the king joined 300 guests including young people from schools across England, dignitaries and representatives of charities and community projects.



The Labour peer Valerie Amos sits next to King Charles during the service at St George's Chapel. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

The Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the bishop of Dover, said: "They are pioneers who paved the way for generations who came after them, not merely to survive but to thrive."

The congregation heard the words of John Agar's Remember the Ship – with its stirring exhortation "to remember the ship in citizenship" – recited by pupils from the Archbishop's School in Canterbury. A choir from St Martin-in-the-Fields high school for girls sang Something Inside (So Strong), while the gospel hymn His Eye is on the Sparrow was sung by Jermain Jackman.

Paulette Simpson, the deputy chair of the Windrush Day advisory panel, said the Windrush pioneers had been invisible for too long. "They have been part of the fabric of modern Britain and it is heartwarming to see that not only the pioneers but their descendants in various walks of life are being recognised and written in to British history," she said.



The king meets members of the choir from St Martin-in-the-Fields high school for girls after the service. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

The HMT Empire Windrush first docked in England on 22 June 1948 at Tilbury Docks in Essex, bringing people to Britain from the Caribbean who had answered the call to help fill postwar labour shortages.

The celebrations of their achievements come after the [Windrush scandal](#), exposed by the Guardian in 2018, in which many British citizens, mostly from the Caribbean, were denied access to healthcare and benefits and threatened with deportation despite having the right to live in the UK.

Charles has said the Windrush generation rebuilt a country, after arriving with little more than what they were able to carry with them. He said their stories “help light the path of progress and remind us of a fundamental truth: that though we might all be different, every individual, no matter their background, has something unique to contribute to our society in a way that strengthens us all.”





## [Titanic sub incident](#)

# US navy says it picked up ‘anomaly’ hours after sub began mission – as it happened

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Rescuers continue to scour the north Atlantic for the missing Titan submersible after it disappeared on Sunday while taking tourists to see the wreck of the Titanic. Photograph: EyePress News/Shutterstock

[Titanic sub incident](#)

## Missing Titan likely intact but out of power, says expert who designed deepest-diving submersible

Engineer Ron Allum says missing tourist sub unlikely to have suffered a ‘catastrophic implosion’ but partial flooding could be preventing it from resurfacing

- [Missing Titanic sub – latest updates](#)
- [Full report: rescuers intensify search amid concerns over Titan’s remaining oxygen supply.](#)

[Donna Lu](#) *Science writer*  
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Thu 22 Jun 2023 02.37 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 07.45 EDT

The missing Titan submersible is unlikely to have suffered a catastrophic failure of its pressure hull, according to a deep-sea engineer who designed the vessel that film-maker James Cameron used to reach Earth's deepest point.

Ron Allum, an Australian deep-sea engineer and explorer, co-designed the Deepsea Challenger submersible that Cameron used in 2012 to reach the deepest-known point of Earth's seabed in the Mariana Trench.

Allum also worked with Cameron on his Last Mysteries of the Titanic documentary in 2005.

"Sound travels particularly well underwater," Allum said. "A catastrophic implosion could be heard for thousands of miles and could be recorded."

An implosion would likely trigger signals in military hydrophones, devices used for recording or listening to underwater sounds.

"To me, it sounds like the sub's pressure hull is intact, but it's demobilised from power," Allum said. In such an event, the Titan was likely to have [automatically dropped weights](#) to resurface.

The tourist sub [lost communications in the north Atlantic](#) on Sunday while on a dive to the wreck of the Titanic. How long it would take to retrieve it if found depends on where and what state the vessel is in.

"If the pressure hull is flooded, you're now talking about the dry mass of a vessel. You could be lifting a very heavy weight," Allum said.

"If it were intact, an ROV [remotely operated vehicle] could attach to it and it could at least bring it up to shallower water where they could get a stronger lift cable to it to lift it out of the water ... that ascent may take an hour or two.

"The ROV may have to work around the wreckage ... it may take a few hours to release the sub from the seafloor."

## Graphic

The submersible should have released its drop weights in an emergency but partial flooding of the pressure hull could be preventing the vessel from resurfacing, Allum said.

“If you have water in the pressure hull, it’s quite a large volume. The drop weights usually aren’t that big, and that could be what’s keeping it on the bottom.

'We were hoping this wasn't going to happen': expert says industry had concerns about Titan – video

“It also means that if the occupants are sitting in a half-flooded pressure hull, that could also be catastrophic. They could become hypothermic. I don’t know how well the CO<sub>2</sub> scrubber systems would work if they’re wet.”

Dr Glenn Singleman, an Australian extreme medicine expert who has visited the Titanic shipwreck, said a lack of oxygen and carbon dioxide buildup were worrying concerns for the people onboard the missing submersible.

“You’ve got to control your oxygen flow and you’ve got to remove carbon dioxide and you’ve got to remove water vapour. They’re the three things about the environment internally that you’ve got to control. The fourth thing is temperature ... the water temperature down there is 0 to 1C,” he said.

Singleman has been the expedition physician on several deep-sea exploration projects, including for Cameron’s Titanic documentary, the Deepsea Challenger expedition, and Victor Vescovo’s Five Deeps expedition.

To prevent carbon dioxide buildup, submersibles are equipped with “scrubbers”, usually made of soda lime, which remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the air.

“The problem is that you get to a saturation point after a while, and you’ve got to change out the soda lime,” Singleman said. “CO<sub>2</sub> content in air is about 400 parts per million. As it goes up, over 1,000[ppm], most people

start to get symptomatic, and over 5,000, you're very symptomatic – you get hyperventilation, you get a headache, you just feel awful.”

### Graphic

Singleman added that the oxygen being supplied inside the vessel was likely being delivered to maintain the regular atmospheric concentration of 21% oxygen.

A drop in oxygen levels in the air can result in hypoxia, in which bodily tissues become deprived of adequate supply. Oxygen concentrations of 10% and lower can result in loss of consciousness and death.

Singleman said the Titan's initial 96-hour supply of oxygen would be a figure based on an average person's oxygen consumption at an average metabolic rate.

“You've got no idea how people respond to the stress of a difficult situation – some people can increase their metabolic rate with stress, some people can relax and try to sleep and decrease it.”

### Graphic

Singleman described Paul-Henri Nargeolet, one of the five people on board, as a “legend” in the submersible community and “one of the leading experts” on the Titanic wreck.

“His passion is the Titanic, and he's visited that wreck more than 100 times in submersibles ... Everybody says: why would you go on such a risky venture? The reason is because it's his passion. This is who he is. He's spent a lifetime in submersibles going to these extreme environments, exploring unknown places and bringing back these incredible photographs and incredible stories of what's possible.

“I've talked to PH many times about it. That's worth the risk.”

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## 2023.06.22 - Spotlight

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‘Music’s been good to me’ ... Tony Uter, 92, playing percussion with the Jamaican Jazz Band at the Effra Hall Tavern in Brixton. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Guardian

[Music](#)

# **‘We’ll play until our teeth drop out!’ The long, remarkable lives of Britain’s Windrush-era musicians**

Now in their 80s and 90s, having faced down racism and neglect, musicians of Caribbean heritage are still centre stage in the adopted country where they’ve enriched music in so many ways

[Garth Cartwright](#)

Thu 22 Jun 2023 05.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 10.31 EDT

When the Empire Windrush docked at Tilbury in 1948, passengers disembarking included Trinidadian calypsonians Lord Beginner, Lord Woodbine, Monica Baptiste and Lord Kitchener, the latter serenading the Pathé News film crew with an a cappella version of his song London Is the Place For Me. Until the Commonwealth Immigrant Acts (1962, 1968, 1971) produced a hostile environment for [Caribbean](#) nationals wanting to emigrate, many West Indian musicians would follow them, introducing everything from ska to soca. A handful of them would achieve international success; others would be broken by their experiences. Most were overlooked and would endure many privations, but they all enriched British music in myriad ways.

“I suppose we made some kind of impact,” says the self-effacing Michael “Bami” Rose as he reflects on their legacy ahead of this week’s Windrush 75 commemorations. Bami is preparing for tonight’s residency at Brixton’s Effra Tavern with Jamaican Jazz, an ensemble formed in the early 1990s that paired veterans – Rose, the late trombonist Rico Rodriguez, percussionist Tony Uter, trumpeter Eddie “Tan-Tan” Thornton – with younger Black British players. Rodriguez died in 2015 and Thornton is ailing, but Rose and Uter, 80 and 94, respectively, continue to lead a dynamic outfit. “Musicians play until their teeth drop out!”, Rose says.



Michael 'Bami' Rose playing at the Effra Hall Tavern in Brixton.  
Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Guardian

Having left Jamaica for Britain in 1962 and then co-founded pioneering Black British band Cymande, Rose has since played on countless recording sessions (including Aswad's Warrior Charge), and is a longstanding member of Jools Holland's Rhythm & Blues Orchestra. "Back then, we all listened to the West Indian jazz musicians who were playing here," he says, including the aforementioned Rodriguez (who would later play the trombone riff on A Message to You, Rudy – both Dandy Livingstone's original and the Specials' hit cover). "He was a great help to me when I first got here, he introduced me to many people. He had that great sound: so full!"

Rodriguez is also acknowledged by Uter who learned to drum in Kingston's Salvation Army band before playing with Rastafarian drummer Count Ossie, cutting cane in Florida ("brutal!") and working his way to Britain playing congas in a ship's calypso band in 1959. Since then he has played with many musical greats. "Ronnie Scott, Dizzy Gillespie, Keith Tippetts, Tubby Hayes – I play with all the jazz men," says Uter, smiling at the memories, "and through Rico I play with Prince Buster and plenty other, including Bob Marley. We tour with Bob in 1977 and he a really down to earth man. We tight!" Uter has also worked closely with Linton Kwesi Johnson and today regularly plays alongside Errol Linton and Diz Watson. Is he, I ask, the

oldest working musician in the UK? “Me not sure, but one thing for sure,” says Uter with another wide smile, “I love to make music. My son ask, ‘when you retire?’ and I reply ‘never’. Music’s been good to me and it good *for me.*”

The Windrush musicians forged contemporary jazz alongside their British and African contemporaries – 21-year-old Fela Kuti honed his chops playing trumpet in a multiracial north London jazz band – while working on calypso, ska, pop, rock and reggae sessions: the irrepressible Tan-Tan joined Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, played on the Beatles’ Got to Get You Into My Life and was adored by the Small Faces (who wrote Eddie’s Dreaming for him).

Initially, calypso sold strongly with Kitch, Beginner and Baptiste releasing remarkable records on London’s Melodisc Records. “Calypso was the popular sound in Jamaica in the 1950s,” recalls Uter. “We play it in hotels and on the street and this is how I begin to make a living making music. It get things started for many of us.” Melodisc’s Austrian founder Emile Shalit then launched Blue Beat Records in 1960, focusing on Jamaican music, and its success encouraged Ska Beat, Island, Pama and Trojan Records to follow suit, making London a hub for ska, rocksteady and reggae.



Glenroy Oakley. Photograph: Glenroy Oakley

“I arrived in London from Jamaica aged 11 in 1960,” says Glenroy Oakley, vocalist for Greyhound, a British reggae band who scored three Top 20 hits in 1971-72. “It was a nice time – we played Mick Jagger’s wedding, toured with Bob and Marcia and Toots; Tony Blackburn made Black and White his record of the week. I don’t think we got the recognition we deserved – reggae wasn’t taken very seriously back then. We were on Trojan and while they were good to us that label was pretty wayward.” He chuckles and adds, “but I enjoyed myself and so much wonderful music was made”.

Windrush-era R&B was even more overlooked, but one who attempted it – along with Carl “Kung Fu Fighting” Douglas and Jackie “Keep On Running” Edwards – was Jimmy James, now 83, who arrived in London as vocalist with the Vagabonds in 1964. “We brought a hell of a lot: music, fashion, food,” he says. “Even now the kids try and speak like Jamaicans. At the same time, we had to put up with discrimination: ‘no Irish, no Blacks, no dogs’. How can people be so ignorant?”

Originally intent on performing for West Indian audiences before returning to Jamaica, the Vagabonds were discovered by Pete Meaden, the Who’s mod mentor, who convinced them to stay and produced their 1966 album *The New Religion*. The Vagabonds became mod icons, entering the Top 40 in 1968 with *Red, Red Wine* – the first version to chart – while James later scored several disco hits.

“We didn’t understand rock music at the time,” says James, “so, when we started supporting the Who, we used to laugh and say ‘they must be on drugs!’ They had a lot of anger and that came out in their music. I’ll say this about the Who – they saved our lives. Our van with all our equipment in it got stolen and Roger and Pete and Keith went into all the music shops and got us new keyboards and guitars and drums. For that we are eternally grateful.”

The Who probably were on drugs – amphetamines – while West Indian musicians preferred marijuana. Uter mentions how he began smoking ganja aged 14 and, 80 years on, continues to puff, believing it helps him keep healthy. “Cocaine hurt musicians – look at Tubby Hayes! – but not ganja,” he says, adding “me smoke with everyone” as he lists musicians before

detailing how Sammy Davis Jr would, when performing at London nightspot The Talk of the Town, rush up to Ronnie's during his break, find Uter and the two musicians would go for a smoke up on the club's roof. "Nice man, Sammy," he says.

Using the Empire Windrush as a catch-all for the UK West Indian community's history has rightly been criticised as reductive; noted Caribbean musicians were based here prior to the second world war, such as trumpeters Leslie Thompson and Jiver Hutchinson and bassist Coleridge Goode. Trinidadians Edmundo Ros and Winifred Atwell settled in London in 1937 and 1945 respectively, both achieving huge success: Ros's Latin band – who Uter joined when he first arrived in London – had a fan in Princess Elizabeth while Atwell became the first Black woman to top the UK charts.



Winifred Atwell arrived in the UK from Trinidad in 1945. Photograph: Bert Hardy/Getty Images

But it was the calypsonians who first forged a distinctly Caribbean musical identity in Britain, compounded by steel pan bands who began here in 1951 when Sterling Betancourt decamped from the Trinidad All-Steel Percussion Orchestra's European tour to stay in Britain.



Jamaica's musical culture in the UK meanwhile drew stronger when Duke Vin and Count Suckle both set up sound systems at West Indian parties in the mid-1950s – they organised the UK's first soundclash in 1958. Today, steel pan and sound systems are mainstays of Notting Hill carnival and part of popular music's DNA.

“When we first here there not many clubs that welcome Black people,” says 81-year-old Wally Bryan, “so we take the sound system inside a house and make a party”. Bryan, who runs Supertone Records on Brixton's Acre Lane and The Mighty Supertone sound system, arrived in 1964. He points across Acre Lane to a house and says, “I'd put my sound in a three-storey house like that and 500 people would come. We like it close!”

Both Bryan and James recall the shock of UK closing time. “The concierge told the band to stop playing at 11pm on our first concert,” says James, “and I asked, ‘what did we do wrong?’” He laughs. “In Jamaica we'd just be getting warmed up at 11pm.” “Sound system play music all night,” says Bryan. “Party finish 5am, maybe 9am.”

Bryan has run Supertone Records since 1983 and seen its clientele change from locals queueing for new tunes “from the yard” to online sales now surpassing those across the counter. “The record shop was important for Jamaicans,” he says, “it a place for us to gather and enjoy ourselves. Still is.”



Wally Bryan, 81, the owner of Supertone Records which has been in Brixton for more than 30 years. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Guardian

The ranks of Windrush era musicians who reshaped British culture are thinning – Errol Dixon, the pianist-singer whose 1961 single *Midnight Train* helped establish the Blue Beat label, died suddenly last January having spent the past four decades based in Switzerland (where he still performed 150 nights a year), while sound system don Jah Shaka died in April. After 60-plus years of performing, Jimmy James retired last year due to mobility issues; Dizzy Reece and Ernest Ranglin, once transplants to the UK, remain semi-active nonagenarian musicians in New York and Jamaica respectively. The formidable Eddy Grant – who left British Guiana (now Guyana) in 1960 to join his parents in Kentish Town aged 12 – sued Donald Trump for using *Electric Avenue* on the campaign trail and pulled all his music from streaming services.

The music of these pioneers has gained wider recognition thanks to compilations and reissues in recent years by labels Honest Jon's, Cherry Red, BGO and Cadillac Records, and was prominently featured in Steve McQueen's *Small Axe* TV series, but the longstanding ignorance, neglect and even outright hostility still rankles. "We were fortunate to make a good living but have never really been acknowledged," says James. "West Indians were asked to come here to help rebuild Britain. We did this – and much

more. Some people acknowledge it, while others still mutter about us being here.” He says that the Mobo awards have never honoured his generation. But he takes solace in their legacy: “What we did, we did it well.”

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# Windrush generation celebrated in a series of 10 portraits – in pictures

Laceta Reid by Serge Attukwei Clottey. Photograph: Matthew Hollow Photography/the artist

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‘Political points of view have moved from the logical to the emotional hemisphere of the brain’ ... Robert Rinder. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Guardian

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# **‘I have overwhelming impostor syndrome’: TV judge Rob Rinder on empathy, shame and survival**

[Emine Saner](#)

He grew up gay in a working-class community, before becoming a criminal barrister, then moving into television. Now he has written his first novel



[@eminesaner](#)

Thu 22 Jun 2023 05.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 05.21 EDT

Rob Rinder had fantasies about the kind of novel he would like to write. Something the literary giants, whose books lined his study, might create; something inspired by his life as a barrister, that said something big and important about justice, and who gets it. He is, he says with a laugh, someone who “disappears into their own imagination while they’re on a treadmill and has a deluded sense of their own cultural grandeur. Then I tried to sit down and write that earnest book, and it wasn’t emerging.”

For years, he says: “I’d overprojected value, even humanity, on the great writers, forgetting the greatness of the books that I’ve read and loved. It

takes such talent for you to disappear into a joyous afternoon. Jilly Cooper!” He almost shouts her name in evangelical praise, when we meet at his publicist’s office. “I mean, tell me Riders isn’t a work of art.”

Rinder, 45, is great company – garrulous, a little gossipy, interested in anything and everything (he spends the first few minutes of the interview questioning me about my life until I have to move him on). There is something golden about his colouring – hair, skin, eyes – that makes him look cherubic, and gives him an added sheen of fun. But, as anyone who has watched his TV shows will know, he can also be very thoughtful. His new legal thriller, *The Trial*, is more Cooper than Kafka (no bad thing, in my book). A young barrister, Adam Green, is struggling through his pupillage – his apprenticeship in chambers – while investigating his client’s case to prove his innocence. Justice, let’s say, is not clear cut. Rinder is already working on the second in the series, this time partly set in the world of daytime TV.



‘There’s a moment where you realise that what you’re doing has the most profound value to uphold democracy under the rule of law’ ... Rinder on ITV’s *Judge Rinder*. Photograph: ITV



How much of Rinder is in Green? They are both Jewish, with single mothers, from working-class backgrounds, navigating an Oxbridge-dominated profession. Adam has, says Rinder, “that thing that anybody I like feels, which is this overwhelming sense of impostor syndrome, of not belonging. He has always felt somehow that he lucked out.” Does Rinder – successful barrister, TV “judge”, documentary-maker, now novelist – feel like that? “At some point every day.”

He pauses and rephrases, carefully building an argument. “The difficulty is, we’d have to define what the definition of luck is, and how much of that you make and how much work goes into creating that luck.”

Rinder, who specialised in international fraud but also took on wider cases – he represented British soldiers charged with manslaughter after the deaths of Iraqi detainees – would often be “the de facto decision-maker on an extremely important decision. Would there be moments where I’d be in that room thinking: ‘What are you asking me for?’ Of course.”

Rinder grew up in the north London suburb of Southgate, where his father was a taxi driver and his mother started her own publishing business from her bedroom. He went to grammar school, then the University of Manchester, but at the time he was called to the bar, in 2001, more than [80% of barristers](#) had been to Oxbridge. Did he feel out of place? “There are two answers to that – yes and no, which is not very helpful,” he says. “The ‘no’ is, I think, being gay and growing up in a working-class community, you intuitively understand you’re outside, from the moment of consciousness of being gay, or even being culturally curious.” There was an idea that certain things – books, music – were for other people. “‘This is for the Hampstead Jews, not the Southgate ones.’ So there was a sense, from a young age, of wanting to reclaim my own thing. I remember, in the silliest way, feeling a different sort of impostor syndrome.”

He would go on a day trip to a stately home, for instance, “and think that it was preposterous that I didn’t live there.” He created his own identity, his own voice, with his clipped tones – “I describe myself as being mugged by a Mitford” – and I can picture Rinder as a sophisticated teenage raconteur amid bewildered school friends. “I didn’t suit the condition of childhood at all well,” he says. “I just thought the whole thing was pointless.” He used to

enjoy listening to his mum's friends complain about their difficult relationships, and although he was fairly popular, his best friend at school was the school nurse.

Growing up with my incredibly emotionally literate mum has deprived me of a good five chapters of an autobiography

Rinder's home life was loving and although his parents split up when he was about seven, his mother encouraged a close relationship with his father and family. "Growing up with my incredibly emotionally literate mum has deprived me of a good five chapters of an autobiography," he says. When he got divorced from his husband in 2018, her "first question was: 'How can I be mindful in this conversation?'" He looks mock-aggrieved.

Was there a feeling that he was entitled – in the best sense of the word – to more from life? That he was deserving? "There's a Yiddish word that best describes it – *davka*. It can mean being contrarian, difficult, but I think it's something else." His maternal grandfather was a [Holocaust](#) survivor, and Rinder witnessed how he had rebuilt his life. His mother, too, personifies it. "The world had crafted a narrative for them, and they reclaimed the pen – in other words, *davka*. So, it's not so much entitlement or deserving, it's more important – that you have the right to be the creator of your own story."



Rob Rinder in BBC's *The Holy Land and Us*. Photograph: Tom Hayward/BBC/Wall to Wall

Rinder was 21 when he came out, “but I was meandering out at university. It wasn’t so much that I was worried about being gay, as much as doing something that would make my mum fearful for me. When I realised I was gay, HIV/Aids was a death sentence, a looming shadow. It was the time of section 28, where this was something dirty and furtive.” Also, he says: “There were so many complexities about disappointing my mum. We were the first divorced family [in her family], there was pressure on her as a single mum. At that time, being gay was cloaked in shame, and I was probably conscious about wanting to make sure my mum wouldn’t experience that.” He had also wanted to marry and have children. “That wasn’t part of the narrative for gay men then.” Accepting his sexuality “required a conscious loss”.

Becoming a barrister suited Rinder’s relatively late-discovered love of learning, the debating skills he nurtured at university and a genuine desire for advocacy. “There’s something enormously powerful about standing between the individual [accused of a crime] and the power of the state. There’s a moment – it happens to all young barristers – where you realise that what you’re doing has the most profound value to uphold democracy under the rule of law. It sounds sanctimonious, or about your own importance. It’s not quite like that.” It’s not about him specifically, he says, more what it means for us all.

He is dismayed about the state of the criminal justice system, which many have warned is at breaking point after years of underfunding, including the dismantling of legal aid. “Having a lawyer that can represent you, making sure that victims are served, making sure that if somebody’s liberty is going to be removed, it’s done so to the highest possible standard – what other value do we have as a democracy under the rule of law?” says Rinder. “As soon as that starts to be eroded, it’s not a small thing, it’s foundational. When justice becomes the possession exclusively of the privileged, the violence and damage that will ensue is impossible to overstate.”



‘There’s something enormously powerful about standing between the individual and the power of the state’ ... Robert Rinder. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Guardian

His work as a barrister exposed him to people from all backgrounds and life experiences. It has given him real empathy, and an understanding of complexity. At one point, he was representing members of the far-right National Front “who would express homophobic views in front of me. With people who had any kind of energy, capacity, time for hate, there would be this sort of sea of human debris around them.”

In 2010, Rinder went to the Turks and Caicos Islands as counsel to a team investigating and prosecuting allegations of fraud and corruption. Bored at the weekends, he started writing scripts. He worked with a production company and went to meet a commissioning editor at ITV. She thought his script was terrible – but she liked Rinder and asked if he would do his own Judge Judy-type reality court show.

The ITV show, Judge Rinder, started in 2014 and he was a TV natural. There were some mild accusations at the time that disadvantaged people were being used for entertainment, but although Rinder could certainly be funny and withering, his fundamental kindness was never far from the surface. “Anybody who thinks [it was exploitative] can’t have watched it.

Sometimes, you might laugh at somebody because of the silliness.” He gives the example of a woman suing her dentist: ““Where did you get your teeth done?’ ‘In my mouth.’ You’re going to laugh, it’s funny.” Many of the cases were family conflicts and relationship breakdowns, and he says he was proud that, for some: “It was the first opportunity they had to be forced to be in a space where they would hear one another.” He wasn’t, he says, “eviscerated” by his fellow barristers “because at the heart of it was the integrity of the legal decision, even if it was a silly case”.

Rinder still brings joy to TV – his facial expressions when he competed on *Strictly Come Dancing* are seared into my brain – but in recent times he has made serious and moving documentaries, including an exploration of [Israel and Palestine](#) and [My Family, the Holocaust and Me](#), both for the BBC. His maternal grandfather, known as Morris, was born in Poland; his family were sent to the Treblinka camp, where they were murdered, but Morris, a fit young man, was sent to work in a factory, then to other forced-labour camps. Being the grandchild of a Holocaust survivor, says Rinder, has “informed my politics, my view of the world, my instinctive reaction to people, this idea of who in the community is a bystander, a rescuer, a perpetrator”. In 1945, his grandfather was one of several hundred Jewish orphans who were flown to the Lake District to begin new lives; Morris lied, saying he was younger than he was to get here. There are parallels with today’s migrant crisis, with young people, particularly men, accused of “faking” their age to come to the UK.

It seems Rinder still can’t reconcile the struggle between his innate compassion and his respect for the rule of law. “It’s a complex dynamic, right? What I will say is language matters, how we think about who a refugee is matters.” It’s the dehumanisation of refugees that appals him. “Think about my grandfather and others. Gradually, like most refugees, they work, pay taxes, contribute, and they’re imbued with a passion as a result, and an understanding of what it means to have the gift of living in a democracy under the rule of law. I think his story is really inspirational. Once you start making that case, and you can put a face and a name to it, that changes the conversation.”

But he also has understanding for people who feel threatened by the idea of refugees. “Many are in communities lacking privilege, who already have

scarce resources. It's not necessarily about racism, though it's easy to dismiss it as that and so fail to listen."

It's the same with ideas about prison, when he hears they are "too soft". He says: "It's not bleeding-heart liberalism, it's the straightforward reality of what these places look like – addiction, huge swathes of people with special educational needs, that dark drainpipe from school. What are we doing?"

A few months ago, Rinder was touted as a potential Conservative London mayor. Is he going to stand? "I think it's highly unlikely, don't you?" he laughs. Is he a Conservative? "I'm not a member of a political party," he says, not answering the question. He likes to remain impartial, not least because he is an occasional presenter on ITV's Good Morning Britain, but also, I suspect, because he is so conditioned to sifting the evidence before making a decision that he can't be a political tribalist.

Rinder still practises law to the extent that he lectures, offers advice to some organisations and mentors young barristers. But he seems more keen to use his profile to highlight issues he cares about. "The reason I make documentaries is because I'm convinced, especially with social media, that political points of view have moved from the logical to the emotional hemisphere of the brain. That's exacerbated by echo chambers." People with an opposing view, he says, "interfere with your sense of identity and safety. So how can you have a conversation with goodwill?" He wants more listening, "to say: 'I hear you', and mean it. To say: 'Let me tell you a story.'"

The Trial by Rob Rinder is published by Century on 22 June (£20). To support the Guardian and Observer, order your copy at [guardianbookshop.com](https://guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply.

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Don't be fooled by fakes! Illustration: Ryan Gillett/The Guardian

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# Massive discounts and midweek mini-breaks: 20 ways to book a fantastic, more affordable holiday

Keen to snag a holiday bargain – while avoiding scammers and anything too good to be true? Here is everything you need to know

[Rachel Dixon](#)

Thu 22 Jun 2023 00.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 13.46 EDT

The summer holidays are almost upon us, which, for an increasing number of Britons, means only one thing: being scammed out of thousands of hard-earned pounds. Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, [revealed in May](#) that it had received 6,457 reports of holiday fraud in the last financial year, an increase of 41% on the previous year. The average loss was £2,372 per person, with 44% of victims in their 20s and 40s – dispelling the myth that only older people fall prey to fraudsters.

Even without the scams, holidays can be a huge expense in a cost of living crisis – and Which? reported that getaways this summer could [cost up to 70% more](#) than last year. But before you resign yourself to another summer at home, try these booking tips to outsmart the scammers and bag a great deal.

## Beware clones and fakes

One of the biggest threats comes from cloned comparison, airline and holiday websites. These look like the real deal but have a small change to the url, from .co.uk to .org, for example. They may even send fake confirmation emails or booking references – Anna Bowles, the head of consumer policy and enforcement at the UK Civil Aviation Authority, says: “Some victims only realise they have fallen victim to fraud when they are at the airport to check in for their flight, only to be told that their booking does

not exist.” Check the url carefully and Google the site to find the official one.

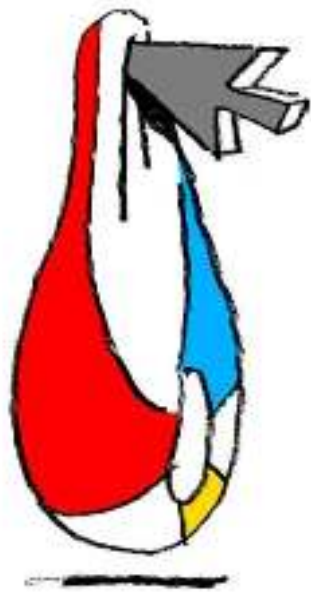
Fake sites, as opposed to clones, can often be spotted by spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and low-quality pictures. Valid businesses should have a phone number and registered address and, ideally, accreditation from a travel body such as Abta or Atol. Worryingly, Bowles says an emerging trend is fake Atol protect numbers, so cross-check on the Atol website. Sites such as Trustpilot can verify the company is genuine.

Don’t trust companies whose only online presence is on social media and don’t click on links in social media posts or emails. Never respond to unsolicited emails, calls or texts.

## **Don’t be fooled by the pictures**

Fake listings steal images of gorgeous villas/luxury hotels/fancy apartments and pass them off as their own. Do a reverse image search (right-click on the picture and select “search image with Google”) to see where else the image appears online. If the same picture is illustrating multiple different properties, it’s a scam.

At the less extreme end of the spectrum, keep an eye out for fish-eye lenses that make rooms look bigger than they are; overly staged images and closeups of objects (designed to distract you from, say, a grotty bathroom); and signs of digital manipulation – stretched or blurred edges, odd shadows and unrealistic colours.



Check travel websites' claims with Google Maps and Street View.  
Illustration: Ryan Gillett/The Guardian

## **Use a map**

Some hotels and holiday homes may stretch the truth about the location – “a stone’s throw from the beach” could require a very strong arm. Put the address into Google Maps to check, and consider using Street View (although bear in mind it might not be up to date if the property has been recently refurbished). Make sure the location suits you as well as the property itself: has it got good transport links and nearby shops/restaurants, for example? Claire Wills, the director of the holiday rental site [Coolstays](#), says: “We hear lots of stories about guests who try to get to very rural places without a car or any supplies and expect Deliveroo to reach them.”

## **Read online reviews ...**

Check out the reviews on the business’s own website and on sites such as TripAdvisor or FeeFo. If there are no first-person reviews, only edited (or invented) testimonials, that could be a red flag. Ditto very old reviews, suspiciously similar reviews, a sudden flood of rave reviews and one-off reviews from users who have never posted before. It can also be useful to

read the responses from the owners/managers – are they polite, friendly, open to constructive criticism?

## **... but don't let one or two bad reviews put you off**

Reviews are subjective, after all – and some unscrupulous reviewers may be working for a rival business or trying to wangle an undeserved refund.

## **Don't forget word of mouth**

A personal recommendation from someone you know and trust is worth more than the opinions of 100 anonymous keyboard warriors. Wills says it is often the best way to find hidden gems.

## **Consider a travel agent**

Believe it or not, high-street travel agents still exist, and those that have survived are likely to offer a great service. They will help to find the best deals and support you if anything goes wrong.

## **Go direct for a discount**

Rory Boland, the editor of Which? Travel, says if you want a good hotel deal, just phone up and ask. “Hoteliers and B&B owners are often stuck in contracts with online booking websites that prevent them from offering you a better price on their own websites. But on the phone, they can do any deal they want, and they usually will,” he says. “When I have phoned directly, they’ve usually been able to beat the online price, or at least match it and throw in a room upgrade or meal voucher. Plus, more of the money is going to the owner rather than a middleman.”

## **Look out for hidden fees**

The headline price might be appealing, but make sure you read the small print to see what is included. Paying for extras such as service fees, baggage allowance, transfers and breakfast can add up quickly.

## Double-check important details

Identify your holiday priorities and check your booking really does fit the bill. For example, Wills says: “Some ‘dog-friendly’ places ask you to confine your beloved pooch to one area of the house.”



Save money by travelling out of season. Illustration: Ryan Gillett/The Guardian

## Be flexible with dates

Do you have school-age children or work in education? If not, don't travel in the school summer holidays. The weather can be lovely in spring and autumn, and prices are far lower. If you are going very early or late in the season, though, do check that the hotel isn't doing any maintenance work and that everything is open: pool, restaurants, attractions etc. If you are tied to the school holidays, Karen Williams, a travel expert at [Eurocamp](#), says the May half-term or the last week of the summer holidays in September tend to be cheaper than July and August. Midweek breaks are cheaper than weekends. Williams says: “Don't restrict yourself to traditional holiday durations, such as one week, 10 days or a fortnight. Play around with the length of your trip by a few nights either way to get the best prices.”

## **Flying is not the only option ...**

... and it's obviously not the greenest option. If you must fly, Tuesday tends to be the cheapest day. Boland has plenty of other money-saving flight tips: "If you are flexible on your destination, set up price alerts on flight comparison websites, such as Skyscanner, for multiple countries. These will alert you to price drops on the route." He also suggests keeping an eye out for new airlines. "There have been cheap deals to New York and Boston in 2023 because new budget airlines, such as Norse and Play, launched flights and other carriers dropped their prices to compete." Finally, he says it's not worth paying for seat selection. "Our research suggests that you have a strong chance of being seated with your travel companions even if you don't pay – Ryanair is really the only exception to this rule."

Otherwise, consider taking the train or a ferry, booking as far in advance as possible for the best prices. Interrailing around Europe can be good value for families – two children under 12 travel free with every adult. Companies such as Eurocamp often have free ferry offers when you book accommodation through them.

## **Go with a group**

Teaming up with friends or family can be a good way to save money. Big holiday homes tend to work out much cheaper per head than those that sleep two to six, and [more than 100 YHA hostels](#) in England and Wales are available for exclusive hire from as little as £7 a night per person. There is also a recent trend for whole campsite bookings, which can work out at less than a tenner a night per person.

## **Book (way) in advance**

The bad news is that the best deals for this summer have long gone, although there are still bargains to be had from mid-autumn onwards. The good news is that now is a great time to book for next summer. If you're worried about paying out so far in advance in case the company goes bust, Angus Kinloch, the managing director of [Ski Line](#), a specialist travel agent, suggests snooping on Companies House. "This site allows users to view the latest company accounts to see if it is profitable and likely to still be in business when you take your holiday. A business showing negative shareholders' funds or accumulated losses isn't likely to be trading for very long."

## **Don't bank on a last-minute bargain**

Dan Fox, the managing director of the tour operator [Ski Weekends](#), says: "Late deals do still exist with the major package operators because they have already paid for the flight and accommodation and need to sell it." However, he adds: "The overcapacity that used to exist has all but disappeared, so these deals are few and far between; don't bank on finding one." Maximise your chances by signing up for email alerts on last-minute offers from operators, hotels and spas, or gamble on an impromptu UK minibreak – boutique hotels often discount massively on the day if they aren't fully booked.

## **Beware huge discounts**

Having said that, early-bird or last-minute offers are one thing, but unrealistically big discounts or very time-sensitive deals ("Act now!") may well be a scam. Even if the company is genuine, Mark Nathan, the owner of [Chalets1066](#) in Les Gets, France, says: "It is easy to be attracted by offers such as 50% off, but this often means that the list price is inflated enormously. You have to ask the question: do you trust a company that inflates the list price and tries to make huge profits, and only discounts when a week is not selling?"



## **Follow payment guidelines**

Kinloch says: “Scammers play on people’s greed, asking clients to pay for their holiday away from the website where the listing is so they can avoid paying commission. Always follow the payment guidelines when booking on sites such as Airbnb.” Legitimate websites with secure payment systems have an SSL certificate, indicated by “https” rather than “http” in the url, and a padlock symbol. They will also have a privacy policy explaining how they store your data. Never give out personal or financial information over the phone, and avoid paying by bank transfer. “Using a credit card will offer you extra protection under section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act,” says Boland. PayPal’s Buyer Protection programme is another good option.

## **Buy travel insurance**

If travelling in Europe, apply for a global health insurance card (Ghic), which entitles you to limited emergency healthcare. But you still need travel insurance – annual multi-trip cover is [often the best value](#) if you are going away more than once a year. “Always take out travel insurance at the same time you book your holiday. This ensures you are protected if you can’t travel, which is especially useful if you or one of your party becomes unwell, says Boland. “Read your policy document carefully so you understand what is covered. For example, last year we found that four in 10 policies won’t cover you in the event of strikes by airline or airport staff.”

## **Price isn’t everything**

For many, the cheapest option is the only option. But if you can afford it, consider paying a little more to support independent businesses with sound environmental policies. You may even be able to help someone else have a holiday – some retreat venues and festivals operate on a “pay what you can” basis, with better-off customers subsidising others. The [Greenbelt festival](#) in Northamptonshire, for example, is £190 for a standard ticket or £230 for a supporter ticket; the latter helps cover the cost of free and discounted places for people on benefits or in financial difficulties.

## And finally ...

“If it sounds too good to be true, it most definitely is,” says Pauline Smith, the head of Action Fraud, and pretty much every other travel expert. You have been warned.

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## 2023.06.22 - Opinion

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- Seven years on, the UK and EU are still drifting apart. The public wants a change
- Back off, sourdough! All hail the glorious return of the sliced white loaf
- The climate crisis is this century's biggest threat. We need a global finance pact that reflects the task ahead



People arriving at Tilbury docks on HMT Empire Windrush, 22 June 1948.  
Photograph: TopFoto

[Opinion Windrush at 75](#)

## **They survived and thrived in a hostile Britain. That's why we revere the Windrush pioneers**

[Hugh Muir](#)



Docking 75 years ago, they had no idea of the difficulties ahead. This country made nothing easy. It should salute their achievement

Thu 22 Jun 2023 01.00 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 09.19 EDT

Look again at that picture taken 75 years ago at Tilbury docks. Look at those people as they posed for the historic photographs. Look at their faces; wearied from a month of travel, etched with joy, hope, bewilderment and lurking stage left, just out of sight, foreboding.

As the descendants of that Windrush generation, we get to look at those faces every day in the pictures of our own families that we hang on the walls and in our front rooms. They have the same posed smiles, the demeanour of all adventurers who smile at the outset of an uncertain journey. There were 492 of them and they knew they had to impress and account for themselves. The attire was pin-sharp, whatever could be said of them on arrival, it was not to be that they were slovenly. They knew enough to show that they came in peace. Some sang and exuded bonhomie for [Pathé News](#), but others interviewed on the day sought to echo the self-effacement and deprecation they saw as essentially English. They made the best of it; but they didn't know much at all. They would have to learn much quickly in turbulent decades.

Where would they live? Around 236 of the men would be bussed to the half light of [an underground shelter](#) under Clapham Common in south London. It was dark, a bit damp and cramped, as if they had transferred from a ship to the innards of a submarine. But it was English dry land, and proximity to a labour exchange brimming with postwar work offered the springboard that allowed many to rent rooms and buy homes in nearby Brixton, making it the unofficial black capital of Britain – and Europe. In time they would migrate to other big cities where work was available, Birmingham, Manchester – where [dock and construction work](#) could be found – and on to Leeds and [Nottingham](#) as well.

But smiling on the dock, how could they have known about the No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs signs to come. The exploitative landlords; the fact that [Peter Rachman](#), known as the worst of them – widely reviled, and rightly so, as king of slum landlords – would become a go-to guy because he at least was willing to let them live in his squalid accommodation, albeit at an extortionate cost. The rapacious exploiter as saviour. They took what they could get.

They didn't know what lay ahead, and yet they prevailed. They rented rooms, worked hard and saved cash. My uncle, a contractor – a bit of a wheeler-dealer – helped guys find rooms, bought some houses, rented out more rooms. My dad, who arrived in 1953, stayed in one of them: part of the Caribbean-to-UK underground railroad, until he moved into his own place, and thanks to carpentry jobs, bought his own.

Things moved fast. According to the [Imperial War Museum](#), when the first US GIs arrived in Britain in 1942, there were thought to be between 8,000 and 10,000 black people in Britain, scattered mainly around the many ports. By 1958, as families grew, relatives left behind in the Caribbean were sent for and others, like my own father, came by sea and air to try their luck, 125,000 had arrived.

They helped each other prevail. My dad ran the “pardner”, the unofficial savings scheme whereby a group of people threw money in the pot and at the end of the week, one of them received the total for their own use – seed capital for a house or for furniture. People would knock on the door and hand to me, barely a teenager, their contribution to pass on when Dad came

home from work. When all the money was in, one of them would come back to collect it all, and bounce away smiling about the acquisition that would follow or the bill that could finally be paid. Sniffy, distrustful banks weren't an option, so they trusted each other.

They came for employment, but what did they know about what would happen at work? Jobs were available and they were ready to graft, but their faces would fit one day and jar the next. There was no employment or discrimination law on the buses (until the 1960s, a colour bar pertained on Bristol's buses), or the trains or at Ford or on the building sites. Not until 1968 did the [Race](#) Relations Act render unlawful acts of discrimination in employment, housing and advertising. My dad was laid off from one building site because he drove a nicer car than the foreman, and made the mistake of parking it where the boss could see it.

They prevailed, with a bit of help. No blacks, No Irish, said the signs and, for those so targeted, that forged camaraderie. Ruddy-faced Tom Norton worked alongside my dad on the building sites and would tell him of opportunities. One of those led Dad to Lambeth council in south London where he joined the direct labour organisation building homes and at the end of his working life, building Brixton Recreation Centre. Two decades later, when Dad retired in traction, having fallen off scaffolding into an as yet waterless pool, we visited him in hospital, and Tom Norton was there.





The Clapham South deep-level shelter where 236 of the Windrush passengers were housed, 22 June 1948. Photograph: TopFoto

Everything was new that first day. What did they know as the ship docked and the news cameras whirled, of how Britain would view their children? How so many in English schools would quickly be condemned by inevitability of geography and by bureaucratic design to the worst classes and over represented in the schools for those deemed educationally subnormal. That was a shock to those who saw the educational opportunities as the prize most worth having. Most thought a free British schooling system staffed by teachers, a highly respected breed in the Caribbean, would be the least of their worries. Instead those in London in 1967 found the proportion of their children [diverted to ESN schools \(28%\)](#), was almost double that in mainstream schools (15%).

Prevailing on education remains an objective today – witness the [statistics on race disparities](#) within our schools system – but back then it took many forms. Saturday supplementary schools in draughty halls and churches, campaigns by black teachers and activists and left-leaning institutions exposing the discrimination, and its terrible effects on those least able to navigate the system.

The campaigns were macro and micro. My mother, armed with a bible and a food thermos, with children underfoot, staged a day-long sit-in directly outside our director of education's private office when my sister was allocated a lesser school than merited. The director hunkered down – for who was he to be challenged by a female immigrant, but she had stuff to eat and read, more patience than him and a deal of indignation. By day's end, the allocation was changed. It took cussedness to prevail.

How could they ever have known at Tilbury dock that the prejudices of those who regretted their presence here would be conveyed by the forces of law and order? The stops, the searches, the Vagrancy Act 1824, known as the “sus law”, which proved ideal for the targeting of black communities. Who could predict the over-surveillance, the under-protection, the flimsy arrests, the violence, the arbitrary raids.

As a child, I returned home from playing football on a local street to see a row of police vans slowly turning the corner and entered our house to find it dishevelled, my parents angry and traumatised. There had been a very public drugs raid because the police detained someone and said “give us a name”, and so he did, prompting a visit to our house, where all there was to uncover was domesticity and hymn books. We tidied up, we prevailed.

And that's what I see when I look at those arrival pictures. Bright people, smart people, tough people, adaptable people. People who didn't know what awaited them but largely did what they intended to do when they bought their tickets: made a better life for themselves and those of us who follow.

And I see a journey that at its end and through the years made this a better country. Their sweat and that of their descendants helped build our infrastructure – physical and social, their creativity infuses our politics, our industry, our arts and culture, our sport.

They faced challenges and today, we their descendants face challenges and a country that has still to come to terms with its ambivalence. Consider the [Windrush scandal](#). Consider this week's revelation that Suella Braverman [has disbanded the Home Office's own Windrush reform unit](#). Consider the fact, repeated in [a Home Office document leaked last year](#), that “during the period 1950-1981, every single piece of immigration or citizenship

legislation was designed at least in part to reduce the number of people with black or brown skin who were permitted to live and work in the UK”.

But then, for today, take a moment, look at the picture, look at them, then look at Britain. Who knew?

- Hugh Muir is the Guardian’s executive editor, Opinion

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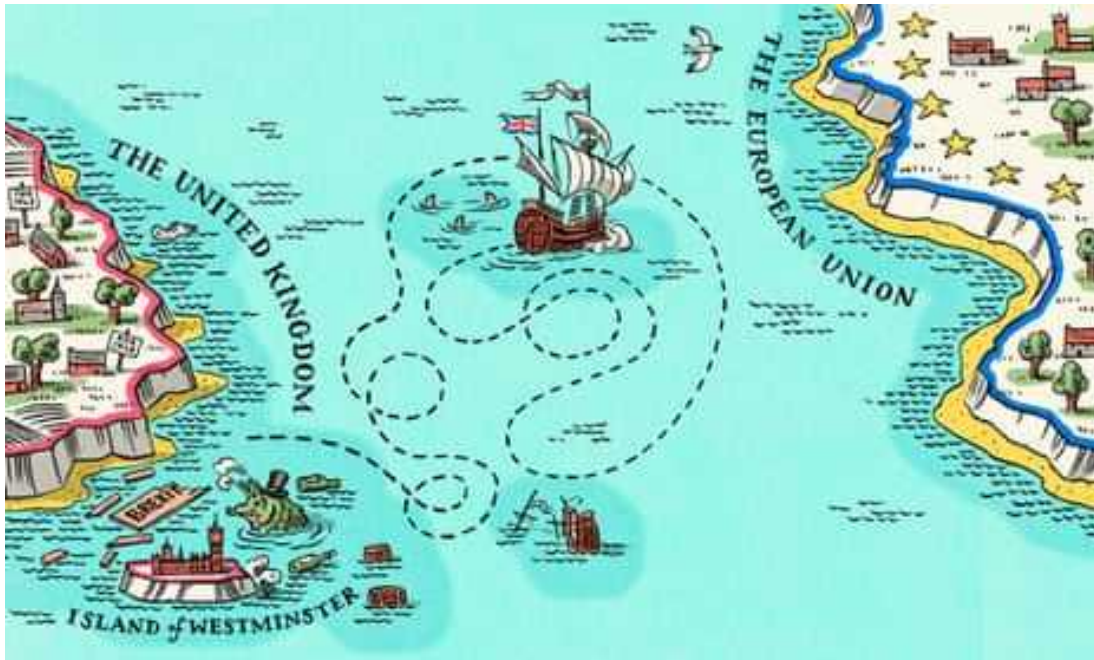


Illustration: Bill Bragg/The Guardian

[OpinionBrexit](#)

**Seven years on, the UK and EU are still drifting apart. The public wants a change**

[Timothy Garton Ash](#)



Britain is like a sailing boat in the middle of the Channel, struggling for direction. It needs a bold new captain and a new crew

Thu 22 Jun 2023 03.00 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 07.23 EDT

As we approach the seventh anniversary of Britain's fateful vote, on 23 June 2016, to leave the EU, the state of UK-EU relations is superficially encouraging and structurally depressing.

Britain is like a sailing boat faffing around in the middle of the Channel. Most of its passengers want it to steer closer to the continental coast and even the captain seems willing to make some modest adjustments to his course. But strong winds and currents are pushing the boat further away from the continent. It will require a much more decisive change of course from a new captain, after a different crew comes onboard next year, for the forces of convergence to prevail over those of divergence.

In YouGov's most recent regular poll, taken last month, 56% of those asked said Britain was wrong to leave the EU against 31% who said it was right; 62% said [Brexit has been "more of a failure"](#) against just 9% for "more of a success". In a poll by Opinium, which offered four options for the future

relationship, 36% of British respondents chose [“we should rejoin the EU”](#) and another 25% “we should remain outside the EU but negotiate a closer relationship with them than we have now”.

The politics lag behind the public. Rishi Sunak, the prime minister, can see the pragmatic case for better economic relations with the UK’s biggest single market, but he’s also a more genuine Brexiter than his disgraced predecessor Boris Johnson ever was. Sunak’s world is [Silicon Valley at one end, dynamic Indo-Pacific capitalism](#) at the other. He is even hesitating about paying the bill for Britain to rejoin the [Horizon programme of scientific cooperation](#), despite an almost unanimous chorus of scientists from both sides of the Channel in favour of doing so. Given the continued strength of the Brexiter in his party, and the intimidating power of the Eurosceptic press, only small incremental improvements can be expected on his watch.

Keir Starmer, Labour’s leader, is relentlessly focused on winning next year’s general election. He believes this requires winning back voters in “red wall” seats who felt passionately about Brexit and, therefore, switched to the [Conservatives](#) in Johnson’s 2019 “get Brexit done” election. (In her book *Beyond the Red Wall*, the public opinion researcher Deborah Mattinson, who advises Starmer, records one such voter saying that when he heard the referendum result in 2016, he felt “as if England had won the World Cup”.)





‘A Keir Starmer government will undoubtedly seek a better deal with the EU.’ Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Starmer recently had an article in the rightwing, fiercely Eurosceptic Daily Express in which he roundly asserted that [“Britain’s future is outside the EU](#). Not in the single market, not in the customs union, not with a return to freedom of movement. Those arguments are in the past, where they belong.” He went on to say that “the paper-thin Tory deal has stifled Britain’s potential and hugely weighted trade terms towards the EU. Every day it isn’t built upon, our European friends and competitors aren’t just eating our lunch – they’re nicking our dinner money as well.”

On a close reading, this article was actually making the case for a new deal with the EU, but it was also playing the old New Labour game of appeasing the Eurosceptic tabloids – and thus giving hostages to fortune. (Shortly before the May 1997 election, Tony Blair got a commentary placed in the Sun saying he would “slay the Euro-dragon”.) The Express savaged its own guest author, gleefully quoting a Conservative MP who said [“trusting Sir Keir with Brexit is like trusting Dracula at a blood bank”](#).

If Labour wins the next election, with or without the need for some kind of parliamentary support from the Liberal Democrats or Scottish National party, the new government will undoubtedly seek a better deal with the EU.



Shadow foreign secretary [David Lammy indicated as much](#) in a speech to business leaders this week. It's not implausible to think that by the 10th anniversary of the referendum vote, in June 2026, the review of the EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement, which is scheduled for 2025, might have opened the door to a closer economic relationship.

This might include significant elements of involvement in the single market and customs union, with corresponding regulatory alignment. It's hard to see how Labour can even remotely hope to achieve its hugely ambitious target of [“securing the highest sustained growth in the G7”](#) without reducing the post-Brexit friction with the country's largest market.

There's an interesting connection here with the war in Ukraine. The debate about Ukraine's future relationship with the EU is now focused on incremental, progressive integration, in areas such as energy, environment, transport and the single market. If Ukraine can have progressive integration, can't the UK have some progressive reintegration?

Yet there remains the underlying dynamic of cross-Channel divergence. With every passing month, the UK and the EU are visibly drifting apart. Previously strong cultural, commercial, artistic, scientific and political ties are weakening. A British university vice-chancellor tells me that his intake of EU students has fallen by 90%. Britain actually has more immigration overall than before the [Brexit](#) vote, but less from the EU.

I have spent time recently in Ireland, Estonia, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden. In all these north European countries, which once looked on the British as special partners and friends inside the [European Union](#), Britain is now barely mentioned, except as the object of pity, ridicule and contempt. The grimy farce around Johnson's resignation honours list and his disgracefully Trumpian departure from the House of Commons have only reinforced those sentiments. These countries have forged new partnerships, as people do after they separate. They have moved on.

So has the EU itself. In response to the Covid crisis, and above all to the war in Ukraine, Europe's core political community is experiencing a period of rather dynamic integration in areas of vital interest to Britain: security policy

and defence procurement; digital policy and the regulation of AI; large-scale support for industry to make the green transition, competing with US Bidenomics on the one hand and Chinese industrial policy on the other.

Britain is not standing still either. Both the Conservative government and the [Labour](#) opposition are developing their own variants of those policies, which may diverge from and compete with the EU's. In several key areas, such as tech, AI, creative industries and financial services, Britain still has strengths that make it a serious competitor.

But it will take a lot of bold strategy from a new British government, and goodwill from both sides, to counter these deeper currents of divergence.

- Timothy Garton Ash is a historian, political writer and Guardian columnist

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‘There is only one bread that deserves to entomb our fish fingers and our bacon and our crisps.’ Photograph: Barry Mason/Alamy

[OpinionBread](#)

## **Back off, sourdough! All hail the glorious return of the sliced white loaf**

[Amelia Tait](#)



Rising costs have no doubt played a part, but so has natural justice: a sandwich should never be sharp, especially if it's only masquerading as nutritious

Thu 22 Jun 2023 02.00 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 21.30 EDT

Do you know how many things have been invented since Otto Frederick Rohwedder perfected his [bread-slicing machine](#) in 1928? Like, loads. There have been at least 10 iPhones since then, plus a machine that can literally [harness the power](#) of the stars. Yet when someone wants to hype up a new product today, they don't say, it's the best thing "since Bluetooth" or "the rocket that took man to the moon" or even "the polio vaccine". They say it's the best thing since sliced bread – because, nearly a century on, we still haven't invented anything better.

Soft, pillowy white bread that sticks to the roof of your mouth when untoasted – that you squish into a ball and bite into as a kid, that you pack in lunchboxes and on picnics and fry in beaten eggs – is something many of us know is worth dying earlier for. It is a comfort food so comforting that, [according to](#) Warburtons chairman Jonathan Warburton, sales rose during Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. "The staple white sliced bread is most certainly not dead," said the breadman after consumer behaviour firm

Circana found that sales of pre-packed white loaves are up 0.6% compared with this time last year – while sales of all other surveyed bread categories declined.

Of course, what's good news for Warburton isn't necessarily great for everyone else. It's worth scrutinising the way the economic crisis is [affecting our diets](#) and health, and it's sad that – according to Hovis commercial director Alistair Gaunt – “shoppers are buying fewer different types of bread for their household” thanks to feeling squeezed. What I want more than anything is for everyone to be able to afford the bread they like best. Yet I can't help but rejoice at the return of white bread, simply because of how much I despise its cruel, hard, glamorous cousin from out of town – the bread that has spent the last few years taking over cafes across the country. I'm talking about the worst girl I've ever met: sourdough.

I recently paid £11 for a club sandwich. Extortionate, but it would be worth it – or so I thought. As I waited for my order, my mouth watered at the thought of the jammy egg with the right-kind-of-chewy chicken, the bread snugly squeezing the fillings together. Yet when it arrived at my table and I took a bite, I found that the insides of my sandwich slipped and slid about, barely held together by two slabs of tough, brown sourdough. My fury was hard and unyielding, like the crusts I couldn't eat.

It is not that sourdough is always or inherently evil – spread with jam, held in your hand, I can see why it was the pandemic's most popular pal. Yet sourdough has somehow become the de facto bread for sandwiches and loaded toasts. The ridiculousness of this situation becomes apparent when a waiter hands you a steak knife to eat your eggs and avocado with. This is a knife that admits, right to your face, that the bread on your plate is too inflexible.

It takes but one brave little boy to declare that the emperor is naked, so I shall be he. Bread should not cut and scrape the roof of your mouth! Sandwiches should be so soft that our jaws continue to be [measurably worse](#) than those of our caveman ancestors! “But,” you might say, because people love to say but – “isn't sourdough super healthy? Isn't it good for gut health and super nutritious?” What if I told you that your gums are potentially

being shredded by bread that is no better for you than some thick sliced white? According to the [Real Bread Campaign](#), run by non-profit food alliance Sustain, many shops are currently selling “sourfaux”, which is filled with additives and preservatives and not made with the real, fermented sourdough starter that gives sourdough its nutritional edge.

To my mind, then, white bread has more than earned its comeback. I don’t think it’s just a money thing – even Waitrose customers are turning back to the trusty old classic, with the supermarket reporting a [17% rise](#) in sliced white bread sales in the year leading to September 2022. I think – I hope – we have simply opened our eyes. There is only one bread that deserves to entomb our fish fingers and our bacon and our crisps. Speaking after Circana’s findings, Roberts Bakery insight manager Rachael Chard called white bread a “blank canvas”, adding: “Consumers can experiment with interesting sandwiches and toasted sandwiches – and white bread, whether standard or premium, is usually the ideal base.” I’ll eat to that.

I hope we continue to invent more rockets and vaccines, but I also hope that scientists will soon fuel our bread slicers with the stars. There is a reason that no other invention has taken over the idiom. Yet somehow, simultaneously, sourdough has taken over our cafes. For shame – no more, please. [Sourdough](#) sandwiches are the worst thing since sliced bread.

- Amelia Tait is a freelance features writer



A child rides a bike through floodwaters in Funafuti, Tuvalu, a Pacific nation struggling to cope with the impacts of the climate crisis. Photograph: Mario Tama/Getty Images

[OpinionClimate crisis](#)

## **The climate crisis is this century's biggest threat. We need a global finance pact that reflects the task ahead**

Chris Bowen, Steven Guilbeault and James Shaw

As climate change ministers, we urge multilateral banks to come together to help vulnerable nations, who face cascading challenges

Thu 22 Jun 2023 00.57 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 23.18 EDT

The science is clear. The climate crisis is the biggest single threat we face as a global community. In turn, meeting the goals of the Paris agreement and realising the opportunities of climate action is the task of the 21st century.



No single government can address this alone. Together, we can rise to the challenge.

When leaders gathered in [Bretton Woods](#) in 1944 as the second world war was winding to its close, they set themselves a formidable task.

Their job was to design an international financial system that would reduce global recessions and instability, and lead to a steadier international political environment than the one which bedevilled the first half of the 20th century.

The result was imperfect, but nonetheless astounding. The creation of the [World Bank](#) and the International Monetary Fund was played an important role in supporting a more stable period through the second half of the 20th century.

If a new Bretton Woods system was being thrashed out today, there would no doubt be agreement that the present task is even greater than that of the 20th century – building a global financial architecture that helps the world stay as close as possible to 1.5C of warming.

We, the climate change ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, hold hope that it is still possible to urgently correct course and see deep, rapid emissions reductions across all sectors and systems. But it is critical we create the right conditions for all nations to thrive, and not be left behind.

We need a global financial architecture that helps address the existential threat of climate change, while supporting countries' development ambitions, responding to the millions slipping back into poverty and maintaining stability in the global financial system.

Pacific and Caribbean Island nations are showing us the way. Their leadership has been instrumental in driving global climate ambition, including to advocate for adequate and predictable flows of climate finance.

The prime minister of the Cook Islands and chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Mark Brown, recently called for “transformation in our multilateral

development funds and institutions”. This reflects the shift that we agree is necessary.

We are also inspired by the leadership of Barbados, whose prime minister, Mia Mottley, is a tireless advocate for international financial architecture reform to support the most climate-vulnerable nations. This includes small island states who face multiple, cascading challenges to their economic prospects because of climate change.

Growing debt burdens are limiting the ability of developing countries to absorb the costs of addressing the devastating impacts of climate change on their own. That’s why we recognise the need to increase support for adaptation and the response to climate impacts in the developing world. We also call for developing countries to be directly engaged in these reform efforts. Our climate and development goals must be pursued in lockstep.

Given their important role, multilateral development banks are uniquely placed to demonstrate leadership and our three nations welcome the delivery of initial reforms including the recent announcement to unlock US\$50bn in lending capacity over the next 10 years at the World Bank.

However, there is much more to do.

Considering how urgent it is to provide climate finance at affordable rates, we need to make it a collective effort to ensure climate change becomes a bigger factor in the balance sheet of each multilateral development bank, recognising the importance that the banks retain their preferred creditor status and AAA credit rating.

The reality is that climate finance from these multilateral institutions continues to be patchy and at times inaccessible to the nations that need it most – particularly those in the Pacific, and small island states around the world.

We must change that. [Climate finance](#) that is inaccessible has little value.

Multilateral development bank portfolios should increase alignment with the Paris agreement and scale up the provision of concessional finance. That

means integrating climate risk considerations and impacts across their activities. It means strengthening efforts to leverage and unlock greater private sector investment off the back of interventions as well as streamlining access, eligibility and delivery of projects and programs.

Now is a time of both challenge and opportunity.

The summit for a new global financing pact is under way right now and it presents a time to focus on pathways to advance climate and nature-positive reforms across global financial architecture. So too, the World Bank and IMF annual meetings in Marrakech in October represent an opportunity to formalise the evolution of the World Bank, which we hope will deliver meaningful action. We also extend our support to the United Arab Emirates as the [Cop28](#) president, expressing our joint ambition to work closely with UAE to make multilateral development bank reform a key focus of their presidency agenda.

We all need to be “all in”. And that includes all international financial institutions.

- Chris Bowen is Australia’s climate change and energy minister. Steven Guilbeault is the Canadian minister of environment and climate change. James Shaw is New Zealand’s climate change minister.

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- [China Barbecue restaurant explosion kills 31 after gas leak](#)
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- [China Temple visits rise as jobless young people seek spiritual assistance](#)
- [Honduras Gangs locked women in cells before prison fire that killed 46](#)

China: blast at Yinchuan barbecue restaurant kills dozens – video

[China](#)

## China barbecue restaurant explosion kills 31 after gas leak

Seven people are receiving medical care after the blast in Yinchuan which took place on the eve of a popular local festival

*Agence France-Presse*

Wed 21 Jun 2023 23.39 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 21.30 EDT

At least 31 people have been killed when an explosion ripped through a restaurant in the north-western Chinese city of Yinchuan on the eve of a popular local holiday, according to state media.

“A leak of liquefied petroleum gas ... caused an explosion during the operation of a barbecue restaurant,” state news agency Xinhua said of the Wednesday evening blast, citing the regional Communist party committee.

Seven more people were receiving medical treatment, the agency said, with one of them in a “critical condition”. Two others had suffered severe burns, two had minor injuries and two had scratches caused by flying glass, Xinhua said.

The explosion at about 8:40pm local time on Wednesday took place at the Fuyang Barbecue Restaurant in a residential area of downtown Yinchuan, the capital of the Ningxia autonomous region.



Firefighters work at the fire scene following a gas explosion at a barbecue restaurant in Yinchuan. Photograph: Video Obtained By Reuters/Reuters

Footage on state broadcaster CCTV showed more than a dozen firefighters working at the site as smoke poured out of a gaping hole in the restaurant's facade. Shards of glass and other debris littered the darkened street, which is also home to a number of other eateries and entertainment venues.

The ministry of emergency management said local fire and rescue services dispatched more than 100 people and 20 vehicles to the scene in the wake of the blast.

The rescue efforts had concluded by 4am on Thursday, it said.

The explosion occurred on the eve of the three-day Dragon Boat festival holiday, when many in [China](#) go out and socialise with friends.

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Lot 219 in the auction, Pictures From The Life Of The Fuhrer, sold for \$280. The director of Danielle Elizabeth Auctions has said politicians were among the buyers of items in the sale. Photograph: Danielle Elizabeth Auctions

[Australia news](#)

## Australian politicians bought Nazi artefacts, auction house director claims

Gold Coast auction house sold huge collection including photo album of concentration camps and signed pictures of Hitler ahead of federal ban on display and sale of Nazi symbols

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Thu 22 Jun 2023 04.45 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 17.19 EDT



An Australian auction house that sold an extensive collection of Nazi artefacts online has defended the sale by stating politicians were among the buyers.

Jewish groups are outraged at the sale of the “blood-stained items” that included signed pictures of Hitler, Himmler and Rommel, a striped concentration camp cap, a “Jewish winter overcoat” with yellow star attached, picture albums of dead soldiers and PoWs and personal photo albums of SS officers.

Danielle Elizabeth Auctions, based in Southport on the Gold Coast, promoted last weekend’s auction of 240 items under the banner: “Huge Militaria Sale. Get it Before History is Banned & Erased.”

The artefacts also included posters of Hitler, uniforms, helmets, daggers, antisemitic propaganda posters and a Nazi vase.

Danielle Elizabeth Auctions’ managing director, Dustin Sweeny, defended the Nazi sale, saying it was not illegal and “lots of politicians” had bought items.

“I can honestly say I’ve never even met a neo-Nazi. The people buying our historical artefacts are collectors, politicians, lawyers, emergency doctors and history professors,” he told Guardian Australia. “It’s legal, it isn’t illegal, we aren’t selling drugs to kids.”

When asked who the politicians were, Sweeny refused to provide further details, stating the auction house didn’t divulge the identity of purchasers.

“There are lots of politicians, but I can’t divulge names or what they buy, or how much they spend. Quite often we have buyers’ agents who make purchases for people’s collections, where they don’t want people out there screaming about it,” he said.

“Everyone is now trying to dig and find out who it is to point fingers, but I can’t divulge names or information about our buyers.”

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The auction house's description of Lot 158 – Jewish Concentration Camp and Atrocity Photos – reads in part: “Many of these are very disturbing to put it mildly ... there are a number of very gruesome photos including Execution Photos, Piles of Dead Bodies, Firing Squad pictures, photos inside the Concentration camps including many prisoner profile pictures, and there is even an Original Jewish Passport included.” Following instructions on how to bid, the item description ends: “Thk You, and enjoy the sale.”

Dr Dvir Abramovich, the chair of the Anti-Defamation Commission, called on politicians to disclose if they had bought any of the items.

“No one will be getting a free pass or cover on this issue,” he said.

“I call on every member of the federal parliament to disclose whether they own Nazi memorabilia or obtained these blood-stained items from last weekend's revolting auction. If they have, they need to explain why it is OK for the extermination and dehumanisation of millions to have a tag price and be offered to the highest bidder.”

Abramovich said anyone who had bought items would also need to outline why they were “contributing to this ghastly profiteering from the proceeds of history's worst crime as well as the glorification and mainstreaming of Hitler's legacy in Australia”.

He noted there was [legislation before the federal parliament](#) to ban the public display and sale of Nazi symbols.

The bill, introduced in mid-June, will [make it an offence](#) to seek to profit from such material in stores or online. It will not ban private ownership or transfers of artefacts that are not for profit.

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The federal attorney general, Mark Dreyfus, said on Thursday evening: “The government’s position on this could not be clearer. I’d have to ask why anybody would want to own these symbols that glorify hatred and the horrors of the Holocaust.”

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies chief executive, Darren Bark, said he supported the legislation and such items should be used for “educational purposes” only.

“The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies welcomes the proposed federal legislation banning the trade of these symbols and continues to work to ensure that these disgusting auctions are illegal in NSW,” he said.

“Unless used for educational purposes or in other reasonable settings, Nazi symbols are a threat to our entire country and have no place in our tolerant, multicultural society.

“These symbols are chilling reminders of a horrific period in history and belong in museums to remember the horrors of the Holocaust, not flogged off to the highest bidder at auction.”

Bark said the artefacts were an affront to the Jewish community, Australian soldiers who fought the Nazis, their descendants, the LGBTQ+ community and “our democratic values”.

Another auction by David G Smith Auctions of Bathurst – scheduled for this weekend – also features Nazi memorabilia including helmets, pins, daggers and badges.

The auction house declined to comment when contacted on Thursday.

NSW, Victoria, [Queensland](#), WA and Tasmania have all [moved to ban the display of Nazi symbols](#) in recent years in a bid to curb far-right extremism.

Additional reporting by Paul Karp and Josh Butler

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Supporters of former presidential candidate Carlos Pineda protest after he was blocked from the ballot. Photograph: Luis Echeverria/Reuters

[Guatemala](#)

**‘Simulation of democracy’: Guatemala readies for election amid concerns of**

# manipulation

Candidates have been disqualified on spurious grounds as experts warn of country backsliding into autocracy

[\*Nina Lakhani\*](#) and *Jody Garcia in Guatemala City*

Thu 22 Jun 2023 05.30 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 18.19 EDT

Along the main thoroughfares that crisscross [Guatemala](#) City, campaign posters promoting almost two dozen presidential candidates are plastered on electricity poles and lamp-posts, each promising to bring prosperity and security to Central America's most populous country.

Yet despite the plurality on display, few Guatemalans expect much to change amid mounting evidence that this Sunday's election could be little more than a simulation of democracy.

Candidates from across the political spectrum have been blocked on spurious procedural technicalities, including the former frontrunner Carlos Pineda – a conservative agribusinessman and TikTok star – and Thelma Cabrera, an Indigenous Maya Mam grassroots leader.

Both have been encouraging supporters to spoil their ballot on 25 June in hopes of forcing a rerun. But less than 30 years since the end of the brutal civil war which left 200,000 mostly Indigenous civilians dead and disappeared – and four years since a pioneering UN-backed anti-corruption body was forced to leave Guatemala – fears are mounting that the country is backsliding into autocracy.

“This is a blow to Guatemala's supposed democracy,” Cabrera told the Guardian.

Experts warn that the election appears to have been manipulated to guarantee a president willing to consolidate power on behalf of the country's elites, who in recent years have gained control over every branch of

government – as well as the public prosecutor’s office – in order to secure immunity from prosecution for corruption and civil war crimes.

“The wind is blowing against the candidates seen as opponents of the ruling coalition,” said Edgar Ortiz, a constitutional law professor based in Guatemala City. “The legal system is a disaster ... application of the law is unpredictable and arbitrary.”

The [Inter American Commission on Human Rights](#) has found “serious and worsening setbacks” in the fight against corruption due to the erosion of the justice system, and growing harassment of independently minded judges, prosecutors, journalists and human rights defenders.

Last week the veteran journalist [José Rubén Zamora was sentenced to six years in prison](#) for money laundering, in a case widely condemned as political revenge for his newspaper’s investigative reporting on corruption. El Periódico, the daily Zamora founded in 1996, was forced to shut down in May.

Zamora faces two further spurious charges, while eight of his journalists are under criminal investigation for alleged obstructing justice by writing about his case.

“The election is a simulation of democracy, a process fixed to elect another klepto-dictatorship to continue governing in the interest of the same elites,” Zamora told the Guardian, as he was handcuffed and escorted back to prison to begin his sentence.

In 2015, Guatemala saw a string of anti-corruption protests that led to the fall of the government and arrest of the then president, part of a regional wave of [democratic activism known as the Central American spring](#).

Just eight years later, pessimism is rife and there are no grassroots rallies or noisy demonstrations in Guatemala City’s central plaza.

The wind is blowing against the candidates seen as opponents of the ruling coalition

*Edgar Ortiz*



“It was very emotional to see the square full in 2015, after decades of terror,” said the veteran rights activist Brenda Hernández, 58, recalling the 36-year internal conflict that wiped out a generation of community leaders and trade unionists. “Now the biggest fear is not dying, it’s going to jail.”

Demonstrations have been stymied since November 2021, when the government deployed [riot police with teargas](#) to a largely peaceful protest after a fire broke out in congress.

Since then, protesters – along with dozens of judges, prosecutors, journalists and human rights defenders – have been jailed or forced into exile after being targeted with bogus criminal charges. Lawyers defending victims of criminalization are themselves being investigated, jailed and debarred for nonsensical charges.

“This judicial persecution is without doubt a military intelligence strategy aimed at reinstating impunity,” said Alejandro Rodríguez from Impunity Watch Guatemala.

“The ruling alliance has co-opted our institutions to destroy in six years what we took 30 years to build. We’ve never before seen such manipulation and arbitrary use of the law ... which has succeeded in silencing a generation of leaders.”

Guatemala is the largest and poorest country in Central America, with more than half its 17 million people living in poverty, [and half of all children suffer chronic malnutrition](#).

Rates of extreme poverty, inadequate public services, and hunger are much worse among Indigenous communities, who most often bear the brunt of extractive industries like mining, dams and African palm plantations backed by the governing elites and international financiers.

[Such dire conditions have helped drive years of mass migration north to Mexico and the US](#). Families rely heavily on remittances, which account for about 15% of Guatemala’s GDP, as the ruling elite has failed to invest in

basic public services such as health, education, road safety, housing, water infrastructure and sustainable agriculture.

The current president, Alejandro Giammattei, came to power shortly after his predecessor – a former blackface comedian called Jimmy Morales – [expelled Cicig, the UN backed crime fighting agency, in 2019.](#)

Over the course of a decade, [Cicig had identified more than 70 complex criminal](#) structures involving some of Guatemala's most powerful politicians, judges, businessmen and military veterans, chipping away at the immunity long taken for granted by the rich and powerful.



The Guatemalan presidential candidate for the Cabal party, Edmond Mulet.  
Photograph: Johan Ordóñez/AFP/Getty Images

Cicig trained and assisted anti-corruption prosecutors to secure more than 400 convictions – including the former civil war general and president Otto Pérez Molina and his deputy Roxana Baldetti, [who were forced to resign in 2015, and later sentenced to 16 years.](#)

But investigations into illicit campaign financing by the country's economic oligarchs – and another alleging corruption by Morales and his family – triggered a vengeful and ultimately successful effort to oust Cicig. The

campaign was given [high-profile support by US Republicans such as Marco Rubio](#).

Morales installed an attorney general who has been sanctioned by the US for [“obstruction of justice”](#) but remains in post and has filled the public prosecutor’s office with allies.

Giammattei, a former prisons chief, brokered alliances with a dozen small parties to take control of the legislature, which in turn has blocked the appointment of new judges – including those who decide the eligibility of political candidates – in order to keep allies on the bench.

Anti-corruption investigations have been shelved, as have reparations and investigations into civil war-era abuses, in favor of persecuting Cicig’s allies.

“The rule of law is completely broken, there is no guarantee of due process or the right to a defence. Anyone considered an enemy of the regime can be accused of an invented crime for political gain or personal revenge,” said Jorge Santos, director of the Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders of Guatemala (Udefegua).

In one case, [Virginia Laparra, 43, an anti-corruption prosecutor from Quetzaltenango](#) in western Guatemala, was sentenced to four years for abuse of authority after she reported her suspicions that a judge had leaked sensitive details from a sealed corruption case. Last week, a group of UN experts called for her immediate release after concluding that her detention was “arbitrary”.

Laparra is facing a second charge of leaking information, after she requested the postponement of a hearing while an outstanding request involving the same defendant be resolved. Both cases involve the same judge and the Foundation against Terrorism (FCT), an ultra-right campaign group which is an official complainant in most of the malicious criminal investigations.

Wendy López, one of Laparra’s defence lawyers, is now under investigation for public disorder after she objected to being expelled from court and called

on the judge to sanction the public prosecutors and FCT lawyers for insulting the defence. “It’s the same pattern of arbitrary violations instigated by the same actors ... it stops you sleeping at night because it doesn’t matter how good our legal argument is, we can’t win,” López said.



The Guatemalan candidate for the National Union of Hope party and former first lady, Sandra Torres, greets supporters. Photograph: Johan Ordóñez/AFP/Getty Images

As it stands, the top contenders for president are Sandra Torres, a former first lady who in 2019 faced [corruption charges for illegal campaign financing](#); Zury Ríos, daughter of Efraín Ríos Montt, [a former military dictator later convicted of genocide](#); and Edmond Mulet, a career diplomat who has [denied](#) allegations he helped facilitate improper overseas adoptions during the civil war.

A runoff between the top two in August looks likely, though Mulet could still be expelled from Sunday’s vote, as he is facing [allegations of obstruction of justice](#) for speaking out against the criminalization of Guatemalan journalists.

Election observers have warned of low voter registration and turnout and on the streets there’s little sign of enthusiasm. “I should vote, but there are no

real options,” said taxi driver Edgar Aroldo.

Santos, the human rights defender, said: “It doesn’t matter who wins, the political mafia has already made sure that the regime will continue and we will be crisis for at least another generation.”

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Tourists visit Jianfu temple in Xi'an, north-west China, last month.  
Photograph: Xinhua/Shutterstock

[China](#)

## Temple visits rise in China as jobless young people seek spiritual assistance

Number of visitors up 367% at start of year with about half born after 1990, according to travel websites

[Amy Hawkins](#)  
[@amyhawk\\_](#)

Thu 22 Jun 2023 03.48 EDTLast modified on Thu 22 Jun 2023 13.04 EDT

In the search for a job in a gloomy economy, many young people in [China](#) are hoping for divine intervention.

According to data released by the Chinese travel platform Qunar, the number of visitors to temple scenic spots increased by 367% in the first quarter of this year, compared with the same period in 2022.

Much of that increase can be accounted for by the opening up of tourist and cultural destinations since zero-Covid restrictions were abandoned in December. But some other religious sites are also experiencing increases in visitors compared with their pre-Covid levels.

Nearly 2.5 million tourists visited Mount Emei in Sichuan, one of the four holy mountains in Chinese Buddhism, between January and May. That is over 50% more than in the same period in 2019.

According to Trip.com, another travel platform, about half of the templegoers in January and February were born after 1990. Millennials and Gen Z are part of a cohort of young people facing record levels of [unemployment](#). In May, the [unemployment rate](#) for 16- to 24-year-olds hit 20.8%. China's difficult economic recovery from zero-Covid and slowdowns in the education, property and technology sectors have squeezed opportunities for fresh graduates, causing many to have more faith in deities than their degrees.

The phrase “incense-burning youth” has caught fire on social media, referring to young people who have turned to spiritual offerings in an attempt to increase their prospects. “Between going forward and going to work, I choose incense,” is one popular catchphrase.

The slogan reflects a desire to pray for self-improvement, as well as the decision of some young people to opt out of the rat race altogether. It has been linked to *neijuan*, or “involution”, the term used to describe the intense pressure felt by young people in China, where putting in more effort often feels futile.

Many temples have cashed in on this demand for spiritual nourishment by offering meditation courses, on-site cafes and, according to some reports, psychological counselling centres. All this has been labelled the “temple economy” by some commentators.

Buddhist-style trinkets are also increasingly popular. In January, Lama temple, Beijing's biggest Buddhist monastery, issued a statement clarifying that it had not authorised third-party platforms to sell Lama temple bracelets, contrary to the claims of some online vendors.



Although the Chinese Communist party is officially atheist, many people turn to ancient practices in times of need.

Prof Emily Baum of the University of California, Irvine, who studies modern Chinese history, said: “In China, which has a long history of ancestor worship, youths might go to a temple to leave offerings for deceased relatives in the hopes of receiving favour in the future.”

For Chinese worshippers, burning incense is a practical as well as spiritual act. Prof James Miller of Duke Kunshan University in Jiangsu, China, an expert on the Chinese traditional practices of Taoism, said: “Visiting temples is not seen as a necessary indicator of religious belief but as a practical step that anyone can take to help with the problems that they are facing.

“Although the Chinese Communist party promotes atheism, it also promotes traditional Chinese values, which are inscribed in China’s long and complex religious history.”

*Additional research by Chi Hui Lin*

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A woman cries after recognising her daughter among the 46 women killed in a prison riot, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on Wednesday. Photograph: Orlando Sierra/AFP/Getty Images

[Honduras](#)

## Gang members locked women in cells before Honduras prison riot fire

Armed people went into rival gang's cell block, opened fire and doused survivors in flammable liquid, officer says after 46 killed

*Guardian staff and agencies in Tegucigalpa*

Wed 21 Jun 2023 14.08 EDTFirst published on Wed 21 Jun 2023 12.51 EDT

Gang members at a women's prison in [Honduras](#) slaughtered 46 other female inmates by spraying them with gunfire, hacking them with machetes and then locking survivors in their cells before dousing them with flammable liquid, a senior police officer has said.

The carnage in Tuesday's riot was the [worst atrocity at a women's prison in recent memory](#); the intensity of the fire left the walls of the cells blackened and beds reduced to twisted heaps of metal.

"A group of armed people went to the cellblock of a rival gang, locked the doors, opened fire on those inside and apparently – this is still under investigation – used some kind of oil to set fire to them," said Juan López Rochez, the chief of operations for the country's national police.

The president, Xiomara Castro, said Tuesday's riot at the prison in the town of Tamara, about 30 miles (50km) north-west of Honduras's capital, was "planned by *maras* [gangs] with the knowledge and acquiescence of security authorities".

As forensic teams identified more remains on Wednesday, Hondurans were also asking how members of the Barrio 18 were able to smuggle guns and machetes into the prison and move freely between cellblocks. Eighteen pistols, an assault rifle, two machine pistols and two grenades were found after the riot.

"Obviously, there must have been human failures," López Rochez said. "We are investigating all the employees at the center."

Sandra Rodríguez Vargas, the assistant commissioner for Honduras's prison system, said the attackers "removed" guards at the facility – none appeared to have been injured – around 8am Tuesday. .

Twenty-six of the victims were burned to death and the remainder shot or stabbed, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras's national police investigation agency. At least seven inmates were being treated at a Tegucigalpa hospital.

As the death toll crept up, family members gathered outside a morgue in the capital Tegucigalpa, hoping for news of incarcerated relatives.

"We are here dying of anguish, of pain ... we don't have any information," Salomón García, whose daughter is an inmate at the facility told AP.

Family members said there were clear warning signs ahead of Tuesday's bloodbath, as tensions increased between Barrio 18 and the rival Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). The two gangs, [both of which have roots in Los Angeles](#), have long battled for control of drug trafficking and extortion across Central America.

Johanna Paola Soriano Euceda, who was waiting outside the morgue in Tegucigalpa for news about her mother, Maribel Euceda, and sister, Karla Soriano. Both were on trial for drug trafficking but were held in the same area as convicted prisoners.

Soriano Euceda said they had told her on Sunday that "they [Barrio 18 members] were out of control, they were fighting with them all the time. That was the last time we talked."



Police guard the prison where at least 46 were killed in a prison riot in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on Tuesday. Photograph: Gustavo Amador/EPA

Another woman, who did not want to give her name for fear of reprisals, said she was waiting for news about a friend, Alejandra Martínez, 26, who was been held in the ill-fated CellBlock One on robbery charges.

"She told me the last time I saw her on Sunday that the [Barrio] 18 people had threatened them, that they were going to kill them if they didn't turn

over a relative,” she said.

Gangs sometimes demand victims “turn over” a friend or relative by giving the gang their name, address and description, so that enforcers can later find and kidnap, rob or kill them.

Officials described the killings as a “terrorist act”, but also acknowledged that gangs essentially had ruled some parts of the prison.

Gangs wield broad control inside the country’s prisons, where inmates often set their own rules and sell prohibited goods.

“The issue is to prevent people from smuggling in drugs, grenades and firearms,” said the Honduran human rights expert Joaquín Mejía. “Today’s events show that they have not been able to do that.”

Castro has pledged to take “drastic measures”, and the riot maybe increase the pressure on her to emulate the extreme policies of President Nayib Bukele in neighbouring El Salvador.

More than 67,000 people [have been arrested](#) – more than 2% of the population – since Bukele launched his [anti-gang campaign](#) in March 2022. The crackdown has been widely popular among Salvadorians, but has come at a huge cost for democracy and human rights.

In December, Castro [declared a “state of exception”](#) partially suspending constitutional guarantees which has twice been extended, but [analysts are skeptical that the measure has had any meaningful impact](#) on crime.

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## Headlines tuesday 20 june 2023

- Food prices Supermarket inflation falls to lowest rate this year - but is still at 16.5%
- Live UK 'could fall into recession' if interest rates hit 6%; grocery inflation eases to 16.5%
- Live Titanic submarine: rescuers race against time to find missing Titan
- Titanic submarine US and Canadian teams search for missing tourist vessel



Items such as milk and bread are being priced for sale at £1.25 by supermarkets. Photograph: Nathan Stirk/Getty

### Inflation

## **Inflation forces supermarkets to up £1 items to £1.25, data shows**

Kantar survey is released day before official figures expected to show a slight easing in UK inflation rate

- [Business live – latest updates](#)

[Julia Kollewe](#) and [Sarah Butler](#)

Tue 20 Jun 2023 14.16 EDTFirst published on Tue 20 Jun 2023 03.01 EDT

Supermarkets are increasingly pricing budget items at £1.25 rather than £1 as retailers balance attempts to draw in shoppers through bargain deals with stubbornly high grocery inflation.



The price point is now frequently the joint second-most popular price tag for a grocery item, alongside £2 and behind £1, according to the data firm Kantar.

Supermarkets typically use “round-pound” deals to sell budget items, but have been forced to raise prices.

Grocery inflation has eased to its lowest level this year [but remains high](#), Kantar said on Tuesday.

Annual grocery inflation in the UK declined to 16.5% in the four weeks to 11 June, down from [17.2% last month](#) and a record 17.5% in March. It remains at its sixth-highest level since the financial crisis in 2008. The biggest price rises were for eggs, cooking sauces and frozen potato products.

Fraser McKevitt, the head of retail and consumer insight at Kantar, said: “Traditionally, ‘round-pound’ prices have been attractive to shoppers, who find them easier to relate to and practical as well with no leftover change.

“But, with retailers eager to offer value and cash buying less popular, £1.25 has emerged as an increasingly important price point.”

The Kantar figures were released a day before the official UK data on inflation, which is expected to ease to 8.4% in May from 8.7% in April, when food and drink prices rose at an annual rate of 19.1%.

Rishi Sunak’s pledge to halve inflation this year is at risk from stubbornly high food inflation, which has kept the headline rate at a higher than expected level.

McKevitt said: “This is the lowest rate of grocery price inflation we’ve seen in 2023, which will be a relief to shoppers and retailers.

“But prices rising at 16.5% isn’t something to celebrate... Price rises are now being compared to the increasing rate of grocery inflation seen last summer, which means that it should continue to fall in the coming months, a welcome result for everyone.”

A survey for Kantar found that of consumers' top five financial worries, rising grocery prices is the only one that they are more concerned about now than at the start of the year.

Almost 70% of households are either "extremely" or "very worried" about food and drink inflation, compared with just over two-thirds in January. It remains the second-biggest concern behind rising energy bills.

Consumers have been switching to supermarkets' cheaper own-label lines to save money, where sales are up 41% compared with last year, and changing how they eat and cook, Kantar said.

McKevitt added: "People are thinking more and more about what they eat and how they cook as the cost of living crisis takes its toll on traditional behaviours.

"The most prominent change we've seen is that people are preparing simpler dishes with fewer ingredients."

There were 4% fewer meals made using an oven in the last 12 weeks compared with the same period last year, while microwaved meals rose by 8%, and there was a rise in food prepared with toasters and grills.

Sue Davies, the head of food policy at the consumer group Which?, said high prices have been "hammering the household budgets of millions, including desperate families and people on low incomes who have been skipping meals for many months to make ends meet".

She called on the government to get urgent commitments from supermarkets on stocking essential budget ranges in all their stores, particularly in areas where people are most in need, as well as make [pricing much clearer so shoppers can compare prices and find the best value products](#).

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As costs for producers and retailers have risen, the proportion of products sold for £1 has almost halved in a year, from 9% to 5%, according to Kantar.

With the advent of warm weather, consumers have been buying more ice-cream and mineral water, with sales up by 25% and 8% respectively last month, despite price increases of 20% and 17%.

Barbecue food has also gone up in price, with fresh sausage prices up 16% and fresh burgers 13% more expensive.

Aldi was the fastest-growing retailer in the past four months as people turned to the discount supermarkets in an attempt to conserve cash. The chain posted a sales rise of 24.6% to hit a record market share of 10.2%. Lidl's sales growth was only slightly behind its fellow German discounter, increasing sales by 23.2% to take 7.7% of the market.

## **The eight biggest selling items for £1.25**

**Milk** 2-pint bottle British semi-skimmed at Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Asda

**Sharing bag of sweets** Haribo Starmix 175g at Morrisons and Sainsbury's

**Bags of potatoes** 2.5kg of 'all rounder' potatoes at Tesco or Just Essential potatoes at Asda

**Chocolate biscuit bars** Five pack of Bahlsen Pick Up chocolate biscuits at Ocado or Waitrose

**Wrapped white bread** 400g Warburtons Milk Roll from Morrisons, Tesco or Asda or Hovis Simple White bread 800g at Tesco

**Chocolate block** Aero chocolate sharing bar 90g from Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Ocado

**Pack of button mushrooms** 400g pack of closed cup mushrooms at Tesco

**Chocolate multipack** Six pack of Cadbury Dairy Milk little bars at Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Ocado and Iceland

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## [Business live](#)**Business**

# Hunt rules out mortgage support or food price caps; Mortgage ticking time bomb is ‘now exploding’ – as it happened

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## [Titanic sub incident](#)

# Explorers Club speaks of ‘cause for hope’ in Titanic sub search – as it happened

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Search effort under way for missing sub carrying five people near Titanic wreck – video

[The Titanic](#)

## Missing Titanic submarine: US and Canadian teams search for tourist vessel

Race against time to find craft that went missing on Sunday with five people onboard, including British billionaire

- [Missing Titanic sub – latest updates](#)

[\*Jamie Grierson\*](#)

[\*@JamieGrierson\*](#)

Tue 20 Jun 2023 03.41 EDTFirst published on Tue 20 Jun 2023 01.00 EDT

US and Canadian rescue teams are scrambling to search for a tourist submarine that went missing during a voyage to the Titanic shipwreck with a British billionaire among the five people onboard.

Hamish Harding is the chair of the private plane firm Action Aviation, which said he was one of the mission specialists on the OceanGate Expeditions vessel reported overdue on Sunday evening about 435 miles south of St John's, Newfoundland.

The vessel, known as Titan, is understood to have a four-day supply of oxygen onboard, which would have started being used on Sunday morning.

[Map of Titanic wreck](#)

The Pakistani businessman Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood have been named as two of the other people on the submersible.



A statement from the Dawood family, obtained by CNN, said: “As of now, contact has been lost with their submersible craft and there is limited information available.

“We are very grateful for the concern being shown by our colleagues and friends and would like to request everyone to pray for their safety while granting the family privacy at this time. The family is well looked after and are praying to Allah for the safe return of their family members.”

The other two passengers are believed to be Paul Henry Nargeolet, a former French navy commander, deep diver and a submersible pilot, and Stockton Rush, the chief executive and founder of OceanGate Expeditions, the company that organised the mission to the wreck of the Titanic.

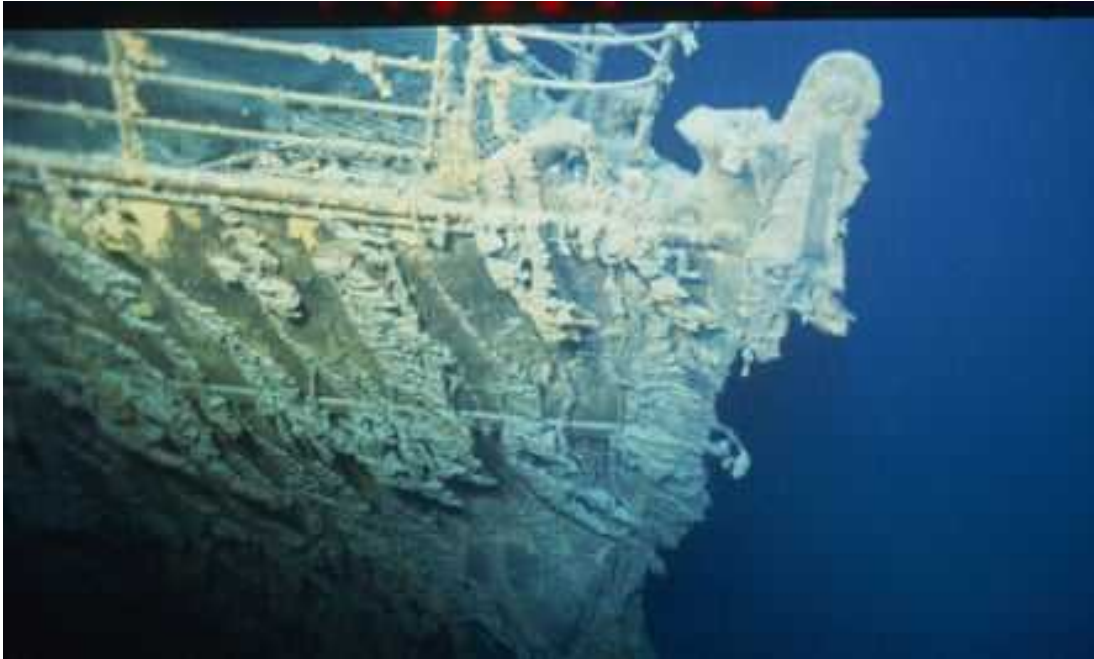
### [Graphic](#)

The Titanic sits 3,800 metres (12,500ft) beneath the surface at the bottom of the Atlantic. It is about 370 miles (600km) off the coast of Newfoundland.

A massive search and rescue operation led by the US Coast Guard and involving military aircraft 900 miles east of Cape Cod was continuing on Tuesday.

The US Coast Guard said the Canadian research vessel Polar Prince and 106 Rescue Wing would continue to conduct surface searches while the US Coast Guard sent two C-130 flights to look for the missing submersible.

Rear Admiral John W Mauger of the US Coast Guard said they were doing “everything” they could to find the submersible, saying it had one pilot and four mission specialists onboard with up to 96 hours of emergency oxygen.



Wreck of Titanic in the Atlantic Ocean. Photograph: Xavier Desmier/Gamma-Rapho/Getty

Titan's support vessel, the Canadian research icebreaker Polar Prince, would continue to do surface searches throughout the evening and Canadian P8 Poseidon aircraft would resume their search on Tuesday, the Coast Guard said.

Harding holds three Guinness World Records, including the longest duration at full ocean depth by a crewed vessel when in March 2021, he and the ocean explorer Victor Vescovo dived to the lowest depth of the Mariana Trench. In June 2022, he went into space on Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket.

On social media at the weekend, he said he was "proud to finally announce" he would be onboard the mission to the wreck of the Titanic, the luxury ocean liner that hit an iceberg and sank in 1912, killing more than 1,500 people.

The Explorers Club, of which Harding is a founding member, revealed his disappearance on Instagram. The club president, Richard Garriott, said: "When I saw Hamish last week ... his excitement about this expedition was palpable.

“I know he was looking forward to conducting research at the site. We all join in the fervent hope that the submersible is located as quickly as possible and the crew is safe.”



Hamish Harding, one of five people onboard the missing tourist vessel.  
Photograph: Dirty Dozen Productions/PA

Officials are working to get a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) that could reach a depth of 6,000 metres to the site.

ROVs can be dropped over the side of a vessel, to which it is connected by a “umbilical cord” that enables a pilot to operate its thrusters and also relay data in real time from its sonar and camera systems. However, the amount of wreckage from the Titanic on the ocean floor means it could take time to discern what is debris and what is the Titan.

Experts have said that even if the vessel is found, retrieving it could also prove difficult, especially if it has become entangled in the century-old wreckage.

“There are parts of it [the Titanic] all over the place. It’s dangerous,” said Frank Owen, a retired Royal Australian Navy official and submarine escape and rescue project director.

Alistair Greig, a professor of marine engineering at University College London, said: “If it has gone down to the seabed and can’t get back up under its own power, options are very limited.

“While the submersible might still be intact, if it is beyond the continental shelf, there are very few vessels that can get that deep, and certainly not divers.”

- *This article was amended on 21 June 2023 to correct the spelling of Suleman Dawood’s name.*

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## 2023.06.20 - Spotlight

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- [How we survive My father beat, starved and belittled me. Love and therapy saved my life](#)
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‘No amount of expensive detergent brands or Instagrammable laundry rooms will change the fact that washing clothes is still a drudge.’ Photograph: Peter Dazeley/Getty Images

[Health & wellbeing](#)

# The no-wash movement: would you wear underpants for a week without cleaning them?

Do you need to wash your T-shirts after every wear? Probably not. What about your knickers? That depends. But more and more people are eschewing detergent to save time, money and the environment



[Emine Saner](#)

[@eminesaner](#)

Tue 20 Jun 2023 05.00 EDT

When Tim, like many of us, started working from home during the Covid pandemic, he developed a more relaxed approach to dressing. This made him consider the time and energy that washing his clothes was costing him. “It was around the time we had our second kid, so I was totally overloaded with things,” he says. “Anything I can cut out of my life I see as a challenge, so laundry was just one less thing to do.” He had already been doing less than many people – a load every week, or sometimes every two – but then he went for an entire year without washing his clothes in the machine.



These days, Tim, a software engineer, does a wash every six months or so. “Seeing as I don’t have to go to the office any more, I don’t really have a need for clean clothes,” he says. “It doesn’t matter.” On video calls, “people only see me from my head up, and half the time I don’t put my camera on anyway”. He looks clean, if fashionably scruffy, when we speak over such a call. “If there’s some important social event, I’ll make sure I’ve got something nice to wear, but day to day it doesn’t really matter.”

He still uses the washing machine to clean his children’s clothes (and his wife still does hers), although he has cut down on that, too. “There’s still loads of washing to do – that’s part of the reason I don’t do my clothes.” It helps, he says, that he has quite a lot of clothes, but during the year-long abstention he got about two weeks’ wear out of a single outfit.

Tim cut down on socks by wearing sandals, including for much of the winter. “I never have to wash socks any more, which was always the biggest problem.” Did he at least wear clean underpants every day? “You can get pants to last a week,” he says. How, I ask nervously, do you get a week’s worth of wear out of pants? “You just have very low standards.” Sometimes, he would wear swimming trunks as underwear – he would wear them in the shower, where they would get a wash, then they would dry quickly.





Synthetic materials pick up odours more easily than some natural fibres, such as merino wool. Photograph: Antonio Guillem/Alamy

Does he notice his clothes starting to smell? “I do notice – and I change them. But you just don’t need to wash them as much as people do.” His wife occasionally says he smells, “but she generally doesn’t mind too much”.

The no-wash movement [started with hair](#) – water was still in, but shampoo was out – and there are signs laundry could be next. [As Vox put it in 2020](#), “laundry remains remarkably undisrupted”. In the article, the writer Rachel Sugar pointed out that, in the US, apps and services that promise to take care of your washing have largely failed. Unlike other chores, such as cooking or grocery-shopping, which have either become aspirational or made easier to outsource by tech, “laundry defies the rules of lifestyle innovation and the promises of capitalism”. No amount of expensive detergent brands or Instagrammable laundry rooms will change the fact that washing clothes is still a drudge.

Perhaps, then, the answer is to step away from it altogether – or, at least, do a lot less.

[Denim fans](#) were the first to popularise the no-wash trend for clothes. “I don’t wash any denim unless there’s a disaster – you spill some milk on your jeans, or something,” says Daniel, a teacher (who washes his pants after every wear). “Mainly, it gives you a better fade – the jeans age much better, they last longer. You don’t need to keep spending money on jeans. It’s better for the environment.” Unwashed jeans don’t smell, he insists. “If I’ve been to a barbecue and there’s a bit of a smoky smell, I might peg them out overnight to air.”

It’s prevalent in our society to think of cleanliness in visual terms: does it look clean? Are your whites white?

*Rosie Cox*

The climate crisis may finally have persuaded us to consider the environmental impact of hot washes, water usage and carbon-intensive

detergents, while recent [increases in energy prices](#) have focused the mind on how much each load is costing us.

“I stopped washing my clothes as much during winter 2022,” says Jenny, answering a call for readers to share their experiences of reducing their laundry. “The drivers for me were the rising energy costs, the effect on the environment and the inability to dry clothes easily inside. It occurred to me that I didn’t need to wash clothes as often. Most clothes really only needed a freshen up.”

She took to spraying them with an odour-eliminating mist instead: “They are good as new. It is also much kinder to the fabric, so clothes last much longer.” Ken, a retired university lecturer, says: “We used to wash our clothes about six times a week. Now, we do it just once a week. We use soap nuts [a type of small fruit that contains soap] and wash at 30C. I put the wash on overnight, so it uses cheaper electricity.” He says he was motivated “by the climate emergency”.

When it comes to what we wear, trying to choose more environmentally conscious clothing is increasingly mainstream – many of us buy less, or secondhand, or supposedly “ethical” brands. But that is only the start, says Charlotte, who works in sustainability and fashion. “Post-purchase washing has a really big impact. Cold washing, only washing when you need to, wearing things for longer – these are of equal, if not greater, importance from a consumer decision-making point of view than buying a ‘sustainable’ brand or more sustainable fibre.”



One reader, Tim, cut down on socks by wearing sandals – even in winter. Photograph: Nerijus Jurevicius/Alamy

Charlotte gets 20 to 30 wears out of many of her clothes, such as trousers. Jumpers are washed perhaps twice a season. Marks and stains get spot-cleaned. “Airing things helps, maybe sometimes steaming things,” she says. She wears a sweatshirt to cook in to avoid staining more cherished clothes. She is from New Zealand, where she says it is normal to wash at low or cold temperatures. “I’d never heard of hot washing anything until I moved to the UK. It’s a cultural thing.” It is not just a sustainability concern – she wants to keep her clothes looking better. “Washing really wears your clothes out,” she says.

Tom, a psychiatric nurse, has about four merino-wool sweaters that he wears on rotation for work. He has gone at least a year without washing them; two have never been washed. “I might rinse them or sponge a stain off,” he says. “They have a magical sort of repelling property; the wool doesn’t pick up odours.” He hasn’t noticed them smelling. “I don’t think anybody has complained,” he says.

He is now such a fan of merino wool that he has started stocking up on shirts, as well as socks and underwear. The latter two get washed. After every wear? “I can go longer,” he says. “I’m almost ashamed to admit, but

let's say three or four days ... In my trade, when somebody says something, you double it – if somebody says they only smoke one joint a day, they mean two or three.” So he can go for a week in his woollen pants? “Yes, something like that,” he says, laughing.

Non-merino items get washed regularly – jeans, for instance, will be worn for a week. “I feel that water is an important resource, so I try not to use as much as I could,” says Tom. “It’s also just pure laziness.” His approach is a hangover from being poor in the past, he thinks, when he would have only one pair of trousers and no socks. “It’s just a habit,” he says, adding that he enjoys the asceticism of it.

Habit is partly what explains others’ low-wash lifestyles. “I didn’t live in a house with a washing machine between the ages of 19 and 39, so I did hand-washing and used laundrettes,” says Michele, a graphic designer and drummer. “During that period, I either didn’t have much money or much spare time.”

Clothes, she realised, could be worn many times, with an airing in between. “I got used to not washing things after just one wear. Even when I finally lived somewhere with a washing machine, I was never tempted to get into doing washing daily or every other day.” Her motivation is largely environmental, “knowing that all the microfibres and detergents pollute our rivers, seas and wildlife. Manufacturers make money out of our fear of dirt and promote ridiculous levels of ‘cleanliness’ – and the planet is suffering.”



Sometimes, you need to use the machine – but often a cold wash will do.  
Photograph: Peter Cade/Getty Images

It is only relatively recently, says Rosie Cox, a professor of geography at Birkbeck, University of London and a co-author of *Dirt: the Filthy Reality of Everyday Life*, that we have taken domestic laundry for granted. “It’s actually really complicated, technically. What happens inside your house is only because of big transformations: having running water, the invention of washing machines that fit in people’s houses, being affordable.” Only since the 1960s, she says, have a majority of households had a washing machine; now, it is close to 100%.

The other element is how our clothes have changed. Essentially, they have become more washable. Before the second half of the 20th century, many garments were made from wool fabric. “You clean those by dry-cleaning them occasionally, but often you brush them, dab them, that kind of thing,” says Cox. “People would have owned fewer things and they would have been more durable.”

The advent of synthetic fibres and cheap manufacturing of fibres such as cotton “happened at a similar point in time to when we started having washing machines”, she says. So, clothes could be washed – and increasingly people had the machines to do so.

## Manufacturers make money out of our fear of dirt

*Michele*

What we consider to be clean is “culturally, historically and socially specific”, says Cox. “It’s prevalent in our society to think of cleanliness in visual terms: Does it look clean? Are your whites white?” This is why many of us, spotting a small mark that seems to tarnish an otherwise-clean garment, decide to toss the whole thing in the laundry basket. It is also why manufacturers push stain removers and brighteners. We also became concerned about smell – not just removing odour, “but putting other odour in. Today, we have all these things like scent boosters.”

Ryan, the father of a four-year-old in Fife, grew up in a house where his mother “used to wash and iron everything religiously.” He had always questioned it: “You just put something ironed on and it gets creased.” Now that he is a father, he tries to make life as easy as possible. This means less laundry – and definitely no ironing. He doesn’t go as far as others in terms of wears between washes – a T-shirt will get two or three outings – but he is doing less washing than he was. He has convinced his wife to cut down, too: “She wanted to wash our daughter’s pyjamas after every wear.”

Alison, a stay-at-home mother in Glasgow, also grew up with a heavy laundry load. “My mum taught me to wash everything after wearing once,” she says. “She ironed everything, too.” Once Alison realised she could put worn clothes back in the drawer or cupboard “without fear of contamination”, she stopped counting how many times they had been worn. Her husband, who grew up in the countryside and had a much less stringent approach to laundry, took on the washing “and made it the norm in our house”. She worried that “people would think I was dirty – and then I realised nobody notices. I think my mum would be horrified if I told her, but she doesn’t notice. Why do all that work? It saves us money, is better for the environment and our clothes last longer.”

Amber, a marketing manager, has designated a drawer for worn-but-wearable clothes: “I check for visible marks or any odours, and if there’s nothing that makes it a problem to re-wear, I simply put it away again. I use the washing machine only once a week instead of most days.”

This year, Chet's washing machine broke down. He decided not to replace it. "It was an easy decision to live like I was in the 19th century and do clothes washing by hand," says Chet, an artist. "I started out trying to wash on the same schedule as before, but quickly I realised it wasn't easily done." Washing gradually became less frequent; now, he does a monthly hand-wash. "It became clear that I didn't need to wash jeans or shirts, so it came down to underwear and socks. I feel sure that I don't need a washing machine ever again."

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# Ragga-metal, Y2K R&B and folk legends: 30 acts to see at Glastonbury

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# My father beat, starved and belittled me. Love and therapy saved my life

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The wreck of the Titanic's bow. A submersible vessel used to take tourists to see the wreckage has gone missing, triggering a search-and-rescue operation  
Photograph: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institu/AFP/Getty Images

### [The Titanic](#)

## **‘We’ve feared this’: veteran Titanic explorer tells of concern for missing submersible**

Joe MacInnis, a member of the first expedition to locate the wreck of the Titanic, says the deep sea exploration community has been left ‘shattered’

- [Missing Titanic sub – latest updates](#)

[Leyland Cecco](#) in Toronto

Tue 20 Jun 2023 07.39 EDTFirst published on Tue 20 Jun 2023 00.15 EDT

A missing submersible near the wreck of the Titanic that has kicked off a [frantic international search](#) has left the deep sea exploration community

“shattered”, a famed Canadian scientist and veteran explorer has said.

“This is the day that we have been fearing for a long, long time – when you lose a sub in really deep water,” Joe MacInnis, a member of the first expedition to locate the wreck of the Titanic in 1985, told the Guardian on Monday night. “It doesn’t look good.”

Authorities from Canada and the US have deployed specialized aircraft and ships to search for the five people aboard a 6.4-metre vessel that lost contact about one hour and 45 minutes into a planned dive Sunday, nearly 400 miles (640km) off the coast of Newfoundland. MacInnes estimates that one hour and 45 minutes was long enough for the submersible, [called Titan](#), to reach the Titanic wreck.

OceanGate Expeditions, the US company that owns the submersible, said it was “exploring all options” to bring the crew back safely.

OceanGate operates trips that combine commercial tourism with scientific research and exploration, to the final resting place of the ill-fated ocean liner that struck an iceberg in 1912 and sank, killing more than 1,500 of the 2,200 passengers and crew.

In deep sea expeditions, MacInnis said, crews often worry about the “trinity”: fire, hull failure or entanglement.

MacInnis is a veteran deep sea explorer who has completed two trips to the famed wreck with a Russian crew, as part of making the 1992 Imax documentary Titanica.

He is also a close friend of film-maker James Cameron who he introduced to the Russian submersible pilots involved. “The next thing you know Jim hires them and makes all his dives to the Titanic before he makes [his big film](#),” he said, referring to the 1997 mega-blockbuster feature, Titanic, which Cameron directed.

On his second expedition to the Titanic, MacInnis and the crew briefly found themselves stuck on part of the wreck. A second sub was sent to investigate

and between the two figure out a way to gently jiggle the craft free. On that same trip, the crew lost radio contact after the sub went behind the Titanic's propellers to film footage for the documentary.

"I'll tell you for a while we were scratching our heads and hoping everything was OK. As soon as they got back from underneath the stern, we got radio contact back. And that was a big, big relief."

While MacInnis' teams lost momentary contact, Titan had been out of contact for more than 30 hours by Monday night. "That's a big concern, especially as time ticks on," he said.

MacInnis said that in the event the submersible is located deep within the ocean, any recovery will be "incredibly costly".

"In any accident, you really want an analysis of what went wrong. And I suspect in this case, there will be a lot of head scratching and [if lost] we'll likely see an effort to recover it if they can."

On Monday, Rear Admiral John Mauger of the US Coast Guard told reporters that crews were "doing everything we can" to find the submersible.

The coast guard is relying on aircraft, some of which have underwater detection capabilities. But officials admitted they only have the capability to search for sounds at the moment.

The outcome officials are hoping for is that the vessel somehow limped to the surface and is drifting somewhere in the North Atlantic, awaiting rescue.

"We've feared this for a long time," said MacInnis, adding the news has rocked a tight-knit community of scientists and explorers who have spent much of their lives pushing further into the darkness of the deep sea.

"But this is the reality of the ocean, especially in its deeper waters. It really is a place of scorching fear. And it is a place of fugitive beauty," he said.

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Search effort under way for missing sub carrying five people near Titanic wreck – video

[The Titanic](#)

[Explainer](#)

## Missing Titanic submersible: what is the Titan tourist sub and what might have happened to it?

The five-person craft has 96 hours of oxygen on board and can dive to depths of 4km to explore wreckage of the Titanic

- [Missing Titanic sub – latest updates](#)

[Graham Russell](#) and agencies

Tue 20 Jun 2023 09.16 EDTFirst published on Mon 19 Jun 2023 22.02 EDT

Search and rescue teams are racing to find a tourist submersible that [went missing with five people on board](#) during a dive to explore the wreck of the Titanic.

Contact with the Titan submersible was lost 1 hour 45 minutes into its dive on Sunday afternoon, according to the US Coast Guard. Here's what we know about the vessel and what might have happened.

[Map](#)

## What is the Titan sub and what can it do?

The Titan is a research and survey submersible that can carry five people, usually a pilot and four “mission specialists” who can include archaeologists, marine biologists or anyone who can afford the experience as a tourist.



Made of “titanium and filament wound carbon fibre”, the 6.7-metre (22ft) craft weighs 10,432kg (23,000lbs), equivalent to about six average-size cars, and is capable of diving to depths of 4,000 metres (13,120ft) “with a comfortable safety margin”, according to operator OceanGate. It uses four electric thrusters to move around, and has a battery of cameras, lights and scanners to explore its environment. OceanGate says Titan’s viewport is “the largest of any deep diving submersible” and that its technology provides an “unrivalled view” of the deep ocean.

### [Titanic sub graphic](#)

It has a 96-hour bottled oxygen supply, as of roughly 6am Sunday local time, according to David Concannon, an adviser to trip operator OceanGate, which would in theory last until Thursday morning . However, that limit would be affected by the breathing rate of those inside the craft, especially if there are tourists onboard with limited diving experience.

## **What might have gone wrong?**

It is too early to say what has happened but experts have offered several of the most likely scenarios, from becoming tangled in wreckage of the Titanic, to a power failure or an issue with the sub’s communications system.

The wreckage of the Titanic, which lies about 3,800 metres (12,500ft) down on the ocean floor is surrounded by debris from the disaster more than a century ago. “There are parts of it all over the place. It’s dangerous,” said Frank Owen OAM, a retired Royal Australian Navy official and submarine escape and rescue project director.

Contact was lost 1 hour 45 minutes into the Titan’s trip, suggesting the crew may have been close to, or at, the bottom, says Owen. The Titan has a maximum speed of three knots, but would be slower the deeper it goes.

### [Titanic depth graphic](#)

In the case of becoming tangled, or a power or communications failure, the Titan would be equipped with drop weights, which can be released in an emergency, creating enough buoyancy to take it to the surface. The Titan has

an array of signals, lighting, reflectors and other equipment it can use once on the surface to attract attention.

Another scenario is that there has been a leak in the pressure hull, in which case the prognosis is not good, said Alistair Greig, a professor of marine engineering at University College London.

“If it has gone down to the seabed and can’t get back up under its own power, options are very limited,” Greig said. “While the submersible might still be intact, if it is beyond the continental shelf, there are very few vessels that can get that deep, and certainly not divers.”

Chris Parry, a retired rear admiral with the British Royal Navy, told Sky News a seabed rescue was “a very difficult operation”.

“The actual nature of the seabed is very undulating. Titanic herself lies in a trench. There’s lots of debris around. So trying to differentiate with sonar in particular and trying to target the area you want to search in with another submersible is going to be very difficult indeed.”

## **What can be done to find it?**

US and Canadian aircraft are searching the area, as well as large ships, but the hunt was “complex” because crews do not know if the vessel has surfaced, meaning they must scour both the surface and the ocean depths, said Rear Admiral John Mauger, first district commander of the US Coast Guard, overseeing the search-and-rescue operation.

Concannon said officials were working to get a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) that can reach a depth of 6,000 metres (about 20,000ft) to the site as soon as possible.

These ROVs are dropped over the side of a vessel, to which it is connected by a “umbilical cord” that enables a pilot to operate its thrusters and also relay data in real-time from its sonar and camera systems.

However, the amount of wreckage of the Titanic on the ocean floor means it could take time to discern what is debris and what is the Titan. The search

teams do at least have a starting point; the vessel's position would have been tracked until the moment contact was lost.

The company's managing director, Mark Butler, told the AP: "There is still plenty of time to facilitate a rescue mission, there is equipment on board for survival in this event," Butler said. "We're all hoping and praying he comes back safe and sound."

This article was amended on 23 June 2023. An earlier version said that the Titan sub "uses Elon Musk's Starlink satellite technology to communicate", supporting this by quoting an OceanGate tweet which said that Starlink was providing communication "throughout this year's 2023 Titanic expedition." However, satellite technology would only have been used above the surface of the water, not for communication with the sub. The reference has been removed.

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## 2023.06.20 - Opinion

- Safety checks run down and boom time for criminals: this is why the UK is becoming the 'dustbin of Europe'
- My generation drank to quell our self-loathing. Gen Z is admirably tough and teetotal
- In the video they are laughing – now Johnson has danced into a new job, and the joke's still on us
- Note to Labour: energy transition isn't just about power generation



‘The Tories have stripped out an already thin veneer of civilisation by laying waste to trading standards.’ Fake cigarettes. Photograph: Albanpix Ltd/Rex Features

[Opinion](#)[Consumer affairs](#)

## **Safety checks run down and boom time for criminals: this is why the UK is becoming the ‘dustbin of Europe’**

[Polly Toynbee](#)



The officials who ensure our consumer goods are safe are being lost to Tory neglect. They work without fanfare but they are vital

Tue 20 Jun 2023 01.00 EDTLast modified on Tue 20 Jun 2023 07.24 EDT

Never forget that all the sound and fury in Westminster is about something very real. Politicians and their parties are not “all the same”. On one side, the Conservatives diminish and damage the public realm, the lives and livelihoods of those with least and the quality of civic values. On the other side, Labour strives to improve public services, the public sphere and enhance the life chances and living standards of those people that the Tories do down.

I’m not sure why I am still so easily shocked by the Tories’ vandalism. But time and again I come across some new act of sabotage that takes my breath away. This time it’s their stripping out of an already thin veneer of civilisation by laying waste to trading standards. Now this is a dull and invisible service, you might think, the sort of thing anyone from a first-world country could take for granted. No longer, just as you no longer assume the rivers are [safe from sewage](#).

Enfield council, in north London, may be about to lose its entire trading standards department. Three of its deeply diminished team of four [are being sacked](#) to save costs, and the remaining manager is resigning in protest: this is not a job for one person. Everywhere else the service is in steep decline, with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) telling me there are half as many trading standards officers in local government as a decade ago: 2,500 highly skilled professionals have been lost. Enfield's Labour council may not be particularly to blame: councils cut to the bone since 2010 have to make unspeakable choices to shrink vulnerable children's services, social care for the frail, public health, housing, bin collections – or other statutory essentials. (Since Enfield never replied to my query, I don't know.)

What do trading standards officers (TSOs) do? They have more than 290 pieces of legislation to enforce. Weights and measures officials, existing since time immemorial, still need to check scales in shops, baby scales in clinics or airport scales that airlines use to claim your bag is overweight: scales are often wildly wrong. A supermarket packet claiming to contain 500g often doesn't. You assume a litre of petrol goes into your tank because you imagine someone checks. But that happens less and less – and traders know it.

Just look at the long list of areas of life that TSOs are supposed, by law, to police, and it's hair-raising how little now gets inspected. Take a very deep breath here before reading this random selection: gas appliances, offensive weapons, botulinum toxin in cosmetic fillers, tenant fees, package holidays, money laundering, fireworks, olive oil marketing, scrap metal, sunbed safety, timeshare holidays, dog breeding, infant formula, mineral water, lotteries and gambling, Christmas Day trading, GM food, battery hens, tobacco advertising, the Knives Act, car tyres and brake linings, calorie counts on packets, the Clean Air Act, copyright and patents, furniture fire safety, motorcycle noise, nightwear safety, the Estate Agents Act, dangerous wild animals, unsolicited goods and services.

Incidentally, since David Cameron and George Osborne are [being grilled by the Covid inquiry](#) this week on the abysmal state of Britain's preparedness, remember that TSOs are also responsible for checking personal protection equipment (PPE). How unlikely it looks that Britain will be any better prepared for another pandemic. Or indeed for another Grenfell, since TSOs



check cladding materials and electrical equipment, such as the faulty fridge that started the tower block fire.

I spent time with a Hammersmith and Fulham TSO with more than 30 years experience, Doug Love, who showed me round his warehouse of evidence that is waiting – a long time these days – for court cases prosecuting offenders. Shelves were stacked high with bags of allegedly counterfeit cigarettes and illegal and possibly dangerous vapes, [vodka of unknown origin](#) that often lands people in A&E, fake batteries (a danger on e-bikes and scooters), fire-hazard fake mobile chargers and toxic cosmetics. He had cases of wine misspelled “shardonnay”, and e-cigarettes with untested levels of heavy metals. He had just completed a case that took five years, concerning the mass theft of access to TV platforms. He speaks of giving evidence more often now at coroners’ courts after anaphylactic shock deaths due to killer allergens that have not been listed on packaging. These days, he says, checks largely only happen after a complaint or intelligence is received.

Last week, the CTSI conducted a spot check in Salford, issuing a stark warning after toy testing revealed bows and arrows with 100 times the [legal limit of phthalates](#) – and fashion dolls 300 times over the limit of these chemicals, which have been linked to cancer. The institute found that the cost of living crisis was driving Salford people to buy cheap and dangerous counterfeit goods. “This is just the tip of the iceberg,” they said, “likely to be replicated across the UK.”

Smugglers, counterfeiters and poisoners need not head to Enfield: just about everywhere is “at breaking point”, says the chair of the CTSI, Tendy Lindsay. She warns me that the UK is becoming “the dustbin of Europe”, saying that the UK “no longer shares intel” with the 27 EU countries about dangerous chemicals and products. At the ports, there are now few TSOs, she says, with Border Force under pressure to get things through ports quickly.

The idea that Britain is about to start rigorous border checks on goods arriving from the EU is delusional. But the rest of the world may become concerned about uninspected rogue goods and services from the UK: a reputation for safety and probity once lost is hard to recapture. It may hardly

matter if the Brexiteers strip away vital EU compliance regulations if no one enforces them anyway. This is becoming a country where civilisation's safety nets seem perilously frayed.

- Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist

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Have Gen Z figured out how to get through awkward social situations without booze? Photograph: Peter Cade/Getty Images

[OpinionAlcohol](#)

## **My generation drank to quell our self-loathing. Gen Z is admirably tough and teetotal**

[Zoe Williams](#)



They are more likely to avoid alcohol than any other age group. Not easy, when you're facing the nerves of starting university or navigating a new job

Tue 20 Jun 2023 02.00 EDTLast modified on Tue 20 Jun 2023 06.44 EDT

My first job out of university was on reception at some blue-chip company full of (probably) terrible suits, but that didn't matter because the only person who ever spoke to me was the other receptionist, and she was great. She had this kid who was a rascal, and one day the police called to say he'd been nicked for some rascally behaviour. "To his credit," they said, "he doesn't have any previous convictions." She replied: "Well, give him a chance – he's only 13."

Her voice popped into my head the other day when I was worrying about my daughter, and how non-alcohol-curious she is. Well, give her a chance – she's only 13. But my nieces are the same way, and they're older. My sister and I decided a while ago that this was our doing: they'd taken one look at us, or to be accurate, a million looks at us, and decided the Aperol bounce wasn't for them. And while I'm almost immune to parental guilt, I did feel fantastically bad about the idea that I might, just by enjoying it too much, have put my kids off alcohol.

The drop-off in drinking among 16- to 25-year-olds is striking. Festivals have to order alcohol-free lager to cater to the new demographic, which is just peculiar – if you never got a taste for regular lager, why not drink squash? Gen Z are more likely to be teetotal than any other age group; if they drink at all, they start at a later age than we did, they consume smaller amounts and less frequently. This is not just the UK – [it's Europe-wide](#). Realistically, this cannot have been caused by me and my sister.

The social-media explanation is plausible, if depressing. It's an era where everything is recorded and nothing gets forgotten; where half the point of doing anything at all is to take a picture of yourself doing it. What goes on tour no longer stays on tour; indeed, every tiny event of the tour could be burned into the retina of a future employer.

I think the impossibility of forgetting has got into their bloodstream, and now they think of their own brains as data storage, from which it would be catastrophic if anything were to go missing, on par with losing your phone or accidentally wiping your hard drive. Some early-adopter teetotal twentysomethings were interviewed about their choice, and one phrase came up again and again: [they wanted to be able to remember the night before](#). It seemed so alarmist, such an overstatement: you can usually remember most of it, and what you can't will float back to you over the course of the day, until it disappears forever in a week and a half; plus, it won't all have been massively consequential. If you lose an hour of your best friend telling you about the jacket she can't decide whether to get in black or brown, and also that she loves you, is that the end of the world?

I think of all the situations I would have found completely untenable, as a young person, without several cans of Tennent's. Festivals, for sure – there's nowhere to hide except the tent you haven't put up correctly; parties, specifically the unique, exquisite awkwardness of feeling so visible, so conspicuous, so out of place, and yet at the same time, so irrelevant, so blank, so entirely uninteresting; university, which is as bad as a party – all the strangers, all the performance anxiety, except you have to live there; the first forays into work, as bad as university except now you don't know how a fax machine works and that's your entire job. It takes years to break the curse of self-consciousness. Have Gen Z found a way that isn't drinking? It's

pretty clear they're not the snowflakes – we are. They're made of iron filings.

- Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist

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New footage shows Tories dancing at Christmas party in breach of lockdown rules – video

[OpinionPartygate](#)

## In the video they are laughing – now Johnson has danced into a new job, and the joke's still on us

[Frances Ryan](#)



The Tories want us to ‘move on’. How can we, when those who partied while children died face no sanction, and some are even honoured

Tue 20 Jun 2023 02.00 EDTLast modified on Tue 20 Jun 2023 07.23 EDT

On Saturday night, [footage emerged](#) of staff at Conservative HQ partying at the height of the pandemic in December 2020. At a time when much of the UK was barred from socialising indoors, staff are seen drinking wine and mocking Covid-19 rules. At one point, a couple wearing Christmas jumpers

laugh and dance past a sign that says: “Please keep your distance.” Two of the people present are on Boris Johnson’s [resignation honours](#) list.

On Monday, 48 hours later, MPs – those who bothered to turn up – gathered to consider Johnson’s fate. The Commons voted to accept the privileges committee report; 225 MPs abstained. The prime minister was [reportedly busy elsewhere](#).

As Rishi Sunak’s allies put it, they are just keen “to [move on](#)”.

Quite. Time to get over it. Though I imagine that is easier if you’re a Tory cabinet member seeking re-election rather than say, a child who said goodbye to their dying mum over an iPad during lockdown.

Since Partygate stories first emerged, the government has worked to convince the public that nothing really happened – and if it did, that it didn’t really matter. [It was just a cake](#). They were work meetings. The broken swing and suitcase of booze were simply hardworking staff blowing off steam. (That no picture emerged of nurses partying in an intensive care unit presumably means they weren’t really working at all.) Any criticism – even by a parliamentary committee – is said to be politically motivated. A “[kangaroo court](#)”.

As the Covid inquiry continues this week, the attitude of many Conservatives could best be described as “bury the bodies and get on”. Sunak – who has reportedly not [found the time](#) to read the full privileges committee report – has the air of a fan bored of his favourite TV show’s long-running storyline. By the time the leaked video of a party emerged, it was already old news to some. Much of the rightwing media are more than happy to peddle this narrative. As [Nick Ferrari said](#) on LBC on Monday, “I don’t know whether we need to chase 22 people for dancing.”

It is not as if these tactics have been wholly unsuccessful. If there is one thing the spectacle of the past few days has confirmed, it is just how few consequences there really are for a certain class of people with power. Johnson may be wounded but he has slipped out of parliament with his characteristic non-stick coating, failing upwards to a lucrative [newspaper](#)



[column](#) and the praise of loyalist MPs and press already salivating for his return. His biggest loss will be a parliamentary pass. [The Met police suggest](#) action will be taken over the party footage, but they did not do so earlier, and it's not likely any fine issued now would dent anyone's career. Shaun Bailey – whose London mayoral campaign team were in the leaked video, and who was previously [photographed smiling at the party](#) – will now sit in the House of Lords after Johnson gave him a peerage. Ben Mallett – a Tory aide seen in the film wearing festive braces – has been awarded an OBE. Mallett, it's worth noting, is said to be a close friend of Carrie Johnson.

Contrast that with the ordinary members of the public who stuck to the rules during the lockdowns, many of whom now have to live with the life-changing sacrifices they made in order to do so. There are countless stories I could mention, not least the thousands shared on social media in recent days from people forced to relive the loss of loved ones to whom they will never get a chance to say goodbye.

My mind keeps coming back to 13-year-old Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab. Described by his family as a “gentle and kind” boy with a “heartwarming” smile, Ismail [died in hospital](#) at the height of the pandemic without his family by his side. Neither his parents nor his brothers or sisters could go to his [funeral](#). Two of his siblings had Covid-19 symptoms and the family self-isolated. They followed the rules. They followed the rules and they watched their little boy's burial on a live-stream from home.

In the days after his death, Ismail's family urged the public “to [listen to government guidance](#)” and “ensure that we adhere to social distancing”. What they didn't know, of course, was that those at the very top of government would soon be breaking the rules themselves – and laughing as they did so.

Fast-forward three years: Johnson exits largely unshaken, his chums are honoured, and we're told to move on. It's hard to shake the feeling that they are still laughing, and squarely at us.

- Frances Ryan is a Guardian columnist
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Keir Starmer delivers a speech in Edinburgh – pledging a new clean energy company and thousands of jobs. Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

[Nils Pratley on financeBusiness](#)

## **Note to Labour: energy transition isn't just about power generation**

[Nils Pratley.](#)



There are some doubts as to whether Starmer's publicly-owned energy company will have its emphasis in the right place

Mon 19 Jun 2023 19.00 EDT

A Labour government would establish a new publicly-owned energy generation company in Scotland, [Keir Starmer](#) announced on Monday. Fine, if expertise and jobs from the North Sea industry are to be transferred over time, Scotland is a logical place to put it. But the location is only a minor piece of the decision-making. Two more important questions about “Great British Energy” are these: how much money will it have to invest? And which investments would it prioritise?

There is – as yet – no hint of an answer to the first question, perhaps understandably if a general election is still more than a year away. But note that many outsiders think GBE would need an annual investment budget of £5bn-£10bn to make a meaningful difference to the pace of energy transition. Clarity can't wait for ever.

But we are – at last – getting more detail on what the company would do. It would, for example, [back a “local power plan” to build clean energy projects at a community level](#). Since there are numerous examples from Europe of successful municipal networks – from Germany and Norway – that seems uncontentious. Other examples where GBE would look to invest are described as emerging technologies, from green hydrogen, floating offshore wind to tidal and so on.

And, thankfully, [Labour](#) does not imagine that GBE would be a go-it-alone investor. It is talking the language of public-private partnerships and using public money as a way to de-risk projects. That all sounds commendable and pragmatic.

Yet, even among supporters of a new publicly-backed enterprise, there are doubts about whether GBE has got its emphasis in the correct place. Labour talks almost exclusively about the new company being a generator of power. But is generation really the top priority? The far trickier bit in energy transition – and the part where the UK is off the pace internationally – is decarbonising the industrial base.

Ed Miliband, the shadow climate secretary, will speak on Tuesday at King’s College London and one hopes he has digested the friendly thoughts of Nick Butler, the college’s visiting professor and energy economist. There is “a serious role” for a publicly-owned enterprise, agrees Butler’s 43-page report (also out on Tuesday), but transition is not all about generation capacity.

Here’s a key line from Butler’s report: “Much of the debate on energy policy focuses on extending the base of supply, but increased volume of low-carbon energy from wind or solar will only make a difference if consumers can use the energy produced as a substitute for their existing use of hydrocarbons.”

Exactly. There is no shortage of capital willing to invest in new offshore wind projects (even if one wishes more windfarms in UK waters were UK-owned). And, if a Labour government loosens the planning rules for onshore wind, as Starmer says it would, there would probably be a queue of investors there too.

So, if one were prioritising targets for state intervention in the energy system, big generation projects might be near the bottom. “The full potential of wind power ... will only be delivered if there are significant advances in the use of electricity in areas such as heating, transport and industry – the sectors which account for the majority of current energy demand,” says the report.

Butler has a long list of ideas of priority investment, all of which could be grouped as demand, rather than supply, challenges: ensure the grid can handle large volumes of renewable power and be compatible with two-way transfers from electric vehicles; develop storage capacity to ensure renewable power is not wasted at times of excess supply; complete electrification of the railways, which should have happened years ago; develop a hydrogen network; and support development of a North Sea energy grid with other countries to mitigate challenges of intermittency.

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Every item on that wishlist sounds fertile territory for a state-backed company – big stuff that requires heavy lifting and long-term backing. Decarbonising industry, note, is also where the bulk of subsidies under Joe Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act are being directed.

Labour isn't blind to the wider challenges, of course. Monday's document on the plan to make Britain "a cleaner energy superpower" also recognised the need to upgrade the electricity transmission infrastructure and expand the grid's capacity. But accelerating rail electrification, for instance, wasn't mentioned.

It's early days, but one wishes Labour's vision for GBE was wider than clean energy generation. If the job of the company is to fill gaps in the national decarbonisation programme, there are some yawning holes that aren't being talked about enough.

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## 2023.06.20 - Around the world

- [Greece Grief-stricken Pakistani town mourns sons lost in shipwreck](#)
- [Greece Sunk boat had not moved for hours, data suggests, contradicting officials](#)
- ['I have come for a sign of life' Relatives cling to hope after disaster](#)





Touqeer Pervez, pictured with his niece, was on board the ship and is still missing. Photograph: Shah Meer Baloch/The Guardian

[Pakistan](#)

## Grief-stricken Pakistani town mourns sons lost in Greek shipwreck

Poverty drove young men from small Kashmir town to board ill-fated fishing trawler, say families

[Shah Meer Baloch](#) in *Khuiratta*

Mon 19 Jun 2023 13.02 EDTLast modified on Tue 20 Jun 2023 02.29 EDT

The last time Mohammed Yousaf talked to his son, Sajid Yousaf, on 8 June, the son was waiting anxiously in Libya for smugglers to pack him and hundreds of others on to a boat bound for the other side of the Mediterranean.

Six days later, the overcrowded fishing trawler sank off the coast of Greece. Sajid, 28, a shopkeeper and father of two from the small town of Khuiratta

in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, is among the hundreds missing, presumed dead.

“I never wanted him to go,” Yousaf said through tears. “His elder brother also advised him against this deadly sea journey. It is like you are walking on fire and it can engulf you. We told him many times, stop it. We even asked him to come back from Libya.”

On Monday, as tracking data [cast further doubts](#) on the Greek coastguard’s account of the shipwreck, an initial investigation by police in Pakistan estimated that about 800 people were onboard. Witness accounts had placed the number at between 400 and 750. Greek authorities say 104 survivors and 78 bodies have been brought ashore.



An image of the overcrowded trawler before it sank in international waters off the western Greek coast last Wednesday. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Sajid Yousaf was one of 25 people from Khuiratta who boarded the boat in Libya. Only two are known to have survived. He planned to reach Italy, where his brother lives having made a similarly treacherous boat journey 12 years ago. In [a video](#) that has since gone viral, Sajid promised to bring a bicycle back home to his four-year-old son.

The Guardian talked to almost a dozen families in Khuiratta whose sons and nephews were on the boat. All said their relatives had paid 2.2m Pakistan rupees to an agent who promised to take them to [Greece](#). Many families took out hefty loans to cover the costs. Most of those who undertook the journey were hoping to eventually reach Italy, where about 500 people from the area had previously relocated.

Sajid's cousin Touqeer Pervez, 29, was also onboard and is missing, leaving behind a pregnant wife. Pervez's father, a labourer in a brick factory, had borrowed money from about 20 friends and relatives to help pay the agent.

Like most of the people from the village who boarded the ship, Pervez left for Libya via a flight from Pakistan. He had worked in Saudi Arabia for two years to help pay for the trip, and left in May to begin his illegal journey to [Europe](#). At 5am on 9 June, he sent a final message to his family to say he was on the ship.

“When I tried to stop him from this risky voyage, he told me that our living standards will never improve by living in Pakistan,” said his father, Mohammad Pervez. “He was adamant to change our future and living standards. I don't know how to console his pregnant wife who has been crying for days.”

Abdul Jabbar, 39, a baker with two children, had also hoped to reach Italy. He took a flight to Dubai on 5 June and then another to Libya. His father, Mohammad Anwar, said his son had called home in distress due to the conditions they were being kept in. That was the last time they heard from him.

“He told his brother that if he had known about the conditions in Libya, he would never have left,” Anwar said. “They were given just a little bread in 24 hours and he said they were dying of hunger. He wanted to turn back but he was helpless as he had already given the money.”



Rubina Kausar sits by a phone showing an image of her son Ahmed, 26.  
Photograph: Shah Meer Baloch/The Guardian

Rubina Kusr, a widow, said her son Ahmed, 26, left for Libya six months ago and endured terrible conditions at the hands of smugglers. She said they deprived him of food, beat him to try to extract more money from him and took his passport and other documents to stop him escaping.

“He was put in a dark cell for four days as a punishment after he had a fight with the agent because he refused 19 offers to go on a small boat and told the agent he was promised that the journey would be on a big boat,” Kusr said. In a phone call with his wife before the boat departed, Ahmed spoke of his happiness that he was finally making the journey on a large fishing trawler.

“My son suffered a lot before his death,” Kusr said. “At first at the hands of smugglers and then in the sea. He must have gone through excruciating pain. We need justice. The government has been in a deep slumber. Why did not our leaders wake up early? Don’t they care about common people, common lives?”

People in Khuiratta said Pakistan’s terrible economic situation and a lack of opportunities in their region were to blame for relatives making the journey.

While many in Pakistan had previously taken a treacherous overland journey through Iran and Turkey to enter Europe, draconian policies by Turkey meant that more were opting to fly to Libya then get on a boat headed for Greece.

According to locals, about 100 people from the area are still in Libya with plans to board boats but have become uncontactable after smugglers switched off their phones.

“It is all poverty that pushed him to take this risky journey,” said Mohammed Haneef, whose nephew Sameer, a tractor driver with six children, was among those feared to have drowned on the boat. “This poverty took his life. Poverty has engulfed the masses in Pakistan over the last few years. He saw people from his home town doing well in Italy, earning money to send home, and it pushed him to go.”

So far, only two from the village, Haseeb and Adnan Bashir, are known to have survived the sinking of the boat. Adnan had been frustrated with the lack of local employment opportunities and had tried to reach Europe twice before, going via Iran and Turkey, but he failed after he was caught by border guards. In order to afford this journey, he sold all his buffaloes – his only livelihood – and his wife’s jewellery before leaving on 3 May.

His father, Bashir Ahmed, a retired soldier, said he had spoken to his son through a relative from the UK. According to his account, the ship overturned after a rope was attached to it by the coastguard – an allegation rejected by Greek officials.

“Adnan said he jumped off the ship the moment it was going down. He said women and children were below in the deck and they could not come out,” Ahmed said. “I am lucky that my son survived.”

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Aerial footage shows migrant ship hours before capsizes in Mediterranean – video

[Greece](#)

## Sunk boat had not moved for hours, data suggests, contradicting Greek officials

Tracking data indicates two vessels stood by or circled around stationary refugee boat for several hours

[Jon Henley](#) *Europe correspondent*

[@jonhenley](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 12.27 EDTFirst published on Mon 19 Jun 2023 10.16 EDT

Tracking data suggests an overcrowded fishing boat that sank off the Greek coast last week with the feared loss of hundreds of lives had not moved for several hours before it capsized, contradicting accounts from the Hellenic coastguard.

As Pakistani police said on Monday they believed up to 800 people were onboard, a Guardian analysis of ship movements supplied by the MariTrace service indicated two vessels – the Lucky Sailor and the Faithful Warrior – stood by or circled round the stationary trawler for at least four hours.

[Map](#)

The coastguard has said it was in contact with the boat throughout that period – from about 3pm to 7pm on Tuesday – by radio, satphone and helicopter and that the vessel was not in difficulty, but moving “at a steady course and speed” towards Italy.



The trawler began rocking, then listed and sank in international waters off the west coast of [Greece](#) shortly after 2am on Wednesday. Authorities have said 104 people were rescued and 78 bodies recovered. A search and rescue operation continues.

Citing survivors, suspects and bereaved families, an initial police investigation in Pakistan, where some of those onboard were from, found that 750 to 800 people had been on the vessel. Other witness accounts have put the number at between 400 and 750.

### [Map](#)

The UN's human rights agency has said up to 500 people are still missing, making the sinking potentially the second deadliest refugee and migrant shipwreck after the [April 2015 capsizing](#) of another vessel on the Libya-Italy route that killed up to 1,100 people.

The UN has called for an investigation into Greece's handling of the disaster amid claims the coastguard should have intervened earlier to prevent it. Greek authorities [have rejected claims](#) the boat sank after an attempt was made to tow it.

Coastguard and government officials have defended the decision not to step in sooner to save the rusting steel trawler, which left eastern Libya on 9 June carrying men, women and children from Syria, Egypt, the Palestinian territories and Pakistan.

A full-scale rescue attempt was not possible, they said, because the people on the boat repeatedly refused assistance and were not in danger. Any kind of forcible intervention could have caused the badly overloaded boat to capsize, they said.

The coastguard has said that the trawler was moving forward more or less steadily until minutes before it sank. Activists, however, say people onboard were clearly in danger and making frequent pleas for help more than 15 hours before the boat sank.

International maritime law experts have said conditions on the trawler, some of whose passengers were reportedly ill and which was supplied with water and food by at least one passing merchant ship, meant the people onboard were clearly at risk.

The state of the vessel and its passengers should have prompted an immediate rescue operation, regardless of what the people onboard may have said, legal experts argue.

The captain of a Greek coastguard vessel that finally reached the trawler less than three hours before it sank has testified to investigating authorities that the passengers refused any help whatsoever, Greek media have reported.

He said when the coastguard boat tied a rope to the trawler's bow after it stopped moving just before midnight on Tuesday, some passengers cried: "No help" and "Go Italy", untied the rope, and restarted the engine – which stopped again at 1.40am.

The Guardian analysis substantiates a [BBC report](#) based on tracking data supplied by another maritime analytics platform, MarineTraffic, which also indicates the fishing trawler was stationary and clearly not advancing for up to seven hours.

Nine survivors from the shipwreck, all Egyptian men aged between 20 and 40 and accused of people-smuggling and other offences, pleaded not guilty in court on Monday, with a lawyer for one of them saying his client had been a passenger.

The court in Kalamata postponed the hearing until Tuesday to provide them and their lawyers with time to review the testimonies of the suspects, who were reportedly identified as members of a smuggling ring by some of the survivors.

They face charges of participating in a criminal organisation, causing a shipwreck and endangering lives. In a separate incident on Monday, the coastguard said 68 people were rescued in the eastern Aegean after the yacht they were on sent a distress signal.



The boat, believed to have set sail from Turkey, issued a distress call early on Monday. Its passengers were initially picked up by two Russian vessels before being transferred to a coastguard boat and taken to the nearby island of Leros.

In Pakistan, authorities in Islamabad said they had arrested 14 suspects in connection with alleged human trafficking related to last week's shipwreck, and police added that they were searching for more suspects.

A statement from the office of the prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, said a high-level inquiry had been ordered into the network believed to be involved. Flags were flown at half-mast after Monday was declared a day of national mourning.

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Aerial footage shows migrant ship hours before capsizes in Mediterranean – video

[Greece](#)

## ‘I have come for a sign of life’: relatives cling to hope after Greek shipwreck

Families of missing desperately search for information about their loved ones after maritime disaster

[Helena Smith](#) in Malakasa

Mon 19 Jun 2023 14.27 EDT Last modified on Tue 20 Jun 2023 08.37 EDT

Six days have elapsed since a fishing trawler piloted by people smugglers sank with unimaginable loss of life off [Greece](#) and yet they still come: relatives armed with pictures, praying that in the aftermath of the maritime disaster, loved ones are not among the perished. On Monday it was outside the steel gates of a migrant facility in Malakasa, north of Athens, that emotions were on display.

“I have come for a [sign of life](#) of my uncle Nadim,” said Zohaib Shamraiz whose first stop was the fenced camp after flying into Greece from Barcelona. “I know for sure he was on the boat because I talked to him five minutes before he boarded. He said there were hundreds on the ship and I told him: ‘Please don’t get on it. Wait for another one.’”

The 21-year-old Pakistani reached Europe with his family as a boy six years ago. Nadim Muhammed, the uncle he had played with as a child in his native Punjab, had wanted to follow suit. “He had three children,” said the soft-spoken trainee taxi driver, with tearful eyes as he showed pictures of Nadim in a traditional shalwar kameez. “He wanted to leave because he was very poor. He worked for \$20 a day. Look, this is another picture of him in Libya the night before the ship left.”



Zohaib Shamraiz holds up a photograph of his missing uncle. Photograph: Petros Giannakouris/AP

Of the estimated 750 men, women and children smugglers are believed to have packed on to the vessel, the vast majority are thought to have hailed from Pakistan. Witness testimonies given to the Greek coastguard suggest that Pakistanis were [singled out](#) and “locked” in the hold together with women and children, which is why investigators believe their mortality rates are so much higher. Afghans, Syrians and Egyptians were kept in groups with almost no space to move on the upper deck.

“We now know there were around 400 of our people onboard,” said Shahid Nawab, the head of Greece’s 30,000-strong Pakistani community, emerging from the migrant facility. “Of the 104 survivors, only 12 are from Pakistan and they are in this camp. Of the 78 bodies found so far, most we think are Pakistani.”

Nawab, who reached Greece “when it was so much easier to get to Europe” on Christmas Day 2000, said the 30,000-strong community had rallied to help the survivors. “We have collected clothes and food and we will offer them shelter when they are allowed to leave this camp,” he said. “Our country is in national [mourning](#) today.”

Greek migration ministry officials on Monday described survivors as still reeling from the ordeal of the odyssey onboard the Italy-bound ship.

“They’re still shocked and in a very bad psychological state,” said one standing outside the camp’s turnstile entry points.

“They’re sleeping a lot. They’ll leave here once they have gone through the process of applying for asylum.”

The old trawler, repurposed by the Egyptian smuggler network behind the doomed voyage, ran into engine trouble after departing Libya on 9 June. Passengers have told of how they [resorted](#) to drinking seawater and their own urine when supplies of fresh water ran out. Others were reported fainting under the hot sun as the engine repeatedly failed and stalled before the ship listed and capsized 47 nautical miles south of Pylos.

A search and rescue operation involving patrol ships and military helicopters was extended at the weekend. Survivors who had been hospitalised, mostly suffering from hyperthermia, are expected to join the 71 other men rescued from the shipwreck in Malakasa this week.

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The former chief secretary to the Treasury was described as a ‘block’ in a book about the NHS. Photograph: Wiktor Szymanowicz/Shutterstock

[Conservatives](#)

## Steve Barclay ‘frustrated health officials by delaying vaccine programme signoff’

Other senior staff allowed rollout to begin 10 days before Treasury’s formal green light, new book claims

[Peter Walker](#) *Deputy political editor*  
[@peterwalker99](#)

Sat 24 Jun 2023 04.26 EDTLast modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 05.06 EDT

Steve Barclay frustrated health officials by delaying the Treasury’s signoff on the Covid vaccine programme, amid wider hold-ups by the department in approving the financing for the project, a new book about the NHS has claimed.

Barclay, who is now the health secretary, has rejected the claim. But one senior figure in the vaccine programme told journalist Isabel Hardman that Barclay, who was then chief secretary to the Treasury and lead minister on the vaccine taskforce, was a block.

“He was a total dick, a total control freak but also not very good at it,” they told Hardman. “He refused to sign off the vaccine programme for ages, saying ‘Is it value for money?’”

Barclay has said this is incorrect, and that he took “significant risk and acted early”. An ally of Barclay said a contemporaneous timeline of his meetings and correspondence showed he had moved swiftly.

[Hardman’s book](#), *Fighting for Life: The Twelve Battles That Made Our NHS, and the Struggle for Its Future*, claims the wider culture in the Treasury was so slow that other officials allowed vaccinations to begin 10 days before the formal signoff for its business case.

The decision by Chris Wormald, who was the permanent secretary at the health department at the time, and Simon Stevens, the then chief executive of NHS England, meant that by the time the business case was approved nearly a million people had already been vaccinated.

Another unnamed insider said of the Treasury: “It took months for them to sign off anything, and so they [the health department and NHS England] had to ignore them and get on with spending the money anyway.”

The book adds that Kate Bingham, who led the vaccine taskforce, was so unimpressed by the number of irrelevant forms that needed filling in that she complained to Boris Johnson.

Johnson in turn questioned Rishi Sunak, Barclay’s boss at the time, who was unaware of the delay as officials had not kept him up to date. “Vaccines had clearly not been high on the list of priorities for the chancellor’s office,” Bingham wrote in her own book about the project.

Hardman's book goes on to say that Johnson was so enthused about the idea of rapid vaccination – in part for the potential political dividends – that he was keen for vaccine centres to be open 24 hours a day, even though officials warned it would be hard to fill slots in the middle of the night, especially with a first cohort of mainly older people.

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The book says Johnson was encouraged in this ambition by Tony Blair, with the former Labour PM saying he would happily queue at any time to get his vaccination.

It adds: “This amused Blair’s former colleagues, who pointed out that the former prime minister had probably last queued for anything in the mid-1990s.”

In the end, Stevens and others persuaded Johnson that all-night appointments were not the best way forward, although a handful of centres did offer a few 24-hour slots, “which seemed to satisfy the prime minister”.







Who's watching and where? The key questions raised as Netflix launches a crackdown. Photograph: Jessica Gwynne/Alamy

[Netflix](#)

## Netflix cracks down as it begins password-sharing purge in UK

Emails are landing warning UK subscribers who allow family and friends to use their account that they have to pay extra

[Miles Brignall](#)

Sat 24 Jun 2023 02.00 EDT

After years of ignoring password sharing, [Netflix](#) has started to crack down on the millions of UK subscribers who give friends and family free access to their account.

It is thought that a quarter of Netflix's 15 million UK subscribers [share their password with others](#), and warning emails are now landing in the inboxes of

some of these account holders.

The alert will come as a shock to some long-term subscribers as the streaming company had previously turned a blind eye to password sharing. So what are the rules if, like many other Britons, you have previously been relaxed about who logs on where?

When Nick James got the email it wasn't a big surprise. For several years he had been allowing his sister-in-law to watch [Netflix](#) using his account.

The email, sent at the end of May, was polite but clear. "Your Netflix account is for you and the people you live with – your household," it stated before offering him the option of adding her to his account, but only if he paid an extra £4.99 a month.

Customers signing up to Netflix's most popular standard (£10.99 a month) package can watch via two supported devices – a TV, laptop, mobile. For £15.99, households can use four different devices at the same time, even if the viewers are in different parts of the world.

This has led to students using their parents' accounts while at university, the kids of separated parents watching the same account at two households, and plenty of cases like the James's.

However, not all account holders who have been allowing their account to be used by others have been receiving the "warning" email received by James, and others. So far it seems that emails have mainly been sent to account holders where the extra non-household user has logged on to a smart TV or has used a Fire Stick or similar to connect their account to a television.

Students watching shows such as Stranger Things on their laptop or mobile at their halls in, say, Birmingham, while their account holder parents watch something else at home in Manchester, do not appear to have triggered an email.

Password sharers who all watch the service on mobile devices have similarly been untroubled by the crackdown emails.

Guardian Money asked Netflix in an effort to clarify the rules, and while the streaming firm did not want to get into the detail of how it worked, it told us that it defines a household as “a collection of the devices connected to the internet at the main place you watch Netflix”.

It was also keen to point out that the changes [do not affect travel](#). Users can continue to watch Netflix as usual “on your portable devices or sign in to a new TV, like at a hotel or a holiday rental”, it says.

For those who live in two places – the children of separated parents, those with a second home – or those who work away during the week, it seems that as long as you log into Netflix once a month at the “home” address, you will be able to carry on as before.

Users who are unsure which household is their home should, according to Netflix, go to settings, click on get help, and then “manage Netflix household”.

The company declined to say how students heading off to university will be treated. It seems if they return home occasionally and log on at the home address, they should be fine – as they will probably be, if they only watch using a mobile or laptop.

Ultimately, though, it seems the worst thing that will happen is that the person using the shared account will simply lose their viewing. Netflix has confirmed that there is no sanction for account holders who allowed their passwords to be used by others.

Those denied viewing can either hope the account holder is prepared to stump up the extra £4.99 to allow them to keep them online, or to sign up for their own account. Packages [at the streaming firm](#) start at £4.99 if you are prepared to endure adverts, or £6.99 a month if you are not.

*\* Nick James is not his real name.*

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Many students who contacted the Guardian supported the UCU industrial action, with most blaming university leaders for failing to resolve the dispute. Photograph: Andrew Fox/Alamy

### [Students](#)

## Third of UK final-year students face grades delay due to marking boycott

Small number could attend graduation but later be told they have failed as pay dispute affects assessments at 145 universities

[Richard Adams](#) *Education editor*

Sat 24 Jun 2023 02.00 EDT

Tens of thousands of university students are being left in limbo without their final degree results this summer, including some who could attend graduation ceremonies only to be told later that they have failed.

About a third of the UK's 500,000 final-year undergraduates are thought to have been affected by the marking and assessment boycott at 145 universities, part of the pay dispute between the University and College Union (UCU) and employers that has strained relations between staff, students and management.

For many, the delay in confirming their degrees is the latest in a string of disruptions they have suffered since 2020, when A-level and BTec exams were cancelled and replaced with a botched algorithm during the pandemic, and lockdowns and Covid prevention measures marred their time on campus and restricted them to online learning in their first years.

With UCU members declining to mark final exams, dissertations and coursework since April, most universities are issuing provisional results or certificates to allow students to graduate on time. [Students](#) have been told that their class of degree will be issued only when the assessments are completed in several months.

The University of Cambridge is among the worst-affected and has told students they will not be able to graduate until their final exams have been marked.

Dr Anthony Freeling, Cambridge's interim vice-chancellor, said in a memo to colleagues that half of the university's final-year undergraduates and up to 90% of postgraduate students on taught courses were affected, and warned: "Students could still be waiting for degrees well into the next academic year."

The University of Edinburgh this week told 2,000 affected students they could take part in the graduation ceremony and receive a degree scroll on stage, but added: "In a very small number of cases, students with delayed degree awards who have attended a graduation celebration may be found to not be eligible for an award once marks are returned after the boycott is over.

“In these rare cases, we will contact the student with details of opportunities to repeat a year or resit the relevant exams and assessments.”

A spokesperson for Edinburgh [said](#): “Graduations are continuing as planned. All students who have been awarded their degree, final or provisional, or who are awaiting a final decision on their degree outcome, will be able to participate in a ceremony.”

The University of Manchester has told staff to award provisional grades for modules where some work has been marked, and will give degree classifications to undergraduates with marks in at least two-thirds of their final-year modules.

Academics at Manchester have criticised the provisional grades as potentially unfair. One told the Guardian: “Some students who did have their work rigorously marked during the boycott – because the modules they took happened to be marked – will be disadvantaged compared to peers whose classifications were based on provisional marks.”

The University of Manchester said it did not know yet how many students would be affected.

“We have put in place measures to allow as many students as possible to receive a classified degree and graduate on time. When all final marks are submitted, we will not lower an awarded degree classification unless there are specific circumstances, such as academic malpractice; however, we would consider a raised classification if appropriate,” a spokesperson said.

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Many of the students who contacted the Guardian supported the industrial action by UCU members, with most blaming university leaders for failing to resolve the dispute.

However, the underlying dispute shows no sign of being settled during the current academic year, with the [Universities](#) and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) claiming that the marking and assessment boycott had had only a “limited” impact and refusing to reopen talks on the 2023-24 pay round.

Some university leaders, including at Cambridge and Exeter, are calling for reopened negotiations with UCU, but other universities have applied punitive measures, deducting up to 100% of wages for those taking part in the boycott, with others hiring non-union staff to do the marking.

Jo Grady, UCU’s general secretary, said: “We are seeing the national degree scandal grow worse and worse, with universities now admitting that thousands of students aren’t graduating. Further disruption is avoidable and our members have made clear that they just need a fair pay settlement to call the boycott off.

“A number of employers have joined us in calling on UCEA to restart pay negotiations. Unfortunately, the employer body is refusing to listen, which is hurting staff and hurting students.”

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Thousands of students have been affected by the dispute over pay and conditions by staff at 145 UK universities. Photograph: Iain Masterton/Alamy

### Students

## **‘We’re collateral damage’: marking strikes hit students’ graduate careers**

After struggling through degrees hindered by Covid, those affected by boycott now say they face missing job opportunities

[Clea Skopeliti](#)

Sat 24 Jun 2023 02.00 EDTLast modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 02.06 EDT

Ray, 21, recently missed out on a dream job at a charity after they were unable to present their degree classification. Due to the marking boycott, they have now been waiting for eight weeks for their dissertation result alongside another unmarked module.

“It’s been deeply upsetting. I’ve worked really hard, I’ve been in the library until 3am.

“Not knowing when I’m getting my grades back, while watching seemingly everyone I know get theirs, has reduced me to tears on a regular basis,” said Ray, who studied history and politics at the University of Chichester, where he said not all modules had been affected equally.

Ray is one of thousands of students who have been affected by the dispute over pay and conditions by staff at 145 UK universities, which the University and College Union has claimed could affect more than [half a million](#) graduations this summer.

When applying for the job, they said the charity tried to accommodate their situation. “They even said they could just take a dissertation grade instead as my dissertation was related, but I couldn’t provide this either so unfortunately they could not accept my application, so I’ve missed out on a very niche dream job.

“It’s been so upsetting to have been deeply impacted by Covid in my first year, which saw me spend more than six months at home, continuing my second year with isolating and testing, and now strike action decimating my chances of starting my graduate career as early as possible.”

Though Ray has been reassured by the student union that their graduation will go ahead, they are filled with uncertainty about exactly when their classification will be finalised. “I hold the vice-chancellor and senior management responsible,” they added, citing the pay of teaching staff.

It feels like deja vu, reminiscent of how our A-levels were calculated.

Jay, 21, is concerned that he may not have his dissertation marked at all. Instead, his degree classification from the University of Westminster looks likely to be calculated by averaging his grades from the previous semester, as strike action has affected his course.

“I worked hard toward my degree and dissertation – it feels like a waste of time,” he said. “This fails to reflect our true potential and undermines our hard work.”

To Jay, it is the latest in a series of disappointments from the education system. “It feels like deja vu, reminiscent of how our final A-level and BTec grades were calculated,” he said. “During the pandemic our school years ended abruptly and our entire first year of university was spent confined within our rooms – we once again face disruption.”

Jay blames the university’s senior management for the uncertain situation students are in. “I think it’s the higher-ups in the university and the vice-chancellor’s fault – the way they devalue both staff and students is disappointing.”

Students are the collateral damage of a dispute that is not at all their fault.

The uncertainty is also creating stress for Emily, who recently finished studying philosophy at the University of Southampton. While the 22-year-old, who has a conditional offer for a masters’ course at the University of Edinburgh, has received marks for her work, the boycott means she is unsure when she will receive her official degree classification.

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“It has caused me stress and frustration since everything is still ‘up in the air’ as to whether my classification will be delayed, which I worry may affect whether I can proceed on to my next course,” she said, though the University of Edinburgh has also been affected by the boycott. “I feel like I have to constantly be checking emails and advocating for myself.

“They’re sending me reminders on their applicant portal to give my degree classification and the deadline is in August – there’s a bit of pressure there. [Students](#) are the collateral damage of a dispute that is not at all their fault.”

There will always be a shadow over my degree classification.

Others feel trepidation at the possibility of having their final year’s work marked by someone other than their supervisor.

Daniel, 24, a history student at the University of Sheffield, is concerned that one of his modules and his dissertation could be graded by another academic who has not specialised in the field his work is on.

He says he was informed this could be the case by teaching staff who raised the possibility of non-specialist markers. “The idea that my dissertation on a very niche area of historical research may be marked by someone without expertise in that area angers me beyond belief. I have spent a full year researching and writing it under the guidance and advice of a specific tutor, who will now not be the one reading it.

“I definitely support the lecturers and what they are boycotting and striking for. It’s just really disappointing – the fact that strikes have been going on for years without resolution and I’m paying so much money and will be paying it off for decades.

“I have been left doubting whether the marks I will end up with actually reflect what I would have achieved had the work been marked by experts in the topic at hand. Whether I achieve a higher or lower mark than I hope for,

I feel that there will always be a shadow over my degree classification, and that employers will think the same.”

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## 2023.06.24 - Spotlight

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‘Like a true Brit, my summer is made when we have a barbecue in the garden.’ Illustration: Spencer Wilson/The Guardian

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**A birdsong app, an allergy cure and a cool glass of gavi: Alan Carr, Mary**



# Berry, Maya Jama and others on the thing that makes their summer

From a slice of cucumber to a sticky cuddle, celebrities reveal their essential companion for a blue-sky day



[Joe Stone](#)

Sat 24 Jun 2023 05.00 EDT

## Alan Carr

I've got this new app called ChirpOMatic which identifies different birdsong. Melanie Sykes told me about it. We went for a walk and she held it up and said, "Oooh there's a blackbird. There's a buzzard." It will change your life, whether you're a bird fanatic or not.

## Mary Berry

What makes my summer? Being at home on a hot, sunny day, in the garden with family, dogs and a chilled glass of sauvignon blanc.

*The new edition of Mary Berry's Baking Bible (Ebury) is out now*

## **Annie Mac**

Getting the ferry from Holyhead in Wales to Ireland is a summer essential. It typifies everything that's important to me as an immigrant. The biggest thing I can give my kids is a sense of Irish identity, so every year we spend a month seeing family, sitting on the beach in our raincoats, our lips turning blue. It's part of their youth and a really huge deal for me.

## **Sami Tamimi**

I love early summer suppers in the garden, moving the cooking outdoors with my Big Green Egg barbecue. To drink: homemade lemonade with fresh mint and lots of ice.

## **Jay Blades**

Something He Can Feel by Aretha Franklin always reminds me of summer. Aretha is talking about a guy, but for me it's about how the sun feels on your skin; it's just sublime and beautiful. When we play it at home, that is summer for me.

*Watch Jay Blades: History of the East End on Channel 5*

## **Joe Lycett**

I have one friend I contact when the sun is shining with the simple message: "Might it be gavi weather?" This is my bat-signal to blue skies: it is imperative that we open a bottle of something crisp. What ensues is golden hours of lingering boozy chats, the familiar smell of factor 50, a slice of cucumber, a fist fight and a sticky cuddle.

## **Maya Jama**

The best thing about summer is Notting Hill carnival. I spent many years on the steps at home in Ladbroke Grove celebrating it with my friends, soaking

in the music, the dancing, the culture, the vibes – a really good time.  
*Host of Love Island, on ITV now*

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## Adam Kay

I've always hated summer. Ever since I was a teenager it has been a streaming-eyed, blotchy-faced festival of sneezing I've done my best to opt out of. Then a couple of years ago I was referred to an allergy specialist who took a spray out of her magic cabinet and taught me to use it properly, which apparently no one does (don't sniff as you squirt, use right hand for left nostril and vice versa). And I haven't sneezed since! My summers are now a 99-eating, lido-splashing, linen-shirted season of unbridled joy. It's called Avamys and they're not even paying me to say this. Then again, nor are the Guardian.

## Sophie Ellis-Bextor

Like a true Brit, my summer is made when we get the chance to have a barbecue in the garden. In our house this can happen any time the sun shines from April to October, but it makes most sense in the summer. Barbecue in

motion, sun cream on, cocktail in hand, family all around, sun in the sky ...  
it's summertime!

## Laura Jackson

This summer, I am enjoying turning my garden into an extension of my home and transforming the space into a stylish sanctuary for me and the family. I'm entertaining, planting fresh summer veg, getting into garden shed DIY, even building my own pizza oven. Why would I ever need to leave?

*Host of So, How Do You... The Interiors Podcast in partnership with Wickes*

## Elizabeth Day

I should say something lyrical like smelling freshly cut grass in the park mingled with coconut-scented suntan lotion. But the truth is, the thing that makes my summer is the new series of Love Island. Those opening chords transport me straight to light-filled evenings and sundowner Aperol spritzes. It's how I mark the change in seasons: as soon as I see rippled abdominal muscles and hear a twentysomething model-slash-estate agent say, "They're my type on paper", I know summer has arrived.

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Annalisa Barbieri: ‘Who doesn’t like to make a positive difference?’  
Photograph: Thomas Duffield/The Guardian

[Smile, it’s summer](#)[Life and style](#)

## Happy endings: our advice columnist on the columns that helped change people’s lives

Annalisa Barbieri has been helping Guardian readers with their personal problems since 2008. Here she shares some of her favourite bits of feedback



[Annalisa Barbieri](#)

[@AnnalisaB](#)

Sat 24 Jun 2023 03.00 EDT

We all hope that any advice we give is taken and enriches someone's life. As someone who gives advice every week in these pages, I sometimes (but not as often as I would like) get to hear what happened next. When the reader writes back to say that my reply was helpful and how it has changed their life, even in a small way, it makes me feel very happy. Who doesn't like to make a positive difference?

Some years ago, a reader, a mother, wrote in to say that she had recently found herself in a difficult relationship. She had been with her boyfriend for two years, after separating from her son's father. Although the reader and her boyfriend loved each other very much, she said, and there were seemingly many good parts of their relationship, her partner had a hot temper and could be verbally very aggressive and harsh with her little boy, who was only six. The reader and her partner were making plans to move in together. Her son had said he didn't want this to happen. A brave boy. What should she do, she asked? My advice was to listen to her son and to reconsider the relationship and read up about abusive relationships, which is what I feared hers was, if not already, then certainly becoming.

A man told me his wife couldn't have more children. Privately I dared to write, 'Are you sure? Doctors get it wrong sometimes'

Recently the reader wrote back to me to say this: "I knew that I needed to end the relationship but I was quite vulnerable, still very damaged from the breakup with my previous long-term partner, and I was petrified of my son losing yet another male figure in his life. I was also worried about falling into a pattern of failed relationships and the impact that this would have on my son. I remember that your advice was calm and measured, but you did suggest that this was not a healthy situation for my son and I to be in. I did end the relationship some months later, after things got even worse, and it was the best thing I could have done. Your advice meant an awful lot to me. I'm happy to tell you that, a couple of years after ending that relationship, I met a wonderful, kind man who has turned out to be the love of my life and we are very happy together (and he and my son get on really well)."

There's another problem I remember very well. A man wrote to me to say that his wife couldn't have any more children. They had one child whom they loved very much but they were finding it hard to mix with people who had two or more children, as it was too painful. I tried to be gentle and counsel them that this was not a great idea and maybe they needed to explore and acknowledge their loss. Privately I dared to write to him to say, "Are you sure your wife can't have more children? Doctors get it wrong sometimes." (At the time I was writing a piece about fertility and obviously fancied myself an expert.) The letter was published and a few months later the man's name popped up in my inbox. I steeled myself a little for a rebuke. "You'll never guess what," he said, "my wife's pregnant."

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# Summer reading: 50 brilliant books to discover

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Clockwise from top left: David Nicholls, Sara Collins, Richard Osman, Maggie O'Farrell, Mick Herron and Zadie Smith. Composite: David Levenson/Getty, PR, Antonio Olmos, Craig Barritt/Getty, Sonja Horsman, Pako Mera/Alamy

## [Books](#)

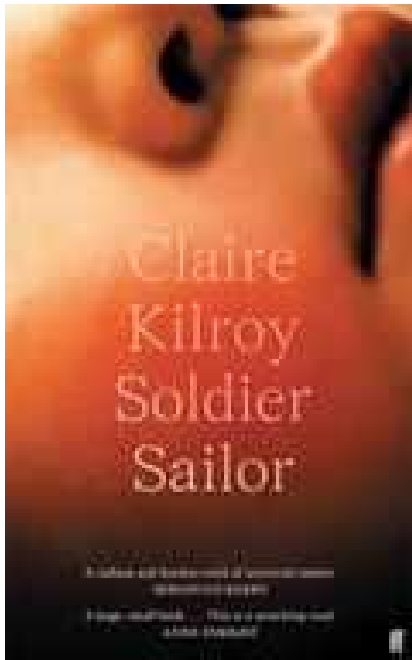
# Summer books: Zadie Smith, Ian Rankin, Richard Osman and others pick their favourites

Leading authors recommend the best recent books, from a forbidden love affair at the Western Front to a murder mystery set in Egypt

[See this year's pick of 50 books for the summer](#)

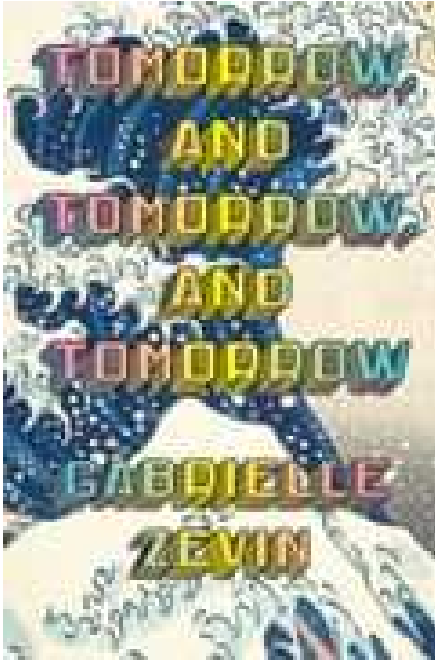
[David Nicholls](#); [Zadie Smith](#); [Pankaj Mishra](#); [Olivia Laing](#); [Colm Tóibín](#); [Ian Rankin](#); [Ali Smith](#); [Mohsin Hamid](#); [Margo Jefferson](#); [Anne Enright](#); [Jonathan Coe](#); [Katherine Rundell](#); [Curtis Sittenfeld](#); [Richard Osman](#); [Maggie O'Farrell](#); Sara Collins; Mick Herron; Shehan Karunatilaka

Sat 24 Jun 2023 04.00 EDTLast modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 04.06 EDT



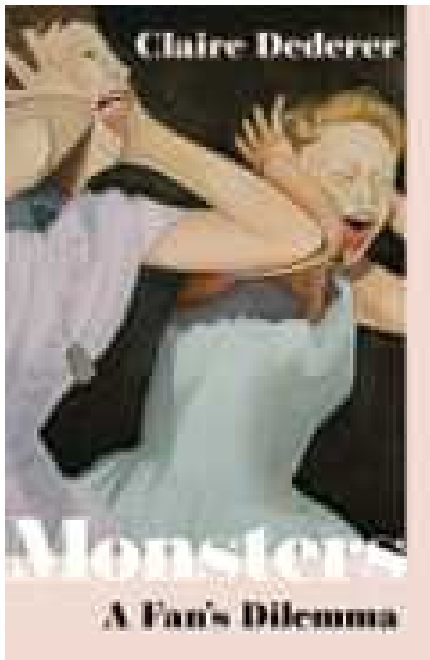
### **David Nicholls**

I'm not sure if it counts as a traditional summer read – there were several moments that made me profoundly anxious – but I loved Claire Kilroy's frantic, furious account of early motherhood, [Soldier Sailor](#), a horror story at times, but full of love, too. Cecile Pin's debut, *Wondering Souls*, manages to be both heartbreaking and hopeful and I'm also looking forward to Paul Murray's new family saga, *The Bee Sting*; he's such a sharp and funny writer.



### Zadie Smith

I recently devoured *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin. So enjoyable. I think Susan Sontag's *On Women* is perfect if you want to think about the aesthetics of fascism and internecine feminist warfare during the summer – which I find I do. I also just finished *Corey Fah Does Social Mobility* by Isabel Waidner, out in July. Rare to find a novel with real stylistic and political ambition. Summer is the time for murders set somewhere interesting: Christopher Bollen is the master of these. His latest, *The Lost Americans*, set in Egypt, is a treat. On my holidays I'll be packing [Kairos](#) because it's by Jenny Erpenbeck, Nicole Flattery's *Nothing Special* – because it sounds intriguing – and *The Mess We're In* by Annie Macmanus, because it's set in the early 00s, in Kilburn, and full of music. Finally, in the hand luggage: *The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho* by Paterson Joseph. I've had that one in manuscript form for over a year but didn't dare read it because I was in the trenches, writing my own historical novel. Now I can't wait.



**Pankaj Mishra**

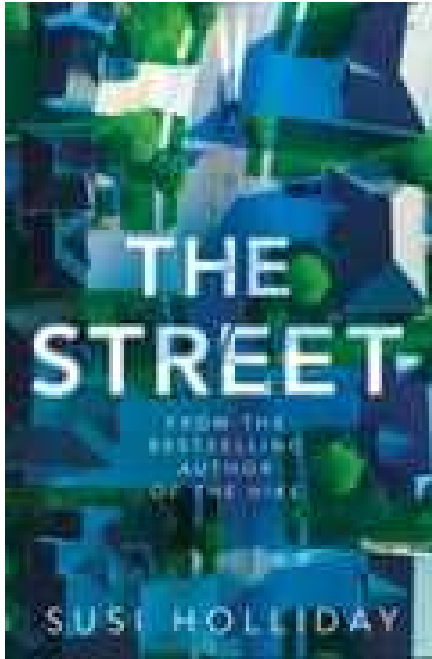
In *Monsters, A Fan's Dilemma*, Claire Dederer asks, with witty self-deprecation, how we should respond to art from artists guilty of morally squalid deeds. The question has become especially volatile in the west as the cultural orthodoxies of a small but powerful minority disintegrate and previously scorned and marginalised voices become more assertive. Instead of rushing to the barricades of ongoing culture wars, Dederer offers – and enacts – a way of thinking that acknowledges the ever growing diversity of intellectual and moral life. You can spend hours dipping into Karl Schlögel's *The Soviet Century*, a social history like no other in its careful excavations of lost monuments and forgotten practices. It will be particularly evocative for those – a great part of the world's population – to whom modernity was once synonymous with the Soviet rather than the American century.



### Olivia Laing

Is M John Harrison the best writer at work today? He's certainly among the deftest and most original, producing immaculately odd sentences in any genre he chooses. [Wish I Was Here](#) calls itself an anti-memoir, and there are elements of autobiography swirling through the matrix, but it's also a manifesto on writing that ruthlessly reassesses the connection between writing and self-knowledge. Better to write from a hidden core, to let sentences eddy from a lost self, to resist familiarity and instead bottle the flagrant strangeness of the world.

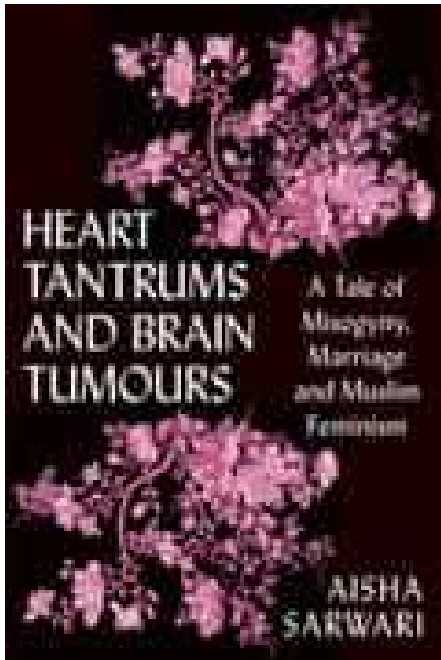
*Olivia Laing's latest book is Everybody: A Book About Freedom*



### Ian Rankin

Susi Holliday is one of our best and most original creators of tense and twisty tales. Her latest, *The Street*, has got me in its grip. A couple move from England to a new-build housing estate outside Edinburgh. On the first night, their next-door neighbours arrive to help them celebrate. But next morning, those same neighbours have vanished, and others on the estate say the house has never been occupied. Anna needs to find out what's going on, while at the same time dealing with her crumbling relationship with her partner. Nothing is as it seems and no one can be trusted in this brilliant page-turner.

*Ian Rankin's latest book is A Heart Full of Headstones*



### **Mohsin Hamid**

I recently read an advance copy of *Heart Tantrums and Brain Tumours* by Aisha Sarwari, which comes out later this summer. It is a searing nonfiction account of one woman's journey in Pakistan through career, marriage, abuse and her husband's life-shattering cancer.

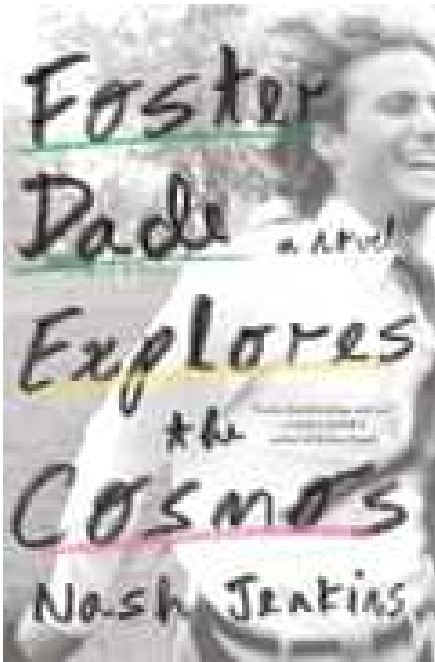
*Mohsin Hamid's latest novel is [The Last White Man](#)*

### **Katherine Rundell**

I loved [Eleanor Catton's \*Birnam Wood\*](#). It has the pace and bite and glee of a thriller, coupled with a profound moral seriousness. It burns hot with intelligence and skill; it leaves you breathless. And, for children, I admire everything Sharna Jackson writes: her latest, *The Good Turn*, is a joyfully witty mystery for nine years and up.

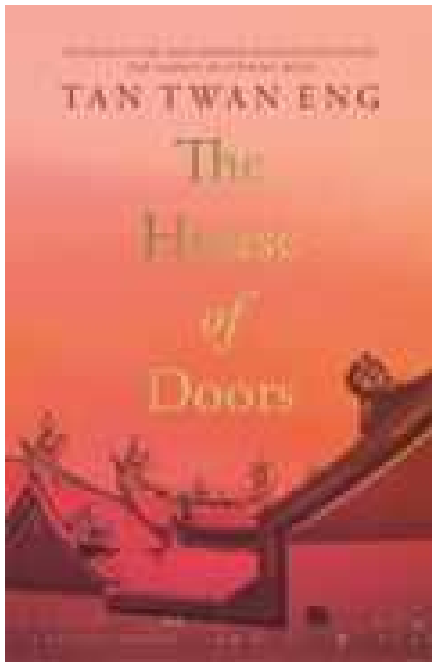
*Katherine Rundell's [Super-Infinite: The Transformations of John Donne](#) won the Baillie Gifford prize*





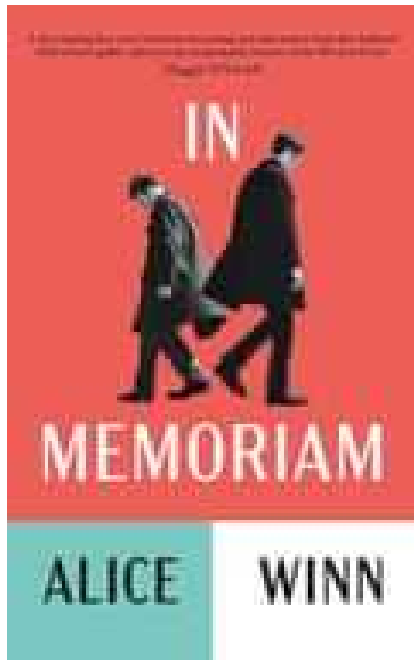
### Curtis Sittenfeld

I just read a long and very juicy first novel set at an elite American boarding school: *Foster Dade Explores the Cosmos* by Nash Jenkins. It follows a new student as he navigates privilege, sexual attraction and confusion, and his semi-accidental career as a campus drug dealer. Another new first novel that I absolutely loved is [Everything's Fine by Cecilia Rabess](#). In New York, in their early 20s, a conservative white guy and a progressive Black woman work together at Goldman Sachs and stumble through their unexpected friendship and budding romance. Rabess and Jenkins are both huge new literary talents.



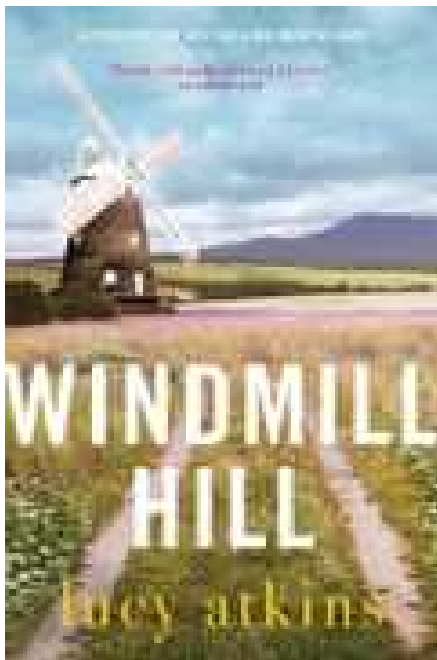
### **Colm Tóibín**

The House of Doors by Tan Twan Eng is fascinating, engrossing and has given me infinite pleasure. It is set mainly in 1921 in the Straits Settlements of Penang – although there is also a brilliantly evocative sequence set in the Karoo in South Africa – when Somerset Maugham comes to visit. Maugham and his partner are painted with sympathy and wit, but the real triumph of the book is Maugham's hostess Lesley Hamlyn who is profoundly intelligent and resilient and made for intrigue. She is one of those born noticers and a lesson to us all.



### Sara Collins

This spring it seemed everyone was talking about [In Memoriam](#), by Alice Winn. And no wonder. I couldn't sleep until I'd finished this story of a love affair between two soldiers at the western front, best friends since boarding school who only act on their secret yearning for one another after coming face to face with the brutal pointlessness of war. It's a novel of admirable historical heft and – even better – of rare, and resonant, empathy.



### **Mick Herron**

[Lucy Atkins's Windmill Hill](#) is the perfect summer read: a wonderfully involving novel about two old women with complicated histories who share a windmill with assorted dachshunds, until the threat of unwelcome publicity propels the older of them, Astrid, on an odyssey to reclaim her damaged past. It's instantly engaging. Similarly absorbing is Anthony Marra's Mercury Pictures Presents, an epic tale ranging from prewar Italy to 1940s Hollywood: love, loss, friendship, survival and moviemaking. One of those books – like Sarah Winman's Still Life – which occupies you completely while you're reading it, and remains with you for a long time afterwards.

### **Richard Osman**

[Shrines of Gaiety by Kate Atkinson](#). One of my favourite writers of all-time is back with a mesmeric tale set in the underbelly of 1920s Soho.



### **Jonathan Coe**

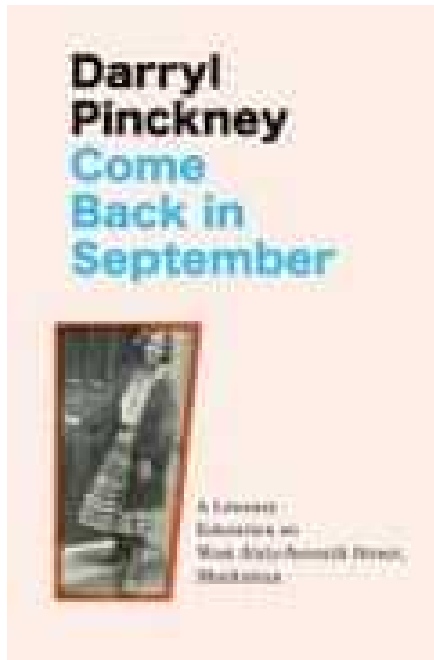
In The Full English Stuart Maconie pays homage to JB Priestley's classic English Journey, published in 1934. He does so not by slavishly following Priestley's footsteps but by making his own sprightly Megabus tour of English hotspots. The deceptive lightness and accessibility of Maconie's writing lead us gently though what is actually a deep dive into this most

mysterious of peoples. *Wish I Was Here* by M John Harrison is a revival of that most unfashionable of genres, the writer's memoir (or anti-memoir, as he dubs it), and turns out to be as oblique, slippery and fascinating as any of his fiction.



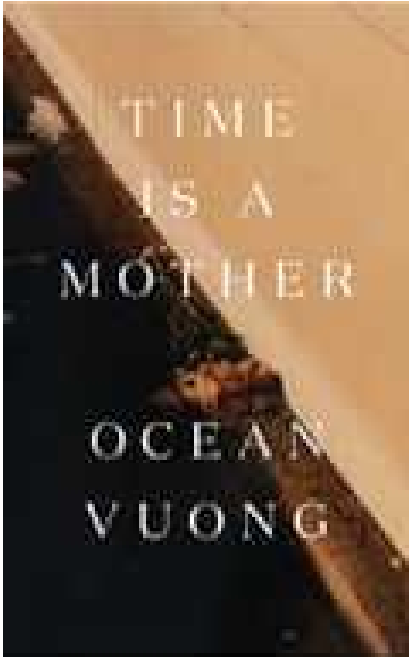
### **Maggie O'Farrell**

Jacqueline Crooks's *Fire Rush* is a heady swirl of a novel that pulls the reader in from the first page. Yamaye frequents basement raves in 1970s London before a sudden tragedy embroils her in a different underworld, that of organised crime and coercive control. Crooks's assured debut weaves together reality and myth, history and the supernatural: a fabulous, absorbing read. I am very pleased to have Lorrie Moore's new book, [\*I Am Homeless If This Is Not My Home\*](#), on my reading pile. Moore is always a deft, precise writer whose stories bore through to what lies at the core of the human heart, and whose observations acutely pinpoint the world we are living in. Obligatory reading.



### **Margo Jefferson**

What combination of ease and sobriety, pleasure and contemplation do you want this summer? I suggest books that draw on multiple moods, subjects, and landscapes: a memoir with the intensities of a novel; an essay collection with the wholeness of a memoir. I call them polyphonic books. Darryl Pinckney's memoir, *Come Back in September: A Literary Education on West Sixty-Seventh Street, Manhattan*, explores his friendship with the extraordinary Elizabeth Hardwick through subtle registers of aesthetic and social change. The essays in Judith Thurman's *A Left-Handed Woman*, roam through literature, art, fashion – through decades of cultural history – with passion and wisdom.



### **Dua Lipa**

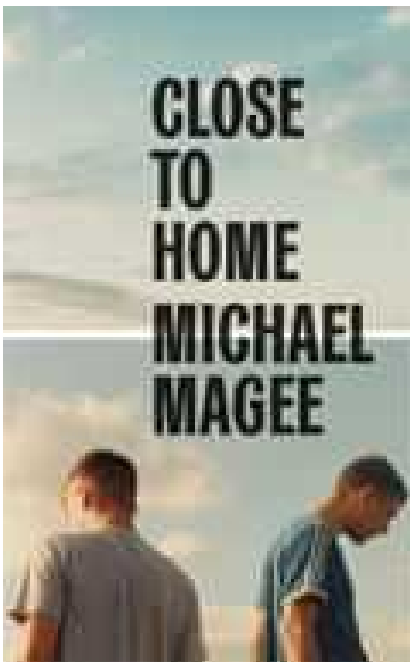
I read the novel [On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous](#) by Ocean Vuong while on tour and the language often stopped me in my tracks. This summer, I'll be packing his poetry collection [Time Is a Mother](#). It's not an obvious beach read, but I'm looking forward to being still and having the space to read and then reread his powerful words.

*Dua has recently launched a book club via her [Service95](#) platform.*



### [Anne Enright](#)

Yan Ge's incredibly varied collection of high-risk, high-impact stories, *Elsewhere*, is written in exacting prose and also great fun. Her first book in English, after 13 in Chinese; it is strange in a way that is all her own. [Soldier Sailor](#) by Claire Kilroy is an existential drama about motherhood of such grip and intensity you will forget you are on a beach. Malcolm MacArthur, the Irish murderer on whose story [John Banville](#) drew for *The Book of Evidence* is also the subject of Mark O'Connell's nonfiction account *A Thread of Violence*. This has some of the Banvillian pleasures of stylistic elegance, with a very different moral temperature. A really thoughtful book.

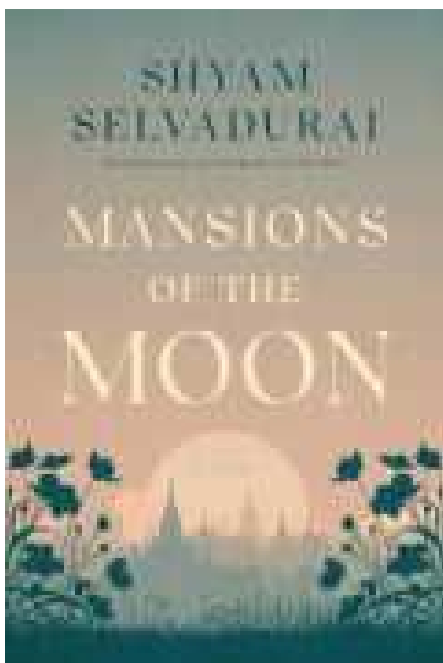


### [Ali Smith](#)

Two wonderful new novels this year, both beauties, seem to me to be taking realism to powerful heights. Michael Magee's [Close to Home](#), amazingly a first novel, is about what it's like to be young and working class right now in Northern Ireland, and is a tremendous read, tensed and immersive, punching the air between hope and despair, deeply decent, unputdownable. Then, following her own fine 2019 debut, *The Parisian*, [Isabella Hammad](#)'s *Enter Ghost* retells Hamlet for now, dropping its readers deep into the contemporary tensions of the West Bank, asking crucial and layered questions about who's excluded and who's included when it comes to the



human claims on tragedy and narrative, and is yet more assurance of a calm and vital storyteller, a writer of real rhythmic grace.



### **Shehan Karunatilaka**

In Sri Lanka, it's summer all year round, a monsoon or three notwithstanding. So most days are good for sitting under trees, in hammocks or on beaches with a good book and not thinking of looming crises. My current summer reads are two very different novels from two very different Sri Lankan writers. Shyam Selvadurai's *Mansions of the Moon* is a tenderly and skilfully drawn portrait of Yaśodharā, wife of the Buddha. While Amanda Jayatissa's *You're Invited* is a murder mystery and love triangle, set around a big fat Sri Lankan wedding. Together the books provide a compelling mix of philosophy, character, evocative writing and unexpected thrills.

To explore all the books in the Guardian's summer reading list visit [guardianbookshop.com](https://www.guardianbookshop.com) Delivery charges may apply.



# ‘One day it will just go off’: are Naples’ volcanic craters about to blow?

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## 2023.06.24 - Opinion

- When it comes to rich nations taking the environment seriously, I say: vive la France
- See you in court, Suella Braverman - your anti-protest law is an insult to democracy
- With even leavers regretting Brexit, there's one path back to rejoining the EU
- Cartoon The word that will get you out of any situation!



Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo and the co-president of the Paris bid for the 2024 Olympics, Tony Estanguet, paddle on the Seine in Paris. Photograph: Reuters

[OpinionFrance](#)

**When it comes to rich countries taking  
the environment seriously, I say: vive la  
France**

[George Monbiot](#)



Emmanuel Macron's government is at least doing the bare minimum to avert the planetary crisis – and putting the UK to shame

Sat 24 Jun 2023 03.00 EDTLast modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 10.20 EDT

While we remain transfixed by a handful of needy egotists in Westminster and the crises they manufacture, across the Channel a revolution is happening. It's a quiet, sober, thoughtful revolution, but a revolution nonetheless. [France](#) is seeking to turn itself into an ecological civilisation.

Like every government, the French administration should be going further and faster to address the greatest predicament humankind has faced: the gathering collapse of Earth systems. But you can measure the seriousness of the government's plan by its institutional commitment. France now has a ministry for ecological transition. By the end of next year, the nation's 25,000 most senior civil servants will have been trained in the principles behind this transition. By the next presidential election, in 2027, every public sector worker will have had this training, [tailored to their sector](#). Think about that: [5.6 million people](#) will be taught about the biodiversity crisis, the climate crisis and the natural resources crisis – how these phenomena relate to the public services they supply and how public sector workers can use this knowledge to change the way they work.

Already, in energy, water and resource conservation, France has done what the UK government vaguely promises for 2040 or 2050 (I've come to see 2040 and 2050 as codewords for "never"). Let's take a look at one of these programmes: waste reduction. The French government has passed a circular economy law, which seeks to stop the [unnecessary use of resources](#). Single-use plastics are forbidden in public procurement. Shops must allow people to bring refillable containers, and charge lower prices when they do. Anywhere that people gather in large numbers must be equipped with drinking fountains, as part of a wider plan to phase out plastic bottles. Manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers are forbidden to throw away unsold items: they must instead be given away or recycled, creating an incentive to avoid overproduction.

The government is seeking to eliminate planned obsolescence. Major commercial sectors – electrical and electronic equipment, toys, sports, leisure, DIY, gardening, textiles, footwear and furniture – must pay into a repair fund. Companies have to provide spare parts and repair instructions. Next year, some sectors will need to display a "durability index" on their products. Manufacturers are banned from using any strategy to restrict the repair or longevity of the devices they sell, such as the software updates that slow down phones and tablets.

Producers and distributors of a wide range of goods – from sanitary towels to cars – are or will shortly be financially responsible for their processing and disposal once they have been used. Manufacturers must produce new eco-design plans every five years to cut their resource use and improve recyclability. By 2025, single-use plastic packaging will be reduced by 20%, all new washing machines will have filters to catch plastic microfibres, and supermarkets and caterers will have to reduce food waste by 50%.

Compare this with the UK. The government will ban a narrow range of single-use plastics [in England](#), mostly in the fast-food sector. But it has sabotaged [Scotland's plans to go further](#). The Scottish government's attempt to introduce a deposit scheme for glass bottles has been delayed for two years, after the Westminster government refused to grant an exemption to the Internal Market Act.

There are similar contrasts in other sectors. For example, France has published a plan for protecting its water resources [from source to sea](#), reducing the amount withdrawn from rivers and groundwater, reusing grey water (the water that drains from sinks, showers, washing machines etc), tackling pollution and improving the ecological condition of rivers and lakes. The government is spending €1.4bn (£1.2bn) on [cleaning up the Seine](#), in which, for much of its length, swimming has been forbidden since 1923, as the water is so toxic. The river will be the centrepiece of the 2024 Paris Olympics, when triathletes and marathon swimmers will compete in its waters.

The UK, by comparison, failed to include an overall improvement in water quality in its [Environment Act targets](#), and appears to have abandoned its feeble pledges to take action on [sewage pollution](#).

Emmanuel Macron's is not a radical government, and none of these should be seen as radical measures. They are the minimum policies that any responsible government should be implementing now, as our planetary emergency unfolds. France is no eco-paradise, and its policies are beset with contradictions. French lobbying is responsible for some of the [worst aspects](#) of the EU's common agricultural policy, one of the most destructive forces on Earth. This week, the [French government banned](#) a leading environmental direct group, Les Soulèvements de la Terre. And it is of course still committed to growth-based capitalism.

But even the basic green measures implemented in France feel like an impossible dream in the UK, where the bugles keep sounding the retreat from reality. Our government has wasted its entire time in office on culture wars, scapegoating and self-inflicted scandals. It will do anything to secure its own survival, nothing to secure anyone else's.

Rather than ramping up environmental standards, it seeks to rip them down. On Tuesday, the House of Lords [accepted two amendments](#) to the retained EU law bill. Their purpose was to prevent environmental protections from being weakened when European laws are either scrapped or replaced. The government [has promised](#) that "environmental protections will never be downgraded", and the amendments sought to write this promise into law.



But the following day, the government whipped Conservative MPs to reject them in the House of Commons. Now [environmental protection](#) hangs on the good faith of government ministers – and we know how far that goes.

After 13 years of Conservative government, the UK has become a dumping ground for every new assault on the planet corporations can devise, from disposable vapes containing lithium batteries, of which 1.3m, impossible to recycle, are dumped every week, and which can burst into flames when they are crushed in [bin lorries](#) (a literal bin fire), to private cars the size of builders' vans, with fuel consumption to match.

Every government should be making the transition towards an ecological civilisation. That France, mundane as its measures are, is among the world leaders should be a source of bitter shame to other rich nations.

The only politics that matter now are those that might arrest our rush towards the brink. If Earth systems collapse, nothing else counts. Yet every day government and media produce a new distraction, hypnotising us with spectacle after meaningless spectacle. This is how we go down, gasping and gurning at the antics of those who claim to govern us.

- George Monbiot is a Guardian columnist

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Metropolitan police officers arrest Just Stop Oil activists after they stop traffic during a slow march in London on 3 May, 2023. Photograph: Daniel Leal/AFP/Getty Images

[OpinionProtest](#)

**See you in court, Suella Braverman -  
your anti-protest law is an insult to  
democracy**

[Akiko Hart](#)



The home secretary is trying to ram through legislation against ‘disruptive’ protests that was rejected by parliament. So we’ve filed a case against her

- Akiko Hart is the interim Director of the human rights organisation Liberty

Sat 24 Jun 2023 05.00 EDTLast modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 05.23 EDT

In [a video](#) posted on social media last week, Chris Philp MP, the minister for policing, signed a new law into being. In the clip, he says: “We live in a democracy and there are ways to change the law lawfully.” He then scribbles his signature on a piece of paper and new legislation is made. We at Liberty believe the law he signed was itself created unlawfully.

The new law – the [“serious disruption” regulations](#) – controversially changes the rules on how disruptive a protest is allowed to be before the police can act to restrict it. It is the latest in a long line of [anti-protest measures](#) introduced by this government. These new regulations give almost unlimited powers to the police to shut down any protest that causes a “more than minor” disturbance, significantly lowering the threshold from the previous, already vague, “serious disruption” wording.

Even before this definition change, the powers were too broad. Earlier this month, the Metropolitan police [bragged](#) that it had imposed conditions on 125 “slow marches” in the previous six weeks, making 86 arrests and 49 charges. With the new law in place, restrictive conditions could be imposed much more frequently – for example if a protest has too many people attending or is happening in too prominent a location, or because of its timing. Essentially, any of the things that make a protest effective.

Why is the government pushing this now? It smacks of a cynical move to weaponise media-stoked frustration at climate protesters in order to frame protest as a negotiated gift that needs to meet certain conditions in order to be allowed. [Protest](#) is not a gift: it is our right. What is at stake here is losing our right to protest because our protest is too popular, too well-timed, too prominent.

That’s why Liberty has filed legal action against the home secretary, [Suella Braverman](#), for creating these new regulations. Not only because they are bad for us all and undermine our rights, but because she didn’t legally have the power to create them in the first place.

A few months ago, parliament debated what “serious disruption” meant, given that it is such a broad term. The government tried to use the opportunity to lower the threshold for when police can impose conditions on a protest. [Parliament rejected this](#) and voted to throw these amendments out.

Normally, this would have been the end of the matter, but Braverman has brought the same rejected ideas back via a “[statutory instrument](#)”. This is a way to bring a new law in without having to create a whole new bill, and has been used as a way to circumvent parliament’s original decision.

Under this method, MPs and Lords were unable to change the wording of the regulations or to consider evidence about their potential impact. A cross-party parliamentary group committee [recently asked if](#) this is the first time the government has ever sought to make changes to the law in this way.

In short, the home secretary has rammed through new regulation that weakens our rights, and she has done so by circumventing the will of parliament, who already rejected it. She has breached the constitutional

principle of the separation of powers, dodged all scrutiny, and in doing so has set a dangerous precedent for lawmaking in this country.

This might be the first time it has used this particular tactic, but it follows a familiar pattern for this government. Over the past few years, MPs have repeatedly tried to make it harder for the public to stand up to power and to challenge them. [Two new Acts](#) have passed in the past 18 months that decimate protest rights. [Voter ID](#) has been brought in. [Anti-strike legislation](#), which will take essential rights away from workers, is on its way through parliament. And the illegal migration bill is being fast-tracked, including measures that will [set back the fight](#) to combat human trafficking and modern slavery.

Even the means by which we are challenging the government – a judicial review – has been something it has [tried to reduce access to](#), because it too often reveals that authorities have done something they shouldn't have.

This all matters because accountability matters. We must make sure that this power-grab does not go ahead, and that the government is not able to weaken our rights by bypassing our long-established democratic procedures. Quite simply, the home secretary must repeal this law. If she doesn't, we'll see her in court.

- Akiko Hart is the interim director of the human rights organisation Liberty
- ***Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a response of up to 300 words by email to be considered for publication in our [letters](#) section, please [click here](#).***



The Rejoin the EU rally, London, 25 March 2023. Photograph: Sinai Noor/REX/Shutterstock

### [OpinionBrexit](#)

## **With even leavers regretting Brexit, there's one path back to rejoining the EU**

[Jonathan Freedland](#)





It seems only a matter of time before we reverse this national act of self-harm. Especially if we learn from Nigel Farage

Fri 23 Jun 2023 12.04 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 14.40 EDT

Let Nigel Farage be our inspiration, let John Redwood be our role model. Not the way they would want, revered as the founding fathers of [Brexit](#), toasted on this day every year as the men who led us to glorious independence from the hated empire of Brussels. Of course not that. On the contrary, 23 June 2016 is a milestone in our national story that evokes sadness and regret rather than celebration.

We don't need to rehearse on this seventh anniversary all the ways in which Brexit has disappointed even those who voted for it. Farage and Redwood, along with Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Jacob Rees-Mogg and the rest, promised increased prosperity, cheaper food, flourishing trade and a flush NHS. They said we'd be free of all that tedious European red tape and would take back control of our borders, encouraging anyone agitated by immigration to believe that fewer people would come in. There would be no downside, only upsides. As David Davis pledged soon after the vote, our exit deal would ["deliver the exact same benefits"](#) as EU membership.

Look around to see how all that turned out. The country is in the grip of a cost of living crisis, food prices are rocketing, trade is either down or static while it's surged for our EU neighbours, and the NHS is ailing. Post-Brexit red tape is strangling thousands of small businesses, whether travelling musicians or exporters of goods, tying them up in daunting forms or extra charges that cost time and money they don't have. Those who thought legal migration of [330,000 people](#) a year was too much when they voted in 2016 now contemplate an annual figure nearly twice as high: [606,000](#). As for the terms of our exit, ask anyone who buys from, sells to or is stuck in a queue to visit the continent if we enjoy the "exact same benefits" we once did.

These are not remainder facts. They are facts understood and absorbed by a growing majority of the British people, including a good chunk of those who voted leave. As the polling guru [John Curtice notes](#), just 33% of Britons now believe the 2016 decision was the right one, while 55% say it was wrong. More striking still, as many as [59% say they would vote to rejoin](#) the EU if given the chance, with just 41% preferring to stay out.

Combine those two facts – that Brexit has proved to be both disastrous and unpopular – and it's easy to conclude that it's only a matter of time before we reverse the decision we took seven years ago today. Indeed, it's tempting to look at the 41 years that separated the 1975 referendum that sealed our membership and the 2016 ballot that ended it, reflect that politics moves twice as fast as it used to and predict that it will take half the time to undo Brexit – with a vote to rejoin scheduled for late 2036. After all, it is surely unsustainable to continue on a course that an emerging consensus regards as an act of national self-harm.

Except the world is littered with unsustainable situations that are nevertheless sustained, seemingly for ever. And there are multiple obstacles that stand between us and what, to rejoiners, seems like a date with our obvious destiny.

For one thing, the status quo ante those 59% are longing to restore may no longer be available. The 27 remaining nations of the EU will be understandably wary of plunging themselves once more into the on-again-off-again psychodrama of the UK's relationship to [Europe](#) – a drama that is, in fact, about the UK's relationship to itself, its struggle to see its place in



the world as it truly is and to accept being a medium-sized European power rather than the imperial superpower of the recent past. The member states of the EU would need to know that this time it's for keeps.

If they do entertain talk of UK readmission, it won't be on the same terms as before. The UK had a sweetheart deal – including a hefty cash rebate, an opt-out on the euro and much more – that the 27 will be reluctant to offer again. Any future referendum is likely to be on a package less appealing than the one Britons cast aside in 2016.

To get to that point, a governing party would first have to put the question. Few are rushing to do that. Labour's preferred posture is Trappist, hoping to stay mute on the issue lest it unsettle the pro-leave members of its electoral coalition. If it does speak, it is to say that Brexit is done and there will be no change. Even the Liberal Democrats, perhaps eyeing pro-Brexit voters in south-west target seats, keep their mouths shut.

Of course, politics is dynamic and those calculations could change. But given the tortuous process of EU-UK negotiation that would be involved, rejoin is a project that could span two parliaments: which party would willingly commit that much political capital to such an endeavour? Especially when you consider that “Europe” has lost much of its salience. In 2019, [70% rated it](#) as the most important issue facing the country; now just 19% say that.

More poignantly, rejoin is predicated on the notion that Britons miss what they no longer have. What if that feeling dissipates, as memories fade? “A generation brought up without the Erasmus scheme and who find it easier to travel to the US than to the EU will think differently,” says Anand Menon, director of UK in a Changing Europe.

All these obstacles are real. None can be wished away. Which is why rejoiners need to look to the likes of Farage and Redwood for inspiration. The long march from 1975 to 2016 required a dogged, even obsessive, persistence and, as important, a strategic patience. They didn't move straight to their end goal: before they were Brexiters, they posed as mere Eurosceptics. They were prepared to play the long game, inching incrementally – a rebellion over the Maastricht treaty here, opposition to

joining the euro there – towards their ultimate goal of exit. Sad to say, it worked.

Rejoiners should do the same. Start with [commonsense, popular demands](#) – say, a new, reciprocal exchange scheme for young people, closer cooperation on security or shared food safety and environmental standards – moves only an ideologue could oppose. A review of the EU-UK trade agreement is due to start in 2026: with a Labour government in place, that could be the vehicle for steady, gradual convergence. After that, the Overton window could be sufficiently open to let in a conversation about re-entering the customs union and the single market. And once you're talking about that, rejoining the EU itself becomes the natural course of action.

Step by step by step. Mocked and on the margins at first, dismissed as unrealistic or swivel-eyed, prepared to be a Europe bore – the Brexiters showed us how it's done and what it takes. It might be harder for us than it was for them. We have the young, but they had the old and the old vote. We have facts, but they had myths, and myths are often more potent. Still, theirs is a path worth studying. It led them to a rupture from our neighbours. It might just lead us to a reunion.

- Jonathan Freedland is a Guardian columnist

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[Opinion](#)  
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# The word that will get you out of any situation!

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## 2023.06.24 - Around the world

- [A year without Roe Protests planned across US to mark one year since loss of abortion rights](#)
- [Roe v Wade Biden puts abortion rights at center of campaign](#)
- [Covid No direct proof virus came from Wuhan lab leak, US intelligence says](#)
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Pro-choice demonstrators march to the White House on the second day after *Roe v Wade* was overturned. Photograph: Allison Bailey/NurPhoto/Rex/Shutterstock

[A year without RoeUS news](#)

## Protests planned across US to mark one year since loss of abortion rights

Overturning of federal abortion rights has led to complete abortion bans, lesser care for patients and upended training for doctors

[Jenna Amatulli](#)

Sat 24 Jun 2023 04.00 EDT

Reproductive rights advocates are planning demonstrations across the US to mark the first anniversary of the supreme court decision in *Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization*, a move that [overturned the landmark ruling](#) established by *Roe v Wade* that protected the right to abortion.

Actions and events are planned on Saturday in cities across the US including Washington, New York and Atlanta. Some events are being held virtually, particularly in states where abortion has been banned since June 2022.

Since the Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization decision a year ago, more than a dozen [states have passed bans](#) banning abortion outright and many others have passed legislation to restrict abortion access. States like Georgia have banned abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, a period of time so short that most people don't yet know they are pregnant. Even more states gearing up to further legislate pregnant bodies.

Without the federal right to abortion, there has been a radical shift in everything from how [doctors are being trained in reproductive care](#) to the [lengths that patients in need of care have to go](#), simply due to where they live, to how much money municipalities and governments need for reproductive health services.

According to National Institute for Reproductive Health data obtained by [NPR](#), "at least 15 municipal and six state governments allocated nearly \$208m to pay for contraception, abortion and support services for people seeking abortions" in the year since Dobbs. That's \$55m more spent on comparable services than was spent in the previous three years, before Dobbs.

Without Roe, the reliance on, relationship with, and access to things like medication abortion and birth control has become more complex.

As [reported earlier this week](#), these bans also exacerbate existing inequities in our healthcare system – particularly for [people of color](#), who statistically are more likely to live in restrictive states and more likely to need abortions.

The rights we have in 20 years will be determined by how we fight the next two years. It is a fight we will win

*Alexis McGill Johnson*

"An already bad situation has gotten worse," Kelly Baden, a public policy expert at the Guttmacher Institute, said. "Accessing abortion in a state like

Louisiana was already hard before the Dobbs decision. But now, abortion is banned in Louisiana and every state that touches its borders. That means having to cross one, two, three, four borders before accessing abortion safely for people from that state.”

Dr Monica V Dragoman, a physician at Mount Sinai in New York, echoed this sentiment to the Guardian this week.

“One year following the Dobbs decision, individuals and communities across the country are experiencing great harm where abortion is severely restricted or banned outright. Black people and people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, poor people, and those in rural areas are among those who experience disproportionately severe consequences,” she said.

“We need everyone who cares about equitable and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health to continue advocating for meaningful access to abortion – it is more important than ever. Learning from the failures of the past, we need policies and practice grounded in a reproductive justice framework not a Roe status quo.”

Abortion will also play a significant role in the upcoming US presidential election. While the political climate was chaotic before Dobbs, it’s only gotten more so as [many Republican presidential hopefuls](#) are moving forward with their prospects to [gut the limited reproductive rights people still](#) have. Given that, according to [an NBC News poll](#) earlier this year, six in 10 voters remain opposed to Roe being overturned, there’s still hope for the future of reproductive rights and time for things to change.

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And there are plenty of advocates for that change who will not stop fighting.

Mini Timmaraju, the president of Naral Pro-Choice America, says this year has “shown us that the American people refuse to give up on their fundamental rights. They’ve shown up time and again, mobilizing and voting to protect reproductive freedom.”

Women’s March [has put together an interactive map](#) that allows supporters of reproductive rights to find demonstrations to get involved in all around the US.

Alexis McGill Johnson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Action Fund argued that while the anti-abortion movement thought the Dobbs decision “would break us, it has also made the supporters of abortion rights – the majority in this country – more committed than ever before to building a better future”.

“The rights we have in 20 years will be determined by how we fight the next two years. This is a fight we must have. And it is a fight we will win,” she said.

Dr Jamila Perritt, OB/GYN and abortion provider in Washington and president & CEO of Physicians for Reproductive Health, says that while the last “12 months have been full of chaos, confusion, fear and anger for people who need and provide abortion care”, her organization will “continue fighting to show up for people who need and provide abortions, speak out against the continued attacks on our self-determination” and “organize to ensure that healthcare providers do not continue the cycles of surveillance and punishment that are entrenched in medical systems”.

“We know it is only the beginning,” Perritt said. “Our community of physician advocates, allies and supporters will keep hard at work to push



back on the onslaught of harmful law and policy and ensure our communities have access to the essential, life-affirming care they need.”

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Joe Biden at the White House on Thursday. Photograph: Al Drago/EPA

[Roe v Wade](#)

## Biden puts abortion rights at center of campaign on Roe reversal anniversary

President announces executive order to boost access to contraception as Republicans call for national restrictions

[Maya Yang](#) and agencies

Fri 23 Jun 2023 15.44 EDT Last modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 16.06 EDT

[Joe Biden](#) on Friday put reproductive rights squarely in the middle of his 2024 re-election campaign as the US president hosted a rally based around defending abortion rights, notched three high-profile endorsements from groups dedicated to the issue, and announced an executive order aimed at boosting access to contraception.

The moves came in stark contrast to the Republican field of candidates, many of whom were attending the Faith & Freedom Coalition annual

conference in Washington DC.

Abortion has become a tough issue for [Republicans](#) because most Americans support the right to an abortion after the conservative-dominated US supreme court last year axed the federal right to terminate a pregnancy.

Nonetheless, former vice-president Mike Pence on Friday doubled down on his hardline stance in a speech calling for national restrictions on abortion – a position seen as unlikely to win much wide support. Pence’s former boss Donald Trump will address the same conference on Saturday and has in recent weeks sought to take a less extreme stance.

Biden and the Democrats, meanwhile, are on the attack on abortion, pointing out the huge loss of reproductive freedoms for millions of women since the US’s highest court overturned the landmark [Roe v Wade](#) decision that had protected abortion freedoms.

Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris on Friday were being endorsed by Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Nara Pro-Choice America and Emily’s List. The groups are throwing their early support behind the re-election effort in part to highlight the importance of the issue for [Democrats](#) heading into the election year, the groups’ leaders told the Associated Press.

“I think that President Biden has been an incredibly valuable partner, along with Vice-President Harris, in fighting back against the onslaught of attacks that we have seen,” said Alexis McGill Johnson, president and chief executive of Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

Biden and fellow Democrats have already seen the power of the issue: a majority of Americans want legalized abortion nationwide. In the lead-up to the 2022 midterm elections, many political pundits dismissed the issue, but it was among the top concerns for voters, who consistently rejected efforts to restrict abortion in the states when given the chance.

Biden’s campaign manager, Julie Chavez Rodriguez, said the president and the vice-president were proud to have earned the support of the groups. Since the decision last year by the supreme court, “we have seen the

horrifying impact that the extreme Maga agenda has on women's health," she said, referring to Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan.

Biden has said he will work to protect reproductive health care, including enshrining abortion rights in federal law. He is expected to convey that message in remarks on Friday at a rally with the first lady, Jill Biden, Harris and the second gentleman, Doug Emhoff.

Meanwhile, Biden's executive order aims to strengthen access to contraception, a growing concern for Democrats after some conservatives have signaled a willingness to push beyond abortion into regulation of contraception. In 2017, nearly 65% – or 46.9 million – of the 72.2 million girls and women age 15 to 49 in the US used a form of contraception.

[In a statement](#), Biden highlighted reproductive health as a top priority of his administration in the wake of the Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization ruling from the conservative-led court that reversed Roe v Wade.

"Contraception is an essential component of reproductive health care that has only become more important in the wake of Dobbs and the ensuing crisis in women's access to healthcare," Biden said.

Biden is seeking to strengthen access to "affordable, high-quality contraception and family planning services", the statement added. It's his third executive order on reproductive health care access since the Dobbs ruling.

The measures include expanding access and services through Medicaid, improving coverage of contraception through Medicare and seeking ways to compel private health insurance companies to provide contraception and family planning services as needed.

The consequences of restricting abortion access in America have quickly moved beyond ending an unwanted pregnancy into miscarriage and pregnancy care in general.

Women in states with tight restrictions are increasingly unable to access care for pregnancy-related complications. Doctors facing criminal charges if they provide abortions are increasingly afraid to care for patients who aren't sick enough yet to be considered treatable.

Over the last year 22 US states have passed either a ban or highly restrictive policies on abortion. Other states, though, have expanded access to abortion care. The Biden administration has brought together leaders from all 50 states to talk strategy on how to expand access and work together to help people in more restrictive states.

Most of the states with severe abortion restrictions are also states that have a high maternal mortality rate and higher rates of stillbirth and miscarriage. Black women are disproportionately affected – they are more than three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

*The Associated Press contributed to this story*

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Republicans are likely to be angry at the report as they claim the administration is withholding information. Photograph: Philippe Lopez/AFP/Getty Images

[US news](#)

## No direct proof Covid-19 stemmed from Wuhan lab leak, US intelligence says

Four-page declassified report said while ‘extensive work’ had been conducted, no evidence of an incident at the Wuhan lab was found

*Reuters*

Fri 23 Jun 2023 21.48 EDT Last modified on Sat 24 Jun 2023 09.40 EDT

US intelligence agencies found no direct evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic stemmed from an incident at China’s Wuhan Institute of Virology, a report declassified on Friday said.

The four-page report by the office of the director of national intelligence (ODNI) said the US intelligence community still could not rule out the

possibility that the virus came from a laboratory, however, and had not been able to discover the origins of the pandemic.

“The Central Intelligence Agency and another agency remain unable to determine the precise origin of the Covid-19 pandemic, as both (natural and lab) hypotheses rely on significant assumptions or face challenges with conflicting reporting,” the ODNI report said.

The report said that while “extensive work” had been conducted on coronaviruses at the Wuhan institute (WIV), the agencies had not found evidence of a specific incident that could have caused the outbreak.

“We continue to have no indication that the WIV’s pre-pandemic research holdings included SARS-CoV-2 or a close progenitor, nor any direct evidence that a specific research-related incident occurred involving WIV personnel before the pandemic that could have caused the Covid pandemic,” the report said.

Intelligence officials have been pushed by lawmakers to release more material about the origins of Covid-19. But they have repeatedly argued China’s official obstruction of independent reviews has made it perhaps impossible to determine how the pandemic began.

The newest report is likely to anger Republicans who say the administration is wrongly withholding classified information and researchers who accuse the US of not being forthcoming.

The origins of the coronavirus pandemic have been a matter of furious debate in the US almost since the first human cases were reported in Wuhan in late 2019.

Joe Biden in March signed a bill declassifying information related to the origins of the pandemic.

Biden said at the time of signing that he shared Congress’s goal of releasing as much information as possible about the origin of Covid-19.

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The debate was refueled by a Wall Street Journal report in February that the US energy department had assessed with “low confidence” in a classified intelligence report that the pandemic most likely arose from a Chinese laboratory leak, an assessment Beijing denies.

FBI director Christopher Wray said on 28 February his agency had assessed for some time that the origins of the pandemic were “most likely a potential lab incident” in the Chinese city of Wuhan. China said this claim had “no credibility whatsoever”.

As of 20 March, four other US agencies still judged that Covid-19 was likely the result of natural transmission, while two were undecided.

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Migrants arriving at the Italian island of Lampedusa. This year has seen a rise in migration across the Mediterranean from Tunisia. Photograph: Vincenzo Livieri/EPA

### [Migration](#)

## 37 people missing after boat capsizes between Tunisia and Lampedusa

Boat capsized in strong winds with most passengers feared dead, according to four survivors cited by migrants' organisation

*Staff and agencies in Rome*

Fri 23 Jun 2023 16.39 EDTLast modified on Fri 23 Jun 2023 17.11 EDT

Thirty-seven people are missing after their boat capsized between Tunisia and the Italian island of Lampedusa, the International Organization for [Migration](#) (IOM) said on Friday, citing an account by four survivors of the shipwreck.

The UN agency said the survivors, all from sub-Saharan [Africa](#), arrived on Lampedusa late on Thursday, having been rescued from the shipwreck by another vessel.

The shipwreck took place on Thursday and at least one newborn baby is among those missing, said UNHCR representative to [Italy](#) Chiara Cardoletti.

The vessel left from Sfax in [Tunisia](#) and was carrying 46 migrants from Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, said Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesperson for the UN migration agency IOM.

The boat capsized in strong winds and high waves, he said. “Some survivors were taken to Lampedusa and others were brought back to Tunisia.”

“Among those missing were seven women and a minor. The survivors are all adult men,” he added.

“We have noticed more arrivals of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa than Tunisians” via the Tunisian route since November, he said.

He explained this was due to people from sub-Saharan Africa fleeing discrimination in Tunisia.

“It is unacceptable to continue counting the dead at the gates of [Europe](#),” Cardoletti said.

Earlier, the UN’s High Commission for [Refugees](#) gave a similar account of the same incident, but said 40 people were believed to be missing, rather than 37.

The southern Italian island of Lampedusa is one of the main entry points for migrants crossing the Mediterranean. Last year, more than 46,000 people arrived there, out of a total of 105,000 in Italy, according to the UNHCR.

There has been a rise in migration across the Mediterranean from Tunisia this year after a crackdown by Tunis on migrants from sub-Saharan Africa living in the country illegally and reports of racist attacks amid an economic downturn.

At least 12 African migrants were missing and three died after three boats sank off Tunisia, a judicial official said on Thursday, while the country's coastguard rescued 152 others.

It was not immediately clear if the four survivors who recounted their story to the IOM were on one of these three boats.

*Reuters and AFP contributed to this report*

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## Headlines monday 19 june 2023

- [Live Average two-year fixed rate mortgage deal hits 6% for first time this year, as Sunak rules out extra help](#)
- [Mortgages Rishi Sunak rules out extra government help](#)
- [Suella Braverman Home secretary tells police to ramp up use of stop and search](#)
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- [Keir Starmer 'I won't hand out resignation honours if I become PM'](#)

## [Business live](#)**Business**

# Average two-year fixed rate mortgage deal hits 6% for first time this year, as Sunak rules out extra help – business live

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2023/jun/19/uk-mortgage-rates-housing-summer-slowdown-rightmove-interest-rates-bank-of-england-business-live>



The government has faced calls to help homeowners as more than 2.4m fixed-rate deals are due to expire by the end of 2024. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

[Housing market](#)

## Sunak says no extra help with mortgages as fixed rates climb to 6%

Prime minister says no new support available for households struggling to pay loans

- [Business live – latest updates](#)

[Alex Lawson](#) and [Richard Partington](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 04.20 EDTFirst published on Mon 19 Jun 2023 03.33 EDT

Rishi Sunak has ruled out extra help for UK homeowners struggling to pay soaring mortgage costs, as the average two-year fixed-rate loan rose above

6%.

The prime minister said the government should “stick to the plan” to halve inflation in its attempts to tackle the cost of living crisis, despite growing pressure on the Conservatives as households across the country face a surge in borrowing costs.

Mortgage rates have soared in recent weeks as the Bank of England’s attempts to cut stubbornly high inflation have fed through into lending deals. City investors widely expect the central bank to announce its 13th consecutive rate increase on Thursday this week in response to persistently high inflation.

Threadneedle Street is expected to raise its key base rate by at least a quarter point from the current level of 4.5%, extending its most aggressive round of interest rate increases in decades since lifting it from 0.1% in December 2021.

TSB became the latest high street bank on Monday to pull their cheapest mortgage deals, as high street lenders reacted to the prospect of higher Bank of England base rates by pushing up the cost of new home loans to the highest levels since the 2008 financial crisis.

The average rate on a two-year fixed-rate mortgage rose to 6.01% on Monday – the highest since 1 December – from 5.98% on Friday. The average five-year deal rose to 5.67% from 5.62%.

[A line graph showing the average rate charged on two- and five-year fixed mortgages](#)

The government has faced calls to help homeowners as more than 2.4m fixed-rate deals are due to expire by the end of 2024, leaving households with the [prospect of a sharp increase in rates before the next election](#).

Speaking on ITV’s Good Morning Britain, Sunak said: “I know the anxiety people will have about the mortgage rates, that is why the first priority I set out at the beginning of the year was to halve inflation because that is the best

and most important way that we can keep costs and interest rates down for people.

Is the Government going to do anything to help people who are facing increases in their mortgage rates? [@GMB](#) questioned [@RishiSunak](#) who said: 'We've got to stick to the plan.' [pic.twitter.com/oSqDT8fVuX](https://pic.twitter.com/oSqDT8fVuX)

— Good Morning Britain (@GMB) [June 19, 2023](#)

“We’ve got a clear plan to do that, it is delivering, we need to stick to the plan. But there is also support available for people. We have the mortgage guarantee scheme for first-time buyers and we have the support for mortgage interest scheme which is there to help people as well.”

UK inflation is 8.7%, well above the Bank of England’s 2% target.

The consumer champion Martin Lewis said on Monday he warned the government last autumn that a “ticking timebomb” of higher mortgage costs was facing millions of households this summer.

He tweetedL “They can’t say they weren’t warned! We needed to prepare in case it rates rocketed – waiting for it to happen would be too late. Yet now, the timebomb has exploded and we’re scrambling about what to do.”

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On Sunday, the cabinet minister Michael Gove had raised hopes that the Treasury may intervene to help homeowners, saying help for mortgage-holders was “under review”. However, Sunak’s comments suggest no extra help is planned.

Keir Starmer has also refused to pledge extra specific support for mortgage-holders should the party gain power. Asked whether Labour would offer support, he said the party would tighten up the windfall tax on oil and gas companies to yield more money to help reduce energy bills. “That wouldn’t be a direct mortgage payment, but it would help people with their bills,” the Labour leader told Sky News.

[A line graph showing a decline in the number of residential mortgage products available](#)

The average two-year fixed rate on a buy-to-let mortgage increased from 6.21% on Friday to 6.30% today, Moneyfacts said. The number of buy-to-let mortgage products on the market has fallen, to 2,515 on Monday from 2,589 on Friday.

Separately, Rightmove said on Monday that rising mortgage rates had brought forward the usual summer slowdown in the housing market. Asking prices for British homes fell in June for the first time in six years, according to the property website.

Average new seller asking prices slipped by £82 this month to £372,812 – the first monthly drop in new asking prices this year, and the first at this time of year since 2017. Against last year, prices were up 1.1%.

Riz Malik, the founder and director of broker R3 [Mortgages](#), said: “We urgently need a cross-party mortgage taskforce to find potential solutions to this ticking timebomb. This should [comprise] economists, lenders and other stakeholders who are actively involved in the mortgage market. We need action or the impending financial earthquake is going to send shock waves across the country.”

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Black people are seven times more like to be stopped and searched compared with white people. Photograph: Steve Phillips/Alamy

### Police

## Suella Braverman tells police to ramp up use of stop and search

UK home secretary says police have her full support in using tactic to prevent violence and save lives

[Matthew Weaver](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 01.00 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 01.42 EDT

Suella Braverman has called on police to increase the use of stop and search powers “to prevent violence and save more lives”.

In a statement aimed at all 43 forces in England and Wales, the home secretary said officers who used the powers had her “full support”.

Her comments are likely to alarm critics of stop and search who point out that the technique disproportionately targets black and minority ethnic communities.

Government statistics suggest black people are seven times more like to be stopped and searched compared with white people. Campaign groups have previously said relaxing restrictions on police use of stop and search could compound discrimination.

In remarks that appear to be aimed at addressing anticipated criticism, Braverman said young black males were disproportionately affected by knife crime.

Her statement says: “Carrying weapons is a scourge on our society, and anyone doing so is risking their own lives as well as the lives of those around them. This dangerous culture must be brought to a stop.

“My first priority is to keep the public safe, and people who insist on carrying a weapon must know that there will be consequences. The police have my full support to ramp up the use of stop and search, wherever necessary, to prevent violence and save more lives.”

Braverman’s statement expresses backing for the police in tackling knife crime among young black males. “Every death from knife crime is a tragedy,” she says. “That’s why I also back the police in tackling this blight in communities which are disproportionately affected, such as among young black males. We need to do everything in our power to crack down on this violence.”

Earlier this month, the head of the police inspectorate in England and Wales, Andy Cooke, acknowledged that the use of stop and search “polarises the public”. But in his first [state of policing report](#), he insisted that stop and search was an [effective way of deterring crime](#) and showing police visibility on the street.

He said police leaders should explain why it had been used disproportionately against black people. Launching the report, he said: “That doesn’t mean that the police are being racist ... There’s also more disproportionality for

victims. It is four times more likely as a black man to be murdered than a young white man.”

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The inspectorates audited 8,902 stop and search records in 2020 and 2021 and found that 83.9% were reasonable. But it said the overall figures masked considerable differences between forces.

Cooke called for new research to assess the deterrent value of stop and search and the causes of disproportionality in its use.

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[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)Politics

# MPs vote to approve Boris Johnson Partygate report – as it happened

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2023/jun/19/rishi-sunak-boris-johnson-keir-starmer-privileges-committee-report-tories-labour-uk-politics-live>



‘The prime minister wants to lead. So he has to come to parliament and vote in this debate this afternoon to show where he stands on this issue,’ says Keir Starmer. Photograph: Ian Forsyth/Getty Images

[Keir Starmer](#)

## Keir Starmer: I won’t hand out resignation honours if I become PM

Labour leader says Sunak ‘waved through’ Boris Johnson’s honours and challenges PM to vote on privileges committee report

- [UK politics live –latest news updates](#)

[Peter Walker](#) *Deputy political editor*

[@peterwalker99](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 04.34 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 12.41 EDT

Keir Starmer has ruled out ever producing a resignation honours list, as he urged Rishi Sunak to “show leadership” by attending and voting in

Monday's debate about the report that found Boris Johnson had [misled parliament](#).

Speaking in Edinburgh on Monday morning before a speech on energy, the Labour leader accused the UK prime minister of weakness for waving through Johnson's long and [increasingly controversial resignation honours list](#).

Among those on the list were two people who attended a party held by London Conservatives during lockdown in December 2020, which [is being reinvestigated](#) by police after footage emerged of staff drinking alcohol and dancing.

The party was organised by the campaign team of the unsuccessful London mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey, who was made a peer by [Boris Johnson in his recent resignation honours list](#). Bailey had left the gathering before the video was filmed.

The Tory aide Ben Mallett, [awarded an OBE on the list](#), is seen in the video.

Asked by BBC Radio 4's Today programme whether he would hand out resignation honours, Starmer said: "No. There are other opportunities."

He added: "Tony Blair didn't have a resignation list. It's very hard to justify ... There are other avenues for that and I think it's easier to be clean about this and simply say, no, I wouldn't do it."

Starmer said he did not believe there was a way to rescind the awards to Bailey and Mallett: "I'm not sure there is. I certainly don't think they should be getting honours. And I think that the prime minister, [Rishi Sunak](#), should have said no. But he didn't – he waved it through."

He did, however, say he would intervene as prime minister if he objected to resignation honours nominated by Sunak.

"Yes," he replied. "I think what Rishi Sunak did was wrong. Everybody knew the privileges committee was about to report on the behaviour of the former prime minister."



“Why on earth didn’t Rishi Sunak take the provisional list of [Boris Johnson](#) and say, ‘Thank you very much, I will put that on one side, and I’ll come to it and look at it when I know the findings of the privileges committee ... If, for example, the privileges committee says you lied to parliament, then I’m not going to put your list through.’”

Speaking earlier to BBC One’s Breakfast programme, Starmer said he would return to parliament in time for the debate and vote on the privileges committee report, which found Johnson repeatedly misled MPs, and called on Sunak to also attend.

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“I want to see the prime minister there when I arrive back in parliament, because he has to show leadership,” he said. “What his predecessor got up to was unacceptable. The prime minister wants to lead. So he has to come to parliament and vote in this debate this afternoon to show where he stands on this issue.”

New footage shows Tories dancing at Christmas party in breach of lockdown rules – video

Many Conservative MPs and ministers are either expected to stay away from the debate, or else not push it to a vote, amid competing pressures to

distance themselves from Johnson's behaviour but not anger Johnson supporters among Tory members.

Speaking on Sunday, the levelling up secretary, [Michael Gove](#), [said](#) he would abstain as he believed the committee's recommendation that Johnson be [suspended for 90 days](#) was "not merited".

The suspension is moot because Johnson resigned from parliament after learning the recommended punishment. However, the vote will ask MPs to endorse whether he should be barred from having the parliamentary pass normally given to former MPs.

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## 2023.06.19 - Spotlight

- 'I'm not just faster, but taller' How I learned to walk properly – and changed my pace, posture and perspective
- A new start after 60 I made a good job of Mum's funeral – so I decided to help other people with theirs
- The great face off Sixteen of the most wonderful portraits ever painted
- 'In at the deep end' Ditching the car for a cargo bike on the school run

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Best foot forward ... walking expert Joanna Hall puts Tim Dowling through his paces. Photograph: Linda Nyland/The Guardian

[Fitness](#)

**‘I’m not just faster, but taller’: how I learned to walk properly – and changed**

## my pace, posture and perspective

When I was told I could reap huge health benefits by learning to walk better, I was sceptical. I was already pretty good at walking, I thought. It turned out I had a lot to learn



[Tim Dowling](#)

[@IAmTimDowling](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 05.00 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 14.22 EDT

In all the time I spent with Joanna Hall, she barely stopped walking. I would see her coming towards me in Kensington Gardens, London, gliding past the other strollers as if she alone were on a moving walkway. When she reached me, I would fall into step and off we would walk, for an hour. At the end, Hall would stride into the distance and keep walking, for all I knew, until we met the following week.

Hall's WalkActive system, a comprehensive fitness programme based around walking, aims to improve posture, increase speed, reduce stress on joints and deliver fitness, turning a stroll into a workout and changing the way you walk for ever. She says she can teach it to me, and we have set aside four weeks for my education.

It is easy to be sceptical when someone claims you can reap huge health benefits simply by learning to walk better. You think: I'm already good at walking. And sometimes, I walk a long way.

But according to Hall, a fitness expert who enjoyed a three-year stint on ITV's *This Morning*, almost nobody is good at walking: not you, not me and not all the other people in the park, who provide endless lessons in poor technique. I notice they are still managing to get where they are going. Are we not in danger of overthinking something people do without thinking?

Hall tells me: "If you ask someone, 'When you go for a walk, do you enjoy it?', they will say, 'Yes', but if you ask, 'Do you ever experience discomfort in your lower back?', quite a few people will say, 'Yeah, I do get discomfort in my back, or I feel it when I get out of bed, or I'm tight in my achilles or stiff in my shoulder.' And those are all indicators that an individual is walking sub-optimally."



'I thought I was already good at walking ... Dowling with Hall. Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

What are we doing wrong? Most of us, she says, tend to walk by stepping into the space in front of us. "I want you to think about walking out of the space behind you."

If that sounds a bit abstract to you – as it did to me, at first – think about it this way: good walking is an act of propulsion, of pushing yourself forward off your back foot. Bad walking – my kind of walking – is overly dependent on traction: pulling yourself along with your front foot. This shortens your stride, relies too much on your hip flexors and puts unnecessary stress on your knees.

The struggle to get me to absorb this basic concept takes up most of our first hour together. My opening question about optimal walking was: “Will I look mad?” I imagined great loping strides and pumping arms.

“I promise you, you won’t look mad,” Hall said. But when you stroll haltingly through a public park while someone instructs you on heel placement, you do attract a certain amount of attention. People think: poor man, he’s having to learn to walk all over again.

They are not wrong. It takes a tremendous amount of concentration to do something so basic, and so ingrained, in a different way. It begins with the feet: I am trying to maintain a flexible, open ankle, to leave my back foot on the ground for longer, and to peel it away, heel first, as if it were stuck in place with Velcro.

“Feel the peel,” says Hall. “Feel. The. Peel.”

Second come the hips: I need to increase the distance between my pelvis and my ribs, standing tall and creating more flexibility through my torso. Then my neck: there needs to be more distance between my collarbone and my earlobes. I need to think about maintaining all of these things at the same time.

Hall acknowledges that, for beginners, there will be what she calls “Buckaroo! moments” – named after the children’s game featuring a put-upon, spring-loaded mule – when too much information causes a system overload. This happens to me when, while I’m busy monitoring my feet, my stride, my hips and my neck, Hall suggests that the pendular arc of my arms could do with a bit more backswing.



“What?” I ask. My rhythm collapses. My shoulders slump. My ribs sink. My right heel scuffs the pavement. I can feel, for the first time, just how not good my normal walking is. How did I get like this?

Hominids have been walking on two legs for more than 4m years. It is more energy efficient than walking on all fours, and it keeps your hands free for other tasks, but this advance came with its own problems. Studies suggest that some common human back problems may stem from spinal characteristics [inherited](#) from our knuckle-walking ancestors.

Your walk can also be affected by the way you sit, especially when you sit a lot: favouring one hip over another at your desk, or in your car. “Small things we’re doing consistently create that default neuromuscular pattern, which is just a little bit out of sync,” says Hall. “And it may not translate into anything, but over a period of time it can manifest itself as discomfort.”

Also, she tells me, my shoes are wrong.



‘I’m not just faster, but taller, and my arms swing with a natural, easy rhythm’ ... Dowling with Hall. Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

Between our meetings, I work my way through Hall’s WalkActive app, a mix of instructional videos, audio coaching sessions and timed walks set to music of varying speeds. At this stage, I’m still perfecting my technique.



“Imagine that maybe you have a Post-it note on the sole of your foot,” Hall says in my headphones as I turn the corner at the end of my road. “And you want to show the message on the Post-it note to the person behind you.” Feel the peel, I think. Read my heel.

Hall conceived the WalkActive system more than a decade ago, during the double whammy of pregnancy and appendicitis. “As soon as I was pregnant, even prior to having the appendicitis challenge, I never felt I wanted to do high-impact activity,” she says. “So walking was a natural thing for me to focus on.”

She later applied the techniques to her clients, but the regime she developed was originally for herself. She says: “It came from a personal space of wanting to rehab myself, to try to walk myself through rehab and walk myself through a fit pregnancy.”

Hall’s programme may be low-impact, but it is not low energy. By the end of our second session together, I am exhausted, because of the concentration required and the distance we have covered. A study that Hall commissioned showed that participants who completed a month of WalkActive training increased their walking speed by 24%. This alone amounts to a pretty big lifestyle adjustment – and you suddenly find that everyone is in your way. I’m not just faster, but taller, and my arms swing with a natural, easy rhythm, exuding a confidence wholly at odds with the rest of my personality. It feels, frankly, amazing.

One Friday morning, just before 7am, I join Hall’s twice-weekly WhatsApp group, along with several dozen other people also dialling in from around the country. I can hear birdsong in my earbuds as I walk out through my front door, while Hall guides us all through 30 minutes of brisk, optimal walking in real time.

“Leave that back foot on the floor,” she says, “so it’s a really sticky foot. Feel the peel.” I can feel it, I think, although I’m actually stuck at a level crossing.

By our fourth and final meeting I have the right shoes, as recommended by Hall. They are ugly, but they have a flexible sole and enough width to allow

the toes to spread when the foot is on the ground. Today, we are concentrating not on speed but on varying our pace, slowing it down and shortening the stride, without compromising technique. This is because, during our third meeting, I mentioned that on ordinary walks I found myself outpacing the people I was with.

“I like to say the technique has a dimmer switch,” Hall tells me as we glide past the Albert Memorial. “You can turn it up or down, but it’s always on.” She has mistaken my boast for a complaint. I didn’t mean that I feel bad for leaving my friends behind. I meant that I am done with those people.

Perhaps the most significant claim Hall makes is that, in terms of fitness, walking can be enough. It can complement other forms of exercise, such as yoga and pilates, but if you don’t do anything else, improving your walk can still confer major health benefits.

“I’m not anti-running, I’m not anti-gyms, I think they all have a role to play,” she says. “But I also think, sometimes, if we just think about the simplest thing that we could all do, and just get people to do it better, even if someone doesn’t necessarily feel as if they want to walk for longer, even if they just looked at changing their walking technique and applied it to their commute, that can be powerful.”

This is the real question: whether, after four weeks of training and new £70 shoes, I will continue to walk like this for ever. But after I leave Hall in the park, I cross the street with my head high, feeling the peel with every step, all the way to my train, in case she is behind me, watching.

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‘There is no dress rehearsal’ ... Simon Booker. Photograph: Liz Mott

[A new start after 60](#)[Life and style](#)

**A new start after 60: I made a good job  
of Mum’s funeral – so I decided to help**

## other people with theirs

A career in TV taught Simon Booker how to handle drama and tight schedules. That skill comes in handy as a humanist celebrant

[Paula Cocozza](#)

[@CocozzaPaula](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 02.00 EDT

Simon Booker left his mother's funeral feeling he had done the best job he could. "I had my producer's head on," he says – he used to work in radio and TV – "as well as my grieving son head on. I was very control-freaky about it." In particular, he was pleased with the humanist celebrant and "tucked the idea away for this phase of life – my third act".

That was in 2010. Booker is 67 now, and last summer he enrolled on a training course for celebrants, run by [Humanists UK](#). There he was, for two weekends, learning and performing dummy funeral ceremonies for his peers.

At his first funeral proper, last winter, he was nervous – "mainly about the logistics, whether the tech would work. And was I going to press the right buttons? There is no dress rehearsal. Your eye's on the clock, because there is another ceremony coming in straight after you. The cardinal sin is to overrun. The crematorium can levy a fine."

The service builds to a "committal", when the bereaved say their final goodbyes to their loved one before they are buried or cremated. As he says: "You don't want to be accelerating at that really impactful, meaningful moment."

Pacing should not be a problem for Booker. In his previous career, he was a writer for TV dramas that were watched by millions – The Inspector Linley Mysteries, The Mrs Bradley Mysteries, Holby City. Now, he says: "I'm still writing and everything's very dramatic, but the audience is smaller, 60 or 80." Funerals are, like TV dramas, ephemeral, Booker says – but they have a much more lasting impact.

The whole ethos is that we only have one short, precious life, and we should try to live it with kindness

“You’re helping a family going through a really difficult time to get probably the worst day of their life to go as well as it can,” he says. At the end, he hopes, they will have “a sense of closure, of being able to *start* the process of moving on”.

Still, it must seem very different from his previous career. Booker left school at 18. His mother had a “very glamorous” job as a publicist for Hollywood films; for a while Booker harboured “a silly idea” of being an actor.

“One of my mum’s friends was the head of drama at BBC TV. He came round one night and showed me a volume of Spotlight, the casting directory for actors, and told me to go through it and tell him how many names and faces I recognised. I quickly got his point,” he says. “My mother put him up to that.”

He got a job as a producer for Capital Radio, working with Michael Aspel and Kenny Everett. He also read the traffic reports. On his 21st birthday, he opened cards from listeners, including one from his father, who had left his mother when Booker was still in nappies.

“There was an address in Weston-super-Mare and the card said: ‘If you ever feel like getting in touch ...’ But I didn’t follow it up. I think I felt it would have been disloyal to my mum, who had raised me without any help from him.”

Booker, who also writes novels, is a lifelong atheist, but a recent humanist. “The whole ethos is that we only have one short, precious life, and we should try to live it with kindness and compassion for others.

“When you get to my age, you inevitably start thinking about your own demise more than when you’re younger. So I suppose that kind of attitude helps as you start to address that prospect.”

Humanist funerals are “not the kind of thing anyone does for the money”, Brooker says, although he has heard of one celebrant who does three a day. He has had “a cluster” in London, where he is based, since Christmas.

Doesn't it get depressing to prepare funerals all the time? “I don't find it depressing – I find it uplifting,” he says. “My own attitude to death is quite sanguine and philosophical. I'm not squeamish about it. The thought of ‘not being’ doesn't spook me.”

The thought of retirement, on the other hand, is anathema to him. “I want to do useful things. Useful and worthwhile, satisfying and interesting.”

[Tell us: has your life taken a new direction after the age of 60?](#)

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Staring both at us and into the abyss ... Self-Portrait of Suffering, by Ibrahim El-Salahi. Photograph: Ibrahim El-Salahi, courtesy Vigo Gallery. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2023

[Art](#)

# The great face off: 16 of the most wonderful portraits ever painted

As the National Portrait Gallery prepares for its grand reopening this week, critics, artists and curators pick their favourite works from 500 years of portraiture

[Adrian Searle](#), [Rianna Jade Parker](#), Nicholas Cullinan, Alison Smith, Chloë Ashby, Thomas J Price, [Jonathan Jones](#), [Aindrea Emelife](#), [Skye Sherwin](#), [Stuart Jeffries](#), [Claire Armitstead](#), [Eliza Goodpasture](#), [Katy Hessel](#), [Hannah Clugston](#) and [Oliver Basciano](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 01.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 14.21 EDT

## Searching, wondering and staring eyes

### ***Self-Portrait of Suffering by Ibrahim El-Salahi, 1961***

The African modernist El-Salahi studied at the Slade in London in the 1950s and western modernism clearly influenced him. El-Salahi's work has often delved into the personal and here we see him in a confused, uncertain state of mind. I am reminded of the gaping mouth of Munch's *Scream*, or the bull in Picasso's *Guernica*, given the equine nature of the face. The hair is manic but orderly, coiled and framing deep, endless concentric circles of eyes – searching, wondering and staring somehow both at us and into the abyss. Portraits at the precipice of melancholy or mania are the most attractive to me. They are honest and human. **Aindrea Emelife**

## Messy domestic moments

### ***Sid James by Ruskin Spear, 1962***

This collage captures both the funny and sad: how life is made up of grand aspirations and messy little domestic settings. We watch comedian Sid James on TV in Hancock's Half Hour, but also see what looks like an invitation to the opening of a Henry Moore exhibition, a CND flyer, as well as adverts for remedies for colds, flu and rheumatism on the coffee table.



Maybe we'll just stay in by the telly. **Alison Smith, National Portrait Gallery chief curator**

**‘I’m a grown-ass woman’**



The perfect pairing ... Sadie by Toyin Ojih Odutola. Photograph: © Toyin Ojih Odutola. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Sadie (Zadie Smith) by Toyin Ojih Odutola, 2018-19***

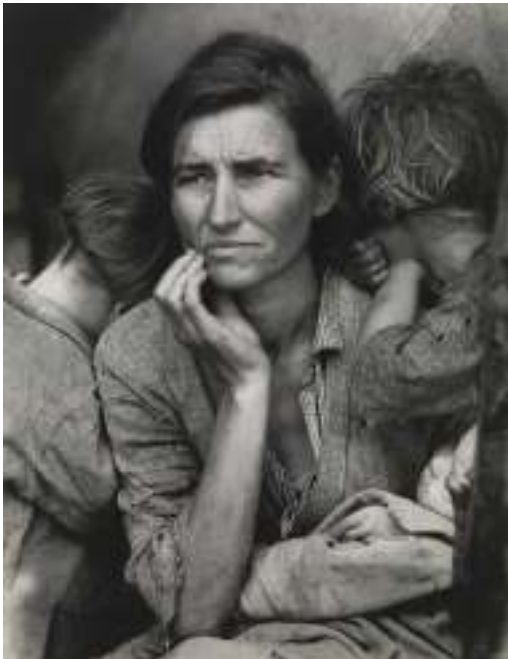
This new commission will be shown for the first time at the National Portrait Gallery when it reopens on 22 June. [Zadie Smith](#) is one of the greatest literary voices of our time and Toyin Ojih Odutola is one of the most exciting artists, so this work is the perfect pairing. It's also the first work by Toyin to enter a British public collection. As Smith said: "I know her art will have a tremendous effect on young people because I'm a grown-ass woman and it's had a tremendous effect on me. Becoming familiar with her images is like having something I missed and wanted in childhood delivered to me now, as an adult. And to be a Toyin creation myself, on the walls of the portrait gallery? It's incredible." **Nicholas Cullinan, NPG director**

**‘I see my own family in this’**

***Bonnie Greer (“Portrait d’une Negresse”) by Maud Sulter, 2002***

One of my favourite portraits at the [National Portrait Gallery](#) is part of the Reframing Narratives exhibition, which celebrates female artists and sitters. It’s Bonnie Greer (“Portrait d’une Negresse”), by Maud Sulter. This photograph pays homage to Marie-Guillemine Benoist, an 18th-century French artist who uplifted black female figurative art during a time of slavery. As I gaze at Sulter’s portrait, I can’t help seeing my own family reflected in the image: my mother, my aunts, my grandmother. It is a powerful representation of the women who have shaped my life. What resonates is its sense of growth and empowerment. Sulter captures the essence of female strength and reimagines it through the giving of a name and the act of clothing the subject. It signifies the reclaiming of identity and the celebration of womanhood. **Violeta Sofia, artist and photographer**

**A mother’s sheer desperation**



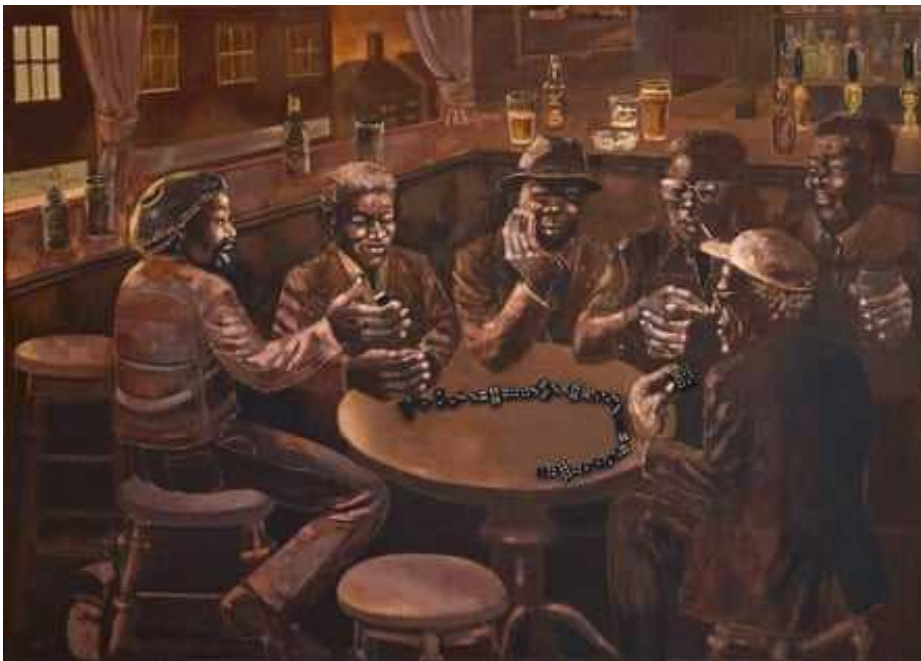
Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California, 1936, printed c.1950.  
Tate Photo: Tate (Jai Monaghan) Photograph: Jai Monaghan/Dorothea Lange

***Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California by Dorothea Lange, 1936***

Some portraits are a window into the souls of their subjects. Others tell the story of a time or place. This iconic portrait of Florence Owens Thompson is

both. It has become a touchstone image of 20th-century America, immediately evoking the gritty desolation and human cost of the Great Depression. Lange made the portrait, currently showing in *Capturing the Moment* at London's Tate Modern, while an employee of the US government – she was one of many artists who were paid to document the realities of the Depression as part of New Deal programmes. So while this conveys a mother's sheer desperation, it is also a reminder of a time in which artists were important enough to include in the most far-reaching welfare programme in US history. It's hard to imagine the same decision being made today – but the magnetism of this portrait lives on. **Eliza Goodpasture**

### **Who has the winning hand?**



Warm memories ... *The Domino Players* © Errol Lloyd, courtesy the artist and Paul Stolper Gallery London 2022. Photography Luke Walker  
Photograph: Errol Lloyd

#### ***The Domino Players by Errol Lloyd, 1986***

When Errol Lloyd was asked to contribute to *Caribbean Expressions* in Britain, a 1986 show at the Leicestershire Museum and [Art](#) Gallery, the Jamaican-born artist immediately submitted the title, medium, dimensions – and then set about finding sitters. But Lloyd wasn't sure where to find a

group of domino players in his suburb of London. He finally found a pub of largely white clientele who pointed upstairs, where the Black patrons played. In Lloyd's scene, the sepia tones give it a historical mood while the use of actual dominos adds realism. The young are pitched against the elders in a nevertheless unifying game. With a close reading, you can see which player has the lucky hand and therefore the right to slam the winning piece on to the table with exuberance and gusto. A warm memory and a feeling of togetherness for many West Indians, at home and abroad. **Rianna Jade Parker**

**‘She inspired my first novel’**



Lonely in a crowd ... A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, by Manet. Photograph: Antiquarian Images/Alamy

***A Bar at the Folies-Bergère by Édouard Manet, 1882***

I vividly remember the first time I saw this glum-looking barmaid. I was studying and feeling glum myself. The thing that got me was her expression: pink cheeks, pressed-together lips, heavy eyes. I tried to work out how she was feeling and settled on sad, tired, stuck, the kind of lonely that can gnaw even in a crowd. Stranded behind the bar of a popular Paris establishment, she's both seen and unseen, present and absent. To me, the greatest portraits tell us something intimate about the sitters and ourselves. Manet's model,

called Suzon, inspired my first novel. She's been with me since we met.  
**Chloë Ashby**

## **Fearless and freaked out**



Violent, ferocious and comical ... Maria Lassnig's *You or Me*. Photograph: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich/© Maria Lassnig Foundation/Bildrecht Vienna, DACS London 2023

### ***You or Me by Maria Lassnig, 2005***

I don't have a favourite portrait – it all depends on circumstance – but this is too good to miss. A gun to her head, another aimed at the viewer: [Lassnig's](#) *You or Me* is self-portraiture as Mexican standoff. Painted in 2005, when the Austrian painter and film-maker was 85, this pitches us into confusion. Lassnig is both fearless and freaked out. *You or Me* is violent, ferocious and comical, dramatising the confrontation not only between subject and viewer, but also between painter and portrait. It is an infinity loop, a short circuit, and there's no way out. Lassnig didn't give a damn. **Adrian Searle**

## **He has holy hair but is not the messiah**

### **[Self-Portrait at the Age of 28 by Albrecht Dürer, 1500](#)**

A young printmaker and painter from Nuremberg depicts himself in this



unsettling masterpiece as a Christ-like mystic gazing at you from strange realms of prophecy and insight. Everyone who sees it for the first time thinks this is a painting of Jesus, because Dürer flirts with that possibility as he lovingly details his long holy hair and beard and inscribes his age in gold letters: 28, not far off Christ's when he died. But he is not the messiah, he is an artist, which in Dürer's eyes may amount to the same thing. This is the first self-portrait that ever asserted the mystery of artistic genius, the melancholy danger the artist confronts in a heroic search for beauty and truth. Behold Albrecht! **Jonathan Jones**

**‘A rock for me to cling to’**

*Self Portrait Exaggerating My Negroid Features by Adrian Piper, 1981*

I was in my early teens when I saw this incredibly striking image. It made me think of ancient Egyptian portraits, with those wonderfully focused, forward-gazing eyes. It's rendered beautifully in just pencil and charcoal, but there was something about the way the eyes drew you in – a psychological meeting. Then I looked at the title. As a person who is read as Black but is mixed race, it threw up a moment of recognition – about the fiction of racial categories and the absoluteness of what people want things to be. In that moment of gazing at myself in that character, I realised that the assumptions some people made about me weren't true. It's just a small drawing, made in the year I was born, but it has such power. It felt like a rock in a sea to cling on to. Someone had created an image that ruptured the strictness of those attitudes to race. I felt seen. **Thomas J Price, artist and sculptor**

**No angels to welcome the soul**



The first modernist artwork? ... The Death of Marat, by Jacques-Louis David. Photograph: Photo 12/Photo12/Universal Images Group/Getty Images

***The Death of Marat by Jacques-Louis David, 1793***

This is an extraordinary portrait. Jean-Paul Marat, the French Revolution's propagandist-in-chief, is obviously dead, shown stabbed in the bathtub he bathed in to ease a skin condition. It's this "here and now" focus that led art historian TJ Clark to call it the first modernist artwork. Although the artist probably worked from the corpse, he used religious and classical tropes to cast the assassinated agitator as a secular martyr. The unheroic end becomes a Christ-like pietà swoon, the nudity that of Greek warriors, yet half the painting is of darkness, without Christianity's heavenly angels to welcome the soul. It's a contemplation of how a man creates his own significance.

**Skye Sherwin**

**A natural and fresh paradox**



Self Portrait in a Straw Hat , 1782. Found in the Collection of National Gallery, London. Artist Vigée Le Brun, Louise Élisabeth (1755-1842). (Photo by Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images) Photograph: Heritage Images/Getty Images

***Self-portrait in a Straw Hat by Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, 1782***

In this self-portrait, the artist knows you know you're looking at her – and she is knowingly looking at you. Yet, paradoxically, both sides know she made this image by looking in a mirror, the better to narcissistically capture herself. It's the revenge of the painted object: a woman constructing herself as beautiful on her own terms. She depicts herself both as personification of painting and as unaffectedly natural and fresh: face gently shaded, chest luminous, hair unpowdered (unlike that of her patron, Marie Antoinette), breasts uncorseted (unlike this picture's inspiration, [Rubens's portrait of Susanna Lunden](#)). And yet everything in this wonderful portrait is artifice.

**Stuart Jeffries**

**Resilience staring down brutal pain**





The two Fridas Double self-portrait of the artist with visible heart. Painting by Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) 1939. Photograph: Luisa Ricciarini/Bridgeman Images

### *The Two Fridas by Frida Kahlo, 1939*

“Like a ribbon around a bomb,” said the surrealist André Breton of Frida Kahlo’s work, which he saw in Paris a year before she painted this, her great dual self-portrait. Kahlo was in her early 30s and becoming an international celebrity, but at home in Mexico her marriage to Diego Rivera had fallen apart. The Two Fridas confronts these linked realities: on the right, her whole-hearted Mexican self cradles a miniature portrait of Rivera; on the left, European Frida tries in vain to stem the flow of blood from her shattered ventricles with forceps. Their joined hands reinforce the defiance with which they stare the viewer down. Kahlo’s resilience in the face of brutal emotional and physical pain was never more powerfully expressed.

**Claire Armitstead**

### **Turning the tables**



Take a second look ... Anguissola's Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola. Photograph: Artefact/Alamy

***Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola by Sofonisba Anguissola, c1559***

Staring out at us are two figures: a man in a dark suit and a woman in a thick crimson dress. He's painting her, a portrait, dictating her appearance, as he gazes back at us, his eyes not quite meeting our gaze while her glassy eyes pierce our view. But take a second look at the caption and you realise the painting is not by him, but by her: Sofonisba Anguissola, his pupil. Not only has she painted herself one and a half times as big as him, she has him painting the embellishment of the jacket – a task normally assigned to an apprentice. Now look even closer and you'll see her left hand – a third hand – guiding his around the canvas. **Katy Hessel**

**A land wrecked by colonial capitalism**

***The Coffee Worker by Candido Portinari, 1939***

Maybe I'm attracted to this work because the story of Candido Portinari's family resonates with my own: poor workers who fled Italy for a better life. His parents ended up on a coffee plantation in Brazil, where Candido was born in 1903, and where he bore witness to the life of the immigrant poor and the legacy of slavery, then only two decades abolished. This painting is

particularly striking, not just as a portrait of hardship (the mournful facial expression, the lilac tones) and heroism (the homoerotic, bulging physique), but also for its portrayal of the extractivist nature of colonial capitalism in the wrecked land that rolls out behind the worker. **Oliver Basciano**

### **In his arms or hooked to a machine?**



Vulnerable and harrowing ... Judy Chicago's *How Will I Die? #2*. Photograph: Donald Woodman/Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco

### ***How Will I Die? #2, from The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction by Judy Chicago, 2015***

If portraiture allows artists to give something or someone immortality, it's intriguing that Judy Chicago decides to use the medium to imagine herself in her final moments. *How Will I Die?* is a series of eight paintings of Chicago in different death scenes – in the arms of her husband, hooked up to a machine, screaming in pain. In this, the artist is naked and curled up in the foetal position with “Will I leave as I arrived?” written above her. It is vulnerable and harrowing, but there is power in Chicago's use of portraiture to test out scenarios and therefore maintain agency before a terrifying inevitability. **Hannah Clugston**

## *The [National Portrait Gallery](#), London, reopens on 22 June*

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Child-carrying cargo bikes are on the increase in London. Photograph: Richard Baker/In Pictures/Getty Images

[Bike blog](#)[Life and style](#)

## **‘In at the deep end’: ditching the car for a cargo bike on the school run**

The price tags can be eye-watering for the electric model I need around my hilly London neighbourhood



[Rowena Mason](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 02.00 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 02.42 EDT

It's been 20 years since I last used a bike every day. But I'm returning to cycling because I want to take my children to school and nursery without the horrible sense of guilt from dropping them off in the car, complaints about walking or the juggle of pushchair and public transport at rush-hour.

To replace my car on the daily school run, I need an electrically powered workhorse that will carry two smallish children and the bags of stuff that we lug around wherever we go.

The options, I'm told, are an elongated cargo bike that fits two children on the back, a detachable trailer, or a trike/bike with a giant child bucket on the front.

In an ideal world, it will be powerful enough that I don't feel dragged down by 30kg of offspring while chugging the household around my hilly [London](#) neighbourhood. The longtail electric cargo seems like the best fit for this brief.

There are various "car replacement" bikes on the market with eye-watering price tags. The Tern GSD retails at £5k-plus at the top end. The model I



choose to try out is a RadWagon, at the cheapest end of the market, though not actually cheap at more like £2,000 with all the necessary attachments.

My main concern is whether I can keep my wriggling cargo safe. I spend a long time poring over Google maps to figure out a route that avoids buses and sticks to cycle paths and parks as much as possible.



Rowena Mason and children on their bike. Photograph: Rowena Mason/The Guardian

I also research parking, endlessly. And it seems this is one of the main disadvantages of a big, expensive bike. The advice is pretty much never to leave them unattended or on display for long. You can lock them up with as many locks as you like but nothing can stop a determined thief with an angle grinder – even in a public place in broad daylight. I decide it will have to be parked only at home, school or work.

Finally, I am ready to borrow the bike from one of the handful of RadWagon partner outlets in London. It has been shipped and taken a week to “build” – the lead time for an order is usually about 10 days. The bikes are extremely popular in the US and mainland Europe but have not been without their problems, including a recall over tyre issues requiring new kit that took some months to be sent. In the UK, there are more than 500 RadWagon

owners, and a handful of service outlets in London.

Turning up at the shop, I admit I've never ridden an electric bike before and the assistant laughs, telling me the RadWagon is going "in at the deep end". It is a beast, at 2 metres in length and 35kg in weight. But after a short trial round a nearby park, I decide to take the plunge and cycle 45 minutes home.

It is in turns both exhilarating and terrifying. At top speed, I am approaching the 25km per hour with little effort on my part. The electric motor makes cycling feel like you're gliding along. A nimble turn of the "throttle" is enough to almost flatten most hills, with major physical exertion required for only the steepest climbs.

The tech is impressive. It has inbuilt lights that switch on with the electrics, a range of 55-88km a charge, an easy-to-read display and the ability to charge your phone on the go.

The first hitch comes, though, in deciding where to put it. Outside seems too risky and it won't fit in the shed. I settle for the hall although this could not be a long-term solution given its bulkiness. This is really a bike for people with garage space or the nerves and insurance to keep it chained in the garden under cover.

When it comes to loading on my children, they give it a very positive review as comfy and fun. There are no complaints about the ride to school apart from when I take a speed bump too fast. I'm worried about fights breaking out behind me among tired passengers sitting close together, but they are too busy holding on and enjoying the ride for this to be a problem.

The RadWagon is built to fit two Thule Yepp Maxi child seats for the youngest riders up until the age of about five. They are also not cheap and can be tricky to find secondhand but lovely, durable seats and easy to fit. Older children can ride with legs astride the central seat pads if they are confident holding on. Its maximum weight is 54kg, which is equivalent to about two children up to the age of eight or nine.

Child-carrying cargo bikes are on the increase in London but they are not prevalent everywhere. The RadWagon attracts a lot of attention and



compliments. A teenage boy stops to tell me I have “nice wheels” and I get curious looks from other parents. Several friends come round for a test. One who transports her children by non-electric cargo says she likes it but finds it a bit less responsive than her non-electric bucket bike. I still feel it is quite steady, if slightly cumbersome to wheel because of its size, with a low centre of gravity and thick tyres.

It’s time to return the RadWagon and I’m considering whether to buy one of my own. The pull factors are the ease, fun and speed of travel, and the fact the children love it. The downsides are the price, parking and hassle if things go wrong. It feels like this type of cargo cycling is the future in cities – I think this really could replace a car, and be more enjoyable as a vehicle, for most local travel. But on a mass basis, this is only really going to happen as the cost comes down further.

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## 2023.06.19 - Opinion

- People voted for Boris Johnson knowing he was a liar. It's too late to start shifting the blame
- I have given up grooming. Welcome to hot crone summer
- Ancient Britons built Stonehenge – then vanished. Is science closing in on their killers?
- I thought I should always be positive with my patients – until I found out how damaging that can be



‘With Boris Johnson, we are constantly finding ways to explain away what are structural weaknesses in our political culture.’ Photograph: Daniel Leal/AFP/Getty Images

[Opinion](#)**Boris Johnson**

## **People voted for Boris Johnson knowing he was a liar. It's too late to start shifting the blame**

[Nesrine Malik](#)



Britain is in thrall to an aristocratic class that feels entitled to power. We don't need finger-pointing, we need self-reflection

Mon 19 Jun 2023 01.00 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 05.43 EDT

There are words and phrases that do some heavy lifting in British politics – “populism”, “Brexit”, “legitimate concerns”, the “red wall”. Watch out for them, as in the next few weeks they will be unsparingly deployed to explain how the hell someone like [Boris Johnson](#) ever came within sniffing distance of Downing Street.

An exercise in orphaning Johnson that has been afoot for a few months will now reach its sad conclusion. His failure will have no fathers and his success will be attributed to an abstract set of conditions that conspired to make his premiership inevitable. Like a monster released from enclosure in an iceberg as it is thawed by a warm weather front, Johnson arrived in Westminster to wreak havoc, until finally the Swat team of British democratic norms and institutions took him out. His critics will issue plaintive laments about the tragedy of a [Brexit](#) that carried him into No 10 with a huge majority, and say that he only has himself to blame for coming undone.

Johnson is simply a wrong 'un who was never fit to be prime minister, as the Tory MP David Gauke [surmised](#). This is true, of course, but the problem is he's the type of wrong that we sort of like. Because he had qualities that still, deep down in our national psyche, made him forgivable.

Here you need to watch out for what has become a national pastime – psychoanalysing Boris Johnson, almost dissecting him. What a grotesque creature, we will be told, as he is pinned on the slab and pored over again. How did this uniquely mendacious man come to so undermine the dignity of his post and “take us all for fools” – as [the Spectator](#) (yes, the Spectator) wrote?

That psychoanalysis is best directed at a political culture that has a deference to public schoolboys, to the entitled confidence of unearned privilege, and to the sort of upper-class persona that, as Oscar Wilde described, treats “all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality”. Johnson's success in consciously leveraging these qualities – ruffling his hair, [shaking hands with “everybody”](#) in a hospital ward in the early days of Covid, and assuring us that Brexit was a piece of cake – was, you will also be told, an example of the perils of “populism”. He thrived because of his ability to charm, rather than because of Britain's fondness for an aristocratic class that, with a glint in its eye, reassures us that it is entirely unflapped by the challenges of power.

Conditions matter, of course. Brexit, its irreconcilable goals, its complicated border protocols and its challenges to the very union of the United Kingdom, needed a figure that could rise above its vexatious details, not get bogged down in them like Theresa May did. Johnson's battering ram approach to Brexit and his [unlawful](#) proroguing of parliament in the process was exactly the sort of behaviour he was elected for. But that hardly explains the glee with which large parts of the media received the prospect of a Boris Johnson premiership.

Boris Johnson is a 'lawbreaker and a liar' says Labour deputy leader – video

The 2019 election brought with it a “sense of [slightly unfocused excitement](#)”, of “zing”, of Johnson's “whiz-bang, sparkle, fizz, gusto, passion – and fun”, wrote Matthew Parris in the Times. Sure, the paper's

[editorial](#) said before the 2019 election, Johnson does have “an on-off relationship with the truth” and often prefers “bluster to grasp of detail”, but unlike his opponent, Jeremy Corbyn, at least Johnson’s faults were “in plain sight”.

The subtext is clear – he’s a liar, but he’s *our* liar. And Brexit still doesn’t explain why, even after [a damning report](#) about his lies to parliament and his departure from political life, the Daily Mail anoints him again with [a column](#) and handsome remuneration for it. He then, with his supporters surely expecting an unfiltered account of the sabotaging of his political career, duly filed a half-arsed column about diet medication. Because it’s never really about the quality of what Johnson delivers, but the style in which he does it, the very flippant contempt for that quality that many still can’t wean themselves off.

It wasn’t the red wall, or Brexit, that handed Johnson a voice in a national newspaper, as his support leaches away and parliament prepares to vote on the Partygate report. It was an indulgence of the man and what he represents. Johnson embodies the useful spirit of a nihilistic Brexit, which was always about concentrating power in the hands of rightwing interests rather than divesting it to the “will of the people”. He serves as a bulwark against political institutions, civil service processes and the rules of law that, if allowed to take their course, would defenestrate, or at least challenge, the stock and trade of certain rightwing media interests – projecting fears of a shadowy cabal of woke progressive powers that, [in the words](#) of Rishi Sunak, seeks to “cancel our values, our history and our women”. As long as Johnson is in play, he is a useful tool in this campaign.

And what of Sunak, our grownup prime minister at last? “One of the most remarkable people I’ve ever met” is how he [described](#) Johnson in 2022. We simply cannot be expected to believe that it was only one specific and poorly timed lie about partying that finally revealed Johnson for what he is. Or that, as footage leaks of [Tories dancing](#) and mocking Covid-19 laws in December 2020, that Conservative party officials and MPs who behaved badly were simply channelling Johnson’s disdain for the public, rather than expressing their own.

This is not a call for a blame exercise, although God knows there's enough to go round, but a plea for a self-reflection that takes stock of how we came to thrust a notoriously well-known charlatan into the country's highest office, and then proceeded to blame him for that decision. One of the reasons British politics has a feel of unreality and triviality to it at the moment isn't down to Brexit stripping it of seriousness and integrity. It is because with Johnson, as with the governmental debacle during the pandemic, we are constantly finding ever more elaborate ways to explain away what are structural weaknesses in our political culture.

We are stuck with a system that indulges useless, morally vacuous politicians as long as they don't threaten to reshape the economy or political culture to the benefit of those who need a strong public sector, affordable housing, fairer distribution of income and the sort of compassion that would give refugees their internationally mandated human rights. If those politicians can maintain this merciless world with flair, even better. If they fail, away from the scene of the car crash we will speed.

As we do so, perhaps we can be diverted by the scenery of the many troubling but ultimately superficial outrages that now dominate our political life: peerages; Nadine Dorries; Sunak's helicopters and heated swimming pool. Anything to stop us seeing the faults that, like Johnson's, hide in plain sight. Never looking back, always racing headlong into the next disaster.

- Nesrine Malik is a Guardian columnist
- ***Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a response of up to 300 words by email to be considered for publication in our [letters](#) section, please [click here](#).***



Ah, the smell of it ... some of the scents on offer this year are even more over-the-top than usual. Photograph: Digital Zoo/Getty Images

[OpinionLife and style](#)

## **I have given up grooming. Welcome to hot crone summer**

[Emma Beddington](#)





I am not budging on my ‘feminist’ (lazy) decision to give up makeup. But I am busy testing perfumes that smell of goat, mushroom and seaweed

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I find myself confronted, yet again, by summer grooming dilemmas, even though I don’t believe in either summer, or grooming. My approach to personal maintenance all year round is to intone “I had a beauty blog once” while gazing into the middle distance like Meryl Streep in *Out of Africa*. As if writing about snail goo in the past absolves me of responsibility to do anything about how I look now.

Then summer, oof! I cried for 20 minutes yesterday just because the birds looked too hot. I don’t really have the mental bandwidth for anything other than letting the heat do its worst with my keratin and whatever skin is (I just googled “What is skin?” for a snapshot of how deep into summer madness I have sunk). But is it rude to go out without making some cursory effort? In summer, you’re dealing with the dread re-emergence of feet into the public sphere, plus the way your whole face slides greasily southwards, making you look, as the writer Sarah Dempster said memorably, [“Like Noddy Holder screaming in a kiln”](#).

I'm not budging on my "feminist" (lazy) decision to give up makeup: when I found myself saying crossly, "A *man* wouldn't be doing this", I decided I wouldn't either, mostly. So I'm only making concessions to social norms that don't compromise my slatternly principles: concealing my feet and seeking out a seasonal fragrance that isn't Dove Original gone crusty. This has been made vastly more entertaining by a friend discovering surely the most over-the-top fragrance site ever. "I've found three that have notes of goat hair," she told me and I was instantly seized by acquisitive fervour and ordered some testers. First, a hedge-witch-inspired goat, mushroom and seaweed perfume: perfect for the hot crone summer I have in mind. The others are Squid ("[Feel the caress of the huge tentacles](#)") and "Rasputin", which was apparently dropped into the "dark, glacial" Øresund strait for 90 days ("[referencing the final part of Rasputin's story](#)") to get the blend right. So soon I'll be as shambolic as ever, but smell fascinating.

- Emma Beddington is a Guardian columnist

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‘An olive-skinned, dark-haired population constructed Stonehenge between about 5,000 and 4,500 years ago.’ Photograph: Jeremy Walker/Getty Images

[OpinionMigration](#)

## **Ancient Britons built Stonehenge – then vanished. Is science closing in on their killers?**

[Jonathan Kennedy](#)



New clues from an ancient plague are pushing us to rethink where Britons were ‘really’ from – and the answer is complicated

Mon 19 Jun 2023 05.00 EDTLast modified on Tue 20 Jun 2023 13.29 EDT

Two weeks ago, Pooja Swali from the Crick Institute announced the discovery of *Yersinia pestis*, the bacterium that causes plague, in the dental pulp of three people who died about 4,000 years ago – [two in Somerset and the other in Cumbria](#). This finding is astonishing in its own right because it pushes back the earliest evidence of plague in England by several millennia. But the discovery may also help to solve one of our greatest prehistoric mysteries: why did the people who introduced farming to the British Isles suddenly vanish shortly after they built Stonehenge some five millennia ago?

Before last month’s announcement, the oldest evidence of plague in Britain came from a 1,500-year-old skeleton interred at an Anglo-Saxon burial site near Cambridge. That victim died during the plague of Justinian, which spread throughout the eastern Roman empire and beyond in the middle of the sixth century. While scientists have identified plague DNA in human remains across Europe and Asia dating to between 5,000 and 2,500 years

ago, until last week, we couldn't be sure that this prehistoric pandemic reached these isles. It's now clear that it did.

We know that more recent plague pandemics have affected society in ways that are still evident. The Black Death, which killed [more than half](#) the British population in the mid-14th century, triggered a struggle between lords and serfs that led to the collapse of feudalism and the emergence of capitalism. Eight hundred years earlier, the plague of Justinian had halted the eastern Roman empire's efforts to reconquer its lost western provinces. Eventually, the nation states of western Europe emerged from this political vacuum. Similarly, it is likely that the consequences of the prehistoric plague that killed Britons in Somerset and Cumbria were so profound that they can still be seen and heard today.

Where Britons are really from is a complicated story. The oldest complete human skeleton found in the British Isles belongs to 10,000-year-old Cheddar Man. When scientists extracted and analysed his DNA a few years ago, they realised that he wasn't your stereotypical fair-haired, pale-skinned "English rose". Cheddar Man had [dark brown skin, black hair and blue-green eyes](#). He wasn't an anomaly: this is how the first Britons looked.

About 6,000 years ago, Cheddar Man's foraging kinfolk were replaced by an olive-skinned, dark-haired population who originated in modern-day Turkey and migrated slowly across Europe, bringing agriculture with them. They would have looked similar to modern-day southern Europeans, [who have inherited](#) a large proportion of their DNA from these Neolithic farmers. We can even hazard an educated guess as to what language they spoke. As the Basque people have a high proportion of neolithic farmer ancestry and their language is not related to any other, Euskara [is likely to be](#) the last surviving descendant of this prehistoric tongue.



Levens Park ring cairn in Cumbria, where *Yersinia pestis* DNA was discovered at a 4,000-year-old burial site. Photograph: Ian Hodkinson, Liverpool John Moores University

It was these Anatolian immigrants who constructed that icon of Britishness, Stonehenge, between about 5,000 and 4,500 years ago. But not long afterwards, they vanished and were replaced by another genetically distinct population group who were taller and fairer. The newcomers were nomadic pastoralists from the Eurasian steppe, where they used cutting-edge technology – horses and wagons – to raise herds of animals. About 5,000 years ago, these steppe herders began to migrate westwards through northern Europe, reaching the British Isles half a millennium later. The Amesbury Archer was one of the new immigrants. His 4,300-year-old grave was discovered by archaeologists at a site slated for a [new housing scheme](#) a couple of miles from Stonehenge in 2002.

Violence may have played a role in the replacement of the Stonehenge builders from Anatolia: 90% of the steppe herders involved in the great westward migration were males, and domesticated horses and metal weapons would have provided them with a distinct advantage in conflict. But even taking all this into account, it is almost impossible to explain how a small group of nomadic herders was able to replace a large, well-established farming society.



The US geneticist David Reich suggests that the most similar historical parallel is the European colonisation of the Americas in the 16th century. Tiny numbers of Spanish conquistadors armed with guns and steel managed to vanquish vast and sophisticated empires. These seemingly miraculous victories were, of course, only possible because Old World germs – first smallpox, then others – raced ahead of the Spanish and devastated the enemy.

Similarly, it is possible that a prehistoric plague pandemic cleared the way for the steppe herders to migrate across northern Europe. Evidence points to a catastrophic demographic crash about 5,000 years ago. The population fell by as much as 60% and remained at that level for centuries. We can't be sure that plague was responsible but it is the best explanation we currently have.

The implications of all this are extraordinary. The new migrants brought the latest technology – not just horses and wagons, but also [Bell Beaker pottery](#) and metal tools – that marked the end of the neolithic and the start of the bronze age. But their impact is much longer-lasting.

Although immigrants have continued to enrich the gene pool in the intervening years, the influx of steppe herders in the third millennium BC was the last transformative movement of people into Europe. Their DNA is the largest source of ancestry in northern Europe, accounting for slightly less than half of the genome of the British Isles.

Steppe herders are also the most likely source of Indo-European languages, which includes English but also German, French, Spanish, Greek, Russian, Farsi and Hindi, spoken by about half of the world's population. In the distant past, proto-Indo-European was spoken by a small group of people, who then spread out across Europe and central and south Asia, taking their language with them. All Indo-European languages share similar vocabulary, including words related to wagons. Steppe herders introduced wagons to Europe and their DNA is found in significant proportions among people who speak Indo-European languages.

All this should be a reality check for notions of where people are “really” from, and how we measure who is entitled to settle where in the world. The

white British population are certainly not the indigenous people of the British Isles. They are the descendants of immigrants who arrived on boats. And it is likely that they were only able to settle here because the humble *Yersinia pestis* bacterium cleared the way for them.

- Jonathan Kennedy teaches politics and global health at Queen Mary University of London, and is the author of *Pathogenesis: How Germs Made History*

This article was amended on 19 June 2023 because the grave of the Amesbury Archer was discovered by archaeologists, not by builders as an earlier version said.

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‘The key for me is to assess the person I am speaking to and find out what they want to know.’ Photograph: andrei\_r/Getty Images/iStockphoto

[Why I quitHealth](#)

**I thought I should always be positive  
with my patients – until I found out how  
damaging that can be**

[Mark Taubert](#)



When I stopped being so upbeat with the people I was treating, it turned out that what they really valued was my honesty

- Prof Mark Taubert is a palliative care consultant based in Cardiff

Mon 19 Jun 2023 03.00 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 03.07 EDT

Years ago, when I was training as a palliative medicine doctor, I saw a woman with lower back pain. I knew from her medical history that she had breast cancer, so I wanted to make sure it hadn't spread to her spinal area. I was fairly certain that it was probably only a muscular pain, and so I reassured her. Her examination findings had not revealed any red flags, so I felt a bit of positivity was not misplaced, as she was feeling very anxious.

Her MRI scan, however, confirmed the worst: a full-scale invasion of a region called the cauda equina in her lumbar spine area. "You were certain it was going to be all right, and now I have to be admitted to hospital?" she exclaimed, visibly upset. She needed urgent radiotherapy to the area and had to be stretched to hospital. Sadly, despite treatment, she became unable to walk and required a wheelchair.

In my early years as a doctor, I thought it was my role to be positive, sometimes overly positive, with patients and their next of kin, reassuring them of a low likelihood of my worst suspicions being confirmed. Yet I started to find myself regretting what I had said, especially when a hunch became a reality. “I wish you’d told us this might happen so we could prepare,” was one of the comments that would come back.

A turning point for me was when I had to get informed consent from patients, to indicate that they had understood all the risks of a medical procedure. When you have an anxious person in front of you, it can feel cruel to list a whole lot of complications (“bowel perforation”, “stroke”, “death”), but the longer you work as a doctor, the higher the likelihood that you will eventually see some of these rare side-effects. And so it was for me, when a patient lost vast amounts of blood after a routine day-case hospital procedure and had not fully appreciated the risks. He survived, required blood transfusions and told me he would not have undergone the operation had I been sufficiently blunt about the risks beforehand.

As a palliative care doctor, I deliver a lot of bad news. That has meant learning how to balance my instincts to not worry an individual, when I suspect something bad may be going on, versus the need to inform them of all possibilities. “We can do a scan of your head just to check what is affecting your balance” can sound slightly more reassuring than “I want to scan your head because I am worried your cancer may have spread to the brain and caused metastases there”.

The key for me is to assess the person I am speaking to and find out what they want to know. Some find too much information distressing and they tell me so from the outset. Others want all possible outcomes laid bare, regardless of how distressing I might deem them to be. But I’ve learned over the years that excessive positivity can be damaging.

There is a lot of pressure to be positive these days. Some people even regard it as a form of wellness treatment in itself and warn of the potential dangers of “allowing negativity into their lives”. But such enforced optimism ignores the realities of our existence. Some patients seem to think negativity will shorten their lives. But researchers in different studies have [tested the hypothesis](#) that optimism can impact survival in cancer patients and have

found that it does [not have an impact](#). In one of these studies, there was a suggestion that encouraging patients to be positive perhaps even represents an [additional burden](#).

Whether you have terminal cancer or not, believing everything must stay positive just isn't sustainable. It needs to be balanced with realism. An expectation that outcomes will and must always conclude well can in itself create disappointment and anxiety – because, at some level, we know that we cannot guarantee those wishes will come true.

Being pessimistic or negative on occasion can help, and patients tell me that it is pragmatic and even reassuring to talk about the worst-case scenarios that may lie ahead. When my patients spend more time getting used to the very real possibility that things will work out not so well, it can reduce anxiety considerably over future weeks and months.

“Never interrupt a patient who is expressing negativity,” said one of my mentors once, and she was right: it's far better to listen and talk it through. And do not be afraid to discuss potential negative outcomes with those who have put their lives in your hands, even if the news may sound terrifying. By considering the worst and the most negative scenario, we do not make it more likely that it will actually happen. Now, I always ask my patients and their loved ones how much they feel they can handle. Nearly all want a doctor who talks frankly, but with honest compassion, outlining what may be ahead.

- Prof Mark Taubert is a palliative care consultant based in Cardiff

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Xi Jinping meets the visiting US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, in Beijing. Photograph: Xinhua/Shutterstock

[China](#)

## Antony Blinken and Xi Jinping hold ‘candid’ talks in Beijing

Meeting between China’s president and US secretary of state takes place at time of heightened tension

[Rachel Cheung](#) in Hong Kong

Mon 19 Jun 2023 08.20 EDTFirst published on Mon 19 Jun 2023 04.06 EDT

The US secretary of state, [Antony Blinken](#), has wrapped up a rare trip to Beijing where he met China’s president, Xi Jinping, concluding a high-stakes visit aimed at stabilising spiralling relations.

Speaking at a press briefing in Beijing before his departure, Blinken said he had had “an important conversation” with Xi during the 35-minute

encounter and stressed it was the responsibility of both countries to find a path forward.

“In every meeting, I stressed that direct engagement and sustained communication at senior levels is the best way to responsibly manage our differences and ensure competition does not veer into conflict,” Blinken said. “I heard the same from my Chinese counterparts.”

Blinken, the first holder of his post to meet the Chinese leader since 2018, strode towards Xi with his hand outstretched at the Great Hall of the People, a venue [China](#) often uses for greeting heads of state – positive signals in the choreography of diplomacy.

“The two sides have had candid and in-depth discussions,” Xi said at the start of the meeting, in comments broadcast on Chinese state television. “I hope that through this visit, Mr Secretary, you will make more positive contributions to stabilising China-US relations,” Xi added, addressing Blinken.

The rest of the discussion was held behind closed doors. The Chinese readout said the two sides “made progress” and reached agreement on specific issues, without offering further details.

Despite signs of positivity, Blinken acknowledged there were issues on which the two countries disagreed profoundly and even vehemently. China rejected a proposal to set up communication between the Chinese and American militaries. “I want to emphasise that none of this gets resolved in one visit, one trip, one conversation. It’s a process,” Blinken said.

The state department said later that in Blinken’s meetings he had raised China’s “unfair and nonmarket economic practices”, human rights violations in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong, and “peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait”.

“The two sides discussed a range of global and regional security issues, including Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, [North Korea’s]

provocative actions, and US concerns with [Chinese] intelligence activities in Cuba,” said Matthew Miller, a state department spokesperson.

Blinken’s visit is the first by a US secretary of state in five years. [Tensions between the world’s two largest economies](#) have soared in recent years over a host of issues including trade, technology and Taiwan, with Joe Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, calling Beijing the most serious threat to long-term US global primacy.

Earlier on Monday, Blinken held extensive discussions with China’s top diplomat, Wang Yi, at the Diaoyutai state guest house. On Sunday, he held talks with China’s foreign minister, Qin Gang, for more than seven hours.

According to a Chinese readout, Wang said China-US relations were at “a critical juncture” and called on the US to make a choice “between dialogue or confrontation, cooperation or conflict”.

Wang stressed the need to reverse the downward spiral in bilateral ties, but also blamed the current low point on the US’s “erroneous perception of China”.

Moritz Rudolf, a fellow at Yale Law School’s Paul Tsai China Center, said Wang’s confrontational tone “shows the great level of mistrust of Beijing vis-a-vis the US”. However, given the bleak state of US-China relations, the mere fact that the visit had taken place was a positive sign, he said.

Blinken’s trip to China was initially planned for February but was postponed when a balloon, allegedly a Chinese spy balloon, flew over the US, sparking a controversy. China insisted it was a weather balloon that had been blown off course.

Given the fraught relations, expectations of the meetings were generally low. Both countries hold hardened positions on a range of issues including trade, Xinjiang and Taiwan.

But both sides showed a willingness to talk, with Qin and Blinken agreeing to maintain high-level exchanges and expand cultural and educational exchanges.



The meetings could launch the process for more diplomatic engagement between the US and China, laying the ground for a Xi-Biden meeting, for instance, at the Apec summit that will take place in San Francisco in November, Rudolf said.

“The reopening of bilateral communication channels, including on security-related matters, would be a step in the right direction,” he said.

Beijing and other western countries have also sought to stabilise relations after a tense few years. On Monday, the Chinese premier, Li Qiang, arrived in Germany for a diplomatic trip that will include a visit to France.

*Reuters contributed to this report*

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Israeli attack helicopters fire missiles into West Bank city – video

[Palestinian territories](#)

## Israeli forces launch helicopter raid on Jenin in occupied West Bank

Five Palestinians killed and 91 injured, according to Palestinian officials as Israeli army enters city to arrest ‘suspects’

*[Ben Lynfield](#) in Jerusalem*

Mon 19 Jun 2023 10.10 EDTFirst published on Mon 19 Jun 2023 04.48 EDT

The Israeli military has used combat helicopters in the occupied West Bank for the first time in years, as an arrest operation in Jenin encountered unexpectedly fierce Palestinian resistance.

The heavy fighting intensified calls by settler leaders to call for a broader military campaign in the West Bank.

The fighting raged until late afternoon, with five Palestinians killed, including a 15-year-old boy, and 91 injured, including 23 severely or critically, according to Palestinian health officials. One of those was a 15-year-old girl who Palestinian witnesses quoted by Israel’s Haaretz website, said was shot inside her house. A Palestinian journalist, Hazem Nasser, a freelance cameraman wearing press gear, was wounded, according to the Foreign Press Association.

The dead Palestinians were identified as Ahmed Saqr, 15, Qassam Abu Saraya, 29 who was claimed as a fighter by Islamic Jihad, Khaled Asasa, 21 and Qais Jabareen, 21.

Seven Israeli soldiers and militarised border police sustained light to moderate injuries, according to an army spokesperson.

## Why the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is so complicated – video explainer

Israel's Kan public broadcaster said late on Monday afternoon that all remaining soldiers had been successfully withdrawn from Jenin.

Violence in the West Bank territory occupied by Israel during the 1967 Middle East war has worsened since early last year when Israel began mounting repeated army raids after a spate of Palestinian attacks. One hundred and twenty-three Palestinians and at least 21 Israelis have died, according to the Associated Press.

Monday's fighting seemed to be particularly serious, with senior Palestinian official Hussein al-Sheikh accusing Israel of waging "fierce and open war" against the Palestinian people. Palestinian politician Mustafa Barghouti predicted that Benjamin Netanyahu's government, the most rightwing in Israeli history, could escalate to the use of fighter aircraft in the West Bank.

Monday's raid clearly did not go as planned from an Israeli point of view. The entry of troops triggered a massive exchange of fire with gunmen, during which, according to the military, "hits" were identified. "As the security forces exited the city, a military vehicle was hit by an explosive device, damaging the vehicle."

## Palestinian journalists under fire in Jenin while covering Israeli raid – video

The army spokesperson said helicopters were called in and opened fire at Palestinian gunmen in order to help extract soldiers. Israeli media reports said it was the first use of combat helicopters in the West Bank since the second intifada uprising, which ended in 2005.

"Helicopters had to be called in because of the unexpected results of the raid, soldiers being wounded and an armoured vehicle getting blown up," said Menachem Klein, professor emeritus at Bar-Ilan University and a visiting professor in the war studies department at King's College London. Despite the devastating casualty toll, Palestinian militants will not be deterred by the raid and may even consider their fight on Monday a kind of victory given the imbalance of power, he predicted.

Klein added that with settlers pressing the government in which they command heavy influence for an all out incursion, it is likely the army will in the near future mount a major operation in Jenin and keep troops there for at least a few days.

Bezael Smotrich, a far-right leader, posted on Twitter during Monday's fighting that "the time has come to replace the tweezer operations with a wide ranging campaign to eradicate the nests of terror".

*Sufian Taha contributed from East Jerusalem*

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Israeli settlers outside a portable building under construction at the former settler outpost of Homesh on the West Bank last month. The Israeli government has tabled plans to approve thousands of building permits in the occupied territory. Photograph: Menahem Kahana/AFP/Getty Images

[Israel](#)

## US ‘deeply troubled’ as Israel plans to approve thousands of homes in West Bank

Palestinians condemn move and Washington calls for return to dialogue amid Israeli plans to give go-ahead to 4,560 housing units in occupied territory

*Reuters*

Sun 18 Jun 2023 22.03 EDT

The United States says it is “deeply troubled” by the Israeli government’s tabling of plans to approve thousands of building permits in the occupied

West Bank and has called on [Israel](#) to return to dialogue aimed at de-escalation.

The plans for approval of 4,560 housing units in various areas of the West Bank were included on the agenda of Israel's Supreme Planning Council that meets next week, although only 1,332 are up for final approval, with the remainder still going through the preliminary clearance process.

“We will continue to develop the settlement of and strengthen the Israeli hold on the territory,” said finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, who also holds a defence portfolio that gives him a leading role in West Bank administration.

Most countries deem the settlements, built on land captured by Israel in 1967 as illegal. Their presence is one of the fundamental issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Palestinians seek to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as their capital. Peace talks that have been brokered by the US have been frozen since 2014.

The US state department said it was “deeply troubled” by the latest move, which comes despite US pressure to halt the settlement expansion that Washington sees as an obstacle to peace. It called on Israel to return to dialogue aimed at de-escalation.

“As has been longstanding policy, the United States opposes such unilateral actions that make a two-state solution more difficult to achieve and are an obstacle to peace,” a department spokesperson, Matthew Miller, said in a statement.

Since entering office in January, the nationalist-religious coalition government of [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), the prime minister, has approved the promotion of more than 7,000 new housing units, most deep in the West Bank.

It also amended a law to clear the way for settlers to return to four settlements that had previously been evacuated.

In response to the Israeli decision on Sunday, the Palestinian Authority – which exercises limited self-rule in parts of the West Bank – said it would boycott a meeting of the joint economic committee with Israel scheduled for Monday.

The Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007, after Israel's withdrawal of soldiers and settlers, condemned the move, saying it “will not give [Israel] legitimacy over our land. Our people will resist it by all means.”

Jewish settler groups welcomed the announcement.

“The people have chosen to continue building in Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley, and that is the way it should be,” said Shlomo Ne’eman, mayor of the Gush Etzion regional council and chairman of the Yesha Council, using Israel’s biblical names for the West Bank.

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Cybersecurity firm CyberCX said in a report that Anonymous Sudan is unlikely to be an authentic hacktivist organisation. Photograph: xijian/Getty Images

[Cybercrime](#)

## Hackers behind Microsoft outage most likely Russian-backed group aiming to ‘drive division’ in the west

Cybersecurity firm says Anonymous Sudan is unlikely to be authentic hacktivist group, as initially believed

[Josh Taylor](#)

[@joshgnosis](#)

Mon 19 Jun 2023 02.53 EDTLast modified on Mon 19 Jun 2023 03.42 EDT

The hackers believed to be behind a recent attack that took some of Microsoft’s services offline are likely to be a Russian-linked group rather than a grassroots pro-Islam collective operating out of Sudan, experts say.



Anonymous Sudan, which surfaced in January 2023, has also claimed responsibility for at least 24 distributed denial-of-service attacks on Australian companies, including healthcare, aviation and education organisations.

Last week, Microsoft confirmed that outages to its Outlook service in early June were the result of a DoS attack [believed to have](#) been carried out by Anonymous Sudan, which had claimed credit.

The group presented itself as a loose group of hacktivists with a name that suggested they were located in Sudan, and it claimed to be targeting Australian organisations in March in protest against clothing worn at Melbourne fashion festival with “God walks with me” written on it in Arabic.

Cybersecurity firm CyberCX said in a report released on Monday that the group is unlikely to be an authentic hacktivist organisation and is likely linked to the Russian state, after an analysis of the group’s activities.

CyberCX said most hacktivist groups conduct their plans for operations in a semi-public way online, but Anonymous Sudan had only announced targets when they were being attacked, indicating a closely held operation.

The firm also said the organisation’s use of paid infrastructure in the attacks – directing mass amounts of traffic to a service in order to bring it down – would have cost tens of thousands of dollars, and was less likely to have been used by a loose collective.

CyberCX said Anonymous Sudan was also publicly aligned with pro-Russian threat actors and is a member of the pro-Russia hacker group Killnet.

Alastair MacGibbon, CyberCX’s chief strategy officer, told Guardian Australia that Anonymous Sudan’s generally low-level targets and the fact it was presenting itself as an Islamic group indicated a Russian-backed organisation that could be trying to “drive division in society” and disrupt the west.

“It really stems from the Russian government proclivities to drive division in society,” he said.

“They don’t really care about the issue ... anti-racism, pro-environment or whatever – [they] just get into whatever it is that matters to [harm] targets. In this case, the west.”

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MacGibbon said there appeared to be a growing pattern in the spate of cyber-attacks from Russian-linked hacker groups against Australia.

The [Optus](#) and [Medibank attacks](#) last year were “less monetisable forms of attack”, he said, with the groups threatening to post the data online rather than locking up systems in ransomware attacks.

“There has to be a link to other forms of monetisation, potentially a state or some form of direction coming from the state that says ‘go and cause fear, uncertainty and doubt’,” he said.

Anonymous Sudan’s Telegram channel has grown to more 60,000 followers since launching.

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