



# The Guardian

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## 2021.04.25 - Opinion

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## OpinionPop and rock

# Thanks, Jim Steinman and Les McKeown, for reminding us that the best pop is pure fantasy

Barbara Ellen



Both spoke to the inner drama queen we all possess



‘Tartan keeper of the true teen spirit’: Les McKeown, second left, with the Bay City Rollers, April 1975. Photograph: Getty Images

‘Tartan keeper of the true teen spirit’: Les McKeown, second left, with the Bay City Rollers, April 1975. Photograph: Getty Images

Sat 24 Apr 2021 13.00 EDT

Aw, no, Jim Steinman and Les McKeown gone in the same week! Steinman, 73, composer extraordinaire of Meat Loaf’s *Bat Out of Hell*, had deep roots in musical theatre and the dark blood of rock’n’roll bombast squirting through his veins. McKeown, 65, singer with 1970s phenomenon the Bay City Rollers, was the strutting, half-mast trousered tartan keeper of the true teen spirit.

While obviously very different, [Steinman](#) and [McKeown](#) had at least one thing in common – they wound up the purists, the *très sérieux* musos, something rotten. Even as tributes poured in, there were those who couldn’t resist pointing out they weren’t fans. Variations of “I didn’t care for the music, but...”. What provokes this sort of mealy-mouthed nonsense? As if affection for particular artists must be carefully rationed if they’re not deemed to be of cultural value.



‘Couldn’t care less about subtlety’: Jim Steinman in 1981. Photograph: Terry Lott/Sony Music Archive/Getty Images

In truth, *Bat Out of Hell* continues to be a monster seller for all the best reasons. If the title track doesn’t make you want to ride a motorbike along a cliff top with your hair on fire, nothing will.

The same is true of other Steinman hits: Total Eclipse of the Heart (an invitation to cling on to Bonnie Tyler’s tonsils for dear life during an emotional tsunami) and Dead Ringer for Love (tremble as Meat Loaf and Cher flirt at full scream). It wasn’t that subtlety was beyond Steinman – it was more that he couldn’t care less. You got the impression that if a volcano erupted in his back garden, he’d moan that there wasn’t enough lava.

The Rollers, for their part, had a story dark enough to make you weep, but still, undeniably, they did it, didn’t they? For a flash, they were global sensations, the band to beat. And while boys rejected the Rollers, this was also about girls ruthlessly rejecting the boys, specifically, the musical tastes that males deemed acceptable. “No!” screamed the girls of the 1970s. “We don’t want your ‘serious’ music; we want young Scottish blokes stomping about in crazy trousers, showing off their belly buttons.” It says something that Rollers songs (Bye Bye Baby, [Shang-a-Lang](#)) have remained earworms for decades – something beyond many serious artists.



Perhaps, in their different ways, both Steinman and the Rollers proved the same thing: that even if things erupt into ridiculousness, does it matter? Music is an art form deserving of serious critical scrutiny, but it needs light (fizz, swagger, epic silliness) as much as it needs shade. Who gets to dictate what's daft or overblown anyway? Steinman, in particular, understood that supposedly ordinary lives are full of drama. And supposedly ordinary people harbour inner drama queens.

And that, in many ways, this is the best of us and we will always want and need to access it. So thank you (with no caveat) for the music, gentlemen. And, just as importantly, thank you for the drama.

## **The pandemic has really hurt students – give them a break**



The way it was: students at the University of East Anglia. Photograph: Imagedoc/Alamy Stock Photo

Who could blame university students for wanting clarity and fairness when it comes to Covid tuition fee refunds and appeals? A group of 20 student unions, including the National Union of Students, has contacted the Competition and Markets Authority to demand [clearer refund/appeal](#)

[guidelines](#). At present, the students and unions argue, the processes are so complex that they seem designed to put people off trying.

There's a feeling among complainants that full fees haven't been justified by online/blended learning during the pandemic. They feel they've lost out regarding tuition, campus facilities and accommodation. Which all sounds reasonable. Parents I speak to who've had children at university during the crisis paint very bleak pictures, with some experiences stretching over two academic years. Obviously the entire country has been dealing with a pandemic, but students are still entitled to point out that sitting in their rooms doing online tutorials doesn't resemble a "university experience" worth paying full whack for. All this can't just be filed under "Yes, but the pandemic..." or "That's life". They are only asking for applications for compensation to be dealt with and for clear guidance on how to proceed.

No one wishes to attack the efforts of universities, or higher education generally. I'm sure many pains have been taken to provide the best service possible in the unprecedented circumstances. However, is it fair for students to bear the brunt and, if they complain, to be portrayed as whingeing brats who just need some Blitz spirit? Student debt is a huge financial burden that can affect graduate lives for years – the expense needs to be worth it.

Pandemic students have already missed out on a key stage of socio-educational development, one that can never be "refunded". If they don't feel they should pay in full for a university experience they haven't had, they should not struggle to be heard.

**For those of us with good taste, Marmite is the elixir of life**





Food of the gods: Marmite on toast. Photograph: Simon Dack/Alamy

The world is divided into people who like Marmite and people whose taste buds have rotted away, leaving only tiny blackened portals leading straight to hell.

Who'd ever have thought that the pandemic might pose an existential threat to Marmite? Last year, there were the [first stirrings](#) of a Marmite supply crisis. As the hospitality industry closed, beer production went down, meaning a reduction in yeast production, leading to limited supplies of Marmite. We stood firm and didn't panic. That much.

Now Marmite stocks are so low that [supermarkets are running out](#). There's online talk of poignantly empty shelves. People have resorted to using (whisper it) [Vegemite](#). The desperate fools. No amount of toast and butter is going to make that devil paste taste like anything but parboiled Tarmac.

We've all been through so much and this could be the final insult to our essential humanity. People need Marmite to eat and to cook with. There haven't been Marmite marches or Marmite riots yet, but don't rule them out. Even now, some of us are hunting out our summery Crocs, so that we can be comfy while we make our voices heard.

So, never mind Boris Johnson's pandemic bounce in popularity – that will soon disappear if British citizens can't get their hands on a jar of Marmite.

Barbara Ellen is an Observer columnist

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## Opinion Super League

# The Observer view on the collapse of the Super League

## Observer editorial

As long as fans want owners with deep pockets, football will never be a level playing field



Manchester United fans protest against the club's owners after the failed launch of a European Super League. Photograph: Carl Recine/Action Images/Reuters

Manchester United fans protest against the club's owners after the failed launch of a European Super League. Photograph: Carl Recine/Action Images/Reuters

Sun 25 Apr 2021 01.15 EDT

The past seven days have been claimed as a heartwarming victory for the egalitarian instincts of [football “fan power”](#). It was only last Sunday that the owners of the self-styled “big six” of the English game announced that they

were removing themselves into a different sporting sphere, one in which they could, in perpetuity, admire their collective Bigness, alongside a handful of equally Massive continental peers – and in which the traditional footballing virtues of failure, relegation, despair and near-bankruptcy would no longer be options. What followed was like a rewrite of the Craig David song; the Super League “founders” were pilloried on Monday, panicking on Tuesday, capitulating on Wednesday and distantly contrite by Friday. “Seismic” is the word that pundits reached for to describe the original announcement, but in the end the break-away bid hardly rattled the crockery.

[Super League shows why the deliberate ‘stupidising’ of sport must be resisted](#) | [Barney Ronay](#)

[Read more](#)

Certainly, the fans protesting outside Stamford Bridge and Anfield early in the week, and swamping social media with genuine hurt and outrage at the proposals, were a crucial factor in that humiliating climbdown. Those protests were amplified to [great effect by ex-players](#) who understood the fatal threat to European football’s “pyramid”, which allows any club to at least dream of one day reaching the pinnacle. The common rallying cry of those protests, which gave a common purpose to football fans of all stripes, was that the offshore owners of clubs “don’t understand our game” and that “they don’t listen to the ordinary fan in the street”. While the former claim might certainly be true, it is a little harder to make the case for the latter proposition. If the overwhelming voice of Premier League football fans was in fact for greater competitive fairness, then the owners of the clubs might be forgiven for it having passed them by. Listen to any football phone-in or read any fan site and supporters are demanding not checks and balances but medieval beneficence, the drama of extreme inequality. They want their oligarch or oil sheikh to spend, and spend big time, and then when that doesn’t work, to spend some more. Arsenal fans are far from alone in [loudly bemoaning](#) the reluctance of their majority shareholder, Stan Kroenke, to “put his hands in his pockets so we can compete”. Any efforts of the footballing authority Uefa to impose “financial fair play” have been limp and ill-conceived. The result has been predictable.

There are within the Premier League – not least among the “big six” – strong examples of the positive impact that clubs can make on their cities and

communities, but it is also true that the final standings of any recent season correspond fairly exactly with the respective individual wealth of the plutocrats in charge. Fans of the rags-to-riches stories point to the title triumph of [Leicester City](#) as a prime example of footballing romance (perhaps forgetting that the Srivaddhanaprabha family that owns the club is worth £4.6bn). Claims might be made that a greater outlier was Liverpool FC, which managed to become champions with an owner worth “only” half that amount and a 10th of its rival, Manchester City.

Among the myths that have been exposed by the Super League debacle is that such excessively wealthy individuals love free and fair competition; rather, billionaires never see a market that they don’t want to manipulate. By trying to de-risk their investments the owners were only doing what comes naturally. Their mistake was to misunderstand that, while [Premier League](#) fans may routinely demand that sporting success be bought, they don’t want ever quite to acknowledge that fact. Talk of level playing fields last week was no doubt sincerely felt – and perhaps the first stirrings of a new consensus – but come summer there will still be calls to splash £100m on a new striker.

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## [Opinion](#)**Boris Johnson**

# The Observer view on Boris Johnson's fitness for office

## [Observer editorial](#)

Weak and dishonourable, the prime minister fails the Nolan test of public life and brings further disgrace on the government



Boris Johnson pictured with former special adviser Dominic Cummings in 2019. Photograph: Peter MacDiarmid/REX/Shutterstock

Boris Johnson pictured with former special adviser Dominic Cummings in 2019. Photograph: Peter MacDiarmid/REX/Shutterstock

Sun 25 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

Integrity is one of the [seven principles of public life](#), alongside selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Enunciated by Lord Nolan in 1995, they set out the ethical standards to which all those who work in the public sector should adhere. It would be fair to expect the prime minister, the most senior public office holder in the land, to set an example



for other public servants. But with every week he is in No 10, it becomes clearer that Boris Johnson – a [“vacuum of integrity”](#), according to former attorney general Dominic Grieve – is a man who comprehensively fails the Nolan test and who brings the office of prime minister into utter disrepute.

[‘Mad and totally unethical’: Dominic Cummings hits out at Boris Johnson](#)  
[Read more](#)

On Friday, Dominic Cummings published a blog that set out some extraordinary charges against his former boss. Cummings himself is a man of questionable integrity, as highlighted by the dishonest campaign he ran in favour of Brexit, but he was Johnson’s most senior adviser during a critical period of national emergency and his claims must be thoroughly investigated. There are two main claims, either of which if true should be sufficient to spell the end of Johnson as prime minister. First, Cummings alleges that Johnson tried to put a stop to a government [inquiry](#) that he himself had ordered into who leaked the cabinet decision to impose a second national lockdown last November before an official announcement. This was a highly damaging leak that resulted in a media frenzy and confused public health communications at a time when people’s lives depended on receiving clear and reliable information from the government. Cummings claims that Johnson wanted to call off the inquiry because he feared it would expose a close friend of his fiancée as the source.

Second, Cummings says that the prime minister sought to get donors to pay for £58,000 of renovations to his Downing Street flat in plans that were “unethical, foolish, possibly illegal and almost certainly broke the rules on proper disclosure of political donations”. Like all prime ministers, Johnson has a £30,000 annual allowance for the upkeep and refurbishment of his official residence under government rules, but it seems this generous allowance was not enough. Johnson has since stated that he has [personally met](#) the cost of the redecoration. But the Tory party is under investigation by the Electoral Commission over whether a donation it received to help pay the bill was appropriately declared.

That these serious allegations are entirely plausible speaks volumes about just how weak and dishonourable Johnson has already revealed himself to be. There have been questions about his integrity for as long as he has held

public office. As mayor of London, he failed to declare personal interests, including the fact that a woman he appointed as an adviser was the mother of one of his children, and his personal relationship with [Jennifer Arcuri](#), whose company received thousands of pounds of public money over a four-year period. With Cummings, he led the Vote Leave campaign, which misled voters that leaving the EU would mean an extra £350m a week for the NHS, a claim the UK Statistics Authority declared a “[clear misuse of official statistics](#)” – and lied that a vote to remain in the EU was a vote for a border with [Iraq and Syria](#). The campaign itself was found guilty of [breaking electoral law](#).

Since becoming prime minister, Johnson has continued to behave disgracefully. When democratically elected MPs would not pass his flawed Brexit deal, he shut down parliament in a move the supreme court later declared was [unlawful](#). Not only has he shown a total lack of concern for the union during his premiership, prioritising the right of his party’s desire for a hard Brexit over the national interest, he has failed to show due regard for the fragile situation in Northern Ireland. He [lied](#) about the consequences of his deal for border arrangements for Northern Ireland and has been [far too slow](#) to respond to rising tensions there. In a sign that he considers loyalty more important than integrity or decency, he failed to sack Priti Patel, who was found to have breached the ministerial code by [bullying civil servants](#). His government has been beset by scandal in relation to the awarding of government contracts to [people with ministerial contacts](#) during a pandemic.

All this is profoundly depressing but entirely in keeping with Johnson’s character. This is the man who did not decide whether to back remaining or leaving the EU until it was clear which would be better to further his own political career. Brexit has unleashed a broader governing crisis on the country; to achieve it in the way he wanted, Johnson purged the Conservative party of the integrity, experience and competence of people such as Grieve, leaving a cabinet of amateurish ministers such as Patel, Gavin Williamson and Robert Jenrick. During a national emergency, in which well over 100,000 people have lost their lives, we have a government consumed with sowing division and picking culture wars to distract from its incompetence and channelling public funds to areas of the country based on [political expediency](#) rather than levels of need.

Johnson's premiership embodies perfectly what happens when you get government by people who are motivated not by public service or the national interest but who instead see politics as a power trip that will eventually pave the way for lucrative financial gain. The lack of vision, integrity and principle leaves a vacuum that gets filled with petty infighting, briefing and counter-briefing and obsessing about whether the furnishing of official residences caters to personal tastes. The *Observer* has [called for](#) significant tightening of rules around political lobbying and a strengthening of the ministerial code, but the sad truth is no set of rules in the world can inject integrity, selflessness and leadership into the character of a man who has none.

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Opinion**Boris Johnson**

# **Tories are wrong to think that they will never face a day of reckoning for sleaze**

Andrew Rawnsley



Dominic Cummings is dangerous to Number 10 because few have had a better perch for observing the way the PM behaves when he thinks the world can't see what he's up to



‘The PM is a serial sleaze, a habitual liar and a relentless rule-breaker who knows ethics only as a county to the east of London.’ Photograph: Reuters

‘The PM is a serial sleaze, a habitual liar and a relentless rule-breaker who knows ethics only as a county to the east of London.’ Photograph: Reuters

Sun 25 Apr 2021 02.45 EDT

Dominic Cummings offering a [lecture on integrity](#) in government is like a cannibal telling you how to be a good vegan. When his subject matter is Boris Johnson, it is nevertheless worth paying attention. Few possess a more detailed map of where the prime minister’s skeletons are secreted than the man who was once his most senior aide. Few have had a better perch for observing the way Mr Johnson behaves when he thinks the world can’t see what he is up to.

[No 10 refurb row: Grieve calls Boris Johnson ‘vacuum of integrity’](#)  
[Read more](#)

The blog posted by Mr Cummings on Friday night was an incendiary counterblast provoked by Number 10’s claims that he had been behind leaks embarrassing to the Tory leader. This is revenge served spicy hot. Of the stink bombs he has thrown through Number 10’s letterbox, the accusation most likely to cut through to the typical voter is that Mr Johnson hatched a

plan to have Tory donors secretly pay for the renovation of the Downing Street flat, which was “unethical, foolish, possibly illegal and almost certainly broke the rules on proper disclosure of political donations”.

The allegation that will most horrify Whitehall is that the prime minister sought to impede an official inquiry into a leak about lockdown timing that compromised the response to the pandemic. According to Mr Cummings, Mr Johnson wanted that inquiry shut down because the finger of suspicion was pointing at one of his fiancée’s close friends. [His final shot is](#) the faux-lachrymose remark: “It is sad to see the PM and his office fall so below the standards of competence and integrity the country deserves.” I cannot recall a previous example of a former senior aide turning so savagely on the prime minister he used to work with.

Apologists for Mr Johnson are saying that this is bile from a bitter and twisted man who lost a power struggle within Number 10 at the end of last year. That can be true while also being true that what he says about his erstwhile boon companion in the Brexit campaign and Downing Street is correct. It is scarcely novel, the accusation that the PM is a serial sleaze, a habitual liar and a relentless rule-breaker who knows ethics only as a county to the east of London. But the charge gains significant force in coming from a witness who was his most senior aide for 16 months and claims to have more to expose and detailed records to back up his allegations.

This capped a week that began with the release of WhatsApp exchanges between the prime minister and Sir James Dyson in which Mr Johnson [promised to “fix”](#) a tax issue for the Brexit-supporting [vacuum cleaner salesman](#). Rather than confess to any regret about this revelation that you can directly negotiate tax policy with the head of government if you are a billionaire fortunate enough to possess the prime minister’s phone number, Mr Johnson declares that he will make “[absolutely no apologies](#)” for agreeing a tax waiver to engage Sir James’s company in the project to build more hospital ventilators. This anything-goes-in-an-emergency defence may sound familiar because it is not the first time it has been deployed as a shield against charges of special favours for friends of the prime minister and his party. That alibi was also used when we found out that a hefty chunk of lucrative Covid-related contracts ended up in the hands of chums of Tory ministers, MPs and peers who were granted access to a “VIP lane”.



An investigation by the National Audit Office found that bids using this privileged priority channel, which I have previously dubbed [the crony express](#), were [10 times likelier to win](#) business. Safeguards against abuse were relaxed and more than £10bn of contracts were awarded without competitive tender. The respected monitoring group, Transparency International, has just published an analysis that concludes that one in five of the Covid contracts signed between February and November 2020 raised one or more [red flags](#) for potential corruption.

The identity of many of the beneficiaries remains hidden because the government refuses to name the companies that received a great deal of public money, which is an eccentric way to behave if there is nothing to hide. As in the Dyson case, the suspension of the normal rules has been repeatedly justified by ministers on the grounds that the pandemic created an urgent need to secure critical equipment. Yet we are now learning that the “VIP lane” had the opposite effect. It didn’t lubricate the swift delivery of vital supplies – it gummed up the pipeline. Evidence in a case brought by the Good Law Project being heard in the high court has turned up an email from an official on the team tasked with sourcing protective equipment. The unnamed civil servant complains that officials were “[drowning in VIP requests](#) and high priority contacts” that “do not hold the right certification or do not pass due diligence”. Far from expediting the supply of desperately needed equipment, the reserved lane for Tory mates undermined that life-or-death endeavour.

Labour is hammering the theme of “Tory sleaze” in the hope of making it ring in the ears of the voters, but there is a view that this will not damage the government as much as it ought to. The argument goes that Mr Johnson won’t be much hurt because an expectation that he will behave badly is already “in the price”. Those who voted to confirm him as prime minister in 2019 knew that they were electing a rogue, not a saint. I hear this view expressed both by blase Tory MPs, who blithely think that their leader is lacquered with a Teflon coating that makes him invulnerable to any scandal, however appalling. I also hear it from some Labour MPs who despair, in the words of one, “however hard we throw it, nothing seems to really stick”.

There is some supporting evidence for this from polling. The Opinium poll we publish today has more people agreeing that the prime minister is mostly

or completely corrupt than thinking him clean and honest, but the [Conservatives](#) nevertheless enjoy a double-digit lead over Labour. This is because context matters. History suggests that voters are generally more tolerant of sleaze when they are feeling good about their own lives and much less forgiving when they are miserable. The intensity of public outrage over the abuse of parliamentary expenses was magnified because that scandal erupted at a time when many voters were suffering the consequences of the financial crisis of 2008 and subsequent recession.

At the moment, the accumulating heap of stories about cronyism and corruption is in a context that is sufficiently favourable to Mr Johnson that a significant chunk of swing voters are either not too exercised or are willing to give him a pass. As more jabs go into more people's arms, he continues to enjoy a lift from the "vaccine bounce". The hope that the country is emerging from its last lockdown is another component of the recent rise in the government's popularity.

This context will change and become more menacing for the government when vaccine euphoria wears off, business and job support schemes are unwound and ministers implement some excruciatingly tough choices about how to pay the bill for the pandemic.

What won't fundamentally alter is the character of Mr Johnson's government. If you've missed the latest sleaze story, don't worry, another one will be along in a minute. As I like to remark from time to time, the personality of institutions is hugely influenced by the example set by the person at the top. When the prime minister is a man with a lifelong contempt for the norms of decent behaviour and a career history of behaving as if he can get away with anything, the government is going to reflect his amoral character. Never forget that Mr Cummings was not sacked when he went for his lockdown-busting excursions around Durham, an example of "one rule for them" that mightily cut through to the public. They only parted company months later when the svengali fell out with the prime minister's fiancée.

A culture of impunity in which unethical behaviour, however outrageous, never goes punished, is pretty much a guarantee of even worse to come in the future. I cannot tell you how the Johnson government will end or when, but it will surely not be a happily ever after. Sleaze may not catch up with

the Tories tomorrow or next week or next month or even next year, but there will be a day of reckoning. To paraphrase Ernest Hemingway, governments become bankrupt in the eyes of the voters gradually, then suddenly.

Andrew Rawnsley is Chief Political Commentator of the Observer

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## [Opinion](#)[Scottish independence](#)

# Ignoring the will of the Scots would be an act worthy of Trump

[Nicola Sturgeon](#)



If there is a majority in the Scottish elections for an independence vote, it has to go ahead



A barber at work in Edinburgh: 'Rethinking how we provide economic security will be one of the biggest legacies of the pandemic.' Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

A barber at work in Edinburgh: 'Rethinking how we provide economic security will be one of the biggest legacies of the pandemic.' Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

Sat 24 Apr 2021 14.30 EDT

The Covid pandemic has required every nation to reimagine its future and how best to recover from the biggest crisis of our times. Most countries have the ability to chart that recovery for themselves, in cooperation with international partners. But instead, imagine this. Imagine a country seeking to recover from Covid, without the ability to control the key economic and social policy levers needed to rebuild, while the bulk of social security powers, tax, employment, borrowing and migration powers are held elsewhere. For good measure, imagine that country was taken out of the EU and the huge European single market against its democratic will.

[Sturgeon warns Johnson: don't use Trump tactics](#)  
[Read more](#)

It is ludicrous to assume any country would contemplate for a single second being put in such a position, yet that is where [Scotland](#) finds itself. We are being told that we must leave the key powers needed to shape our recovery in the hands of a Westminster government, led by Boris Johnson, which we did not elect.

In 10 days' time, I am asking people to re-elect me as first minister to provide the experienced leadership I believe is required for these serious times. And at this election the SNP is putting forward a serious and ambitious plan for government, to kickstart recovery.

Rethinking how we provide economic security will, I believe, be one of the biggest legacies of the pandemic and one of the dominant challenges for governments everywhere. So now is the time to think big and to be pioneers.

Insecure work, one of the scourges of the pandemic, must be tackled and we will use all our current powers to do so. If we are re-elected, we will take the first steps towards what is known as a minimum income guarantee by assessing what would be a minimum acceptable standard of living for people in Scotland and we will make whatever progress we can with existing devolved powers. I welcome the support of the Greens and the Labour party, in Scotland if not at Westminster, for such a move.

But only by fully controlling tax, social security and employment powers will we be able to do more than lay the groundwork or paper over the cracks. We will remain hamstrung when it comes to fully delivering on that guarantee or putting in place a citizens' basic income.

And while we will use the current powers of the Scottish parliament to the max to bring about a more prosperous and fairer country, Westminster is pulling Scotland in the opposite direction. Brexit, Tory austerity, welfare cuts and hostility towards migration will all make recovery harder. The Tories' aim is not to build back better, it is to return to the same damaged system they have presided over for a decade and reshape Scotland in their own rightwing image without the consent of the people who live here.

So the question people face at this election is this: what kind of country do you want to build and where should the decisions about that recovery be



made?

The choice is a stark one. Scotland faces two very different futures. We can decide to take the powers we need to rebuild our economy and society into our own hands, with a future as an independent country, working with our friends in Europe and building a fairer economy. Or we can remain tied to a Westminster system that is dragging us in the wrong direction and which with every day that passes is slipping deeper into a mire of [Tory sleaze](#).

That is why, when the Covid crisis has passed, people in Scotland must have the right to choose to become an independent country.

Tackling the pandemic and getting the recovery underway come first. However, if there is a majority in the Scottish parliament after this election for an independence referendum then Scotland must have the chance to put the recovery into Scotland's hands.

For the UK government to seek to block it would be unsustainable. For it to try to take legal action, as has been suggested, would be asking a court to effectively overturn the result of a free and fair democratic election. That would be an appalling look for any prime minister. More to the point, it didn't work for Donald Trump and it wouldn't work for Boris Johnson.

Scotland's future must, and will, be decided by the people of Scotland.

Nicola Sturgeon is first minister of Scotland and leader of the Scottish National party

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[Observer comment cartoon](#)

[Boris Johnson](#)

# Dominic Cummings returns to haunt Boris Johnson – cartoon

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## [OpinionMuseums](#)

# Enough with the imperial nostalgia and identity politics. Let museums live

[Tristram Hunt](#)

As cultural spaces are set to open again, critics from left and right need to get out of the way



A ‘Hector’ handbag by Thom Browne will feature in one of the V&A’s reopening exhibitions: Bags: Inside Out. Photograph: Tristan Fewings/Getty Images

A ‘Hector’ handbag by Thom Browne will feature in one of the V&A’s reopening exhibitions: Bags: Inside Out. Photograph: Tristan Fewings/Getty Images

Sun 25 Apr 2021 02.30 EDT

The past fortnight of frenzied shopping has led Bernard Donoghue, boss of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, [to ask: “Why is H&M open, but not the V&A?”](#) Or, indeed, massage parlours and gyms, but not the

People's History Museum or Castle Howard. You can watch snooker at the Sheffield Crucible, but still not enjoy the Ruskin Collection at Sheffield Museum. In France, anger at art's long Covid has led to public petitions demanding an end to museum lockdowns and out-of-work actors staging theatre sit-ins.

[Unions fear government wants museums to 'airbrush' UK history](#)  
[Read more](#)

Beyond the understandable frustration, with just three weeks to go until the reopening of museums and galleries, the question is what kind of culture do we want to return to? There are important insights from this year of plague, but we should be deeply wary of an elitist power grab seeking to hold on to thinned-out audiences, fewer popular exhibitions and an end to museums' broader social and educational function. In short, an attempt to strip away all the progressive achievements of the last three decades in transforming the UK's cultural landscape.

Of course, such a broader remit is going to be much harder with the catastrophic collapse in resources. The government has been very generous, but nonetheless museums have closed and more than 4,000 jobs have been lost. At the V&A, a £40m drop in revenue has led to redundancies and a passionate public debate as to how we future-proof the museum: curating our collections of fashion, photography, performance and decorative arts in a more chronological manner, or updating the materials-based departments? We have sought to retain the V&A's unique ethos, while speaking to younger visitors interested in a richer historical context. It has been a turbulent period, made all the more difficult by the doors being closed and the museum community separated from its collections.

Yet if entry to physical sites has been barred by the pandemic, digital access has been transformed. The National Gallery offered online tours of its [Artemisia Gentileschi exhibition](#), the Uffizi Gallery in Florence captured a younger audience by [embracing TikTok](#) and the Frick Collection in New York built a loyal YouTube following through its ["Cocktails with a Curator"](#) soirees. Events that used to garner a few hundred visitors can now attract tens of thousands. Just as importantly, for museums with colonial-era

objects, being able to share our collections more widely with new audiences across the global south has been profoundly important.

Museums and galleries serve as storehouses of ideas for artists, hoping to spark the imagination and ingenuity

But the last year of unrelenting screen time has also exposed the cultural jeopardy of digital dominance. The more we understand about clickbait-driven content, the addictive allure of social media and the hidden hand of the algorithm, the more obvious is the connection to growing ideological division and sociopolitical groupthink. Online search engines have reinforced certainty, prejudice and chauvinism. Predictive capitalism based around the motto “if you like this, you’ll like that” has allowed big tech to narrow the boundaries of creative thinking and has served to make the attributes of museums – public interaction, scholarship, diversity, learning – more compelling.

I sense a keen desire to reconnect with the authentic and the physical. The lockdown success of *The Great Pottery Throw Down*, *The Great British Sewing Bee* and *The Repair Shop* has revealed the huge public enthusiasm for designing and craft. [Museums](#) and galleries serve as storehouses of ideas for artists, hoping to spark the imagination and ingenuity of contemporary makers. For simply nothing beats seeing in the flesh a Bernini sculpture, Lucian Freud etching, Wedgwood vase or Eileen Grey chair: to sense the materiality, watch the play of light, have some intimate feel for the presence of human endeavour.

TikTok at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence

What museums also offer is serendipity. Rather than Netflix telling you what to watch next, the joy of a museum is the mix of traditions, styles and materials. With that comes challenge and difference and uncertainty, all so important for the intellectual resilience of a healthy civil society. Against a worrying drumbeat of nationalism and populism, museums and galleries celebrate multiculturalism, exchange and cosmopolitanism. You only have to read Edmund de Waal’s wonderful new book, *Letters to Camondo*, exploring the history of a Jewish, Parisian family of collectors – “the

Rothschilds of the East” – who founded the Musée Nissim de Camondo and were then butchered by the Nazis, to understand the significance of cultural collections and archives in the face of political extremism.

We are not in the 1930s, but through scholarship and exhibitions museums today have a role in transcending our brittle culture wars of identity politics and imperial nostalgia. On the one hand, we have some conservative thinkers misapplying the government’s “retain and explain” policy on public statuary to museum collections, which should always be open to change, to argue against any bust being sent to the stores. Our very purpose is to see how artefacts can be reinterpreted and redisplayed for new generations in new ways. Equally vocally, there are leftwing activists determined to dismantle public collections as part of a political reckoning with patriarchy, racial inequity and social injustice. Indeed, one Oxford don has recently decried museums as places “of extreme violence and cultural destruction, indexes of mass atrocity and iconoclasm and ongoing degradation” that should be taken apart with “a pickaxe or a jack hammer”.

Our museums have never been more open, democratic, popular and attractive

Less histrionic, but more insidious is an elite, connoisseurly desire to hold on to the empty galleries and absent school parties. In the *Art Newspaper*, the [critic Blake Gopnik has argued](#) for no return “to the thoughtless crowding of pre-Covid culture” and urged keeping “the gloriously peaceful conditions” of the plague year. From the Hepworth Wakefield to V&A Dundee, from blockbuster Hockney exhibitions to Tate Artists Rooms, our museums have never been more open, democratic, popular and attractive. They have helped regenerate towns, transform art education and play a crucial part in nurturing the UK’s creative industry and tourism market. As the veteran exhibition designer Dinah Casson has rightly written: “The transformation of museums from the ‘dreary, dusty places’ they used to be to places that people want to be in, alongside objects they want to be near and ideas they want to understand and then share, has been extraordinary.”

So, at the V&A, we can’t wait to welcome the public back. We are reopening with three exhibitions – on [Epic Iran](#); [Alice in Wonderland](#); and



[Bags: Inside Out](#) – and are keen to welcome as many visitors as social distancing allows. The culture we need back in our lives is inspiring, beautiful, unexpected and, above all, like Primark and Wembley Stadium, open.

Tristram Hunt is director of the Victoria & Albert Museum

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## OpinionMalaria

# New vaccine success for Oxford is truly remarkable

[Kenan Malik](#)



Malaria has still not been eradicated in the poorest countries, but that could be about to change



A doctor tests a child for malaria in Arusha, Tanzania. Photograph: Katy Migiro/Reuters

A doctor tests a child for malaria in Arusha, Tanzania. Photograph: Katy Migiro/Reuters

Sun 25 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

Another vaccine from Oxford's Jenner Institute and one that may have a greater impact than that against Covid-19. Results from trials of its [malaria vaccine, R21](#), show it to be 77% effective. If replicated in larger scale trials, it would be a remarkable breakthrough. Malaria kills more than [400,000 people](#) a year, almost all in sub-Saharan Africa, and mainly children. Until now, the only approved anti-malarial vaccine, Mosquirix, has had a low level of efficacy – among young children it reduced cases by 39%; in infants, says the World Health Organization, it “[did not work](#) sufficiently well to justify its further use”.

This is what makes the new vaccine so exciting, raising the possibility of reducing deaths to the “[tens of thousands](#)”. The reason for slow progress in eradicating malaria is partly technical. The parasite that causes the disease, of which there are five kinds, passes through several life stages, making it more difficult to target with a vaccine.

Even without vaccines, one can eliminate the disease. A century ago, malaria was endemic in parts of America. In the 1930s, Washington launched an eradication programme, draining mosquito breeding areas and improving health services. By 1950, it had [almost disappeared](#). In 1955, WHO launched a global anti-malaria programme, but excluded sub-Saharan Africa for logistical reasons. It was highly successful in Europe, parts of Asia and the Americas but was suspended in 1969 because of drug and insecticide resistance and funding shortages.

As with many diseases of poor countries, the problem lies with a lack of resources and political will. That is why the new vaccine carries with it so much hope. Something to celebrate on [World Malaria Day](#).

Kenan Malik is an Observer columnist

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[Names in the news](#) Jane Austen

## Is the row about Jane Austen anything more than a storm in a teacup?

[Rebecca Nicholson](#)



Yet another UK historical institution has to defend talking about history



A portrait of Jane Austen. Photograph: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy

A portrait of Jane Austen. Photograph: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy

Sat 24 Apr 2021 13.14 EDT

There is an old meme of a wonky coat hook, its “fists” raised, with the caption “drunk octopus wants to fight” and, increasingly, when I read yet another story in which historical institutions are attacked for talking about history, this is the image that comes to mind. Put ’em up, facts. Let’s take this outside.

After Richard Deverell, the head of Kew Gardens, had to [fend off critics](#) accusing him of “preposterous posturing” for acknowledging Kew’s roots in colonialism and changing display boards to give more information on the history of its collections, and after the head of the National Trust, Hilary McGrady, [had to defend](#) what she called “telling really interesting stories about our properties”, which includes information about how the slave trade funded the building of some of those properties, now Jane Austen’s House Museum in Hampshire has been forced to issue a [statement](#) explaining that its plans to “refresh the displays and decorations” did not amount to “woke madness” or even “revisionism”, of which it had been accused.



“We will not, and have never had any intention to, interrogate [Jane Austen](#), her characters or her readers for drinking tea,” the museum said, in a statement that sounded more baffled than exasperated.

In the words of Cher Horowitz from the film *Clueless* – Emma, as imagined by 1990s Hollywood – “Ugh. As if!” *As if* the problem is historical accuracy concerning the time in which Austen, an author about whom very little is actually known, lived and wrote. *As if* providing more information about an era, information that, as Jane Austen’s House wearily pointed out, already exists in the public domain and has not been dredged up with the specific intention of “cancelling” Austen, is anything other than adding another layer to another “really interesting story”. *As if* anyone wants to cancel Jane Austen, as if the intentions behind this are anything other than cynical and deliberately obtuse. As if, as if, as if.

In other Austen news, [Netflix has announced](#) an adaptation of *Persuasion*, starring Dakota Johnson, and directed by Carrie Cracknell, who is moving from theatre directing to her feature film debut. There is another *Persuasion* in the works, starring *Succession*’s Sarah Snook, and this is a good time to argue that, while it may not be the flashiest Austen novel, *Persuasion* is the best. If you don’t agree, then drunken octopus will fight you. Put ’em up. Let’s take this outside.

**Annie Mac: the life and soul of her Radio 1 party**



Annie Mac: ‘a friend with really good taste in music’. Photograph: c/o Radio 1

Even now, after decades of listening to it, line-up changes at Radio 1 leave me feeling a little unsettled, in the same way that I do when a favoured brand of chocolate tweaks its recipe or a faithful moisturiser is discontinued.

But I felt genuine surprise when Annie Mac announced that she would be [leaving Radio 1](#) in September after 17 years. She said that with her debut novel out soon she wanted more time to write fiction, make podcasts and see her children. “I also love the idea of leaving the party (and make no mistake, working at Radio 1 does feel like a party) with a huge smile on my face, while I’m still having the most fun I can,” she added.

It has been [noted by many](#) that radio has been a perfect medium during the tougher months of this pandemic, that its blend of familiarity and intimacy has been particularly comforting during uncomfortable times.

Throughout her tenure at Radio 1, Mac captured that sense that you were listening to a friend with really good taste in music, giving recommendations you could trust, as if you knew her. (That easy intimacy forms the backbone of her podcast, [Changes](#), which memorably gave [Kelis](#) the opportunity to air

her thoughts on men running the world – worth a listen, if you haven’t heard it already.)

Mac also resisted genre snobbery, while the eclecticism of her playlists was magical. Clara Amfo will take over her *Future Sounds* show, an excellent choice, but I have loved being at Annie Mac’s party. It always felt like everyone was invited.

## Tom Kerridge: a veggie fish finger, please



Marcus Rashford and Tom Kerridge: cooking up a storm. Photograph: Gemma Bell and Company/PA

Marcus Rashford’s inspirational fight against child hunger and food poverty continues apace, as the footballer teams up with chef Tom Kerridge to launch [@FullTimeMeals](#) on Instagram.

The weekly videos will offer recipes and cooking tutorials aimed at helping families make easy and “pocket-friendly” meals. One will be the ultimate fish finger sandwich, a coup for the humble fish finger’s PR, which may have taken a, ahem, battering after the Netflix anti-fish film [Seaspiracy](#). As a vegetarian who likes the taste of meat, fish fingers are the one food I miss.

You can get decent sausage and bacon substitutes, but there is no good non-fish fish finger and I have tried many.

The risk is that these kinds of initiatives might come across as preachy and therefore ineffective, but this feels different. It is coming from experience – Rashford and Kerridge spent last week talking about how their teenage years informed the idea of teaching people to cook without gadgets or expensive ingredients, and without feeling too intimidated to begin, because everyone has to start somewhere. If they've got any ideas for a veggie fish finger, I'm all ears.

Rebecca Nicholson is an Observer columnist

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## Observer lettersConservatives

# Letters: not governing but ‘getting away with it’

Tory sleaze is the logical extension of business practices where everyone is ‘at it’



Labour activists highlight Tory sleaze and cronyism outside Downing Street, London. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Labour activists highlight Tory sleaze and cronyism outside Downing Street, London. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Sun 25 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

Bernard Jenkin spectacularly misses the point: “There is nothing wrong with a private citizen wanting to make money” is simply not true until you add the word “fairly” or “honestly” (“[The line between public service and private gain is shamefully blurred](#)”, Comment). We applaud and aspire to honest endeavour, invention, flexibility, hard work and a genuine commitment to customers’ and employees’ wellbeing, but you can’t say

there is nothing wrong with wanting to make money by cheating people or selling them goods that we know will hurt them or simply offer very little for a high price.

Businesses can be a force for good, but without fairness, truthfulness and respect for the common good, making money becomes an exercise in what you can get away with and it is logical for those who manage to get away with it to influence politics to further this. That creates a vicious circle where to survive everyone has to be “at it”. It’s an old story, but urgently relevant as new technology and globalisation allow businesses to do more things, more easily and quickly, less obviously and with less accountability.

It’s no surprise to see the level of “shameful blurring” emerging around this government. It has put aside prudence, honesty and respect for the common good in favour of factional projects and schemes, pushed through by getting away with whatever it can. Until politicians and voters make government work for the benefit of all the people, the public sector is a vast, lucrative and low-risk arena to be exploited.

**Christopher Curtis**

Blackfield, Southampton

## **The secret’s out**

How lovely to have a favourite chef talk about his favourite ingredient, which is also mine, and thus find somewhere else to get it (“[My secret ingredient](#)”, Observer Food Monthly). I discovered colatura di alici while holidaying near Amalfi, in the far-off days when such a thing was normal and have been raving about it since. Thank you, Jeremy Lee.

**Judith Witts**

Edinburgh

## **Byron’s bounty**

Readers may be interested to know how Lord Byron, a lavish spender in his youth who had been hugely in debt, could afford to give the Greek government a cheque for £4,000 (£332,000 today) in 1823 (“[Revealed: Byron’s £4,000 cheque that helped create modern Greece](#)”, News).



The main reason was that in 1818 he had sold his ancestral estate, Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire, for £94,000 (£5m today). From then, he became much more careful with his money, welcoming the opportunity to support liberal causes such as the Italian Carbonari (freedom fighters) and the Greeks in their struggle with the Ottomans. This payment was, nevertheless, a huge act of commitment and generosity which, as Professor Roderick Beaton says, changed the course of the Greek war of independence for good.

**Geoffrey Bond**

Southwell, Nottinghamshire

## **Labour's lack of ambition**

William Keegan writes that “the dissatisfaction with Labour at [local] level is the result of reductions in local authority expenditure prompted by savage cuts in a Conservative government’s grants” (“[Johnson will not stumble until Labour tackles him on Brexit](#)”, Business). Nearly right. The dissatisfaction is with Labour’s willingness to accept these cuts without any effort to mobilise effective opposition. Accepting responsibility for Tory policies seems to be the height of ambition for so much of today’s Labour party.

**Mary Pimm and Nik Wood**

London E9

## **A frail old woman, all alone**

I’m not sure there’s any bleaker image than that of an old woman, sitting alone and with nobody to support her, at the funeral of her husband of 73 years (“[Queen alone with her thoughts as Duke is laid to rest](#)”, News). After a year of stories about press intrusion, the palace allowed cameras inside a private family service. As a consequence, one of the defining images of her rule will be a frail old woman, cut off from everyone including her own family.

**Dan Thompson**

Margate, Kent

## **Sex and the law**

Rowan and Felix Moore's article misrepresents me and my employment discrimination claim, while in turn accusing JK Rowling of misrepresentation ("[Being trans is not something you put on and take off](#)", New Review).

When Rowling wrote about me on Twitter and in her essay she was quite accurate. Her intervention changed the wider debate, and I am grateful she spoke up for me, but it also triggered a smear campaign against me. The piece claims "the basis" of an employment tribunal judgment was that "Forstater aggressively denied the identities of people with whom she might have to work". In truth, I have always been polite to colleagues, have not denied anyone's identity and am certainly not aggressive. I simply do not believe that it is possible to change sex. Clear language about the sexes is particularly important in relation to healthcare, sex and reproduction, women's rights, women's services and sports, gay and lesbian rights and child safeguarding.

I lost my job because my employer considered this "transphobic". I asked the judge to rule on whether a philosophical belief that sex is determined by biology is protected in law. Shockingly, he said it wasn't. The appeal starts on Tuesday. I am going back to court to get justice and to create a legal precedent that will prevent bullying and discrimination of others who say that sex matters.

**Maya Forstater**

St Albans, Hertfordshire

## Over and out

When it comes to the lexicon of the Hundred, Jonathan Bouquet is right about "out" but wrong about "batters" ("[May I have a word?](#)"). The former term is the currency of baseball and has no cricketing provenance. The use of "batters", however, has the great merit of applying equally to both sexes, appropriate given that the Hundred will feature male and female competitions. Its first use in cricket predates the game's newest format, being recorded in 1773.

**Mark Catley**

Watford, Hertfordshire

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## [For the record](#) [UK news](#)

# For the record

This week's corrections

Sun 25 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

A statement supplied by the Wellcome Trust quoted director Jeremy Farrar as saying that hundreds of thousands are dying from Covid-19 every day; this should have been “every month” (“[Global death toll passes 3 million as pandemic ‘grows at alarming rate’](#)”, 18 April, page 10).

An article (“[Just how accurate are rapid Covid tests?](#)”, 18 April, the New Review, page 20) said “government data showed that the false positive rate for [lateral flow tests] since 8 March was 18%”. In fact, “false positive rate” refers to the proportion of people who are not infected but get a positive result, which would be 0.1%; we meant to say data showed “the percentage of positive results that are false” was 18%.

We incorrectly said that Centrica chief executive Chris O’Shea’s remuneration package “increased last year by more than £100,000” to £765,000. O’Shea was chief financial officer before becoming CEO in April 2020, with his total package increasing by £15,000 from 2019 to 2020 (“[‘Fire and rehire’ tactics rife at workplaces that are in profit ... and claiming Covid cash](#)”, 18 April, page 15).

The price of the new Tesla Model Y is expected to start at around £45,000, not £24,600, as the panel accompanying an article about electric vehicles said (“[How they compare](#)”, 18 April, page 55).

Coverage of Prince Philip’s funeral said that “the Queen ruled the family would be in mourning dress rather than military uniform”; we meant to say “morning dress” (“[William and Harry put on united front while a global audience watches](#)”, 18 April, page 3).

Other recently amended articles include:

'Being trans is not something you put on and take off. It's part of who you are'

Writers grapple with rules of the imagination

Brexit vote sparked surge in Irish passports issued in Great Britain

Colombia's cartels target Europe with cocaine, corruption and torture

Could Marine Le Pen finally triumph with her third tilt at French presidency?

*Write to the Readers' Editor, the Observer, York Way, London N1 9GU,  
email [observer.readers@observer.co.uk](mailto:observer.readers@observer.co.uk), tel 020 3353 4736*

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[The weekly stats uncovered](#) **Coronavirus**

## Covid, false positives and conditional probabilities...

[David Spiegelhalter](#) & [Anthony Masters](#)

An 18th-century clergyman's legacy is central to understanding the pandemic



The side of a tomb in Bunhill Fields, London, where the Rev Thomas Bayes is buried. Photograph: Graham Turner/The Guardian

The side of a tomb in Bunhill Fields, London, where the Rev Thomas Bayes is buried. Photograph: Graham Turner/The Guardian

Sun 25 Apr 2021 02.15 EDT

[Bunhill Fields](#) burial ground contains the relics of John Bunyan, William Blake and Daniel Defoe. Of import to statisticians is the tomb of the Rev Thomas Bayes, Presbyterian clergyman from Tunbridge Wells, who died 260 years ago. He is famous for his work on conditional [probabilities](#), which



concern the chance of one event occurring, given another event has happened.

Take lateral flow tests. The conditional probability of getting an (incorrect) positive result (call this A), given you are not infected (B), is less than one in 1,000. That rate is very low. [Bayes's theorem](#) shows how to calculate what we really want: the conditional probability you are not infected (B), given you have a positive test (A). In that case, you would be isolating with no benefit. Unintuitively, when the virus is rare and there are very few “true positives”, this probability can be high. Currently in [secondary schools](#), around three in 10 positive lateral flow tests turn out to be false.

In courtrooms, mixing up the probability of “A given B” with “B given A” is known as the “[prosecutor's fallacy](#)”. In 1999, a court convicted Sally Clark of the murder of her two sons, in part because a medical expert claimed the chance of two accidental cot deaths was [one in 73m](#). Even if this number was right – which it isn't – it did not reflect the chance she was innocent. A double murder was also very rare: the relative likelihood of the two explanations was key and with new evidence and better [statistical reasoning](#), an appeal court quashed the conviction.

There was [controversy](#) after a recent *Observer* headline referred to Bayes's theorem as “obscure”. His ideas may be little known by the public, but they are growing among scientists. Many complex analyses done during the pandemic have been “Bayesian”, including [modelling](#) lockdown effects, the [ONS infection survey](#), and [Pfizer-BioNTech's](#) vaccine trial. The term “[credible interval](#)”, rather than “confidence interval”, is the giveaway.

Last week, Cass Business School announced the [renaming](#) of its institution after Bayes and his theorem. The obscure tomb in nearby Bunhill Fields is worth a visit.

David Spiegelhalter is chair of the Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication at Cambridge. Anthony Masters is statistical ambassador for the Royal Statistical Society

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## Headlines thursday 22 april 2021

- [Revealed Residency loophole in Malta's cash-for-passports scheme](#)
- ['Golden passports' The firm that lays on VIP service to colourful list of clients](#)
- [First world war Scandal of unequal commemoration of UK's dead known about 'for years'](#)
- [Exclusive 'Racism' behind failure to honour black and Asian troops who fell serving Britain](#)

# Revealed: residency loophole in Malta's cash-for-passports scheme

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## Malta

# How ‘golden passports’ firm lays on VIP service to colourful list of clients

Files show lengths Henley & Partners goes to in helping wealthy applicants navigate Maltese citizenship scheme

- [Revealed: residency loophole in Maltese passports scheme](#)



Malta’s ‘golden passports’ scheme is one of several run by Henley & Partners around the world. Composite: David Levene/The Guardian, Jeffrey Coolidge/Getty Images, Getty images, Guardian Design Team

Malta’s ‘golden passports’ scheme is one of several run by Henley & Partners around the world. Composite: David Levene/The Guardian, Jeffrey Coolidge/Getty Images, Getty images, Guardian Design Team

[Luke Harding](#) and [David Pegg](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 00.00 EDT

In 2014, the firm [Henley & Partners](#) prepared to welcome an important person to Malta. The client would arrive by private jet, sweep through the airport's ministerial lounge and be taken in a S-class Mercedes to Le Méridien St Julien's, a luxury seafront hotel with a Mediterranean view.

Nothing was too much. The company even sought a private tête-à-tête with Malta's then prime minister, Joseph Muscat. "Is the PM available next week, or would that not be appropriate at this stage?" a manager at the firm wrote in an email, promising the "highest of confidentiality" and a "Rolls-Royce" service.

The special VIP guest wasn't an EU chief or head of state. It was Irina Abramovich, the ex-wife of the Russian billionaire and Chelsea FC owner, [Roman Abramovich](#). Roman Abramovich is also a one-time Kremlin official and a Vladimir Putin ally who served for eight years as [governor of Chukotka](#), a remote territory in Russia's frozen far east.

Irina Abramovich was one of 851 wealthy Russians to seek Maltese citizenship under a controversial programme facilitated by Henley & Partners, according to a leak of the firm's data shared with the Guardian. After due diligence and the transfer of €650,000, plus the rental or purchase of a property in Malta, an EU passport could be obtained in just 12 months.





Roman and Irina Abramovich in 2004. Photograph: Reuters

The “golden passports” scheme is one of several run by Henley from more than 30 offices around the world. It helps to sell citizenship in nine territories: [Malta](#) and [Austria](#) – both EU states – as well as the small Caribbean nations of St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Dominica, St Lucia, and Antigua and Barbuda, plus Turkey and Montenegro.

Clients are the uber-wealthy: high net worth individuals who may want visa-free access to the EU. The mastermind is Henley’s charismatic chairman, Dr Christian Kälin, nicknamed the “[passport king](#)”. A Swiss lawyer, he has transformed Henley from a sleepy firm of wealth advisers into a leading player in a sharp-elbowed \$3bn (£2.3bn) global industry.

Q&A

### **What is the Henley & Partners leak?**

Show

The Henley & Partners data leak consists of files from a firm specialising in helping wealthy clients to buy visas or passports. Investor citizenship, also known as the “golden passports” trade, is legal but highly controversial. The leaked files illustrate how many Maltese investor citizens had little or no significant links to the island where they were naturalised as citizens.

The leak was obtained by the Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, a non-profit organisation, and shared with media partners including the Guardian. The foundation, which was supported on this project by the Investigative Journalism for Europe (IJ4EU) fund, is named after a Maltese investigative journalist killed by a car bomb in 2017. The murder of a journalist in an EU member state precipitated international outrage, and commitments from fellow journalists that they would continue to report on the issues Caruana Galizia had pursued before she died.

In 2013 the Maltese government announced plans to sell passports to wealthy individuals from outside the country. Henley & Partners, which had previously helped to launch a similar programme in the Caribbean nation of

St Kitts and Nevis, helped to design the Maltese scheme. In the years before her death, Caruana Galizia was fiercely critical, publishing multiple revelations about the scheme on her blog.

The information was obtained by the foundation from a whistleblower who first approached Caruana Galizia several years ago. The foundation managed to re-establish contact with the whistleblower following Caruana Galizia's death.

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Kälin's method was ingenious. He approached cash-strapped governments, typically in tiny tropical nations, and offered to set up citizenship-by-investment programmes on their behalf. Henley often designed a scheme. It then typically implemented it and acted as exclusive agent. The firm [raked in a fee](#) from each applicant, earning tens of millions of dollars.

After [winning a contract with St Kitts in 2006](#), Kälin successfully pitched Malta's ruling Labour party. The country's "individual investor programme" (IIP) launched in 2013. It has so far had 2,325 applicants, mostly Russians but also Chinese, Saudis and others.

Rival firms have since been contracted to work as agents on the investor programme, but Henley is understood to control the lion's share of business. It works hand in glove with Malta's government, with ministers contractually obliged to promote the scheme.



Ursula von der Leyen: 'European values are not for sale.' Photograph: Reuters

The EU commission has clashed repeatedly with Malta over the issue of golden passports. It has [begun infringement proceedings](#). As the commission's president, Ursula von der Leyen, put it, "European values are not for sale." She worries that such schemes are attractive to high-risk individuals seeking entry to the EU, or could be exploited by some for tax evasion or money laundering. Most applicants do not have genuine links with the country, the commission argues.

By way of response, Malta has in effect told Brussels to get lost. It says citizenship is the prerogative of individual EU states. Muscat and his cabinet, meanwhile, energetically boosted Henley's scheme at seminars and roadshows – in London, Dubai, Hong Kong and Singapore. Henley says the cash has provided a huge boost to Malta's once indebted economy, bringing in €850m by 2020. It has led to social and healthcare investment and is a win-win, it says.

In order to qualify, Irina Abramovich had to jump through a few hoops. Henley helped her open a local bank account and find a modest seaside apartment in the town of Sliema, north of the capital, Valletta, with a year's

rent paid upfront. The firm liaised with Identity Malta, now known as [Community Malta](#), the government agency that handles passport approvals.

Henley insists it carries out the world's strictest background checks, saying its vetting checks "match or exceed those of adjacent professional services such as law firms and banks." Its files, to an extent, confirm a more proactive approach than the firm's critics might fear. In some cases, clients are turned away on the basis of tax disputes in their home countries, or advised that negative press means the Maltese government is unlikely to approve their application.

Other instances are less clear cut, in part because there may be grey areas. In spring 2014, Abramovich applied for a passport for herself and three family members. She gave a home address in London. Funds for her application came from a 2007 divorce settlement, she said – in other words, from her high-profile ex-husband.

All applicants are asked to declare if they are "politically exposed persons", or PEPs, a status that triggers enhanced vetting. In internal correspondence, Henley acknowledges that, according to its checks, Abramovich is a PEP. On an application form, however, she appears to answer "no" to an "are you a PEP?" question. It's unclear why the discrepancy arose and whether it was remedied, though Henley apparently did not levy a surcharge usual in PEP cases. Abramovich did not respond to requests for comment.

## **Spurious claims**

The leaked documents also reveal the highly artificial nature of the golden passports scheme. They suggest that for many applicants, claims to nationality based on a genuine link to Malta may be largely spurious or superficial.

The documents appear to confirm the EU's suspicions: few seem to have substantial or lasting ties with the country.

In theory, they are meant to be resident for 12 months. But the scheme does not require [them to be "physically present"](#). In other words, they can qualify legally as residents without really living there. Many spend as little time as

possible in Malta. Some rich individuals fly in just twice: once to collect a residency card; the second time to swear an oath of allegiance and to pick up a new EU passport.

The leaked data suggests would-be citizens spend on an average less than three weeks in Malta before securing their passport.

Henley provides advice to applicants on how they can take advantage of the system – scoring points for buying real estate, employing local professionals and chartering a boat, for example. One successful Russian client, [Vadim Vasilyev](#), the former CEO of AS Monaco football club, earned credit by making a charitable donation. During a trip to Malta in 2014 he gave football jerseys to a third division amateur side.



Vadim Vasilyev earned credit by making a charitable donation. Photograph: Franck Fife/AFP via Getty Images

Like all would-be citizens, Vasilyev wrote a letter of intent. “I would like to secure a future for my children in [Europe](#),” Vasilyev declared, adding that he appreciated Malta’s “stable democracy”.

In Monaco, Vasilyev lives in grand style, in an exclusive waterfront development next to the principality’s casino. His Henley-rented property, by contrast, looks like a student bedsit, with a bed plonked in the kitchen.

Henley registered numerous other applicants to the same block in Sliema's Tigne Street.

Vasilyev declined to say whether he had ever visited the apartment. He said concerns over the scheme were “far-fetched”, adding that it took two years and strict due diligence checks before he got a passport. He said he had genuine links with Malta, had set up a company there and had chatted during a meeting with Muscat about football. The PM was a “big” fan, Vasilyev said.

“I do visit the island from time to time,” he added. “The vast majority of applicants are people who have succeeded in their professional life and who would like to enjoy the right to live and work freely in Europe. I have fully complied with the residency requirements as communicated to me by Henley acting on behalf of the government of Malta.”

Another interested Russian, the [billionaire businessman Mikhail Fridman](#), cited in his letter of intent Malta's business climate and agreeable weather – sunnier, he noted, than at his home in the German city of Cologne.

Like Vasilyev, Fridman met Muscat in 2014. These unreported encounters with the prime minister were used, in circular style, to bolster their legitimacy as applicants. Two years after filling in the paperwork – in which he said he was not a PEP – Fridman withdrew his application. Henley lists Fridman as a PEP in its internal emails, [citing World-Check](#), a due diligence database.

Fridman told the Guardian he had a short, formal “courtesy meeting” with Muscat “at the behest of his [Henley] advisers”. The question of his citizenship application was not discussed, he said. He voluntarily dropped out of the scheme after obtaining an Israeli passport, he added. The oligarch disputes that he should have declared himself as a PEP. He says he has been miscategorised because of a sanctioned former business partner, Viktor Vekselberg, whom he has not seen since 2013.

## **Royals and tycoons**

Others attracted to Henley's Malta scheme have colourful backstories. They include former members of Russian regional assemblies, ex-ministers and associates of sanctioned figures, as well as members of Saudi Arabia's royal family and Chinese tycoons. Others who showed an interest in a Maltese passport include a missing Moscow banker.

A Saudi prince who privately met Muscat asked that his full name be kept off an official gazette where the names of new citizens are published. Dual citizenship is illegal in Saudi Arabia. The prince said he had sought alternative nationality because he was worried about events in the Middle East.

In some instances, Henley weeded out unsuitable clients. They included the Indian businessman [Nirav Modi](#), who contacted the firm in 2017. At the time, prosecutors had accused Modi of carrying out a \$2bn diamond fraud. He fled to the UK where he was arrested, and he is currently in Wandsworth prison awaiting extradition to Delhi. He denies illegality.

Modi is not the only wealthy Henley applicant to finish up behind bars. In 2012, [Alexander Grigoriev](#), a prominent Moscow banker sought St Kitts citizenship. His name appears in a confidential agreement signed between Henley and a London-based services company. Grigoriev applied together with Beslan Bulguchev, a shareholder in Grigoriev's Russian Land Bank (RZB).

Unusually, Henley agreed to pay extra fees for introducing the two Russians – \$17,500 and \$10,000 respectively. It is not clear whether the money was ever paid. In 2015, however, Grigoriev's opportunity for visiting the Caribbean was dramatically cut short when he was arrested at a Moscow restaurant. A Russian court convicted him of embezzlement.





A beach on the Caribbean island of Nevis. Photograph: Alamy

According to Kommersant newspaper, Grigoriev faces further, more serious charges in connection with his [alleged role in the Global Laundromat](#), a \$20bn money-laundering scheme run out of Moscow, with funds sent via Moldova and Latvia into the western banking system. In March, a Moscow court [issued an international arrest warrant](#) for Bulguchev, who has vanished.

Henley denies there is a “systemic problem” with its scheme or that its programmes are used for “nefarious purposes”. It said [in a statement](#) that fewer than 1% of all applications over a period of many years “have later been called into question”. Between 20% and 50% of Malta applicants are rejected, it is understood. The firm would not comment on individual clients, citing confidentiality.

Henley said it was aware of the “potential inherent risks” in handling citizenship applications and had made significant investment in advanced due diligence processes. However, it added: “Ultimately it is the responsibility of the countries involved to investigate and vet applicants. As a private company, we are neither required by law to do so, nor do we have access to the same level of background information, contacts and resources that government authorities have.”

Other individuals have gone through Malta's golden passport programme successfully have since become the focus of controversy. Pavel Melnikov, a Russian, bought St Kitts and Nevis nationality via Henley. [According to the New York Times](#), he has citizenship from two further Caribbean nations, as well as residency in Hungary. In 2016, he used Henley's services to obtain Maltese passports for himself and his family. Melnikov says he is a businessman and investor. He said he spent 21 days Malta and had boosted his local connections by renting a yacht.

In 2018, a team of commandos [raided a small island in Finland](#) owned by Melnikov. Authorities had grown suspicious after he installed state-of-the-art electronics, a helipad and a military-style accommodation block on his archipelago home. The island overlooks a strategic shipping route. The officers found €3.5m in cash.

Finnish authorities attributed the raid to money laundering and tax investigations. Melnikov denies speculative claims that the raided island had a clandestine espionage function. "I'm not a spy. I have no base," he [told Finland's Helsingin Sanomat newspaper](#). No charges were brought. He did not respond to requests for comment.

Overall, Malta's investor passport scheme has been a colossal money-spinner for the country. But it has been dogged from the beginning by criticism, not just from the EU but also from Malta's opposition parties and civil society.



Joseph Muscat. Photograph: Geert Vanden Wijngaert/AP

Muscat, the now former prime minister, defended the passport programme, which he said had been “crucial to the turnaround of Malta’s economy”. He acknowledged he met applicants at the request of Henley and other agents but said this had “no bearing” on the process, which he said depended on due diligence and was “independent”. Meeting potential investors was an “essential part” of his job, he added.

The Maltese government said all applicants were subject to Interpol and Europol database checks. “Negative circumstances render the person ineligible for citizenship based on investment,” it said. It was “factually incorrect” to describe the 12-month residency requirement as a “sham”, it added.

Emails show just how desperate Malta and its preferred passport broker was for Irina Abramovich’s “lucrative” business. When Henley discovered Muscat would not be available to see her – he was away in New York – it suggested Malta’s then economics minister, Christopher Cardona, could “entertain” her instead. Cardona might invite her for dinner or meet her in the day, it said.

Alas, it wasn't to be. Shortly before the scheduled September 2014 trip, Abramovich's assistant sent a brief email. The oligarch's ex-wife had changed her mind. "Mrs A needs a longer time to think about Malta option. Thank you for your understanding," it said.

- [Response: Henley & Partners full statement](#)

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## [Military](#).

# UK failure to commemorate black and Asian war dead known ‘for years’

Commonwealth commission apologises after report shows thousands of first world war deaths not properly marked

02:12

War graves: 'No doubt prejudice played a part in decisions,' says Ben Wallace – video

[Alexandra Topping](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 05.35 EDT

The failure to [properly commemorate hundreds of thousands of black and Asian](#) troops who died fighting for the British empire has been known about for years, the head of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) has acknowledged.

Claire Horton, the commission’s director general, acknowledged that research revealing black and Asian soldiers had not been equally commemorated had been in the public domain for years. The commission had only taken steps to address the imbalance following [a 2019 documentary featuring Labour MP David Lammy](#).

Horton was asked on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme why it had taken so long to take action, given that the work of historian [Michèle Barrett](#) uncovered the issue a decade ago. Asked if the issue had been known about a long time ago, Horton replied: “It was and I think to be honest we’ve not seen enough of that work over the years, we’ve not looked into it deeply enough.”

She added that the commission was “apologising unreservedly”, adding that “the failings of the past should absolutely not have happened.”

An investigation by the CWGC, published on Thursday, discovered that at least 116,000 – but potentially up to 350,000 – predominantly African and Middle Eastern first world war casualties may not be commemorated by name, or at all. It also estimated that between 45,000 and 54,000 African and Asian casualties were commemorated “unequally”.

Horton said the commission would work “intensively” over the coming years “to ensure that these people that we failed 100 years ago are properly commemorated as everyone else”. That would include new memorials, individual headstones and would involve working with communities in the countries involved, she added.

“Pervasive racism” underpinned a failure to properly commemorate service personnel, the investigation found, quoting racist statements such as a governor saying in the 1920s that “the average native ... would not understand or appreciate a headstone”. The commission concluded that soldiers were treated differently if they came from Commonwealth countries.

Tottenham MP, David Lammy, said the investigation was “a watershed moment”. Speaking on Today, he said: “It’s taken 100 years to bring it about, but of course, I am pleased ... It’s a major moment that we, that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, are now rewriting this history and writing their lives, their virtue, their sacrifice, into the history books.”

Prof David Olusoga told the programme that the failure to properly commemorate potentially hundreds of thousands of predominantly black and Asian service personnel who died fighting for the British empire was “one of the biggest scandals I’ve ever come across as an historian”.

Olusoga, whose television company produced the documentary *Unremembered: Britain’s Forgotten War Heroes*, said the first world war had killed more British soldiers and more Commonwealth soldiers than any conflict in history.

“It is a war that deeply changed our culture and part of the impact of the first world war was the power of the way those who fell were memorialised,” he said.

“When it came to men who were black and brown and Asian and African, it is not equal, particularly the Africans who have been treated in a way that is, as I said, it’s apartheid in death. It is an absolute scandal. It is one of the biggest scandals I’ve ever come across as an historian, but the biggest scandal is that this was known years ago.”

He said the CWGC’s initial response, under previous leadership, to the documentary featuring Lammy was not to launch a committee but instead was “annoyance and anger”.

He added: “The first attempt to put a committee together excluded Prof Barrett, and I know that because they invited me to sit on it and not her. I’m very pleased this is all happening but it has been somewhat reluctant, it has been somewhat dragged down to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.”

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## Military.

# UK inquiry blames ‘pervasive racism’ for unequal commemoration of troops

Exclusive: Commonwealth War Graves Commission expected to apologise for commemorating British empire’s black and Asian first world war dead ‘unequally’

- [How millions of black and Asian men were mobilised in first world war](#)
- [Unremembered: the African first world war soldiers without a grave](#)



All fallen military service personnel are supposed to be commemorated identically with their name engraved on a headstone over an identified grave or on a memorial to the missing. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

All fallen military service personnel are supposed to be commemorated identically with their name engraved on a headstone over an identified grave or on a memorial to the missing. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

[Rajeev Syal](#)

Wed 21 Apr 2021 13.15 EDT

Hundreds of thousands of predominantly black and Asian service personnel who died fighting for the British Empire have not been formally commemorated in the same way as their white comrades because of decisions underpinned by “pervasive racism”, an investigation has concluded.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is expected to issue a formal apology on Thursday after it discovered that at least 116,000 – but potentially up to 350,000 – predominantly African and Middle Eastern first world war casualties may not be commemorated by name, or at all.

Their investigation findings, seen by the Guardian and set to be announced by the defence secretary, Ben Wallace, in the House of Commons, also estimated that between 45,000 and 54,000 African and Asian casualties were commemorated “unequally”.

All fallen military service personnel are supposed to be commemorated identically with their name engraved on a headstone over an identified grave or on a memorial to the missing.

But, quoting racist statements such as a governor saying in the 1920s that “the average native ... would not understand or appreciate a headstone”, the commission has concluded that soldiers were treated differently if they came from Commonwealth countries.

In a formal response to the investigation, the commission said: “The report highlights that, in certain circumstances, those principles so rigidly adhered to for all who fell in Europe were applied inconsistently or abandoned in the more distant corners of the globe when applied to the non-European war dead of the British Empire, in the immediate aftermath of World War One.

“The commissioners acknowledge that this was not right then and must not be allowed to remain unaddressed now. Those identified in the special

committee's report deserve to be remembered as much today as they did 100 years ago."

The report added: "The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) acknowledges that the commission failed to fully carry out its responsibilities at the time and accepts the findings and failings identified in this report and we apologise unreservedly for them."

The apology will come more than a century after the end of the war, and against the backdrop of a reckoning over Britain's relationship with its racist history, including protests over statues commemorating slave traders.

The Imperial War Graves Commission, later renamed the CWGC, was founded in 1917 to commemorate men and women of the British Empire who lost their lives in the "Great War" and was defined by the principle of equality of treatment in death.

The war graves inquiry was ordered in 2019 following a critical Channel 4 documentary, *Unremembered*, presented by the Labour MP David Lammy, which uncovered how African soldiers' graves in Tanzania were abandoned while European officers' resting places were still tended.

The programme also quoted from commission documents in which African soldiers were referred to as "semi-savage". Another suggested "they are hardly in such a state of civilisation as to appreciate such a memorial" and "the erection of individual memorials would represent a waste of public money".

In light of the documentary, the CWGC appointed a "special committee" in 2019 to identify inequalities in the way the organisation commemorated the dead of the British Empire from the two world wars.

It found that between 45,000 and 54,000 casualties – predominantly Indian and African, – were not remembered in the same way as most white, UK-based soldiers.

"For some, rather than marking their graves individually, as the IWGC would have done in Europe, these men were commemorated collectively on

memorials. For others who were missing, their names were recorded in registers rather than in stone,” the report said.

As many as 350,000 predominantly, but not exclusively, east African and Egyptian personnel, were not commemorated by name or possibly not commemorated at all, it added.

“Most of these men were commemorated by memorials that did not carry their names – in part because the IWGC was never furnished with their names or places of burial by the military or colonial authorities, in part because it chose to diverge from its principles in the belief that the communities these men came from would not recognise or value such individual forms of commemoration,” the report said.

One reason for the different treatment was the way that British attitudes towards people across Africa, the Middle East and India, influenced the operations of the commission in a way that it did not in Europe, the report said.

It added: “As a result, contemporary attitudes towards non-European faiths and differing funerary rites, and an individual’s or group’s perceived ‘state of civilisation’, influenced their commemorative treatment in death.

“Although in the vast majority of cases the IWGC did not make the decision to diverge from its principles unilaterally, it should at least be considered complicit in all of them.”

In one 1923 letter quoted in the report, FG Guggisberg, the governor of the Gold Coast in Africa, wrote: “The average native of the Gold Coast would not understand or appreciate a headstone.”

He received a response from Lord Arthur Browne, the principal assistant secretary at the IWGC, which said: “In perhaps two or three hundred years’ time, when the native population had reached a higher stage of civilisation, they might then be glad to see that headstones had been erected on the native graves and that the native soldiers had received precisely the same treatment as their white comrades.”

The special committee found that many of the IWGC's decisions were influenced by a scarcity of information, errors inherited from other organisations and the opinions of colonial administrators.

“Underpinning all these decisions, however, were the entrenched prejudices, preconceptions and pervasive racism of contemporary imperial attitudes,” the report found.

Claire Horton, director general of the CWGC, said on Wednesday: “The events of a century ago were wrong then and are wrong now. We recognise the wrongs of the past and are deeply sorry and will be acting immediately to correct them.”

The Ministry of Defence was approached for comment.

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- [Analysis India's second wave response a warning to other countries](#)
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## [Coronavirus](#)

# Revealed: big shortfall in Covax Covid vaccine-sharing scheme

Only a fifth of Oxford/AstraZeneca doses expected by May delivered as export bans, hoarding and supply shortages bite

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A nurse prepares to administer the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine at a hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Photograph: Tiksa Negeri/Reuters

A nurse prepares to administer the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine at a hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Photograph: Tiksa Negeri/Reuters

[Michael Safi](#) and [Ashley Kirk](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 05.35 EDT



The global vaccine-sharing initiative Covax has so far delivered about one in five of the Oxford/AstraZeneca doses it estimated would arrive in countries by May, according to a Guardian analysis, starkly illustrating the cost of export bans, hoarding and supply shortages for a scheme that represents a key lifeline for many in the developing world.

The organisations that run Covax [had predicted](#) countries would receive fewer vaccines than expected after the Indian government restricted exports from its largest manufacturer in response to [a catastrophic second wave there](#), but the figures reveal the shortfall to be severe, leaving many governments scrambling to secure doses elsewhere.

Large countries such as Indonesia and Brazil have so far received about one in 10 of the Oxford/AstraZeneca doses they were expecting by May, while Bangladesh, Mexico, Myanmar and Pakistan are among those that have not received any doses of the vaccine through the programme so far.

A handful of countries such as Moldova, Tuvalu, Nauru and Dominica have received the full amount they were allocated, but the vast majority of those in the scheme have so far received a third or less of what they were allocated.

In Africa, Rwanda has received just 32% of its allocation, the biggest percentage on the continent, ahead of countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have each received about 28% of the doses they are expecting.

Overall, as of Wednesday this week, the programme had delivered about 40.2m or 21.5% of the 187.2m doses it planned to distribute during or by the end of May. The analysis is based on data drawn from Airfinity, a life sciences analytics firm, and Unicef and Gavi, two of the organisations that are helping to run Covax.

The shortage is leading to panic in countries such as Bangladesh, where a source in the vaccine industry said supplies of Oxford/AstraZeneca doses would run out within a fortnight, with no prospect of an imminent resupply.

[Graph](#)

“We have already given first doses to 5.7 million people and we have to give them the second dose, but we don’t have any supply,” he said, asking not to be named because he was not authorised to speak to media. “How do we immunise those 5.7 million people?”

Covax is [an unprecedented global collaboration](#) that aims to use funds from charities and wealthier countries to bulk-purchase vaccines and distribute them equitably around the world, ensuring that at least 20% of the population of each country – focusing on health workers and the most vulnerable – are vaccinated by the end of the year.

But the scheme is at the mercy of national governments and the pharmaceutical industry, and both have undermined it since it was established last year. Wealthy governments signed up to Covax [but also struck private deals directly](#) with vaccine manufacturers offering to pay higher prices to secure access more quickly.

Vaccine producers such as Pfizer agreed to sell a relatively small amount of doses to Covax at a not-for-profit rate, but directed the bulk of their supply to more lucrative private contracts. Other manufacturers such as Moderna are yet to supply the programme with a single dose.

Covax was nonetheless able to secure agreements for more than 1.53bn doses this year, relying heavily on the Serum Institute of [India](#), a Pune-based supplier that was licensed to produce the Oxford vaccine on a royalty-free basis in exchange for agreeing to produce it for developing countries.

But the Serum Institute has been slower than predicted to increase supply, citing US export bans on key ingredients it needs to produce more doses. Alongside this, the resurgence of the virus in India has led the government there to drastically reduce the amount of vaccine it is permitting to be sent overseas.

Liam Sollis, the head of policy at Unicef UK, said the dramatic shortfall in Covax supplies so far emphasised the need for well-supplied countries to start donating some of their doses immediately.

“We need to ensure that current supply of manufactured doses that are available in the UK at the moment, a proportion of those are committed to be shared with Covax,” he said.

“A minimum of 5% should be committed at this stage and that should be on a rolling basis, but that proportion should be scaling up over the course of the year as vaccination coverage increases in the UK, and that same commitment should be made by the G7 countries and all countries with significant supply at the moment.”

Some countries have not received the Oxford/AstraZeneca doses they were allocated because they may not have needed it. Qatar, for example, which has bought ample supply privately, or Canada, [which was criticised](#) for drawing on the Covax supply when it had [already privately reserved](#) the most doses per person of any country in the world.

South Africa, too, has [stopped using the Oxford/AstraZeneca](#) formulation after the jab had only 10% efficacy in preventing mild or moderate infections by the new variant now dominant in the country.

But any advantage for other Covax countries from this potential extra supply has been dwarfed by the overall vaccine shortage.

A Unicef spokesman [told Reuters on Wednesday](#) that it had found alternative supplies of the Oxford vaccine outside India and that it expected to receive 65m more doses by the end of May.

The Serum Institute of India says it plans to increase its vaccine production to 100m doses a month by the end of May but it is unclear how much of this supply will be permitted to go to Covax.

This article was amended on 22 April 2021. South Africa halted AstraZeneca vaccinations because of low efficacy against the main variant, not because of concerns over possible blood clot links.

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## India

# Covid-19: India's response to second wave is warning to other countries

Analysis: India's surveillance of the virus missed its real prevalence earlier this year

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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Indian holy men on their way to the Ganges River during the Kumbh Mela at Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Thousands gathered for the pilgrimage this year. Photograph: Idrees Mohammed/EPA

Indian holy men on their way to the Ganges River during the Kumbh Mela at Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Thousands gathered for the pilgrimage this year. Photograph: Idrees Mohammed/EPA

[Peter Beaumont](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 00.00 EDT

The blindspots in India's response to its second, devastating wave of coronavirus infections serve as a stark warning to other countries.

In retrospect it was clear that the figures for new infections that India was reporting in January and February were probably too good to be true, with a country of more than 1.3 billion people seeing its caseload drop from its first peak last year of over 100,000 cases a day to under 10,000.

Then, it was reported in terms of being almost miraculous.

As [Jishnu Das](#), a health economist at Georgetown University in the US, told NPR in early February: "It's not that India is testing less or things are going underreported. It's been rising, rising – and now suddenly, it's vanished! I mean, hospital ICU utilisation has gone down. Every indicator says the numbers are down."

### [India cases](#)

Except it had not vanished. The reasons for that illusion are likely to take years to unpick, but it is clear that India's surveillance of the virus missed its real prevalence earlier this year, even at a point when people were celebrating its decline, until it was too late.

While there has been much focus on the most recent Indian variant of Covid-19 as much of the latest wave is also probably down to a combination of social behaviour, weaknesses in India's health system and policy decisions.

Told that the virus was conquered (or that some areas were approaching herd immunity); that vaccination was imminent, making it controllable, some of those who might earlier have sought a test will not have pursued that option especially if confronted with less than serious symptoms.

With a median age of 26.8 it seems likely too that – as elsewhere – the resurgence may have been driven in large part by younger cohorts less concerned about a disease perceived as being one that hits the oldest and less healthy disproportionately hard, marking a now familiar recent pattern of transmission among the younger spreading to the older.

For many others, finding a test in a country with areas of profound poverty and poor healthcare will not have been a viable option. Others still, as the head of one of India's largest laboratory networks made clear this week, have struggled to find tests.

02:10

India Covid crisis: families' plea for help amid oxygen shortages and mass cremations – video report

The reality, it appears, is that India made similar errors to other countries, including the UK, after the first wave peaked – suggesting a return to a degree of normality even at a time when it was clear that other countries had already been hit by serious second waves.

As Dr Chandrakant Lahariya wrote in an opinion piece for India Today last week: “The second wave of Covid-19 has come a few months after the second wave in other countries, which had a similar situation somewhere in the mid- to late 2020. There was no reason to believe it would be any different in India.

“Though the laxity in people's behaviour was being noted, but from February to April 2021, the government too did not show its resolve to enforce public health measures. While customary guidance on Covid-appropriate behaviour was issued, it was policymakers and elected leaders who tacitly encouraged crowding in festivals (Holi at end March 2021), election rallies in five states (March-April 2021) and religious congregation (Kumbh Mela in Haridwar; March-April 2021).”

### [India deaths](#)

Some of it too seems like complacency.

The world's major vaccine producer, India has replicated mistakes made also in the US and elsewhere of assuming that vaccination alone would suffice to control Covid-19, an error compounded on Tuesday by Narendra Modi's insistence that lockdowns should remain a measure of “last resort”.



The reality, as the UK's experience appears to have demonstrated, is that a combination of aggressive vaccination, lockdowns and surveillance offers the best chance of mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

Perhaps most of all it reinforces three key lessons. First, without an emphasis on effective monitoring, coronavirus will exploit those blindspots to spread again. Second, that even in the midst of a vaccination campaign such as India's, while large numbers remain unvaccinated Covid-19 remains a powerful threat, able to overwhelm health systems.

A third and final lesson is one for the political leaders.

Boosterism (like Modi's around India's vaccine production) and the encouragement of normalcy bias (which leads people to minimise threats when confronted by serious risks) have real impacts in public health emergencies that rely on encouraging people to be careful.

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## India

# ‘World’s worst outbreak’: what India’s papers say as coronavirus crisis toll mounts

Newspapers warn that the situation shows no sign of improving, and calls on warring politicians to cooperate to beat the virus

- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



An ambulance outside Lok Nayak Jaiprakash Narayan hospital in New Delhi, India. India papers describe sense of urgency in tackling the Covid surge. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

An ambulance outside Lok Nayak Jaiprakash Narayan hospital in New Delhi, India. India papers describe sense of urgency in tackling the Covid surge. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

[\*Martin Farrer\*](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 00.40 EDT

India's media has reacted with despair as the country set a new world record for daily cases of Covid-19 amid a devastating new wave of the pandemic.

The [Hindustan Times leads](#) with the stark headline “World’s worst outbreak”, detailing how the country’s tally of 314,835 cases on Wednesday was the highest daily total recorded by any country. It surpasses a mark set by the United States in January.

With a sense of national emergency engulfing the world’s second most populous country, the paper suggested that the situation was likely to get worse before it gets better.

“The most worrying factor right now remains how fast daily cases are continuing to grow,” it reports, “and how the trajectory is exhibiting no clear signs of approaching a peak still”.



Hindustan Times. Photograph: Hindustan Times

The [Indian Express](#), which is based in Chennai, leads with comments on Wednesday by Delhi high court judges exhorting hospitals to “Beg, borrow, steal to get oxygen”.

The Max Healthcare network had sought intervention from the courts in frustration at the “dangerously low” oxygen supplies in hospitals. Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said it was a “national emergency”, the paper reports, telling the court: “We are shocked and dismayed that the government does not seem to be seeing the reality ... What is happening? Why is the government not waking up to the reality.”

The paper’s editorial said the resistance of prime minister Narendra Modi to another lockdown was “welcome”, but said: “Because for all the talk of a no-lockdown, no demand or economic activity will revive if the Covid curve doesn’t begin to bend.”

The Covid wave has claimed a number of high-profile victims in India with the former prime minister Manmohan Singh [falling sick](#) this week. It has also claimed the lives of a former senior Congress party leader Dr AK Walia, the Times of India tweeted, and the [son of Communist party leader Sitaram Yechury](#).

The Times of India said that as the national crisis mounts, more cooperation was needed between the central government and state governments, and between the states themselves, to pull the country back from the brink.

In an editorial, [the Times](#) decried the lack of preparedness among all levels of government and says that when the time comes for a postmortem into the handling of the pandemic, “state and central governments must answer for low public health budgets”.

“All hands must be on deck,” it says. “India started the pandemic with shortages of masks, PPE kits and testing infrastructure but quickly scaled up. Today’s crisis can be tided over too with a spirit of humaneness, cooperation and accommodation. Let the politics take a back seat.”

Value modifications to be implemented in the incident, says State Health Minister

On Sept. 26, 2007, Dr. Williams was interviewed about the subject of what she is doing in a medical research center that gives the majority of the grant to Dr. Williams' research. She is currently working on a grant to study the effects of the environment on the health of the population.

Although the test is a non-invasive, state-of-the-art device that can be used to monitor the health of a patient, it is not a substitute for a medical examination and should not be used to replace the doctor.

Between mid-1980 and 1990, the number of deaths increased from 10 to 150,000. The main cause being an HIV/AIDS virus, which, if not kept under control, can spread rapidly. The number of deaths is expected to rise to 250,000 by the year 2000.



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the University and the rapidly changing conditions he would be unable to do enough to help the students. "We have been through the same thing for more than a year now, and the situation has

Normally the virus is transmitted by mosquitoes, but it can also be spread by blood transfusion.

order of management during its development, the quality of the type of fire service. Development of the fire service is the main factor in the development of the fire service.

247 second year will receive a letter to that effect.

Despite similar concerns, growth in the emerging world played a different role in driving innovation. Innovation in emerging markets was often driven by the need to overcome local constraints, rather than by the desire to compete globally. This led to the development of innovative solutions that were tailored to the specific needs of the local market.

These  
three have formed  
the "Three Musketeers" of  
the industry, and they  
will continue to lead  
the way.

"There is a 100 percent jump in the volume of risk and rewards in electronic commerce for business-to-business," says the author. "The price is significantly lower and the difference between supply and demand (the basis for value creation) is



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### Smaller hospitals in Chennai feel the pinch

A number of people recently learned that the author of the book was a woman. "I was shocked," says the author. "I was not a woman, and I was not a writer."

of a few baseball-loving  
out-of-campers. That's all  
but said they were expect-  
ing a season in the making  
soon, given the numerous  
injuries.

The [Hindu](#) leads with the tragic story of [24 people killed by an oxygen leak](#), and also reports on how the central government was planning to intervene to ensure oxygen supplies to Delhi.

## [Coronavirus](#)

# Britons left stranded by Japan's slow vaccine rollout

Japan has vaccinated less than 1% of the population, leaving many expatriates frustrated London is not helping them



A medical worker receives a dose of Covid-19 vaccine in Tokyo. Some expat Britons are frustrated at the slow pace of the rollout of jabs. Photograph: ZUMA Wire/REX/Shutterstock

A medical worker receives a dose of Covid-19 vaccine in Tokyo. Some expat Britons are frustrated at the slow pace of the rollout of jabs. Photograph: ZUMA Wire/REX/Shutterstock

[\*Justin McCurry\*](#) in Tokyo

Thu 22 Apr 2021 01.57 EDT

Japan's [troubled vaccination rollout](#) has left British residents feeling “trapped” in their adopted home, preventing them visiting parents and



children they haven't seen since before the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.

Since its rollout began in mid-February, [Japan](#) has vaccinated less than 1% of its population, compared with 2.9% in South Korea and at least 40% in the US and Britain. Supply issues, red tape and poor planning have prompted [warnings](#) that it could take another year to vaccinate the country's 110 million over-15s.

Sean O'Neill, the vice-president of a global IT company in Tokyo, said he had hoped to return to the UK at the end of this month to combine vaccinations with a family visit, but the cost, including quarantine and Covid-19 tests, had forced him to abandon the idea.

"Why should I have to consider spending £4,000-£5,000 for a trip back to the UK to get the vaccine, plus the same again 10 to 12 weeks later to get the second dose? I would happily pay, say, £500 to get the vaccine delivered to me over here in [Japan](#). I'm sure others would, too," said O'Neill, who has not seen his children in Australia and the UK for more than a year.

[Japan to declare state of emergency in Tokyo amid pre-Olympics Covid surge](#)  
[Read more](#)

British expats were united in their praise for Japan's [overall response](#) to the pandemic, which has kept cases and deaths to a fraction of those in the UK.

But the pace of immunisation is causing frustration and heartache, with some of those interviewed by the Guardian saying they could not afford the time and money needed to quarantine on both legs of the journey between Japan and Britain.

Wealthier expatriates are reportedly flying to other countries in the region to receive their jabs. "I can confirm having heard of executives going to their home countries for vaccines," Michael Mroczek, president of the European Business Council in Japan, told Reuters. But he added that quarantine requirements had kept numbers low.



Marc Wesseling, a long-term foreign resident, is among those who could not wait. “I love [Japan] and I wish them all the best,” said Wesseling, the co-founder of an ad agency in Tokyo who this month flew to Singapore, where his company has an office, in part to get vaccinated so that he could safely visit his parents in the Netherlands.

“I think a lot of people are frustrated, especially when you want to have the Olympics and everything,” he said from his quarantine accommodation in Singapore. “Come on guys. Make it happen. The whole world is doing it. Why wait?”

Not all Britons living in countries with slow vaccination rollouts – including Japan, South Korea, [Australia and New Zealand](#) – face a long wait, however.

The British government is offering [vaccines](#) to diplomatic staff and their families worldwide, according to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. “We are committed to ensuring all overseas personnel for whom the government has a duty of care have access to a vaccine in line with the UK’s domestic rollout, including all staff working at the British embassy in Tokyo,” an FCDO spokesperson told the Guardian.

The spokesperson, who declined to give details of the extent or timing of vaccinations for “security reasons”, added: “As a residence-based system, the NHS does not provide healthcare (including vaccinations) outside the UK. Wherever possible British nationals should aim to be vaccinated where they live.”

Graham Burt, who has three young children, is among those who sympathise with the government’s stance.

“I don’t believe the British government’s duty of care extends as far as providing the vaccine,” said Burt, a Tokyo-based recruiter for tech startups. “Japan is a first-world country with a good health service.”

Burt, who is keen to get home to see his mother, added: “If the UK government has vaccines to spare, then there are plenty of people and places ahead of some British expats in the queue. I’m disappointed that the rollout

has been slow in Japan, but the general response to the pandemic from the population, both local and expat, has been really good, so I feel safe.”

His sentiments were echoed by Rob Williams, an independent financial adviser, who said expatriates should instead be “lobbying the Japanese government to get the vaccines done. Lives could be saved if Japan expedited its vaccination rollout, which is unacceptably glacial.”

Sheila Curley, a teacher living in Tokyo, wondered why the British embassy had not stepped in to help British citizens, noting that it had distributed iodine tablets – which can protect the thyroid from radiation – in the wake of the March 2011 [Fukushima](#) nuclear meltdown.

“It feels a bit unfair that they are not looking after us now, especially in view of how Japan has been so slow to roll out the vaccine,” said Curley, who last visited the UK in September to see her terminally ill sister.

Others spoke of the “torture” of not knowing when they would be able to return to the UK to see their families, particularly if more airlines start demanding proof of vaccination.

“The vaccine rollout in Japan is affecting not only my personal mental health but also that of my friends and family here in Japan in a very negative way,” said Sally Diffor, who has lived in Tokyo for four years.

“In July it will be two years since my family last went to the UK, and our general feeling is that of being trapped and isolated. It’s causing us to reflect on whether we would be happier returning permanently to the UK, as many of the families I know are contemplating.

“The British government has a duty of care and obligation to the entire British community. We should not be abandoned and neglected.”

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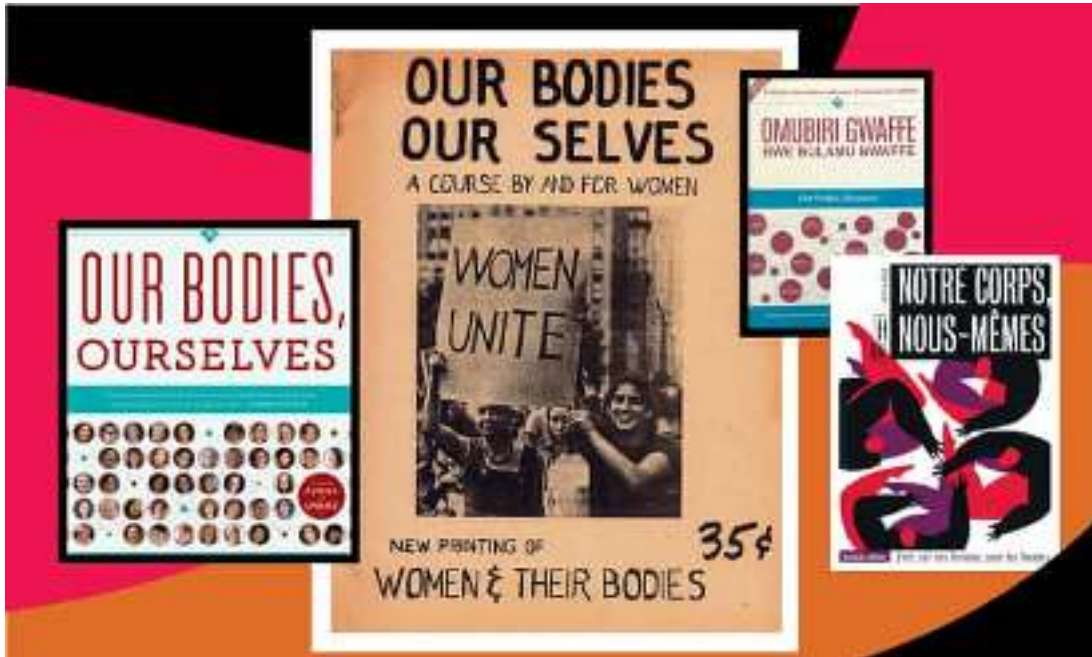
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## 2021.04.22 - Spotlight

- [The clitoris, pain and pap smears How Our Bodies, Ourselves redefined women's health](#)
- [The long read 'Our music, our conscience': how I fell in love with French hip-hop](#)
- [Burnt out Is the exhausting cult of productivity finally over?](#)
- [Unremembered African first world war soldiers of the British empire, left without a grave](#)
- [First world war Millions of black and Asian men recruited forcibly](#)

## Women

# The clitoris, pain and pap smears: how **Our Bodies, Ourselves** redefined women's health



Passed from mother to daughter ... The 1971 cover of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (centre), plus the 2011 edition and Ugandan and French versions. Composite: Courtesy of OBOS

Passed from mother to daughter ... The 1971 cover of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (centre), plus the 2011 edition and Ugandan and French versions. Composite: Courtesy of OBOS

First published 50 years ago, the feminist classic was hugely influential, telling truths about women's bodies long obscured by a chauvinist medical establishment



[Laura Barton](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 05.00 EDT

In 1969, Wendy Sanford was still in the early days of her marriage, living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her husband and their newborn son. A couple of years earlier, she had graduated with high honours from the prestigious Radcliffe College, and yet the path before her was clear: domesticity, home decor, dinner parties. She struggled with this new life. “My husband was so disappointed that I wasn’t happy,” Sanford remembers. “I cried a lot. I was in the middle of postpartum depression, and had no words for it at all.”

Sanford spoke to her doctor, who suggested she find solace in raising the next generation and supporting her husband. He also prescribed a diaphragm. She asked when she ought to put it in, and the doctor gave her the same mantra he gave all of his female patients: dinner, dishes, diaphragm. “So that was the era,” Sanford says. “And he was a very kind man, but he embodied sexist medical care. He had no idea that he was just pushing me into the arms of feminism.”

When her son was nine months old, and Sanford felt at her lowest, a friend invited her to a women’s health meeting at Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (MIT). “You have to come to this group,” the friend told her, “because we’re learning about our bodies.” Reluctantly, Sanford agreed.

The meeting was not what she expected: “I walked into this lounge full of women,” she remembers, “and someone up in the front of the room was talking about the clitoris, orgasm and masturbation, and I was just so embarrassed. I just sank down to the floor and listened really hard. This was stuff that I had never heard said out loud before.”

At one point, Sanford remembers, the speaker held up a lifesize picture of a woman, with legs apart, to show the location of the clitoris, and to explain how, contrary to Freudian thinking, it is the major organ of female sexual pleasure. “Who knew this before?” she asked the group, who sat largely blank-faced. “That’s my point,” she told them. “We should know these things. These are our bodies.”

For Sanford, the opportunity to discuss such issues proved radical. “That evening really turned something around in my life,” she says. “I was so grateful, I gave the next 40 years of my life to the women’s health movement.”



Wendy Sanford (far left) and the other founding members of Our Bodies Ourselves, c 1975. Photograph: Phyllis Ewen/Courtesy of OBOS



Sanford would become one of the founding authors of [Our Bodies, Ourselves](#), a book about women's health and sexuality that would prove revolutionary. It sold more than 4m copies globally and became available in 33 languages, and is considered one of the most influential books of the 20th century. Across its nine editions, it addressed sexual health, sexual orientation, menstruation, motherhood, menopause, postnatal depression, abortion (still illegal in much of the US in the book's early editions), violence and abuse, gender identity, birth control and desire.

The origins of the book began some months before Sanford's first meeting at MIT. In the spring of that same year, as the women's movement gained momentum, a Female Liberation conference had been held at nearby Emmanuel College. There were taekwondo demonstrations, talks called [Women](#) and the Church, How [Women](#) Oppress Themselves and, on the Sunday morning, a workshop called [Women](#) and Their Bodies, held by Nancy Miriam Hawley.

At the end of the workshop, the attenders were reluctant to leave, and the discussions spilled on outside. Over the months that followed, they formed a group that would be named the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, to discuss their bodies, their lives, sexuality and relationships. The next year, they published a book named after the original workshop title.

In 1971, they changed the book's title to *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, to reflect women taking ownership of their own bodies. Priced at 30 cents, it sold 225,000 copies without any formal advertising, and its success attracted the attention of Simon & Schuster, which would publish the first commercial edition in 1973.

Alongside Sanford were 11 other women: Ruth Bell Alexander, Pamela Berger, Joan Ditzion, Vilunya Diskin, Paula Doress-Worters, Hawley (who did the workshop), Elizabeth MacMahon-Herrera, Judy Norsigian, Jane Pincus, Esther Rome, Norma Swenson and Sally Whelan. Each took a chapter topic to research and write. None of the authors were medically trained, though trusted medical authorities were consulted. Alongside factual information, it featured strikingly graphic illustrations and first-person stories from women. Its tone was informal and warm – the voice of a trusted



but authoritative friend. It quickly earned a reputation as a book to be passed from mother to daughter.

What was radical about *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was not just the subjects it broached but the fact that it was written by women for women. In so doing, it challenged the power and role of the largely male medical profession. “We as women are redefining competence,” the 1970s edition stated. “A doctor who behaves in a male chauvinist way is not competent, even if he has medical skills. We have decided that health can no longer be defined by an elite group of white, upper-middle-class men. It must be defined by us.”



The founders of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in 2016. Photograph: Courtesy of OBOS

That women are treated differently by the medical profession is a long-established truth: scientists, researchers and doctors are predominantly male, and most clinical trials have been carried out on men or male cells. Early medical textbooks suggested that women’s bodies were inferior to those of men – Aristotle even referring to the female body as a mutilated male body. This has had huge implications for disease, diagnosis and treatment.

Even today, discussions around female health are often couched in moral terms, implications of hysteria and suggestions that women’s bodies are

principally reproductive machines – ideas explored richly in [Gabrielle Jackson's Pain and Prejudice](#), [Laura Bates' Everyday Sexism](#), and [Caroline Criado-Perez's Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men](#).

More than 50 years after *Our Bodies, Ourselves'* call to redefine health, a recent [Guardian investigation into women and pain](#) found that women are more than twice as likely to be prescribed opiate painkillers rather than having their pain properly investigated. This followed a 2020 UK-government-ordered inquiry that concluded that the arrogance of medical culture had resulted in serious complications, from vaginal mesh to hormonal pregnancy tests, being dismissed as “women’s problems”.

This spring, the UK government launched a review to better understand women’s experience of the healthcare system, with the plan to create the first ever [women’s health strategy](#). It will begin, they say, by “placing women’s voices at the centre of their health and care”.

Over the past five decades, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* has not been without controversy. In the early 1980s, it incurred the wrath of the conservative attorney Phyllis Schlafly and the televangelist Jerry Falwell of the conservative Christian movement Moral Majority, who declared the book “obscene trash”. This in itself perhaps only raised awareness of the publication, and for a time it was the most-stolen library book in the US.

Other criticism was more valid, pointing out that the members of the collective’s core group were all white, able-bodied and well educated. Subsequent editions, along with expansions in the editorial team, board of directors, nonprofit founders and staff members, sought to be more inclusive.

Speak to the founders today, and what marks their conversation is an expansiveness and a capacity for change. Swenson, for instance, who talks of how, as the group’s oldest member in 1969, she was forced to confront many of the beliefs she had held as outmoded, educating herself in contemporary feminism. Or Judy Norsigian, who discusses pioneering work in perimenopause education. Or Sanford, who talks of the joy of her second marriage, to a woman.

As Our Bodies, Ourselves spread around the world, it took the crucial step of being adapted, rather than translated – so embracing the nuances and specificities of different cultures. Among those adaptations is the Ugandan edition of 2017, edited by Diana Namumbejja Abwoye, 35, a family nurse practitioner and a member of the board of directors of Our Bodies, Ourselves.



Diana Namumbejja Abwoye with a women's group in Uganda, discussing Our Bodies, Ourselves. Photograph: Courtesy of Diana Namumbejja Abwoye

Namumbejja Abwoye moved to the US as a student in 2007, and became involved with the group after a distressing pap smear experience. In Uganda, where the focus is on curative rather than preventive medicine, pap smears are uncommon, and Namumbejja Abwoye had no understanding of what was being done to her. “I felt violated,” she remembers.

She discussed her experience with a colleague, Ruth Hubbard (an adviser to Our Bodies, Ourselves) , who encouraged her to attend the Our Bodies, Ourselves 40th anniversary symposium. Like Sanford more than 40 years earlier, Namumbejja Abwoye was floored by what she heard. “All these accomplished women talking about these things,” she remembers. “Things that were a taboo to talk about from where I came from.”

Given a copy of the 2011 edition, Namumbejja Abwoye went through the book with a highlighter. “I knew it was something I wanted to share,” she says. “The gift of knowledge that you want to pass on to girls and women who you think really need it.” She set about finding ways to fund a translation into Luganda, the main language in central Uganda.

It was not without challenges: abortion and same-sex relationships are still illegal in Uganda, and so Namumbejja Abwoye had to find a way to write about such issues covertly: “In my generation, we had some code words that we had come up with to talk about things that were a taboo, ensuring that the opposite sex or our elders would not know what we were talking about,” she says. “So I depended on such language to talk about certain aspects in the book.”

She also knew that in a country where many families struggle to get by on less than 50 cents a day, she would need to find a way to distribute free copies to communities. But she regarded it as vital work: “Having grown up in a culture where doctors or healthcare providers are like kings, I feel as if knowing your own body, and what to expect at the doctor, equips everyone with a tool so they can advocate for themselves,” she says.

It has also changed Namumbejja Abwoye’s experience of medicine in the US. “My interactions with healthcare providers were totally different after reading this book, because I had the basic knowledge about what to expect,” she says. “It’s empowering. It’s something I’d wish for every woman: to build a collaboration with their healthcare provider.”

It has changed the way I perceive myself as a woman, and my role in this world as a woman

It has also altered how she approaches her work as a medical practitioner. “I am very supportive of evidence-based medicine, but certain things can’t beat the experiences talked about in this book,” she says. “I always feel that knowledge is power. Both for me, as a provider, but also for me as a patient.”

And, on a more personal level, she feels the book altered her perception of herself, making her question the upbringing that taught her to be a dutiful wife and mother. “It has changed the way I relate with my own body,” she says. “It has changed the way I perceive myself as a woman, and my role in this world as a woman.”

Since 2011, there have been no new print editions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. But the work lives on online, courtesy of Suffolk University, and continues to be adapted for new audiences – this year, for instance, will bring a new adaptation in Brazil.

The group’s influence also continues to extend elsewhere: 2014 saw the publication of *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*, (the second edition is due to be published later this year). Its editor, the doctor Laura Erickson-Schroth, 39, was raised in Brooklyn by a mother who was involved in the women’s movement, and kept a copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* at home. “It was one of many reminders that our home was a place where I could be myself,” says Erickson-Schroth, “whatever that turned out to be.”

*Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* “came out of a confluence of events” she says. “Two of my close friends from college came out as trans, and, at the same time, I was starting to learn about trans health in medical school. There seemed to be a real disconnect between these two areas of my life.” She saw that her friends were having trouble finding the medical information they needed, while the doctors she was meeting didn’t seem to have much knowledge about trans people’s lives. “It felt like a similar moment to when *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was published,” she says. “There was a community that was the best experts on themselves, but they didn’t have a comprehensive way to share that information with each other.”

Erickson-Schroth contacted *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and received an invitation to meet Norsigian and Sanford in Boston. “They asked me to come help teach a class with them,” she says. “They ended up writing the afterword for *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*, which felt like an amazing way to close the book. For me, it’s a symbol of their understanding that our lives are intertwined and that we are all fighting the same fight from different angles.”

“Thanks to Trans Bodies, Trans Selves and all the transgender folks who have been writing and teaching over the past many years, we, a group of cisgender women, now know that we can no longer say ‘a woman’s body’ and mean only one thing,” runs Sanford’s afterword. “One person’s body may have a penis and testicles, and be a woman’s body. Another person’s body may have breasts or a clitoris, and be a man’s body. The revolutionary point is that we can name our gender identity for ourselves and rightfully expect respect and recognition. ‘Our bodies, ourselves’ grows in meaning daily.”

Today, though the group now exists as a voluntary organisation, the founders of Our Bodies, Ourselves remain active campaigners for women’s healthcare and social justice. They meet often, talk even more frequently, and have a bond that they describe as more than friendship – they are family, a sisterhood, and together they have helped one another through divorce, death, dementia, celebrated successes, births, marriages and coming out – and encountered disagreements, disputes and divisions.

But what has always united them, what spurs them on today, is what Sanford has described as “expanding this excitement, this learning, and this crucial work for social change”. Though it would be wrong, she says, to suggest they are anything other than a group of ordinary women. “I hope you don’t idealise us,” she adds. “Idealising makes other women feel they can’t live up to us.”

This article was amended on 22 April 2021 because an earlier version referred to Namumbejja Abwoye’s colleague as Ruth Alexander Bell, founder member of Our Bodies, Ourselves. In fact, the colleague was Ruth Hubbard, an adviser to the organisation.

*Laura Barton presents Our Bodies, Ourselves on Radio 4 and BBC Sounds on 24 April at 8pm*

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# ‘This was our music, and our conscience’: how I fell in love with French hip-hop

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## Work & careers

# Burnt out: is the exhausting cult of productivity finally over?



Juggling the work/life balance has become too much for increasing numbers of workers. Composite: Alamy/Guardian Design Team

Juggling the work/life balance has become too much for increasing numbers of workers. Composite: Alamy/Guardian Design Team

In the last decade, employees have been encouraged to see work and life as interchangeable, and to hustle ever harder. But the pandemic has brought a new reckoning



[Zoe Williams](#)

[@zoesqwilliams](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

In the US, they call it “hustle culture”: the idea that the ideal person for the modern age is one who is always on, always at work, always grafting. Your work is your life, and when you are not doing your hustle, you have a side-hustle. Like all the world’s worst ideas, it started in Silicon Valley, although it is a business-sector thing, rather than a California thing.

Since the earliest days of tech, the notion of “playbour”, work so enjoyable that it is interchangeable with leisure, has been the dream. From there, it spiralled in all directions: hobbies became something to monetise, wellness became a duty to your workplace and, most importantly, if you love your work, it follows that your colleagues are your intimates, your family.

Which is why an organisation such as Ustwo Games likes to call itself a “[fampany](#)”. “What the hell is that?” says Sarah Jaffe, author of [Work Won’t Love You Back](#). “A lot of these companies’ websites use the word ‘family’, even though they have workers in Canada, workers in India, workers in the UK; a lot of us don’t even speak the same language and yet we’re a ‘family’.” Meanwhile, companies such as Facebook and Apple [have offered](#)

[egg-freezing to their employees](#), suggesting that you may have to defer having a real family if you work for a fake one.



A grownup soft-play area: inside the Google office in Zurich, Switzerland.  
Photograph: Google

The tech companies' attitudes have migrated into other "status" sectors, together with the workplaces that look like a kind of grownup soft-play, all colourful sofas and ping-pong and hot meals. In finance, food has become such a sign of pastoral care that Goldman Sachs recently [sent junior employees hampers](#) to make up for their 100-hour working weeks. If you actually cared about your staff, surely you would say it with proper working conditions, not fruit? But there is an even dicier subtext: when what you eat becomes your boss's business, they are buying more than your time – they are buying your whole self.

Then Elon Musk weighed in to solve that niggling problem: what's the point of it all? Making money for someone else, with your whole life? The billionaire reorientated the nature of work: it's not a waypoint or distraction in the quest for meaning – work *is* meaning. "Nobody ever changed the world on 40 hours a week," he memorably tweeted, concluding that people of vision worked 80 or more, eliding industry with passion, vision, society. Say what you like about him but he knows how to build a narrative.

Hustle culture has proved to be a durable and agile creed, changing its image and language while retaining its fundamentals. Sam Baker, author of [The Shift: How I \(Lost and\) Found Myself After 40 – And You Can Too](#), worked an 80-hour week most of her life, editing magazines. “The 1980s were, ‘Put on a suit and work till you drop,’” she says. “Mark Zuckerberg is, ‘Put on a grey T-shirt and work till you drop.’” The difference, she says, is that “it’s all now cloaked in a higher mission”.

What has exposed the problems with this whole structure is the pandemic. It has wreaked some uncomfortable but helpful realisations – not least that the jobs with the least financial value are the ones we most rely on. Those sectors that Tim Jackson, professor of sustainable development at Surrey University and author of [Post Growth: Life After Capitalism](#), describes as “chronically underinvested for so long, neglected for so long” and with “piss-poor” wages, are the ones that civilisation depends on: care work, retail, delivery.



Elon Musk ... ‘Nobody ever changed the world on 40 hours a week.’  
Photograph: Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

Many of the rest of us, meanwhile, have had to confront the nonessentiality of our jobs. Laura, 43, was working in private equity before the pandemic, but home working brought a realisation. Being apart from colleagues and

only interacting remotely “distilled the job into the work rather than the emotions being part of something”. Not many jobs can take such harsh lighting. “It was all about making profit, and focusing on people who only care about the bottom line. I knew that. I’ve done it for 20-odd years. I just didn’t want to do it any more.”

Throw in some volunteering – which more than 12 million people have during the pandemic – and the scales dropped from her eyes. She ended up giving up her job to be a vaccination volunteer. She can afford to live on her savings for now, and as for what happens when the money runs out, she will cross that bridge when she comes to it. The four pillars of survival, on leaving work, are savings, spouses, downsizing and extreme thrift; generally speaking, people are happiest talking about the thrift and least happy talking about the savings.

Charlotte White, 47, had a similar revelation. She gave up a 20-plus-year career in advertising to volunteer at a food bank. “I felt so needed. This sounds very selfish but I have to admit that I’ve got a lot out of it. It’s the opposite of the advertising bullshit. I’d end each day thinking: ‘My God, I’ve really helped someone.’ I’ve lived in this neighbourhood for years, and there are all these people I’ve never met: older people, younger people, homeless people.”

With the spectre of mortality hovering insistently over every aspect of life, it is not surprising that people had their priorities upended. Neal, 50, lost his job as an accountant in January 2020. He started applying for jobs in the same field. “I was into three figures; my hit rate was something like one interview for 25. I think I was so uninterested that it was coming across in my application. I was pretending to be interested in spreadsheets and ledgers when thousands of people were dying, and it just did not sit right.” He is now working in a psychiatric intensive care unit, earning just above the minimum wage, and says: “I should have done it decades ago. I’m a much better support worker than I ever was an accountant.”

This is a constant motif: everybody mentions spreadsheets; everyone wishes they had made the change decades ago. “For nine months, my partner and I existed on universal credit,” Neal says, “and that was it. It was tough, we



had to make adjustments, pay things later, smooth things out. But I thought: 'If we can exist on that ...'”



The tyranny of work ... Could change be its own reward? Photograph: Bob Scott/Getty Images

So why have we been swallowing these notions about work and value that were nonsense to begin with, and just getting sillier? We have known that the “higher mission” idea, whether it was emotional (being in a company that refers to itself as a “family”) or revolutionary (being “on” all the time in order to change the world) was, as Baker puts it “just fake, just another way of getting people to work 24 hours a day. It combined with the email culture, of always being available. I remember when I got my BlackBerry, I was working for Cosmopolitan, it was the best thing ever ... It was only a matter of months before I was doing emails on holiday.”

But a lot of status came with feeling so indispensable. Unemployment is a famous driver of misery, and overemployment, to be so needed, can feel very bolstering. Many people describe having been anxious about the loss of status before they left their jobs; more anxious than about the money, where you can at least count what you are likely to have and plan around it. As Laura puts it, “not being on a ladder any more, not being in a race: there is

something in life, you should always be moving forward, always going up”. And, when it came to it, other people didn’t see them as diminished.

Katherine Trebeck, of the [Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#), is keen to broaden the focus of the productivity conversation. “To be able to have the choice, to design your own goals for your own life, to develop your own sense of where you get status and esteem is a huge privilege; there’s a socio-economic gradient associated with that level of autonomy,” she says. In other words: you have to have a certain level of financial security before your own emotional needs are at all relevant.

“When I was at Oxfam, we worked with young mothers experiencing poverty,” Trebeck says. “Just the pressure to shield their kids from looking poor made them skimp on the food they were providing. Society was forcing them to take those decisions between hunger and stigma.” She is sceptical about individual solutions and is much more focused on system change. Whether we are at the bottom or in the middle of this ladder, we are all part of the same story.

Part of the scam of the productivity narrative is to separate us, so that the “unskilled” are voiceless, discredited by their lack of skill, while the “skilled” don’t have anything to complain about because if they want to know what’s tough, they should try being unskilled. But in reality we are very interconnected – especially if working in the public sector – and you can burn out just by seeing too closely what is going on with other people.

Pam, 50, moved with her husband from London to the Peak District. They were both educationalists, he a headteacher, she in special educational needs (SEN). She describes what drove their decision: “If you think about a school, it’s a microcosm of life, and there have been very limited resources. Certainly in SEN, the lack of funding was desperate. Some kids just go through absolute hell: trying to get a CAMHS [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services] appointment is nigh on impossible, kids have to be literally suicidal for someone to say: ‘OK, we’ll see you in two months.’”

They moved before the pandemic, and she found a part-time job with the National Trust, before lockdown forced a restructure. She hopes to resume working in the heritage sector when it reopens. Her husband still does some



consultancy, but the bedrock of their security, financially speaking, is that the move out of London allowed them to “annihilate the mortgage”.



A rewarding alternative ... volunteers working at a foodbank in Earlsfield, south London. Photograph: Charlotte White/PA

Creative and academic work, putatively so different from profit-driven sectors, nevertheless exploits its employees using, if anything, a heightened version of the same narrative: if what you do is who you are, then you're incredibly lucky to be doing this thoughtful/artistic thing, and really, you should be paying us. Elizabeth, 39, was a performer, then worked in a theatre. “My eldest sister used to be an archaeologist, and that sounds different, but it's the same: another job where they want you to be incredibly credentialed, incredibly passionate. But they still want to pay you minimum wage and God forbid you have a baby.”

There is also what the management consultants would call an opportunity cost, of letting work dominate your sense of who you are. You could go a whole life thinking your thing was maths, when actually it was empathy. I asked everyone if they had any regrets about their careerist years. Baker said: “Are you asking if I wish I'd had children? That's what people usually mean when they ask that.” It actually wasn't what I meant: whether you have children or not, the sense of what you have lost to hyperproductivity is

more ineffable, that there was a better person inside you that never saw daylight.

When the furlough scheme came in, Jennifer, 39, an academic, leapt at the opportunity to cut her hours without sacrificing any pay. “I thought there’d be a stampede, but I was the only one.” She makes this elegant observation: “The difference between trying 110% and trying 80% is often not that big to other people.”

If the past year has made us rethink what skill means, upturn our notions of the value we bring to the world around us, fall out of love with our employers and question productivity in its every particular, as an individual goal as well as a social one, well, this, as the young people say, could be quite major. Certainly, I would like to see Elon Musk try to rebut this new consciousness in a tweet.

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## Military.

# Unremembered: the African first world war soldiers without a grave

How a 2019 documentary helped spark an inquiry into missing war graves of soldiers from the British empire

- [UK inquiry blames ‘pervasive racism’ for unequal commemoration of troops](#)
- [How millions of black and Asian men were mobilised in first world war](#)



King's African Rifles during World War I. Photograph: Culture Club/Getty Images

King's African Rifles during World War I. Photograph: Culture Club/Getty Images



[Robert Booth](#) *Social affairs correspondent*

Wed 21 Apr 2021 13.31 EDT

A crackly audio recording made in the 1980s is one of the few direct links left to the African soldiers and auxiliaries who served Britain in the first world war. It provides a chilling insight into their experience, which saw an estimated 50,000 Africans in labour units die from disease and other causes.

The recording contains the voice of a former porter who was working alongside the King's African Rifles in east Africa. He described how his job was to carry boxes of bullets and as they walked, there were dead bodies lying on the road. Exhausted, he decided to rest but he was found by a superior, punished and beaten. He later escaped and lived to tell recount his experience.

David Lammy MP played the clip in [Unremembered](#), a 2019 TV documentary investigating the hundreds of thousands of missing war graves of soldiers from the British empire which helped spark the Commonwealth War Graves Commission investigation.

In southern Kenya, Mwamkon Mwavaka, whose grandfather Chichole served the British army as a porter in the war transporting supplies to the

frontline, told how he has no idea where his ancestor's body might be and described the sometimes violent conscription of recruits.

“They were taken whether they liked it or not,” Mwavaka said. “They would beat them to submission. When he was killed they shaved his hair and brought it home to us. Only the hair was brought”.

There is no grave and no memorial for his grandfather.

With no monuments, the names of the fallen are by definition hard to trace, but Prof Michèle Barrett of Queen Mary University London, who is a leading expert in the field, found an intriguing record of some.

She unearthed a list of “native African soldiers” who had died and whose deaths were to be logged one of only three such war memorials in Africa. There was Aidi from the King's African Rifles who died on 19 December 1918, Anjala who died on 18 May that year and Asadi Bantubalm who died on 11 November 1918, Armistice Day. There were also Muchana, Okama and Petrop Kantual – but we do not know where any of their bodies lie.

The list made clear that the plan was to commemorate them on a memorial, not by name, but rather numerically. In the event, the memorial erected in Dar Es Salaam did not even include the number of dead. Instead it included an inscription that described the carriers as “the feet and hands of the army”.

As he travelled Kenya and Tanzania, Lammy was troubled by the absence of memorials to African soldiers and auxiliaries. In Voi, southern Kenya, where the so-called “carrier corps” gathered in the war, he found the residents today lobbying for a war memorial and a museum to the fallen.

In Dar Es Salaam, what was a large carrier corps cemetery is now a dusty wasteland with no markings. How that was allowed to happen is suggested in War Graves Commission meeting minutes from shortly after the war, found by Barrett, which states that the governor for the area “considered that the vast carrier corps cemeteries at Dar Es Salaam and elsewhere should be allowed to revert to nature as speedily as possible”.

“It breaks my heart that this is their cemetery,” Lammy said. “There has to be some atonement, some reckoning.”

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## First world war

# How millions of black and Asian men were mobilised in first world war

Many in Africa were recruited forcibly, while Indian army provided 1.2 million soldiers

- [UK inquiry blames ‘pervasive racism’ for unequal commemoration of black and Asian troops](#)
- [Unremembered: the African first world war soldiers without a grave](#)



Members of the British West Indies Regiment in camp in France in September 1916. Photograph: IWM via Getty Images

Members of the British West Indies Regiment in camp in France in September 1916. Photograph: IWM via Getty Images





[Robert Booth](#) *Social affairs correspondent*

Wed 21 Apr 2021 13.15 EDT

As well as a struggle for European dominance, the first world war was a battle for control of colonial possessions, not least in Africa, where western powers including Britain, Germany and France embroiled [about 2 million people](#) in the conflict as soldiers or labourers. It is estimated that 10% of them died.

The Indian army provided Britain with more than 1.2 million men. Its soldiers were deployed to all the main theatres of war and made up two-thirds of all the manpower serving in Mesopotamia, modern Iraq. Casualties ran high. More than half of British India's 3,000 combatants at Gallipoli died.

More than 16,000 men from the British Caribbean, many of them descendants of British slave trading, served in the British West Indies Regiment in Europe, Egypt, Palestine, sub-Saharan Africa and Mesopotamia.

[UK inquiry blames 'pervasive racism' for unequal commemoration of black and Asian troops](#)

[Read more](#)

All in all, well over 4 million black and Asian men were mobilised into the European and American armies, according to [research by Dr Santanu Das](#).

Many were conscripted or coerced, particularly in Egypt and the colonies of east and west Africa, according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. This could involve threats and even kidnappings. In Egypt alone, it has been suggested by the historian David Killingray that [three-quarters of the 327,000 men who served were recruited forcibly](#).

Large numbers of conscripts in Africa were used as part of a human supply chain in “carrier corps”, which took a huge toll that the lack of adequate memorials can make hard to calculate.

The [Giza Memorial](#) in Egypt commemorates all the missing of the Egyptian Labour Corps and Camel Transport Corps, but without their names or even a suggestion of the number lost. A number of recent estimates have placed this figure at upwards of 10,000, according to the commission.

No such imprecision is required to count the dead from Britain, who were carefully logged and remembered on individual gravestones and memorials up and down the country and in carefully tended cemeteries around the world.

A key founding principle of the War Graves Commission was that “all, whatever their military rank or position in civil life, should have equal treatment in their graves”. But after the war ended there was a stark contrast between the effort put into locating and concentrating graves on the western front and in east Africa.

By June 1919, 15,000 labourers had been recruited by the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries to work on exhumations in France and Belgium, according to the commission. The unit for east Africa had just six officers and 130 staff members covering more than 650,000 square miles of seven countries.

In the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria and Sierra Leone, no African death of the first world war is commemorated with a headstone.

Prof Michèle Barrett, of Queen Mary University of London, found a document from the British graves registration organisation in what is now Kenya from the early 1920s that said: “Most of the natives who have died are of a semi-savage nature and do not attach any sentiment to the graves of their dead.” Its author considered individual headstones a waste of money and that “tribes” would not appreciate them.

Winston Churchill, when colonial secretary after the first world war, also said mass memorials would be adequate in Africa.

This article was amended on 23 April 2021. An earlier version omitted to credit research carried out by Dr Santanu Das, an extract of which was published on the British Library website.

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## 2021.04.22 - Opinion

- How far has Britain come on race in the 28 years since Stephen Lawrence was killed?
- Gadgets should make life easier. So why can't I turn on this no-touch tap?
- The European Super League is the perfect metaphor for global capitalism
- Four steps this Earth Day to avert environmental catastrophe

## OpinionRace

# How far has Britain come on race in the 28 years since Stephen Lawrence was killed?

[Diane Abbott](#)



The Macpherson report was a breakthrough, but this year's Sewell report is a major step back



Stephen Lawrence, who was stabbed to death in Eltham, south-east London on 22 April, 1993. Photograph: METROPOLITAN POLICE/AFP/Getty Images

Stephen Lawrence, who was stabbed to death in Eltham, south-east London on 22 April, 1993. Photograph: METROPOLITAN POLICE/AFP/Getty Images

Thu 22 Apr 2021 05.43 EDT

Stephen Lawrence [Day](#) is a good opportunity to consider the importance of the Macpherson inquiry. Twenty-eight years after Stephen died, it is also a good time to contemplate where British society goes from here in the fight for racial justice.

The [Macpherson](#) report had 70 recommendations. Sadly, some of those important recommendations have yet to be implemented. But the single most significant thing that the inquiry did was to label the official reaction to Stephen's killing "institutionally racist". Sir William Macpherson said that the Metropolitan police investigation had been undermined by "professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership".

It is important to remember what a seismic effect Macpherson's use of the phrase had. Some of us, as campaigners against racism, had talked about the

police and institutional racism for some time. It was one thing for black people to use the phrase but for a white, then 72-year-old former high court judge who lived in a Scottish castle to acknowledge institutional racism was quite extraordinary.

Macpherson did not start off as a believer in the concept. In fact, some of us were sceptical that a pillar of the establishment was the right person to lead the inquiry. But he was persuaded by the evidence that he heard in the course of his inquiry. Hugh Muir, a Guardian journalist who covered the inquiry, described how [Macpherson's demeanour](#) went from “scepticism to concern, to shock to incredulity”. And it was precisely because he was an establishment figure that his findings carried such weight.

But, if Macpherson's acknowledgement of institutional racism was seismic, then this government's attempt to deny institutional racism in [the recent report](#) by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, led by Dr Tony Sewell, was not just seismic but shocking. Many commentators have remarked how incoherent is the report. A UN working group has [said](#): “In 2021 it is stunning to read a report on race and ethnicity that repackages racist tropes and stereotypes into fact, twisting data and misapplying statistics and studies into conclusory findings and ad hominem attacks on people of African descent.”

But this report was bound to be muddled. In practice, the conclusions were determined long before any investigation or research was done. The No 10 official behind it was the head of the policy unit, Munira Mirza. She has worked closely with Boris Johnson since he was mayor of London. And she has long been hostile to the idea of institutional racism, describing contemporary accusations of it, in 2017, as reflecting “[more perception than reality](#)”. She has further complained about “[a culture of grievance](#)” among anti-racist campaigners. So the report ended up cherry-picking data from existing research to confirm its [predetermined](#) worldview. As a result, academics, including the world-renowned public health expert [Sir Michael Marmot](#), were soon [queuing up](#) to say that they had not been properly consulted and their work was misrepresented.

[Celebrating Derek Chauvin's conviction is not enough. We want to live | Derecka Purnell](#)



## [Read more](#)

Sewell's [report](#) is a determined attempt to take the debate on race in this country back to a time before Macpherson. Back then, black people who tried to talk about racism were routinely described as having “a chip on their shoulder”. In other words, the problem lay with black people themselves, not with society or the institution that they were talking about.

Finally, there is no policy issue where a denial of institutional racism is more dangerous than education. The life chances of millions of black young people depend on education. The institutional factors that are behind black children not fulfilling their educational potential have been known for decades. They include: the low number of black teachers, the curriculum, policy on exclusions, some teachers preconceptions, lack of support for black parental involvement, and the attitude of educationalists. But by downplaying the reality of institutional racism, the government relieves itself of the responsibility of doing anything about these things. The new [all-party parliamentary group](#) for race equality in education, of which I am chair, will be tackling all these issues in the coming months and years. The memory of Stephen Lawrence deserves no less.

- Diane Abbott is the [Labour](#) MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington

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## [Technology](#)

# Gadgets should make life easier. So why can't I turn on this no-touch tap?

[Adrian Chiles](#)



Technology can change the world for the better – or make it weirdly complicated, as I learned from my parents' new car and an attempt to quench my thirst



We need vaccines and cheap, sustainable fuel – not unnecessary technology like no-touch taps. Photograph: Cultura RM Exclusive/Nancy Honey/Getty Images/Cultura RF

We need vaccines and cheap, sustainable fuel – not unnecessary technology like no-touch taps. Photograph: Cultura RM Exclusive/Nancy Honey/Getty Images/Cultura RF

Thu 22 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

I keep hearing that we're reassessing everything about our lives now there's a ghost of a chance that we're coming out of the other side of the pandemic. May I suggest something pertaining to the march of technological progress: please can all of you who are engaged in the invention of things restrict yourselves to inventing stuff that we actually need? You know, things like vaccines and batteries that actually last a long time, and sustainable sources of cheap fuel. Stop wasting your time on things we neither needed nor asked for and which actually make things harder rather than easier.

Take the boots, or tailgates, of cars. We used to click them open manually without any effort or fuss. A little click and up they went; a little push down and with a clunk they closed. Then we were given switches to open tailgates remotely. OK then, if you must. Now there are buttons that you simply must

press to get them to close on their own, rather than push them down manually. Why?

I bought my parents a new car. The tailgate opened (automatically) too high for their garage. Thanks to the march of useless technology, there was a facility to control the height to which it rose. My dad made the necessary adjustments and brought my mum out to show her. He pressed the button and with an awful crash the tailgate of their new car smashed into the ceiling of the garage, knackered the two-day-old bodywork. I got it fixed. A month later I was reversing the same car into their garage when I inadvertently sat on the remote for their automatic garage door. Down it came, smashing up the tailgate for a second time. I got it fixed.

Another bugbear is no-touch taps, the ones that deliver water without the need to lay hands on them. In a public place I get the logic regarding hygiene and so on, but, as with all tech, it's also just one more thing to go wrong. There's a new kitchen-type area near my studio at the BBC. In a five-minute break during my three-hour radio show, I sprinted out to fill my water bottle. I held it beneath the automatic tap. Nothing. I moved it around. Nothing. I touched the tap. Nothing. I danced around frantically on the spot trying to wake it up. Nothing. I returned to my studio with an empty bottle, a parched throat and an elevated heart rate.

Thanks, inventors. Now please spare us any more.

Adrian Chiles is a Guardian columnist

## [Opinion](#)European Super League

# The European Super League is the perfect metaphor for global capitalism

[Larry Elliott](#)



From elite football to tech giants, our lives are increasingly governed by ‘free’ markets that turn out to be rigged



‘The organisers of the ESL have taken textbook free-market capitalism and turned it on its head.’ Graffiti showing the Juventus president, Andrea Agnelli, near the headquarters of the Italian Football Federation in Rome. Photograph: Filippo Monteforte/AFP/Getty Images

‘The organisers of the ESL have taken textbook free-market capitalism and turned it on its head.’ Graffiti showing the Juventus president, Andrea Agnelli, near the headquarters of the Italian Football Federation in Rome. Photograph: Filippo Monteforte/AFP/Getty Images

Thu 22 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

Back in the days of the Soviet Union, it was common to hear people on the left criticise the Kremlin for pursuing the wrong kind of socialism. There was nothing wrong with the theory, they said, rather the warped form of it conducted behind the iron curtain.

[Boris Johnson says fans will be at centre of wider review of English football](#)  
[Read more](#)

The same argument has surfaced this week amid the furious response to the [now-aborted plans](#) to form a European Super League for 20 football clubs, only this time from the right. Free-market purists say they hate the idea because it is the [wrong form](#) of capitalism.

They are both right and wrong about that. Free-market capitalism is supposed to work through competition, which means no barriers to entry for new, innovative products. In football's case, that would be a go-ahead small club with a manager trying radical new training methods and fielding a crop of players it had nurtured itself or invested in through the transfer market. The league-winning Derby County and [Nottingham Forest teams](#) developed by Brian Clough in the 1970s would be an example of this.

Supporters of free-market capitalism say that the system can tolerate inequality provided there is the opportunity to better yourself. They are opposed to cartels and firms that use their market power to protect themselves from smaller and nimbler rivals. Nor do they like rentier capitalism, which is where people can make large returns from assets they happen to own but without doing anything themselves.

The organisers of the ESL have taken textbook free-market capitalism and turned it on its head. Having 15 of the 20 places guaranteed for the founder members represents a colossal barrier to entry and clearly stifles competition. There is not much chance of [“creative destruction”](#) if an elite group of clubs can entrench their position by trousering the bulk of the TV receipts that their matches will generate. Owners of the clubs are classic rentier capitalists.

Where the free-market critics of the ESL are wrong is in thinking the ESL is some sort of aberration, a one-off deviation from established practice, rather than a metaphor for what global capitalism has become: an edifice built on piles of debt where the owners of businesses say they love competition but do everything they can to avoid it. Just as the top European clubs have [feeder teams](#) that they can exploit for new talent, so the US tech giants have been busy buying up anything that looks like providing competition. It is why Google [has bought](#) a slew of rival online advertising vendors and [why Facebook bought](#) Instagram and WhatsApp.

For those who want to understand how the economics of football have changed, a good starting point is *The Glory Game*, a book Hunter Davies wrote about his life behind the scenes with Tottenham Hotspur, one of the wannabe members of the ESL, in the 1971-72 season. (Full disclosure: I am a Spurs season ticket holder.)



Davies's book devotes a chapter to the directors of Spurs in the early 1970s, who were all lifelong supporters of the club and who received no payment for their services. They lived in Enfield, not in the Bahamas, which is where the current owner, Joe Lewis, resides as a tax exile. These were not radical men. They could not conceive of there ever being women on the board; they opposed advertising inside the ground and were only just coming round to the idea of a club shop to sell official Spurs merchandise. They were conservative in all senses of the word.

In the intervening half century, the men who made their money out of nuts and bolts and waste paper firms in north London have been replaced by oligarchs and hedge funds. TV, barely mentioned in the Glory Game, has arrived with its billions of pounds in revenue. Facilities have improved and the players are fitter, stronger and much better paid than those of the early 1970s. In very few sectors of modern Britain can it be said that the workers receive the full fruits of their labours: the Premier League is one of them.

Even so, the model is not really working and would have worked even less well had the ESL come about. And it goes a lot deeper than greed, something that can [hardly be said to be new](#) to football.

No question, greed is part of the story, because for some clubs the prospect of sharing an initial €3.5bn (£3bn) pot of money was just too tempting given their debts, but there was also a problem with the product on offer.

Some of the competitive verve has already been sucked out of football thanks to the concentration of wealth. In the 1970s, there was far more chance of a less prosperous club having their moment of glory: not only did Derby and Forest win the league, but Sunderland, Southampton and Ipswich won the FA Cup. Fans can accept the despair of defeat if they can occasionally hope for the thrill of victory, but the ESL was essentially a way for an elite to insulate itself against the risk of failure.

By presenting their half-baked idea in the way they did, the ESL clubs committed one of capitalism's cardinal sins: they damaged their own brand. Companies – especially those that rely on loyalty to their product – do that at their peril, not least because it forces politicians to respond. Supporters have power and so do governments, if they choose to exercise it.

The ESL has demonstrated that global capitalism operates on the basis of rigged markets not free markets, and those running the show are only interested in entrenching existing inequalities. It was a truly bad idea, but by providing a lesson in economics to millions of fans it may have performed a public service.

- Larry Elliott is a Guardian columnist

*Guardian Live will host an online event to discuss the fallout from this week's European Super League controversy on Tuesday 23 April at 5pm.*  
[Book tickets here](#)

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## [Opinion](#)[Environment](#)

# Four steps this Earth Day to avert environmental catastrophe

[Simon Lewis](#)

With political pressure and these smart policy goals, a new sense of the common good could be within reach



Extinction Rebellion protesters at the Bank of England, London, July 2020.  
Photograph: Barcroft Media/Getty Images

Extinction Rebellion protesters at the Bank of England, London, July 2020.  
Photograph: Barcroft Media/Getty Images

Thu 22 Apr 2021 04.00 EDT

Today is [Earth Day](#), which should provide us with an opportunity to pause and confront the awful predicament humanity faces. We eat [microplastics](#), breathe [pollution](#) and watch other life-forms decline to extinction. We face intersecting poverty, health, climate and biodiversity crises. Our global

predicament is that consumption by the wealthy is driving us towards planetary disaster, yet billions live in [poverty](#) and need to consume more to live well. In this cycle, any version of “success” only hastens catastrophe.

Solving this conundrum requires much more than merely reducing the impact of high-consumption lifestyles. Similarly, if we focus on increasing efficiency this tends to increase resource use: make cars cheaper to run and people drive more. The core of any response that truly rises to this challenge will be interlocking policies that drive society on to an equitable and sustainable path.

Here are four policies that work together to maximise people’s welfare and freedoms, drive essential technological innovation, and allow society to operate within Earth’s limits. At their heart is human dignity coupled with breaking the dynamic of ever-greater production and consumption. Together they could quickly reorient the doomsday machine that is today’s global economy.

The first policy is [universal basic income](#) (UBI) whereby a financial payment is made to every citizen, unconditionally, at a level above their subsistence needs. UBI is needed to break the link between work and consumption. Critically, there is a constant awareness that we all need to be ever more productive at work, otherwise someone else will take our job. In response we have all said: I work hard, so I deserve that fancy meal, new gadget or long-haul holiday. Increased consumption is the reward for being ever more productive at work. Indeed, it makes little sense to curb our consumption when we know we will have to be ever more productive at work, regardless of our choices.

Fears that UBI may lead to laziness are unfounded: small-scale trials of UBI show people [work hard](#) and are typically [more entrepreneurial](#). Crucially, those UBI recipients had lower [anxiety](#), stress and health problems. UBI allows people to say no to undesirable work, unless it is well-paid enough. People can also say yes to opportunities that often lie out of reach, as they can study or retrain. And clearly there is an immense amount of work to do, from caring for others, to producing what we all need to live well. With UBI we would increasingly choose work that we thought mattered, rather than working ever harder to consume ever more.

The second policy framework is what I call universal shared services – others have argued for universal basic services, but what’s needed must be far beyond basic. Many countries have some of these, from healthcare to education. These are the services everyone needs and their delivery has society-wide effects. Core are health, education, energy, housing and leisure services. Providing these universally lowers financial costs due to economies of scale, and can substantially lower environmental costs. Such universal services make societies more equal and drive them towards more sustainability *if* two further policies are enacted.

The third policy tackles the climate emergency via legally binding ever-declining carbon budgets. This framework exists in the UK, following the 2008 [Climate Change Act](#). The government must reduce UK carbon emissions to within a carbon budget. These five-year budgets decline to a zero allocation by 2050. This act also created an independent [statutory body](#) that analyses data and advises the government on how to achieve each successive carbon budget. The advice results in new legislation for specific sectors and drives technological innovation as the zero emissions long-term destination is clear. As a result the UK is world-leading in [reducing carbon emissions](#).

The fourth policy uses the same declining budget principle, but tackles material use rather than energy generation. Similarly, declining “plastic use budgets” can set society on a pathway to eliminating plastic pollution. The same principle can tackle metal use to limit the damage from mining. A budget for the total amount of land used to produce the food a country consumes can limit the footprint of agriculture, central to halting biodiversity loss. As with carbon emissions, scientists can now track the production and use of plastic, metal and food. Scientific monitoring and new “declining budget” policies could keep material use within Earth’s limits.

These four policy goals together would drive people’s welfare up and our environmental impacts down. They are not new, nor are they very radical. We already, for example, assure incomes for pensioners in many countries, healthcare is universal in a number of countries, and declining carbon budgets are being used to help drive today’s energy transition.

But how to pay for it? The first response of the powerful to change is to argue that the costs are too great. They rarely are. After two decades of arguments about the high costs of tackling climate change, consultants to big business McKinsey now report that the cost of Europe reaching net zero emissions by 2050 is [itself net zero](#). The investments literally pay for themselves. Revenue-raising options should also help to implement the four policies more cheaply; these could include taxes on [rentiers](#) financial transactions, and high energy or material use. Of course, without pressure from popular protest movements and political parties, nothing will change.

Yet systemic thinking on how to respond to global problems is increasing. The Covid-19 pandemic has produced a new seriousness by graphically revealing that there actually is no “outside” of society or the environment. When there’s no such thing as “outside”, the neoliberal mantra of avoiding taxes and regulations to keep wealth to yourself makes less and less sense. With political pressure and smart policies a new universality that breaks with centuries of exploiting people and the environment could be within reach. This is undoubtedly a very tough task, but we can’t afford to fail.

- Simon Lewis is professor of global change science at University College London and University of Leeds

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## 2021.04.22 - Around the world

- [Pakistan Four killed in bombing of hotel hosting Chinese ambassador](#)
- [Business Greensill liquidators in Australia to investigate directors after company wound up](#)
- [Business live Credit Suisse posts 'unacceptable' loss after Archegos collapse; markets await ECB decision](#)
- [Banking Credit Suisse records almost £600m loss on Archegos collapse](#)



## [Pakistan](#)

# China condemns bombing of Pakistan hotel hosting ambassador

Beijing backs government ‘anti-terror’ efforts as Pakistani Taliban claim responsibility for car bomb



Damage after an explosion at a hotel in Quetta, Pakistan, on Wednesday.  
Photograph: Anadolu/Getty

Damage after an explosion at a hotel in Quetta, Pakistan, on Wednesday.  
Photograph: Anadolu/Getty

[Vincent Ni](#) and agencies

Thu 22 Apr 2021 07.44 EDT

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson has condemned Wednesday’s powerful car bomb explosion at a hotel where the Chinese ambassador is understood to be staying in Quetta in south-west [Pakistan](#).

At least five people were killed and 12 injured in the attack. A spokesman, Wang Wenbin, said the Chinese ambassador and his team were not in the hotel when the blast happened, and that no Chinese citizens were hurt.

“[We] believe the Pakistani side will bring the assailants to justice,” Wang said. “China will continue to resolutely support Pakistan’s anti-terror effort ... and promote regional peace and stability, and ensure the safety of Chinese personnel and organisations.”

Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Thursday that he was ‘deeply saddened’ by the loss of innocent lives. “Our nation has made great sacrifices in defeating terrorism and we will not to allow this scourge to rise again,” he said in a tweet.

I am deeply saddened by the loss of innocent lives in the condemnable & cowardly terrorist attack in Quetta yesterday. Our nation has made great sacrifices in defeating terrorism & we will not to allow this scourge to rise again. We remain alert to all internal & external threats

— Imran Khan (@ImranKhanPTI) [April 22, 2021](#)

Wednesday’s incident took place in the car park of the Serena, a luxury hotel that is part of a Pakistan-wide chain. Quetta is the capital of Balochistan province, where the military has been fighting a decade-long low-level insurgency.

The Pakistani [Taliban](#) claimed responsibility for the bombing, which it said was a suicide attack using a car filled with explosives.

While officials say they are still in the process of determining the attackers’ motives, initial reports suggested that China’s envoy was the target.

The Chinese ambassador, Nong Rong, had earlier in the day met the provincial chief minister, Jam Kamal Khan, in the city, according to [a tweet](#) from the provincial government spokesman, Liaquat Shahwani.

The provincial home minister, Ziaullah Lango, told reporters: “I just met him. He is in high spirits,” adding the envoy would complete his visit to

Quetta on Thursday.

[Kidnap, torture, murder: the plight of Pakistan's thousands of disappeared](#)  
[Read more](#)

Balochistan is poor despite its natural resources – a source of great anger to residents, who complain they do not receive a fair share of the gas and mineral wealth. In recent years it has become a strategically important part of the country for China, where Beijing invests heavily through its China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) project.

Resentment has been fuelled by billions of dollars of Chinese money flowing into the region through the project – a key part of China's [Belt and Road initiative](#) – which opponents say gave locals little benefit as most new jobs went to outsiders.

Wednesday's attack has also reignited concerns over the security of China's Belt and Road initiative in the South Asian country. A government minister, however, insists that this incident “will not change the ground reality that it's safe [for Chinese companies] to invest in Pakistan.”

“CPEC is a non-negotiable flagship and [is] here to stay,” Fawad Chaudhry, federal minister for information and broadcasting told the Guardian. “We understand fully that those who don't want it to succeed will try to sabotage, but Pakistan-China understanding is so strong that they can't succeed.”

“China has always helped us as and when needed,” he added.

[A new Shenzhen? Poor Pakistan fishing town's horror at Chinese plans](#)  
[Read more](#)

In 2019 [gunmen stormed a luxury hotel](#) overlooking a flagship CPEC project, the deep-water seaport in Gwadar that critics say gives China strategic access to the Arabian Sea, killing at least eight people.

And in June, Baloch insurgents targeted the Pakistan stock exchange, which is partly owned by Chinese companies.

All the attacks were claimed by the Balochistan Liberation Army.

The latest incident comes after more than a week of violent anti-France protests led by an extremist party based in the eastern city of Lahore.

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## Business

# Greensill liquidators in Australia to investigate directors after company wound up

Creditors vote in favour of winding up the Australian company that sat atop the globe-spanning finance empire



Greensill offices near Warrington, England. Creditors of the Australian company Greensill Capital have voted to wind up the company which owes \$4.9bn. Photograph: Oli Scarff/AFP/Getty Images

Greensill offices near Warrington, England. Creditors of the Australian company Greensill Capital have voted to wind up the company which owes \$4.9bn. Photograph: Oli Scarff/AFP/Getty Images

[Ben Butler](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 05.22 EDT

The Australian company that sat atop the globe-spanning [Greensill](#) finance empire will be wound up owing \$4.9bn allowing liquidators to investigate its collapse.

At a meeting on Thursday, creditors of Greensill Capital voted 23 to 0 – with three abstentions – in favour of winding up the company.

Liquidators from accounting firm Grant Thornton have [previously said](#) areas requiring further investigation include hundreds of millions of dollars of transactions between Greensill Capital and a trust controlled by Peter Greensill, the brother of company founder and Bundaberg sugar farmer Lex Greensill.

[Greensill crash: Australian firm owes \\$4.9bn, 'should be liquidated'](#)  
[Read more](#)

The investigations are also likely to include grilling the directors and former directors of the company – who include Lex Greensill and former senior British public servant Bill Crothers – under oath in court as part of liquidators' examinations.

A loan to Peter Greensill grew by US\$244m in just three months between October and December 2019, the liquidators, Matthew Byrnes, Philip Campbell-Wilson and Michael McCann, said in a report to creditors this month.

“Several transactions totalling US\$174m then appear to be transferred out with the narration of ‘Payment of proceeds PG Family Trust’ or similar,” they said.

“Management has indicated these transactions in part relate to the sale of shares by Peter Greensill, however, at this stage we are not in possession of sufficient documentation to confirm.”

The 23 creditors voting for the move were owed a total of \$1.7bn while the three abstaining creditors were owed a total of \$2.96bn.

Greensill Capital itself had few assets apart from its interest in the group's operating businesses in the UK and Europe, meaning any return to its creditors will largely depend on what can be recovered there.

The UK business is also at the centre of an [inquiry](#) ordered by the British prime minister, Boris Johnson, into lobbying carried out by Greensill adviser and former PM David Cameron.

[MPs urge Cameron to make public Greensill lobbying texts to Sunak](#)  
[Read more](#)

As the Guardian [has previously reported](#), in addition to lobbying governments, Cameron's activities while at Greensill included meeting with an Australian insurance executive named in legal action related to the group's sudden collapse in March.

Creditors of Greensill Capital also voted on Thursday to form a committee of inspection to oversee the work of the liquidators.

It will include Greensill's major backers, Credit Suisse and Japanese venture capital group Softbank, as well as representatives of German banks that have made a claim of €2bn (\$3.15bn).

Greensill owned a German bank and the claim represents an estimate of how much it owes under the country's deposit protection scheme.

Also on the committee will be representatives of the Peter Greensill Family Trust, Greensill's employees and vendors of a company called Earnd that the group owned who are still owed money due to the sale.

Greensill's collapse has thrown into doubt the financing of steel magnate Sanjeev Gupta's empire, which includes mills in the UK and Australia.

Gupta has insisted he can refinance debts owed to Greensill, which he disputes, and Australian governments have [made encouraging noises](#) about bailing out the steel mill in Whyalla, South Australia, if he cannot.

However, they have stopped short of guaranteeing they will rescue the mill.

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[Business](#)

# UK manufacturing optimism highest since 1973; ECB presses on with bond purchases – as it happened

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## Credit Suisse

# Credit Suisse records almost £600m loss on Archegos collapse

Loss branded ‘unacceptable’ as Swiss bank says hedge fund failure wiped out best quarterly performance in a decade



The logo of Swiss bank Credit Suisse in Zurich. Photograph: Arnd Wiegmann/Reuters

The logo of Swiss bank Credit Suisse in Zurich. Photograph: Arnd Wiegmann/Reuters

[Kalyeena Makortoff](#) *Banking correspondent*

[@kalyeena](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 04.34 EDT

Credit Suisse swung to a 757m Swiss franc loss (£592m) in the first quarter as the bank reeled from the collapse of US hedge fund Archegos that wiped

out what would have otherwise been its best quarterly performances in at least a decade.

The bank has taken the biggest hit from the Archegos collapse among its peers, logging a SFr4.4bn charge in the first quarter. It comes after Archegos, one of its prime brokerage clients, [was forced to liquidate](#) almost \$20bn (£14bn) in assets last month in a fire sale that reverberated across global markets.

The pre-tax loss, which Credit Suisse executives called “unacceptable”, compares with a SFr1.2bn profit during the same period last year.

Credit Suisse said that, excluding Archegos, it would have made a SFr3.6m profit in the first three months of the year. It would have been one of the lender’s best quarterly financial results in at least a decade.

The bank expects to take a further SFr600m hit in the coming months as it continues to unwind the hedge fund’s investments. Credit Suisse has so far sold off 97% of the shares it held as part of the Archegos account.

It also announced plans to raise SFr1.7bn from investors as it tries to rebuild its balance sheet.

The Swiss regulator, Finma, announced on Thursday it had launched enforcement proceedings against Credit Suisse related to the Archegos loss. It will investigate “possible shortcomings in risk management” and will continue to exchange information with regulators in the UK and US, who are also looking into the matter.

Finma also confirmed it is investigating the lender’s exposure to [Greensill Capital](#).

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The Swiss banking giant said it took a \$30m (£21.5m) charge after Greensill collapsed in early March, as it expects to claw back less cash from administrators who are currently winding down the business. It is also working to reclaim money for customers who invested in Greensill loans

that were packaged up as investments and [sold off via a series of Credit Suisse funds](#).

Finma has ordered Credit Suisse to introduce short-term measures to help protect the bank's financial position as investigations get under way, including cutting down some of its riskier business operations and suspending bonuses. "These precautionary and temporary measures are intended to complement and reinforce steps already taken by the bank," Finma said.

Credit Suisse shares were down 4.8% on Thursday afternoon.

The flurry of bad news comes a week before Credit Suisse [is set to welcome António Horta-Osório](#), the outgoing Lloyds Banking Group chief executive, as its new chairman after its annual general meeting on 30 April.

Credit Suisse executives insisted on Thursday that steps had been taken to learn lessons from the bank's relationships with Greensill and Archegos, following their high-profile failures. It has already [replaced key executives](#) and cut employee compensation by SFr109m, most of which related to lower bonuses.

"What's happened in respect of these two matters is clearly completely unacceptable," the chief financial officer, David Mathers, said.

"As you know, the board of directors is reviewing both matters thoroughly. And we will ensure that all appropriate lessons are learned from this. Our priority is ensuring that this happens, and that we sustain the momentum that we continue to see in the franchise, and continue to serve our clients across the world."

The bank said it was planning to "substantially" cut the size of its prime brokerage division, which was responsible for its relationship with Archegos, by reducing the volume of loans offered to customers like hedge funds by \$35bn. That is about a third of the total loans offered through the prime brokerage business.

Executives also reiterated that they would take “all appropriate legal action” to protect the interests of investors who put their money in the bank’s Greensill funds. Last month, it emerged that Credit Suisse [instructed trustees to file wind-up orders](#) against one of Greensill’s largest customers, Sanjeev Gupta’s GFG Alliance, to try to recoup its losses.

“The fallout from two high-profile insolvencies – Greensill and Archegos – is a real headache for Credit Suisse that will not go away,” said Alex Jay, head of insolvency at UK law firm Stewarts. “The capital raise will help alleviate immediate concerns, but the losses involved mean that the bank will certainly be taking action to recover what it can. That latter issue will play out through the insolvency processes that are ongoing too, and will likely run for some time.”

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## Headlines saturday 24 april 2021

- ['Mad and totally unethical' Dominic Cummings hits out at Boris Johnson](#)
- [Lord Udney-Lister Key Boris Johnson aide leaves No 10](#)
- [Analysis Post-Cummings quiet life goes to pot as 'No 10 sources' leak](#)
- ['Restore public trust' Labour asks Sunak to publish lobbying texts](#)



## [Boris Johnson](#)

# ‘Mad and totally unethical’: Dominic Cummings hits out at Boris Johnson

Ex-aide alleges PM tried to quash leak inquiry that implicated ally and wanted donors to fund work on flat



Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings in Downing Street in 2019.  
Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty

Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings in Downing Street in 2019.  
Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty

[Peter Walker](#) and [Aubrey Allegretti](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 12.46 EDT

Dominic Cummings has launched an unprecedented and extraordinary attack on Boris Johnson, alleging that the prime minister tried to quash a leak inquiry as it implicated an ally, and hatched a “possibly illegal” plan for donors to pay to renovate his flat.

The outburst by Cummings, a day after anonymous No 10 sources claimed that he [had leaked private text messages](#) between Johnson and the billionaire James Dyson, prompted Labour to accuse the government of “fighting each other like rats in a sack”.

Cummings used a lengthy post on his personal blog to deny any leaking. Instead, he accused Johnson and his team of a series of wrongdoings. He said the prime minister had behaved in a way he considered “mad and totally unethical”, and warned that he would happily give evidence under oath to an inquiry.

“It is sad to see the PM and his office fall so far below the standards of competence and integrity the country deserves,” he wrote.

Such a damning intervention by the man who was Johnson’s key ally and ideological inspiration will deeply alarm the prime minister and his aides. Cummings is due to give evidence to MPs next month.

[Leak inquiry launched as No 10 insiders accuse Dominic Cummings](#)  
[Read more](#)

Cummings, who left Downing Street in November, dismissed the accusation, in an anonymous briefing to several newspapers on Thursday, that he had leaked the texts between Dyson and Johnson.

In the exchanges last March, the prime minister appeared to promise the businessman that he would “fix” an issue on the tax status of Dyson staff working in the UK during the pandemic.

Cummings said he had checked his phone and had not been forwarded the messages in question. He claimed he had been told by Downing Street officials that Dyson’s office had emailed screenshots of his exchanges with Johnson to a series of officials, including some at the Treasury, and that this was what had been leaked. He said he had not been copied into this.

“I am happy to meet with the cabinet secretary and for him to search my phone for Dyson messages,” he wrote. “If the PM did send them to me, as he

is claiming, then he will be able to show the cabinet secretary on his own phone when they were sent to me.

“I am also happy to publish or give to the cabinet secretary the PM/Dyson messages that I do have, which concerned ventilators, bureaucracy and Covid policy – not tax issues.”

Cummings also addressed reports suggesting he had been the serial leaker known as the “chatty rat”, who had also allegedly leaked news of another Covid lockdown last autumn.

In perhaps the most potentially devastating allegation in his blogpost, Cummings claimed that in a meeting after the leak, the cabinet secretary, Simon Case, told him and Johnson that “all the evidence” pointed to Henry Newman, then an adviser at the Cabinet Office, who has since moved to No 10. Newman is known to be close to Carrie Symonds, Johnson’s fiancée, seen as a key figure in Cummings’ removal from his job.

Cummings wrote: “The PM was very upset about this. He said to me afterwards: ‘If Newman is confirmed as the leaker, then I will have to fire him, and this will cause me very serious problems with Carrie as they’re best friends ... [pause] Perhaps we could get the cabinet secretary to stop the leak inquiry?’

“I told him that this was ‘mad’ and totally unethical, that he had ordered the inquiry himself and authorised the cabinet secretary to use more invasive methods than are usually applied to leak inquiries because of the seriousness of the leak. I told him that he could not possibly cancel an inquiry about a leak that affected millions of people just because it might implicate his girlfriend’s friends.”

Cummings did not give any further explanation of what he meant by the “more invasive methods”, or whether they had been used.

He said he had warned some officials about Johnson’s plans, and that they would give evidence under oath to an inquiry, adding: “I also have WhatsApp messages with very senior officials about this matter which are definitive.”

On Friday night, No 10 said: “The PM has never interfered in a government leak inquiry.”

Finally, Cummings said he had warned Johnson about renovations to his Downing Street flat costing a reported £58,000, for which the prime minister had allegedly sought outside funding from Conservative supporters.

He wrote: “I told him I thought his plans to have donors secretly pay for the renovation were unethical, foolish, possibly illegal and almost certainly broke the rules on proper disclosure of political donations if conducted in the way he intended... I refused to help him organise these payments.”

Cummings said Johnson had stopped speaking to him about the issue in 2020 after he said this, adding: “I would be happy to tell the cabinet secretary or Electoral Commission what I know concerning this matter.”

He also accused the new head of communications at Downing Street, Jack Doyle, of having given the briefing to newspapers on Thursday.

Earlier, the government sought to close down the renovations controversy by releasing a statement saying no outside finance had been involved.

The statement, released on Friday by a Cabinet Office minister, Nicholas True, revealed that contractors had been brought in to paint, sand and refresh floorboards. But Lord True added: “Any costs of wider refurbishment in this year have been met by the prime minister personally.”

After the release of Cummings’ blog, No 10 responded: “At all times, the government and ministers have acted in accordance with the appropriate codes of conduct and electoral law. Cabinet Office officials have been engaged and informed throughout and official advice has been followed.

“All reportable donations are transparently declared and published – either by the Electoral Commission or the House of Commons registrar, in line with the requirements set out in electoral law.

“Gifts and benefits received in a ministerial capacity are, and will continue to be, declared in transparency returns.”

Cummings had written the issues needed to be handled by “an urgent parliamentary inquiry into the government’s conduct over the Covid crisis”.

He concluded: “Issues concerning Covid and/or the PM’s conduct should not be handled as No 10 has handled them over the past 24 hours. I will cooperate fully with any such inquiry and am happy to give evidence under oath.”

Angela Rayner, Labour’s deputy leader, said the government had “spent the last 24 hours lurching between cover-ups and cock-ups”. She added: “The [Conservatives](#) are fighting each other like rats in a sack and slipping deeper and deeper into the mire of sleaze. It shows breathtaking contempt for the country.”

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## Politics

# Key Boris Johnson aide Lord Udney-Lister leaves No 10

Eddie Lister leaves post at PM's special envoy to the Gulf, Downing Street says



A Downing Street spokesman said: 'The prime minister is hugely grateful for Lord Lister's dedicated service over many years.' Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

A Downing Street spokesman said: 'The prime minister is hugely grateful for Lord Lister's dedicated service over many years.' Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

*Guardian staff and agency*

Sat 24 Apr 2021 04.00 EDT

One of Boris Johnson's closest aides, Lord Udney-Lister, is leaving his post as the prime minister's special envoy to the Gulf, Downing Street has said.

The 71-year-old peer served in City Hall as Johnson's chief of staff when he was mayor of London.

When Johnson became prime minister in 2019, he brought into No 10 as his chief strategy adviser.

He recently took up the post of Gulf envoy. In that role, it was reported that Johnson asked him to investigate after Crown Prince [Mohammed bin Salman](#) complained the Premier League was blocking a Saudi takeover bid for Newcastle United.

It came after the Daily Mail reported that the prime minister was [asked to intervene](#) to "correct" the Premier League's "wrong" decision not to allow the £300m takeover last year.

A Downing Street spokesman said: "The prime minister is hugely grateful for Lord Lister's dedicated service over many years.

"He has been an outstanding servant to the country, to the government and to the prime minister when he was mayor of London."

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## [Boris Johnson](#)

# Post-Cummings quiet life goes to pot as 'No 10 sources' leak and brief

No 10 is arguably less fractious since Boris Johnson sacked his chief aide, but not notably less chaotic



Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings pictured in happier times, in October 2019. Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings pictured in happier times, in October 2019. Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

[\*Peter Walker\*](#)

[@peterwalker99](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 13.30 EDT

When Dominic Cummings and Lee Cain [departed](#) Downing Street and the understated former Treasury official Dan Rosenfeld was [swiftly installed](#) as

chief of staff, the message seemed clear: enough bickering, feuds and drama, it's time for a quieter life.

Five months on, it's fair to say this has not gone to plan, or not entirely.

Some elements of No 10 life are more serene, particularly day-to-day relations with the media, previously marked by incidents such as [a mass boycott](#) of an official briefing after Cain, the head of communications, tried to handpick which reporters could attend.

The winding back of the Cummings/Cain template for reshaping government messaging has brought its own hiccups, however, not least this week's [axing of a plan](#) to hold daily televised briefings with the press secretary, Allegra Stratton, but only after a £2.6m media hub was built inside 9 Downing Street.

But if the hope was to eradicate the factionalism around [Boris Johnson](#), with the near-daily rounds of anonymous media briefings from well-informed if suspiciously partisan "No 10 sources", this week has shown that it was, at best, a temporary halt to proceedings.

[Dominic Cummings launches attack on Boris Johnson](#)  
[Read more](#)

As ever it was Cummings, Johnson's former chief aide, at the centre of it all. In a notable chronology, Downing Street officials announced an inquiry on Thursday into the leaking of text messages between Johnson and the billionaire vacuum cleaner magnate, [James Dyson](#). Hours later, those "No 10 sources" re-emerged to identify the supposed culprit as Cummings.

The briefing was a curious mix of the deeply personal – Cummings was described as bitter that Johnson's government had thrived since his departure – and the highly organised, with near-identical quotes released simultaneously, under a strict 10.15pm embargo, to three friendly newspapers.

This salvo inevitably sparked a rush of counter-briefings, both denying that Cummings was the leaker and then, in something of a return to the classic

era of vivid language from the Cummings camp, a warning that Downing Street was like America going into Vietnam and “the rebel always wins”.

Cummings finally broke his silence to name Jack Doyle, recently promoted to the head of communications job formerly held by Cain, as the source of what he said were false accusations against him.

Never one to go down without a fight, Cummings denied in a blog post published on Friday afternoon that he was the source of the Dyson leak. He also accused the No 10 staffer Henry Newman and apparent friend of the prime minister’s fiancée, Carrie Symonds, of being the mole behind another leak last year concerning England’s second national lockdown.

Cummings recounted that Johnson was worried about having to sack Newman, so wanted to shut down the leak inquiry, and that he had proof in the form of “WhatsApp messages with very senior officials about this matter which are definitive”.

[Leak inquiry launched as No 10 insiders accuse Dominic Cummings](#)  
[Read more](#)

Cummings also confirmed Johnson had told him of plans to have “donors secretly pay” for renovations to the flat above No 11 where he, Symonds and their son Wilf live, called for an urgent inquiry into the government’s conduct of the Covid crisis, and accused the prime minister and his office of falling “below the standards of competence and integrity the country deserves”.

However dramatic, the flurry of animated attacks illustrates the aspects of No 10 life which have not changed under the new officials.

Part of this is the very loyal camp centred around Symonds who is a well-connected Conservative party veteran, and to an extent around Stratton, who with the demise of the TV briefings is to take the media lead for the Cop26 climate summit in Glasgow this autumn.

Downing Street explicitly chose not to deny responsibility for the anti-Cummings briefing. Johnson’s spokesperson refused to answer questions

about it, but some sources claim it originated mainly from officials associated with Symonds, who was bitterly opposed to Cummings and seen as central to his departure.

The row also highlights the fact that while the post-Cummings No 10 is arguably less fractious, it has not been notably less chaotic, shaken by a series of leaked private messages sent to and from the prime minister, and by a torrent of revelations about lobbying, not least connected to David Cameron.

In politics, flux is usually associated with a breakdown in message discipline, and recent weeks inside No 10 have proved no exception.

One of the more odd episodes came last Sunday, when yet more unnamed sources explained to the Mail on Sunday [the theory that](#) the leaks came from a cell of Labour-supporting senior civil servants who were “activated” by their handlers because of Cummings’ stated desire to reform Whitehall officialdom. The mole was even given a name, Redthroat.

It remains to be seen whether the leak inquiry, one of several launched inside Downing Street in the Johnson era, unearths Redthroat, or identifies Cummings as the source. But one thing is clear. The drama is far from over.

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## Lobbying

# Labour asks Sunak to publish lobbying texts to ‘restore public trust’

Opposition demands records of texts, calls and meetings on tax and Covid support schemes to be made public



Messages released previously show David Cameron had repeatedly contacted Rishi Sunak (above) and other Treasury ministers to seek full access to government Covid loan schemes for Greensill Capital. Photograph: Reuters

Messages released previously show David Cameron had repeatedly contacted Rishi Sunak (above) and other Treasury ministers to seek full access to government Covid loan schemes for Greensill Capital. Photograph: Reuters

[\*Ben Quinn\*](#) and [\*Peter Walker\*](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 06.59 EDT

Labour has formally called for the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, to publish all records of text messages, calls or other informal meetings connected to tax rules and Covid support schemes, following the row about lobbying by business interests.

The demand came as Bernard Jenkin, the Conservative MP who chairs the powerful Commons liaison committee, said there should be tougher rules on conflicts of interest in government after text exchanges between Boris Johnson and the [billionaire businessman James Dyson](#).

Concern over lobbying has also centred on David Cameron's repeated attempts during the start of the coronavirus crisis last year to seek official assistance for Greensill Capital, the finance firm for which the former prime minister was an adviser and had share options.

Newly released exchanges, published by the Bank of England and Treasury on Thursday, show Cameron became increasingly desperate in tone, at one point complaining: "I must be missing something here."

Messages released previously show Cameron had repeatedly contacted Sunak and other Treasury ministers to seek full access to government Covid loan schemes for Greensill Capital, which has now collapsed.

After Johnson promised to release details of relevant private lobbying communications, Anneliese Dodds, the shadow chancellor, has written to Sunak requesting he does the same, saying this would "restore public trust that your decisions and those of HM Treasury were taken exclusively in the public interest".

Dodds said: "We now know that his officials were fully aware that Greensill Capital was in financial trouble months before the government opened the door for it to lend hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayer-backed loans.

"But we don't know what the chancellor told David Cameron he 'pushed his team' to do a day before Greensill's affiliation to a Covid loan scheme was discussed at the Treasury, or what role he played in dishing out tax breaks by text to Sir [James Dyson](#)."

Asked earlier about the lobbying controversy, Jenkin said ministers should not be “locked away in ivory towers” with people unable to contact them.

“The government is now under intense scrutiny – every meeting, every conversation that ministers have had with their officials,” Jenkin told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme.

“What’s got to come out of this is obviously a system of managing conflicts of interest, which commands more public confidence and is more rigorous, but also a balance, there has to be a balance.”

He said the appointment of an adviser on ministerial interests, a post which has been empty since November, when Sir Alex Allan resigned, was “pretty imminent”.

Jenkin’s comments came after [it emerged that the Cabinet Office is to launch an internal investigation](#) into the leak of Johnson’s text messages to Dyson – with reports saying that some in No 10 are accusing the prime minister’s former adviser Dominic Cummings of being the source.

The prime minister’s spokesperson said the decision had been made to launch a formal investigation into the leak, which showed that Johnson promised to change tax rules by saying: “[I will fix it tomo!](#)” The move came amid growing concern over Johnson’s use of a personal mobile phone in government.

In another interview, the culture minister, Caroline Dinenage, told Times Radio ministers did not hand out their mobile numbers “willy-nilly” but those in government were required to engage with businesses, charities and unions all the time.

“We engage with charities all the time, we engage with unions all the time,” she said. “The key thing is that we follow the process, we pass anything like that on to the civil service team to take forward. There are very clear rules and that’s what we all do.”

Jenkin, meanwhile, defended his decision to reject calls by Labour to launch an investigation into Johnson’s conduct, insisting that the liaison committee



did not have the remit to carry out its own inquiries.

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- [Global report India's hospital crisis deepens, Tokyo goes under state of emergency](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson Vaccine can be distributed with warning – CDC advisers](#)

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# More than half of UK population has had first jab – as it happened

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## [European Union](#)

# EU urges member states to re-embrace AstraZeneca vaccine

Call comes after European Medicines Agency reaffirms benefits outweigh very small risk of blood clots

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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A doctor prepares the dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in Bologna, Italy. Photograph: Michele Lapini/Getty Images

A doctor prepares the dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in Bologna, Italy. Photograph: Michele Lapini/Getty Images

[Daniel Boffey](#) in Brussels and [Sarah Boseley](#), Health editor

Fri 23 Apr 2021 12.48 EDT

Brussels has encouraged EU member states to act on a new European Medicines Agency opinion that the benefits of the Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid vaccine outweigh the risks of blood clots in all adult age groups.

The European commissioner for health, Stella Kyriakides, emphasised the vaccine's importance as part of the EU's strategy despite months of controversy following the latest conclusions from the EMA.

In reference to member states who have resumed use of the vaccine in recent days following the discovery of blood clots as a very rare side effect, Kyriakides said she welcomed the fact that they had reflected on the latest evidence.

She has been lobbying capitals to take a coordinated position on the use of the vaccine to rebuild public confidence. Last week, however, Denmark [became the first EU member state to abandon the jab](#).

“It is clear, the overall benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine in preventing Covid-19 outweigh the risks of very rare and unusual side effects,” Kyriakides said in a statement. “The AstraZeneca vaccine is an important part of our vaccines portfolio. It is an effective vaccine that protects from severe disease and death, in the EU and globally.

“The basis for safe vaccination campaigns and the EU vaccines strategy is pharmacovigilance. The basis for successful vaccination campaigns is citizens' trust. Trust requires science, clarity and coherence. Let's ensure that we provide this to our citizens.”

Following a request by the commission for further investigation of the vaccine's risk profile, the EMA said on Friday that its benefits outweighed the risks for all ages, and that the benefits increased with age and the level of infection.

[AstraZeneca Covid vaccine: weighing up the risks and rewards](#)  
[Read more](#)

The EMA declined to update the number of cases of blood clots linked to low platelets in people given the jab, saying it wanted to step away from a regular count.

Instead it has published a series of graphs demonstrating the risk of hospitalisation, intensive care admission or death from Covid against the risk of blood clots for different age groups in low, medium and high infection rate settings.

In the youngest age groups – 20-29 and 30-39 – where infection rates are low, the risks of blood clots is higher than the risk of intensive care and death. But those people are still at higher risk of hospital admission.

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“For all age group categories, benefits occur in some scenarios,” said Dr Peter Arlett, the EMA’s head of pharmacovigilance. He stressed that the “favourable effects of vaccination compared with the very rare effects of blood clots increase with age and infection rate”.

It would be up to member states to decide whether to introduce age restrictions on the use of the vaccine. The UK has opted to allow anyone under the age of 30 to choose to have an alternative to the AstraZeneca jab.

The EMA does not yet have enough data on the gender of those suffering blood clots with low platelets, officials said. That is still being collected in some countries.

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## [Coronavirus](#)

# Covid-19: India's hospital crisis deepens, Tokyo goes under state of emergency

US restarts Johnson & Johnson vaccinations, New Zealand excludes Western Australia from bubble, EU pledges vaccine drive

- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

02:10

India Covid crisis: families' plea for help amid oxygen shortages and mass cremations – video report

*Agence France-Presse*

Sat 24 Apr 2021 02.24 EDT

Hospitals in India have launched desperate appeals for oxygen as the [Covid crisis spiralled](#), while [Japan issued a state of emergency](#) in some areas just three months before the Olympics are due to open.

India on Saturday reported 346,786 new infections in the past day, setting a world record for a third consecutive day, while deaths rose by 2,624 – the highest daily rate for [India](#) so far.

With governments rushing to accelerate vaccine campaigns, good news emerged on Friday when US regulators approved the restart of Johnson & Johnson vaccinations halted over blood clotting concerns; and the EU said it would have enough jabs by the end of July to inoculate 70% of adults.

[Brazil's 'rapid and violent' Covid variant devastates Latin America](#)  
[Read more](#)

The announcement from Brussels came as Europe's medicines regulator said the benefits of the controversy-plagued AstraZeneca vaccine increased with age – and reiterated that it should be used despite links to rare blood clots.

In India [healthcare facilities sounded the alarm](#) on oxygen supplies for patients on ventilator support.

“SOS – less than an hour's oxygen supplies at Max Smart Hospital & Max Hospital Saket,” one of the biggest private hospital chains in Delhi said online.

“Over 700 patients admitted, need immediate assistance.”



Covid -19 patients in Delhi, India wait for beds outside a GTB hospital  
Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Compounding the misery, 13 Covid patients died in Mumbai when a fire broke out in their hospital on Friday – the latest in a string of blazes at Indian healthcare facilities.

Many parts of the country have tightened restrictions, with the capital in lockdown and all non-essential services banned in Maharashtra. The northern state of Uttar Pradesh, home to 240 million people, goes into a shutdown this weekend.

Other countries have [closed their doors to India](#), fearing a new variant spreading quickly in the country. The United Arab Emirates on Thursday became the latest nation to impose restrictions, while Canada halted flights from both India and Pakistan.

New Zealand has paused travel with Western Australia after [a Covid-19 case was confirmed](#) in Perth.

Australia and New Zealand, two largely coronavirus-free neighbours, opened their quarantine-free travel bubble on Sunday, almost 400 days after closing their borders. The move has been hailed as a major milestone in restarting a global travel industry that has been crippled by the pandemic.

Japan on Friday declared a state of emergency in Tokyo and three other regions, just three months before the country is supposed to host the Olympics.

“Today we decided to declare a state of emergency in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Hyogo prefectures,” the prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, announced, citing the rise of infections involving new virus variants.



Japan's restrictions come just three months before the country is due to host the Olympics Photograph: Franck Robichon/EPA

The country's minister for virus response, Yasutoshi Nishimura, earlier warned of a "strong sense of crisis", saying current restrictions were not sufficient.

The measure will run from 25 April to 11 May, coinciding with the annual Golden Week holiday, Japan's busiest travel period.

Authorities want bars and restaurants to stop selling alcohol or close, and to shutter major commercial facilities like malls.

Spectators will be barred from sports events, which can continue behind closed doors, and remote working will be encouraged.

Governments were grappling with new surges elsewhere.

Russia announced on Friday it would impose a 10-day non-working period at the beginning of May to stem the virus spread, a departure from the government's hands-off approach in recent months.

Russia has been hard-hit by Covid-19, with the Rosstat state statistics agency recording more than 224,000 virus-related deaths – more than double the 107,501 that health officials reported as of Friday.

If correct, the Rosstat toll would mean Russia has the third-highest number of coronavirus deaths in the world, after the United States and Brazil.

US health regulators [agreed with a recommendation to resume vaccinations](#) using the Johnson & Johnson jab because its potential risks for clotting were outweighed by its protection against the virus.

According to data presented on Friday, of 3.9 million women in the United States who got the Johnson & Johnson shot, 15 developed serious blood clots and three died. Most of the patients were younger than 50. There were no reported cases among men.

[Rural doctors braced for 'devastating' second wave as India's workers flee cities](#)

[Read more](#)

Meanwhile the EU said it would have enough vaccines for most of its adult population by the summer.

“I’m confident we will have enough doses to vaccinate 70% of all EU adults already in July,” said the European commission chief, Ursula von der Leyen.



European commission President Ursula von der Leyen places an EU flag sticker on a box of Pfizer Covid-19 vaccines Photograph: John Thys/AP

The EU chief had previously set a goal of late September for the target, but announced the new date during a visit to a Belgian vaccine plant that is ramping up production of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

Europe has been plagued by problems with vaccines, first failing to secure much-needed supplies, and then relating to safety concerns, mainly around AstraZeneca’s jab after links to blood clots emerged.

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## US news

# US lifts pause on Johnson & Johnson vaccine after advisers say benefits outweigh risk

The vaccine was temporarily halted while scientists investigated rare but dangerous blood clots



‘This pause was essential to our ability to inform the public, inform physicians and the acquire more data for presentation and for analysis,’ said Dr Jose Romero. Photograph: Joseph Prezioso/AFP/Getty Images

‘This pause was essential to our ability to inform the public, inform physicians and the acquire more data for presentation and for analysis,’ said Dr Jose Romero. Photograph: Joseph Prezioso/AFP/Getty Images

[Jessica Glenza](#)

[@JessicaGlenza](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 19.55 EDT

US health officials have lifted an 11-day pause on Johnson & Johnson vaccinations following a recommendation by an expert panel. Advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday the benefits of the single-dose Covid-19 shot outweigh a rare risk of blood clots.

Panel members said it is critical that younger women be told about that risk so they can decide if they'd rather choose another vaccine. The CDC and Food and Drug Administration agreed. European regulators earlier this week made a similar decision, deciding the clot risk was small enough to allow the rollout of Johnson & Johnson's shot.

The change comes after distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was temporarily halted while scientists investigated rare but dangerous blood clots with low platelet counts linked to the shot.

"This pause was essential to our ability to inform the public, inform physicians and the acquire more data for presentation and for analysis," said Dr Jose Romero, the chair of the CDC's committee on immunization practices, which advises on how to best use vaccines. The committee vote was 10 to four in favor of recommending the vaccine for adults older than 18. There was one abstention.

Janet Woodcock, the acting FDA commissioner, said the pause was an example of safety monitoring precautions working as intended. "We've lifted the pause based on the FDA and CDC's review of all available data," she said. "We are confident that this vaccine continues to meet our standards for safety, effectiveness and quality."

More than 570,000 Americans have died of Covid-19, according to Johns Hopkins University, and 31 million people have been infected with Covid-19 in the US, according to the CDC.

Health authorities at the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) put Johnson & Johnson's vaccine distribution on "pause" on 13 April while six cases of very rare blood clots in women aged 18-49 were investigated.

Since the pause, scientists have found nine more cases of the clots. That means among the more than 7.98m doses of Johnson & Johnson distributed,



vaccine safety monitoring systems found 15 total cases. Doctors on the panel said the fact researchers were able to identify the very rare associated disorder shows the strength of US vaccine safety monitoring.

All confirmed cases were among women, most were middle-aged. Two were cases in women older than 50. The Johnson & Johnson clinical trial also found one case in a male and cases among men are under investigation.

8. This is the warning label language that J&J has agreed to with FDA. Unless ACIP votes against lifting the pause, this means this vaccine will be coming back into use. [pic.twitter.com/Bq3kbFoyuW](https://pic.twitter.com/Bq3kbFoyuW)

— Helen Branswell (@HelenBranswell) [April 23, 2021](#)

Put another way, if 1 million people were vaccinated using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 2,000 fewer people would be expected to die of Covid-19, 6,000 fewer hospitalized, and seven people would be expected to develop the serious blood clots associated with the vaccine.

However, the individual risk for women younger than 50 is higher. Among 1 million people, 12 Covid-19 deaths and 657 hospitalizations would be expected to be prevented, with 13 cases of the blood clotting disorder expected, according to the CDC.

A description of the risks and symptoms of blood clots would appear in a patient fact sheet distributed with the vaccine. In the general population, between 0.7 and 1.6 people per million develop the specific type of blood clot with low platelet count associated with the vaccine.

It is not uncommon for the committee to modify recommendations as data is gathered across millions of people. The new recommendations from independent advisers will be taken into consideration by health authorities at the CDC and FDA, who are expected to act quickly on the advice. Though health authorities do not always take the advice of their independent advisory experts, they most often do.

Those that opposed the measure said the recommendation did not issue a strong enough warning. Dr Beth Bell, a public health professor at the

University of Washington who voted against the measure, did not oppose resuming distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, she said.

“I am concerned the women will not be adequately informed just by [emergency use authorization] factsheets,” said Bell.



The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was temporarily halted while scientists investigated rare but dangerous blood clots. Photograph: Dado Ruvić/Reuters

At the time of the pause, authorities said they hoped the high-profile announcement would help uncover any additional cases of the clotting disorder previously missed, and that the stoppage would give clinicians time to understand how to treat the disorder. Unlike most blood clots, those linked to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine cannot be treated with heparin, a common blood thinner.

Blood clots associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are formally called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia, or blood clotting with low platelet count. Platelets are a component of blood that aids in clotting. The syndrome has been found to occur after more [common flu-like side-effects](#) resolve, between six and 13 days after vaccine administration.

A similar syndrome has been linked to a vaccine by AstraZeneca, which uses the same vaccine technology, called viral vector. In both instances, vaccine manufacturers used a second, weakened virus to deliver the genetic payload of the Sars-CoV-2 virus, prompting immunity.

Although the two manufacturers used different kinds of viral vectors, a chimpanzee virus in the case of AstraZeneca and a human virus in the case of Johnson & Johnson, authorities have said in the past conditions linked to the two vaccines bear a resemblance.

[Fear that Johnson & Johnson pause could heighten vaccine hesitancy in US](#)  
[Read more](#)

Not all experts agreed a “pause” was the best way to investigate the potential side-effect. Many argued it was unnecessary for such a rare side-effect, and that it could cause heightened vaccine hesitancy.

Confidence in the Johnson & Johnson vaccine has dropped significantly, the CDC said. In the two days following the announcement, there was a 15% decrease in confidence in the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Hesitancy is already playing a major role in the largest adult immunization campaign in US history, as states now have more open slots than takers, especially in areas with large populations of racial minorities and conservative voters.

Local health departments had also planned to use the vaccine to reach those most difficult to vaccinate, especially people who are homeless, incarcerated, homebound, or who are seasonal workers.

The advisory committee’s recommendation will not resolve all of Johnson & Johnson’s woes. More than 7.9 million Americans have received a Johnson & Johnson shot, and another 10 million wait in the wings. But the company has had serious manufacturing issues at a US facility expected to produce the bulk of the 100m doses the federal government expected the company to deliver by the coming summer.

*The Associated Press contributed reporting*

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## 2021.04.24 - Opinion

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Opinion**Boris Johnson**

# **Boris Johnson has a text addiction and it's bad news for all of us**

Marina Hyde



The alleged Dominic Cummings leaks may just be a distraction from the bigger issue: we're led by a man with no self-discipline and a very busy phone



Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak in West India Quay, London Docklands, June 2020. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak in West India Quay, London Docklands, June 2020. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

Fri 23 Apr 2021 10.25 EDT

Incredible that Boris Johnson's craziest ex is not actually someone he's had sex with. When you think of the sheer volume of fatal attractions that must be stored in the prime minister's phone under decoy names like "James Dyson" and "Mohammed bin Salman", it seems extraordinary that the biggest bunny-boiler is alleged to be ex-spad Dominic Cummings.

Anyway, speaking of Fatal Attraction, you'll have seen [the news](#) that undead Cummings is rearing back out of the bath again [like Glenn Close](#), except wearing trackie bums and a T-shirt reading "My girlfriend – YES I HAVE A GIRLFRIEND – went to Los Alamos National Laboratory and all she got me was this lousy T-shirt".

According to some concerted briefing efforts by Downing Street, the [text-for-access lobbying leaks](#) that have so adorned British public life over the past week are down to none other than the defrocked master strategist we once knew as Otto von Jizzmark. Cummings himself denies it, in a [Friday](#).



[teatime statement](#) that tends towards the thermonuclear. Just like Princess Di, he won't go quietly. But as one Downing Street source puts it: "If you join the dots it looks like it's coming from Dom." Righto. I've joined the dots, and it's just ... a picture of a cock and balls? Somewhat poorly drawn. Is that what you're getting as well, Superintendent Hastings? "More than anything," the No 10 source says, "the PM is disappointed and saddened by what Dom has been up to."

Ooh – "saddened". Ooh – "disappointed". It's very difficult to see how this government could be more comically grand about being this excruciatingly undignified. I really wouldn't rule out a day in the near future when the Downing Street communications department draws itself up to its full height and intones: "The prime minister has entered a treatment facility to address issues in the area of sex addiction. It goes without saying that he expects the nation to respect his privacy at this difficult time."

[Leak inquiry launched as No 10 insiders accuse Dominic Cummings](#)  
[Read more](#)

As I say, are we even totally sure the individual on the other end of [Johnson's text exchange](#) is the actual hand-dryer genius James Dyson? It might just be a pseudonym for whichever tech mompreneur/concert trombonist/basic Rixo-shopping Sloane is currently keeping Johnson on the boil. I mean, MAYBE it's a chat about respiratory aids, but maybe it's just some mad sex code. Roughly speaking, the following is what we're dealing with. Dyson, or rather "Dyson": "Would you like to see my ventilators?" Johnson, panting in whatever broom cupboard in which he's skiving off a Cobra meeting: "Oh God yes show me your ventilators." "Sadly," replies "Dyson", "you need to remove the tax barriers to see them." "I will fix it tomo!" judders the desperate Johnson. Say it. Say it. "JAMES I AM FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY." There you go. Better out than in.

The only statement from Downing Street this week that I actually believe is the denial that cabinet secretary Simon Case ever told Johnson to change his phone number, the PM apparently having had the same one for more than a decade. Very wise advice. That phone's like the ghost containment grid from Ghostbusters. If you switch it off, extremely bad things will happen. Even if he's as mediocre a yes-man as he appears, Case will surely have worked out

that the phone is basically the safest repository for innumerable entities who are best “managed” rather than fully ghosted. Attempting to shut down the phone completely could result in a vast release of potentially fatal psychokinetic energy to the Sunday newspapers.

On the other hand, are there really even Chinese walls between the various forms of sleaze? And if so, [who paid for the wallpaper on them](#)? You could certainly leave it to Johnson to cross the streams of this week’s two biggest news stories – lobbying and football. It emerged that the PM was lobbied by text by Saudi crown prince and human lumberjack Mohammed bin Salman over his family’s [blocked bid for Newcastle United](#). Hand on heart, this feels ominous. After all, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos once struck up a WhatsApp relationship with the de facto Saudi ruler, and the next thing he knew the National Enquirer had their hands on a cache of text messages and photos of him in his pants. Still, as long as there’s nothing incriminating on the phone of Boris Johnson, I’m sure the Saudi crown prince having our prime minister’s deets is what the government’s shit-eater-in-chief [Kwasi Kwarteng could call](#) “good” for a modern democracy.

As for where we go next with text-for-access, none of it will be good. Today’s Cummings angle may be intended to serve as a distraction, but it is increasingly hard to separate Johnson’s career lack of standards from his administration’s rapid shedding of them. Of COURSE someone as sexually incontinent as Johnson would lead a government as procedurally incontinent as his is, spaffing unmonitored access and promises of procurement favours up whatever wall it happens to be standing next to.

And yet, a lot of senior government figures seem to take genuine pleasure in pointing at the polls and excusing any amount of obviously questionable behaviour as “just Boris being Boris”. They’re seemingly incapable of grasping that the entire executive taking on the character of this amoral and discipline-free man will end very badly indeed. It is precisely Johnson’s lack of discipline and moral courage that has resulted in this country having both the highest Covid death toll in Europe and the most unnecessarily long economic shutdown and loss of essential freedoms. Gloating that the voters don’t think they deserve better will not be the recipe for a great British future.

## Marina Hyde is a Guardian columnist

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## [Opinion](#)**Race**

# Prosecuting individual police officers won't deliver racial justice

[Adam Elliott-Cooper](#)

The Derek Chauvin verdict is cathartic, but tackling racial inequality requires a radical rethink of criminal justice



‘Prosecuting officials who have committed acts of racial violence can be cathartic – something we’ve been denied in the UK.’ Kill the Bill and BLM protesters in London, 17 April. Photograph: Vuk Valcic/Sopa/Rex/Shutterstock

‘Prosecuting officials who have committed acts of racial violence can be cathartic – something we’ve been denied in the UK.’ Kill the Bill and BLM protesters in London, 17 April. Photograph: Vuk Valcic/Sopa/Rex/Shutterstock

Sat 24 Apr 2021 05.00 EDT

At last year's Conservative party conference, while the largest anti-racism protests in Britain's history were taking place across the country, the former home secretary, Sajid Javid, declared that Black Lives Matter is "[not a force for good](#)". This week, following the outcome of the trial of Derek Chauvin, the former police officer who was found guilty of the murder of George Floyd, Javid [tweeted triumphantly](#): "Black lives matter".

Although this about-turn may seem counterintuitive, it's perfectly consistent with the government's position on racism. Rather than reflecting on the demands for systemic change made by Black Lives Matter protesters, Britain's political class has championed the role of the courts in punishing individual perpetrators of racial violence. Similar celebrations took place when the killers of Stephen Lawrence were eventually found [guilty of murder](#), even though the Police Federation remained [in denial](#) about the institutional racism that characterised its response to his death. Viewed from the perspective that racism is an issue of a few bad apples rather than a structural or institutional problem, the single guilty verdict of an individual police officer in the US is something to celebrate. But can criminal prosecutions and prisons ever really deliver racial justice?

Prosecuting state officials who have committed acts of racial violence can be cathartic – and it's something that we've been denied in the UK. There have been at least [1,784 deaths at the hands of the police](#) in England and Wales since 1990, considerably more if we include deaths in [prisons](#) and at our [borders](#). But if we step back and examine how the justice system in Britain operates, it's clear that prosecuting individuals helps to *produce* racial inequalities rather than solve them.

British politicians have long regarded racism as a distinctly American issue, implicitly playing down comparable problems such as the disproportionate [use of force](#) that Black people experience at the hands of UK police, or the reality that while Britain's prison population has soared, Black people in England and Wales have been incarcerated [at the same or a higher proportional rate](#) as African Americans in the US. In the midst of the BLM protests last summer, two Black men were tasered in north London. One was [a pensioner](#) standing on the stairs at his home (in an official statement, the Met said no indication of misconduct was identified). The other was a young man who was [left paralysed](#) from the chest down after being tasered while

climbing over a wall. The taser, a weapon police claim should only be used when an officer is in danger, is deployed with alacrity, [particularly against Black people](#).

Meanwhile, Britain's prison population has [nearly doubled](#) over the past two decades. According to the 2017 Lammy report, [25%](#) of Britain's prisoners are categorised as BAME (this figure jumps to 40% for those in youth prisons). The sustained harm that prisoners experience can have long-term physical and mental effects. Deaths by suicide are more than [eight times more common](#) inside prisons, and on release former inmates endure relatively high rates of joblessness, homelessness, mental health problems and a greater likelihood of rearrest and imprisonment.

Crucially, these forms of “justice” do little to either improve public safety or transform the lives of those who have been imprisoned for committing harm. Many have pointed out that [since 1971](#) Britain has not convicted a single officer for any of the deaths that have occurred at police hands. But such convictions would vindicate the very system that leads to these deaths in the first place. If incarcerating ordinary working-class Black people doesn't improve public safety, then why would convicting individual police officers make a difference? Prison is not the answer to meting out justice, which is precisely why the Black Lives Matter movement did not demand that Derek Chauvin be put on trial.

Instead, the most decisive demands that Black Lives Matter have made are to defund the police and prison system and spend these resources on communities where public services and opportunities have been destroyed. Community-led youth, mental health and domestic violence services are often best positioned to improve public safety. Investment in these services can make people less likely to come into contact with the police and prison system in the first place, while also reducing the likelihood of vulnerable people being harmed or harming others.

But rather than engage with these demands, which are gaining popular support in [Britain](#), the government has instead gone on the offensive. It has published a recent report [denying](#) institutional racism exists, and even proposed legislation that will [criminalise protesters](#) while expanding police powers.

The protests of summer 2020, as well as the people who [gathered](#) this year to protest over the death of Sarah Everard and the police, crime, sentencing and courts bill, brought together people from a wide range of backgrounds. Police and prison violence has shown itself to be a problem that can't be solved through self-regulation; the criminal justice system cannot put itself on trial. Despite what the government may think, the harm caused by police, prison and border systems is both a racist and a British problem. The outcome of the Chauvin trial, despite its political cheerleaders, reaffirms the necessity of finding alternatives to the criminal justice system as we know it.

- Adam Elliott-Cooper is a research associate in sociology at the University of Greenwich. He sits on the board of [The Monitoring Group](#)

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## [Opinion](#) **Monarchy**

# The good, the bad and the monarchy: why we're still suckers for the royal fairytale

[Alex von Tunzelmann](#)

Prince Philip came to understand that the power of royalty lies in its stories – in heroes and villains, and twists and turns



‘There were those who thought Diana had been wronged, and those who thought her feckless; the same applied to Princess Margaret before her.’  
Photograph: Tim Graham/Getty Images

‘There were those who thought Diana had been wronged, and those who thought her feckless; the same applied to Princess Margaret before her.’  
Photograph: Tim Graham/Getty Images

Sat 24 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

There is a small community of islanders in Vanuatu who believe in the [divinity of Prince Philip](#). The cult is thought to have emerged before Prince Philip himself visited Vanuatu in 1974: members are in mourning. Much amusement has been had in the British press over the years, gently (or not so gently) mocking this belief. Last Saturday, though, when millions of Britons watched the reverential coverage of Prince Philip's funeral, there was cause to reflect on the beliefs that underpin royalty in our own society. Despite the technological and societal transformation of the world since Philippos of Greece was born on a dining table in Corfu in 1921, the place of British royalty in public life – and in the public imagination – is as strong as ever.

Reactions on social media to the coverage of Philip's funeral varied. Some were empathetic and emotional, imagining the Queen's grief as she sat alone. Others scrutinised the younger royals for drama: there was great excitement when Princes William and Harry, whose divergence in recent years has been the subject of much speculation, briefly spoke to each other. (Royal-watchers attempting to lip-read the conversation were stymied by attendees' face masks.) Others were dismissive, making flippant comments or jokes. Royal fandom, like many fandoms, attracts an anti-fandom that is equally strong in its convictions – though not in its numbers. The BBC [received 110,000 complaints](#) from viewers who felt there was too much coverage of Philip's death, while 13.6 million watched his funeral in the UK alone.

Longstanding narratives about the royals are fiercely disputed: there are deep divisions between those who think, for instance, that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex [have been wronged](#) by a racist and restrictive system and those who think them feckless. In previous decades, there were those who thought Diana, Princess of Wales, had been wronged, and those who thought her feckless; the same applied to Princess Margaret before her. This dynamic plays out in every generation: did they fail royalty or did royalty fail them?

The belief in “good” royals requires the creation of “bad” royals, for there can be no light without shade. The “bad” royals acquire their own fans, who create defensive counternarratives. Philip himself was often cast as one of those “bad” royals during his lifetime – though death, as with Diana, can be [spectacularly redemptive](#). During the BBC's funeral coverage,

commentators remarked on his care for his regiments, the centrality of his faith, his profound devotion as a husband.

All of these things may well be true. They would have to be said, though, whether they were true or not. Repeating these sentiments is a form of community bonding among supporters of the “good” royals. They affirm the fundamental theme promoted by modern British royalty that separates “good” from “bad” royals: duty. The Queen [announced this theme](#) on her 21st birthday, when she was still Princess Elizabeth: “I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.” She has maintained it impeccably ever since.

Throughout modern British history, we have applauded monarchs like Victoria who appear solid and conscientious, and do not seem to be enjoying themselves too much. Those who reject their duty, such as Edward VIII, or who care more for their own fun, such as George IV or Edward VII, are not widely appreciated. Public perceptions and judgments can be unfair. George IV, for instance, was universally condemned as a spendthrift for such expenses as £8,216 on coronation jewellery. Victoria spent £158,887 on jewellery from Garrard alone, mostly for herself, and got away with it.

The narratives we build around royalty are, of course, largely fantastical; comparisons to fairy tales, soap operas or fan fiction are frequently made. This does not mean they are trivial. In a monarchy, our feelings about the royals reflect and reinforce our own social and political identities, and how we relate to the state itself. This is just as true for anti-monarchists as it is for those who fervently admire one set of royals or another.

It must be bizarre to be a royal at the centre of this relentless attention: you’re given every material advantage imaginable, yet have little freedom in how you use it. Philip chafed against this at points. If people did not want a monarchy, he remarked in 1994, “there’s a perfectly reasonable alternative, which is a republic”. Discussing the monarchy as it was, he went on: “I don’t think anyone would actively volunteer for this sort of job.” Except he effectively did, when he married Princess Elizabeth in 1947. Like scores of royal consorts before and after him, he found the reality of royalty was quite different to how anyone outside imagines it.

“Philip was a moderniser who became more traditional,” wrote Brian Groom in his obituary of the prince in the Financial Times. The young Philip hoped to streamline and open up the monarchy, inviting the BBC in to make an intimate documentary, *Royal Family*, in 1969. Later, as his own relationship with the media grew fractious, he regretted having made his family so accessible. The documentary has not been shown on British television since the 1970s. It was [leaked briefly](#) on YouTube earlier this year, and swiftly removed. “Above all things our royalty is to be revered, and if you begin to poke about it you cannot reverence it,” Walter Bagehot wrote in 1867 of Queen Victoria’s constitutional role. “Its mystery is its life. We must not let daylight in upon magic.”

It is an elegant line, but the position of royalty in society is more complex than mystery. The royals are simultaneously an ordinary family and an extraordinary phenomenon: we know them intimately and not at all. When Bagehot was writing, modern British republicanism was reaching its height and “reverence” was far from universal. In the early 1870s, republican clubs were formed across Britain. The Liberal MP Sir Charles Dilke was among their supporters. The popular press of the time could be astonishingly intrusive. Since then, the evolution of television and social media has exposed the magic of royalty to the glare of daylight over and over again.

Anyone who imagines that this has diminished interest in royalty clearly does not follow the media. The narratives and counternarratives of “good” or “bad” royals are endlessly discussed; those who disdain the whole thing often make a point of that position too. At the centre of Britain’s relationship with royalty is not mystery but storytelling: identification with one of various narratives that unite the personal and political, reflecting our values and our relationship with the state.

Philip did not discourage his cult in Vanuatu. He wrote letters to the members. When they sent him a ceremonial club, he posed for a photograph holding it. When some visited London in 2007, he invited them to Windsor Castle. He did his duty. He understood that what they wanted was for him to play his part in their story, not disrupt it. This is also what he came to understand about royalty in Britain. Royalty may come wrapped in fantasy and magic, but what keeps people watching in the information age is the power of its story.

- Alex von Tunzelmann is a historian and author. Her next book is *Fallen Idols: Twelve Statues That Made History*

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## [Letter from a curious parent](#)[Schools](#)

# Dear Gavin Williamson, teenagers use mobile phones. Get with the times

[Michael Rosen](#)



Why not applaud the explosion of literacy in texts and posts? Better to welcome rather than vilify a tool that can play a part in learning



‘A mobile is a camera, a recording device and a means to talk in pairs or groups with people all over the world.’ Photograph: Barry Diomed/Alamy

‘A mobile is a camera, a recording device and a means to talk in pairs or groups with people all over the world.’ Photograph: Barry Diomed/Alamy

Sat 24 Apr 2021 03.15 EDT

I heard you on the radio the other day, explaining why you thought the proposed European Super League was a bad idea. I must say I was surprised, as I thought your hands were full with the matter of this summer’s GCSE and A-level assessments.

How’s that going? If my youngest is anyone to go by, the situation is as clear as mud – not the school’s fault by any means. I have a sense the education department has been dragged kicking and screaming into accepting the inevitable – that you will have to trust teachers to assess students. Even so, you and your department are so annoyed at having to let go of your usual control-freakery, you’ve inserted exam-like tests into the process. Right now, I have a sense this is the lull before the storm. Come August and the publication of the exam results, a mighty furore will break out. Again. And you can *not* resign. Again.



Another reason I thought you'd be too busy to worry about football is your [drive for discipline](#). As with all great speeches, [yours](#) lured me back to your words, this time on the matter of [mobile phones](#).

“Outside the classroom, the use of mobile phones distracts from healthy exercise and good old-fashioned play,” you said.

As you've invoked the word “old-fashioned” here, perhaps I could take you back to the olden days of 1957-62 at my secondary school. You conjure up a picture of us exercising in a “healthy” way and having a “play”. In my first year (aged 11 to 12) I did spend a lot of time playing a game we called “king-he”, which involved us throwing a ball as hard as we could at each other, aiming to hit someone on the torso.

After that year, running about hurting each other was replaced by standing about. We did standing about against walls, outside toilets and behind bike sheds. For the next six years of school the nearest I got to exercise was when a group of us competed to see who could do the best impression of a man getting beaten up by the Invisible Man.

Then you suggested that the use of phones in school was a “breeding ground for cyberbullying”. Of course this is a problem, but why the use of mobiles in school time contributes to this isn't clear. If you want to be a cyberbully, there are at least 12 hours away from school in which to do it.

Same goes for the other undesirables on your list: “inappropriate use of social media sites – such as anonymous Instagram accounts, where students are ranked on their appearance – can heighten insecurities, damage mental health and encourage harassment.” This is all good crowd-pleasing stuff that fits into the usual pattern of people in authority blathering on about why teenagers are horrible.

[Few schools and colleges will rely solely on exam results to set grades](#)  
[Read more](#)

Let me run this by you: in one of my least successful predictions ever, I came up with the theory 40 years ago that we were moving towards a non-literate world. The teens I was working with in London schools appeared not

to need the written word for anything outside education. All their entertainment and information was coming to them via TV, radio, film and music, and if they wanted to communicate with others, they could do it face to face or on a landline.

Then the internet arrived, and after that, mobile phones. What's happened is an explosion of teenagers writing – in texts and posts. If you weren't so set on rubbishing school students, you could be applauding this explosion of literacy, written communication, exchange and creativity. Breaktimes are ideal for even more of this writing, rather than “old-fashioned” hanging about trying to look hard, as we called it.

We are living in an incredible time: whole libraries, vast banks of knowledge and multimedia resources are available to us via an object that fits in our pockets. At the same time, it's a camera, a recording device, a film-maker and a means to talk in pairs or groups with people all over the world. Hadn't you noticed? You seem to despise an instrument that could play a wonderful part in learning. You're like someone in the 16th century despising teenagers for reading a ballad sold on the street because – heaven forbid – it had been produced on a printing press.

You closed this extraordinary piece of ignorance with this: “While it is for every school to make its own policy, I firmly believe that mobile phones should not be used or seen during the school day, and will be backing headteachers that implement such policies.”

So rather than encouraging headteachers to come up with ways to harness the technology, you tried to recruit them to a regime of blocking it. I make notes, write poems and blogs, read newspapers and academic articles, Google for facts and biographies, talk and write to friends, family and colleagues, take photos, and make videos on my phone. Some of my children make films on theirs. Are you seriously saying that right now we haven't got a fantastic opportunity to do similar things – and more – with the thing you want to ban?

What an old fuddy-duddy you are.

**Yours, Michael Rosen**

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## 2021.04.24 - Around the world

- [Brazil 'Rapid and violent' Covid variant devastates Latin America](#)
- [France Police worker killed in knife attack at station near Paris](#)
- [Climate emergency Biden vows US will work with Russia, though Putin offers little](#)
- [Brazil Bolsonaro slashes environment budget, day after climate pledge](#)

## Coronavirus

# Brazil's 'rapid and violent' Covid variant devastates Latin America

Expert says global leaders must not ignore Brazil, which is 'brewing variants left, right and centre'



Relatives pray during the funeral of a 57-year-old Covid victim at a cemetery in Manaus, Brazil. Analysis suggests the P1 variant originated in or near the city. Photograph: Michael Dantas/AFP/Getty Images

Relatives pray during the funeral of a 57-year-old Covid victim at a cemetery in Manaus, Brazil. Analysis suggests the P1 variant originated in or near the city. Photograph: Michael Dantas/AFP/Getty Images

[Tom Phillips](#) in Rio de Janeiro and [Dan Collins](#) in Lima

Fri 23 Apr 2021 08.00 EDT

As a coronavirus variant traced to the Brazilian Amazon marauded through Peru's coastal capital last month, Rommel Heredia raced to his local hospital

to seek help for his brother, mother and father.

“I said goodbye and promised I’d come back to take them home,” said the 47-year-old PE teacher, his voice muffled by two black masks pulled tightly over his face.

Heredia was unable to fulfil his pledge. Three days later, his 52-year-old brother, Juan Carlos, died as he waited for a bed in intensive care at the Rebagliati public hospital in Lima. The next day he lost his 80-year-old mother, Vilma, who suffered a fatal brain inflammation doctors blamed on Covid-19. Four days later his father, Jorge, passed away.

“The truth is, the pain’s just too great. I can’t come to terms with it,” Heredia said on Sunday as [Peru](#) suffered its heaviest day of Covid losses and fears mounted over how new variants might have rejuvenated the pandemic that has already killed more than 3 million people worldwide.

[Peru: number of new coronavirus cases per day](#)

Similar sentiments of incredulity and despair are being voiced across Latin America as the apparently more contagious P1 variant linked to Brazil makes an already shattering Covid crisis somehow even worse. Nearly 1 million Latin American lives have been lost here since the region’s first Covid case was detected in February 2020, and the pandemic is now accelerating again in countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela and Uruguay, with many convinced the Brazilian variant bears much of the blame.

[Brazilian Covid variant: what do we know about P1?](#)

[Read more](#)

“The Brazilian variant has reached virtually all regions,” Peru’s health minister, Óscar Ugarte, [warned](#) in early April as his country was plunged into the most deadly phase of what was already [one of the worst outbreaks on Earth](#).

Ester Sabino, a Brazilian scientist who is tracking the P1 variant’s spread, said phylogenetic analysis suggested it had emerged in the second half of

November somewhere near Manaus, a sultry riverside metropolis in Brazil's Amazon. Weeks later, Manaus made [global headlines](#) after its hospitals were overwhelmed by a sudden deluge of patients for which they were catastrophically unprepared. "What we're watching is a complete massacre," one local health worker told the Guardian at the time, as hospitals ran out of oxygen and patients asphyxiated.

Until Manaus's collapse, which coincided with the emergence of similar variants in England and South Africa, Sabino had been hopeful Brazil's outbreak might gradually be brought under control in 2021, as vaccination gained pace. But authorities failed to isolate the city and stop the variant spreading.

### [Brazil: number of coronavirus deaths per day](#)

By February, Araraquara, a city 1,500 miles south in São Paulo state, had been forced into lockdown by [an explosion of infections linked to P1](#). Hospitals across Brazil reported being inundated with Covid patients, many disturbingly young, and Brazil's death toll nearly doubled, from just over 195,000 at the start of January to 380,000 now. By March, the variant, which has now been detected in eight South American countries, was invading Brazil's neighbours, too: sweeping west into the Peruvian Amazon, leapfrogging the Andes, and laying siege to Lima, more than 1,300 miles to Manaus's south-west.

"It's not just a much more contagious variant but it also increases the levels of reinfection, which reduces the efficacy of vaccines," said Antonio Quispe, a Peruvian epidemiologist who said P1's "rapid and violent" spread was dire news for the region.

With fears over how some new variants might dodge vaccine protection, governments have tightened travel restrictions and closed borders. France recently suspended all flights to Brazil as a result of what the prime minister, Jean Castex, called [its "absolutely dramatic" epidemic](#).

['The heart of darkness': neighbors shun Brazil over Covid response](#)  
[Read more](#)



“The Europeans are right to be afraid about what is happening in Brazil,” said Marcos Boulos, an infectious disease specialist from the University of São Paulo who said uncontrolled outbreaks such as Brazil’s provided the ideal breeding grounds for variants. “The more transmission there is, the more variants appear ... The situation is very, very serious,” Boulos said.

This week the British government added India – which is witnessing [a ferocious surge in cases](#) – to its travel red list amid growing concern over [the B.1.617 variant](#) found there. A world record 314,835 infections were reported there on Thursday, with the prime minister, Narendra Modi, [comparing the crisis to a storm](#).

[India: number of coronavirus deaths per day](#)

Miguel Nicolelis, a Brazilian scientist who has become one of the most outspoken critics of president Jair Bolsonaro’s denialist Covid response, said government inaction had helped turn Latin America’s most populous nation into a global coronavirus threat. “Brazil is like a brewery and it’s brewing variants left, right and centre,” Nicolelis said, warning that while some mutations might hamper the virus’s ability to spread, others might make it even more transmissible or lethal.

Nicolelis said the situation in India, which has 1.3 billion citizens, a population nearly seven times larger than Brazil’s, was even more troubling. “Things can happen even faster there. They are paving the way for an explosion of mutations ... It’s frightening,” he said, calling for a global strategy of vaccination and sequencing to tackle the problem.

“Countries like Brazil and India can’t just be treated as global pariahs and abandoned. They need to be helped – because it’s not just their problem, it is the world’s,” Nicolelis said, adding that a similar lack of Covid control had also spawned the B117 variant in the UK.

Heredia was not sure which variant had been responsible for killing his family, although the government has said 40% of cases in Lima are now linked to P1. But he had no doubts over the scale of the calamity gripping his country, where a record 433 deaths last Sunday took Peru’s official total to more than 57,000.

“There are 30 patients [in the queue for ICU] before your brother and they’re prioritising younger patients,” Heredia recalled a doctor telling him after his sibling was admitted on the third Friday of March. Juan Carlos never made it out of the emergency ward, where he died three days later from pneumonia and pneumothorax complications.

“People are dying because they can’t get ICU beds,” Heredia said. “This is like war”.

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## France

# French police worker killed in knife attack at station near Paris

Anti-terrorism branch leading investigation after incident in which assailant was shot dead



The scene outside the police station in Rambouillet, south-west of Paris, on Friday after a 49-year-old woman was stabbed to death in the town. Photograph: Bertrand Guay/AFP/Getty Images

The scene outside the police station in Rambouillet, south-west of Paris, on Friday after a 49-year-old woman was stabbed to death in the town. Photograph: Bertrand Guay/AFP/Getty Images

[\*Angelique Chrisafis\*](#) in Paris  
[@achrisafis](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 12.54 EDT

A terrorism investigation has been launched after a French police employee was killed in a knife attack at a police station in Rambouillet, south-west of Paris.

The anti-terrorism branch stepped in to lead the investigation to determine the circumstances of the knife attack by a man unknown to intelligence services.

The attack took place in the secure entrance area of the police station in Rambouillet, 35 miles (56km) from the capital, at around 2.20 pm.

The 49-year-old woman, an administrative assistant who was returning from a lunch break, was stabbed in the throat twice and died of her wounds shortly afterwards. The attacker was fatally wounded when an officer opened fire on him. The murdered woman was the mother of two children aged 13 and 18.

The Tunisian assailant, 36, arrived in France illegally in 2009 but had since obtained residency papers, a police source said, adding that he was unknown to security services. He had just moved to Rambouillet, a middle-class commuter town known for its grandiose former royal parkland estate.

The local prefect said a terrorism investigation was launched for several reasons: because the attacker had carried out a reconnaissance operation to scout out the police station, and because of the method used – a knife attack to the neck – as well as comments that the attacker made while carrying out the attack, which was specifically targeted at police.

The president, Emmanuel Macron, tweeted that France would not give in in its “fight against Islamist terrorism”.

Elle était policière. Stéphanie a été tuée dans son commissariat de Rambouillet, sur les terres déjà meurtries des Yvelines. La Nation est aux côtés de sa famille, de ses collègues et des forces de l'ordre. Du combat engagé contre le terrorisme islamiste, nous ne céderons rien.

— Emmanuel Macron (@EmmanuelMacron) [April 23, 2021](#)

The French prime minister, Jean Castex, said at the scene: “Our determination to fight terrorism is more intact than ever”.

He expressed his support for the department of Yvelines, which stretches west of Paris, and had been the scene of two other terrorist attacks that made headlines in recent years.

In June 2016, a man convicted for terrorist offences and claiming allegiance to Islamic State stabbed a French police commander to death in front of his house outside Paris, then killed his partner who also worked for the police.

Last October, a secondary school teacher, Samuel Paty, [was beheaded](#) in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine in Yvelines after he gave a class discussing the magazine Charlie Hebdo, freedom of expression and cartoons of the prophet Mohammad. Police shot dead the 18-year-old attacker of Chechen origin.

One year before the 2022 French presidential election, with polls showing the final round pitting the centrist Macron against the far-right Marine Le Pen, security issues are high on the political agenda and polls show they are a key concern of voters, particularly on the right.

Le Pen told French TV hours after the Rambouillet attack that it was shocking that the assailant had entered France illegally and lived without papers for a decade before obtaining status in France and that all illegal residents should be deported. She said French people currently felt they were “encircled by violence and criminality”.

Macron’s government has introduced legislation to tackle radical Islamist activity in France, a bill that has stirred anger in some Muslim countries.

Several attacks over the last year have reignited concerns about the terrorist threat.

In September, a Pakistani man wounded two people with a meat cleaver outside the former offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, which had printed cartoons of the prophet Mohammad. On 29 October, three people were killed when a Tunisian man went on a stabbing spree in a church in the Mediterranean city of Nice.

In the most severe recent attack against French police, three officers and one police employee were stabbed to death in October 2019 by an IT specialist colleague who was himself then shot dead.

France is still reeling from the attacks carried out by Islamist terrorists in 2015 and 2016 that began with the massacre of staff in the offices of Charlie Hebdo and at a kosher supermarket in January 2015.

In France's deadliest peacetime atrocity, 130 people were killed and 350 were wounded when suicide bombers and gunmen attacked the Stade de France stadium, bars and restaurants in central Paris and the Bataclan concert hall in November 2015.

In 2016 a [man rammed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd](#) in Nice, killing 86 people.

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## Climate change

# Biden vows US will work with Russia on climate

Countries with poor track records on climate change, including Brazil and Saudi Arabia, were also courted at virtual summit



Vladimir Putin insisted he was ‘interested in galvanising international cooperation’ but he made no mention of reducing oil and gas supply or consumption. Photograph: Alexei Druzhinin/AP

Vladimir Putin insisted he was ‘interested in galvanising international cooperation’ but he made no mention of reducing oil and gas supply or consumption. Photograph: Alexei Druzhinin/AP

*[Fiona Harvey](#) Environment correspondent*

Sat 24 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

The US will work with Russia on ways to combat the climate crisis, President [Joe Biden](#) has announced, saying he looked forward to joint efforts



and was “very heartened” by the country’s call for collaboration on new technologies such as carbon removal.

But though Russia’s president [Vladimir Putin](#) insisted he was “genuinely interested in galvanising international cooperation so as to look further for effective solutions to climate change as well as to all other vital challenges”, he made no mention of reducing oil and gas supply or consumption.

[Biden’s pledge to slash US emissions turns spotlight on China](#)  
[Read more](#)

Putin also failed to provide any assurance that Russia would submit a new national plan on cutting carbon, a requirement this year under the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Russia’s greenhouse gas emissions have risen strongly in recent years, and its status as one of the world’s biggest fossil fuel suppliers has been bolstered by a deal to supply gas to Germany, and could be strengthened still further if Putin’s attempts to drill under and find shipping lines through the shrinking Arctic ice cap are successful.

Paul Bledsoe, a former US government climate official and now a consultant in Washington, said: “Russia is a climate criminal. Its emissions are out of control, growing faster than any other major emitters in the last few years, and Putin seems to want to make Russia’s oil and gas his personal fiefdom. Russia is a complete outlier in climate terms.”

Putin’s presence at the [White House virtual climate summit](#), which took place on Thursday and Friday, was because “he fancies himself as a global leader, but he stuck out like a sore thumb”, said Bledsoe.

Russia was not the only country regarded as a climate villain to attend the summit. [King Salman of Saudi Arabia](#) told other world leaders: “Enhancing the level of international cooperation is the optimal solution to meeting the challenges of climate change.”

But though the world’s largest oil producer has committed to meeting half of its own energy needs through solar power and other renewable sources by

2030, and crown prince Mohammed bin Salman received praise for his plans to plant 50bn trees, King Salman made no mention of reducing oil exports.

Saudi Arabia has a history of obstructing agreement at successive UN climate conferences in the past three decades. As the world prepares for vital UN climate talks, [called Cop26](#), later this year, diplomats are hoping that the pressure from the rest of the world can overcome any such attempts this time.

[As head of the UN's climate change agency, I know this year is crucial for the future of humanity | Patricia Espinosa](#)  
[Read more](#)

Bledsoe warned: “Saudi was up to its usual tricks [at the White House summit]. They murmur pleasant things but then try to undermine consensus at every major juncture. We can look for them to play the same kind of blocking attempts at Cop26.”

Oil producers were not the only countries with a difficult track record on climate [to be courted by Biden](#). Brazil prevented agreement [at the last UN climate conference](#), called Cop25 in December 2019, and president Jair Bolsonaro has overseen a return to the widespread destruction of the Amazon that is close to irreversible.

At the White House summit, Bolsonaro insisted Brazil was intent on protecting the Amazon and repeated his goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. He vowed to end illegal deforestation by 2030, and double funding for enforcement, and said his efforts would result in a halving of the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Few green campaigners believed him. Leila Salazar-Lopez, executive director of Amazon Watch, said: “Bolsonaro once again lied to the international community. He said he strengthened regulatory bodies to protect the environment, when in fact he weakened them. Environmental regulations have been systematically rolled back and the rates of deforestation have tripled.”

Sarah duPont, president of the Amazon Aid Foundation, added: “Brazil’s promises made during the summit are considered insincere and met with great suspicion. Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon has soared. Many of Bolsonaro’s new, as well as possible future, policies relax regulations around illegal deforestation and the protections of indigenous people. The expression ‘watch what they do, not what they say’ is appropriate in this case.”

Bolsonaro is in talks with the Biden administration and with the UK, as host and president of Cop26, over a potential deal that could see some measure of [protection for the rainforest in return for billions](#). Critics regard the potential deal as appeasement.

Australia also used the summit to showcase its leader’s climate credentials, but omitted to make any new commitments. Scott Morrison, prime minister, said future generations would [“thank us not for what we have promised, but what we deliver”](#) and praised the country’s efforts to increase renewable energy and investments in “priority new technology solutions”.

However, he [failed to commit to the net zero emissions](#) by the 2050 target that scientists say is necessary to hold global heating within 1.5C of pre-industrial levels, and which countries responsible for two-thirds of global emissions have now espoused. He also failed to make any new commitments to reduce emissions in the next decade, which was the [main point of the US summit](#) and will be crucial to the success of Cop26 later this year.

Kevin Rudd, former prime minister of Australia, and president of the Asia Society, said: “The fact that the US’ target is almost twice as ambitious as Australia’s, and the UK’s is three times as much, shows just how isolated we have become.”

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## Brazil

# Bolsonaro slashes Brazil's environment budget, day after climate talks pledge

President had promised to double budget for environmental enforcement at conference organised by Joe Biden



Cattle graze on land recently burned and deforested by farmers near Novo Progresso, Para state, Brazil Photograph: André Penner/AP

Cattle graze on land recently burned and deforested by farmers near Novo Progresso, Para state, Brazil Photograph: André Penner/AP

*Reuters*

Sat 24 Apr 2021 00.01 EDT

Brazil's President [Jair Bolsonaro](#) has approved a 24% cut to the environment budget for 2021 from the previous year's level, just one day after vowing to increase spending to fight deforestation.

Speaking on Thursday to the [summit organised by US President Joe Biden](#), Bolsonaro pledged to double the budget for environmental enforcement and end illegal deforestation by 2030.

The US government applauded those targets, part of a shift in tone by the far-right Brazilian leader, although many environmentalists said they would not take the rhetoric seriously before seeing real progress.

[Joe Biden's billions won't stop Bolsonaro destroying the Amazon rainforest | Marina Silva and Rubens Ricupero](#)  
[Read more](#)

Less than 24 hours later, [Bolsonaro](#) signed off on the 2021 federal budget that included 2bn reais (US\$365.30m) for the environment ministry and agencies it oversees, down from 2.6bn initially approved for 2020, according to the official government gazette. Spending can be adjusted over the course of the year.

“The gesture of giving a speech yesterday isn’t enough,” said congressman Rodrigo Agostinho, leader of the environmental caucus in congress. “Brazil’s government needs to do its homework.”

[Bolsonaro](#) vetoed a list of environmental budget provisions worth 240 million reais, including outlays for environmental enforcement.

Bolsonaro’s office directed questions to the economy ministry. The ministry said the environment budget now was in-line with what the president originally proposed, and the vetoes counteracted spending increases approved by congress.

Late on Friday, the environment minister, Ricardo Salles, posted on social media a request addressed to the Economy Ministry for 270 million reais in additional funding for environmental agency Ibama and parks service ICMBio.

A detailed budget listing individual expenditures has yet to be released, so it was unclear how much is set aside for environmental enforcement. A

breakdown of Bolsonaro's vetoes listed 11.6 million reais being cut from the enforcement budget for Ibama.

After [years of ever tighter budgets](#) the latest cuts threatened to completely paralyse environmental agencies, Agostinho said.

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## Headlines friday 23 april 2021

- [Lobbying Leak inquiry launched as No 10 insiders accuse Dominic Cummings](#)
- [Greensill Cameron pushed Bank and Treasury for £20bn lifeline](#)
- [Commons Former PM lobbied top Treasury official by phone](#)



## Lobbying

# Leak inquiry launched as No 10 insiders accuse Dominic Cummings

Reports over former adviser could draw attention away from the contents of leaks such as texts to James Dyson



Dominic Cummings leaves a science select committee hearing into the pandemic last month Photograph: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

Dominic Cummings leaves a science select committee hearing into the pandemic last month Photograph: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

[\*Jessica Elgot\*](#) , [\*Dan Sabbagh\*](#) and [\*Aubrey Allegretti\*](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 18.29 EDT

The Cabinet Office is to launch an internal investigation into the leak of Boris Johnson's text messages [with the billionaire businessman James Dyson](#) – with reports saying that some in No 10 are accusing the prime minister's former adviser Dominic Cummings of being the source.

The prime minister's spokesperson said the decision had been made to launch a formal investigation into the leak, which showed that Johnson promised to change tax rules by saying: "[I will fix it tomo!](#)" It comes amid growing concern over Johnson's use of a personal mobile phone in government.

But the inquiry will not examine a string of other leaks, including a text to the prime minister from the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, or leaked emails about donations solicited to cover the renovations of the prime minister's flat.

Cummings, Johnson's former all-powerful adviser who was booted out of Downing Street last November, was reportedly accused by No 10 sources quoted in multiple newspapers as being responsible for the leaks. In what appeared to be a coordinated attack on Cummings, the Telegraph, Times and Sun reported the same criticisms from an unnamed insider accusing him of being "bitter" about leaving government.

[James Dyson: the Brexit cheerleader now caught up in 'Tory sleaze'](#)  
[Read more](#)

They said Johnson was "disappointed" and "saddened" by what they claimed Cummings was doing, complaining it was "undermining" the government. The Telegraph added Cummings would have had legitimate access to the messages while he worked at No 10, quoting an insider who said: "If you join the dots it looks like it's coming from Dom."

Downing Street declined to formally comment on the reports. The briefings may risk drawing attention away from the contents of the leaks, which have resulted in multiple inquiries being set up, and instead on to the blame game as to who is responsible for them.

Johnson, who has had the same phone number for a decade, is regularly texted by business leaders and politicians, sources have said. The prime minister is understood to have liberally distributed his personal number over the years.

Labour argued a leak inquiry missed the point. The opposition is expected to step up the pressure on the government, and demand that all ministers disclose their text message correspondence relating to government contracts in the coming days.

Rachel Reeves, the shadow Cabinet Office minister, called on ministers to be “vastly more transparent”. She added: “We need all ministers to offer urgent reassurances to the British public that they are not pandering to Tory friends and donors at the expense of taxpayers.”

But some ministers and special advisers fear any new rules obliging them to report every unsolicited text could “open the floodgates” and say “government by WhatsApp” is the norm across Westminster.

Others who have worked in Whitehall warned that Johnson has a “looser style” of government and may not always run all his communication through his private office. No 10 has said the prime minister always abides by the rules.

“There is a loophole that none of this stuff has to be publicly declared, as long as you are telling your officials of any government business, but if these inquiries order that everything needs to be declared, it will be mountains,” one former official said.

Another former civil servant, who was responsible for business liaison with Downing Street and other departments, said they believed Johnson’s mobile phone use demonstrated that “he just doesn’t understand that there needs to be a level of transparency and accountability” in regards to his actions.

They argued that the danger with engaging in direct correspondence was that it implied the prime minister believed “his own judgment on something is sufficient and no further information or assessment is required”.

[A lot of people pitched in during Covid, but only Dyson got a tax waiver for it | Gaby Hinsliff](#)

[Read more](#)

A more proper approach, they argued, was to refer any direct lobbying to his private office and where necessary to arrange a meeting or phone call.

The row was sparked after the prime minister was revealed to have texted the pro-Brexit billionaire Dyson last year, promising that his staff would not have to pay extra tax if they came to the UK to make ventilators during the pandemic.

On Wednesday, Downing Street had said there would be no leak inquiry, only to change its mind 24 hours later.

“We have now decided to undertake this internal inquiry,” the spokesperson said. “As you would expect, we continually look at this and the position we decided today is that we want to make sure we have this internal inquiry into that.”

It will be an internal Cabinet Office inquiry and will not involve the police or the security services. It is understood the texts from Dyson were forwarded to a number of officials and aides in Whitehall.

Johnson’s spokesperson would not deny on the record that the cabinet secretary, Simon Case, advised Johnson to [change his number](#) because it was so widely known.

The prime minister [promised to publish](#) his text correspondence with Dyson, in a reply to the SNP’s Westminster leader, Ian Blackford, at prime minister’s questions, though No 10 aides have not given any timeframe for that to happen.

Labour also wrote to the chair of the liaison committee, Sir Bernard Jenkin, asking for the committee to question the prime minister on the use of his personal phone. The committee, which is made up of all the senior MPs who chair other select committees, will take evidence from Johnson before the summer recess.

There is no requirement in the ministerial code to declare lobbying approaches made by text, and no clear guidance on whether the code covers

virtual meetings. However, texts to the prime minister concerning government business are covered under freedom of information legislation.

Meanwhile, a former minister has been rapped by the appointments regulator for failing to declare five external positions after leaving government.

George Freeman, the former transport minister, told the advisory committee on business appointments that it had been a genuine oversight that he failed to declare the work, including with PPE company Aerosol Shield, which intended to sell its products to the NHS.

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## [David Cameron](#)

# David Cameron kept pushing Bank and Treasury to risk £20bn to help Greensill

Former prime minister sent string of emails to Bank officials and argued firm should be a priority for Treasury funding



Labour supporters stage a protest over David Cameron's involvement with Greensill Capital at Downing Street, London. Photograph: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

Labour supporters stage a protest over David Cameron's involvement with Greensill Capital at Downing Street, London. Photograph: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

[Kalyeena Makortoff](#), [Rajeev Syal](#) and [Jessica Elgot](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 16.02 EDT

David Cameron repeatedly pushed the [Bank of England](#) and the Treasury to risk up to £20bn in taxpayer cash to help Greensill Capital, just as the lender

started to face “significant” financial pressure at the start of the pandemic.

The UK’s central bank was urged to provide support to [Greensill](#), including by setting up a fund that would buy loans made by the financial services company and its competitors, in a string of emails to senior officials.

In one, Cameron introduced Greensill’s founder to one of the Bank of England’s four deputy governors, Jon Cunliffe.

The exchanges, published by the Bank of England on Thursday afternoon, became increasingly desperate in tone as requests from Greensill for government backing were turned down.

Cameron described the situation as “incredibly frustrating” and complained: “I must be missing something here.”

Late on Thursday, the Treasury released details of a call between Cameron and John Glen MP, the economic secretary to the Treasury. In the readout, copied into top officials, Cameron is said to have argued that supporting Greensill would be “the most effective” way to help the small and medium businesses that relied on it for finance.

The Treasury has also released new text messages between Cameron and Glen, where Glen says the Treasury had decided not to extend the funding to Greensill, but offers a “private call” to explain the decision. The Treasury said it would not be releasing Cameron’s texts to Glen, because of his expectation of privacy.

The disclosures underline the concerted efforts made by Cameron to promote Greensill – approaching ministers, civil servants and officials – over a period of weeks.

In other developments in the deepening lobbying scandal:

MPs were told the beleaguered former prime minister had personally lobbied the Treasury’s most senior civil servant, Sir Tom Scholar, and secured nine meetings with another of the department’s key officials.



Scholar, the Treasury's permanent secretary, told the public accounts committee the former prime minister called and sent "some text messages" to demand help for [Greensill](#).

[The Cabinet Office launched an investigation](#) into leaked texts from Boris Johnson's phone to the billionaire James Dyson. He promised to "fix" a tax issue as the company pitched to develop ventilators at the height of the pandemic.

Tory insiders and former officials told the Guardian that informal text communication for government business is commonplace, and has been for several years.

The Bank of England correspondence, released as part of a freedom of information request, shows for the first time the pressure that the former prime minister and his colleagues exerted on central bank officials.

At the time, Greensill [was attempting to lobby for access](#) to the government's largest Covid-support scheme, the Covid corporate financing facility (CCFF), which Greensill ultimately did not qualify for.

Cameron and Greensill's founder and chief executive, Lex Greensill, contacted the bank at least seven times in March and April 2020, even corresponding with officials during weekends, after gaining direct access to Cunliffe, who is the bank's deputy governor for financial stability.

Greensill, a supply chain finance specialist, collapsed in February after an Australian insurer refused to renew guarantees underpinning billions of dollars of loans it had made to customers.

Those loans, for which Greensill collected a fee from the borrower, were then bundled up and sold on to other investors.

[Mandarins reveal virtually endless string of virtual meetings with Greensill | John Crace](#)  
[Read more](#)

The precarious arrangement was described as a “Ponzi scheme” by MPs on Thursday, [as they grilled Treasury officials](#) as they opened their [inquiry into the Greensill lobbying scandal](#).

On 16 March 2020, after introductions by Cameron, Lex Greensill sent Cunliffe a letter asking for government backing.

Greensill pitched the idea to the Bank of England as an opportunity to get money directly to small business borrowers. With a government-backed fund to support it, Greensill would also be free to issue more loans.

“In current markets, investors are unsettled and seeking redemptions. It is critical to stabilise the supply chain finance investor base at a matter of urgency,” Greensill said in the letter addressed to Cunliffe.

“In our judgment, the initial size of the facility needs to be in the order of £10-20bn if it is to provide the necessary level of confidence to the capital markets that will ensure effectiveness in this extraordinary time,” Greensill added.

A briefing note produced by the Bank makes it clear that Greensill was facing financial pressure, due to market turmoil, when the government guarantee was requested. The notes detail a call on 17 March 2020 between Bank officials, Greensill and Cameron.

Greensill and Cameron were ultimately directed to the Treasury, which had final authority over the scheme. But Cameron continued to lobby the Bank of England for a change in rules. The former Conservative leader, who held stock options in the business, and was a paid adviser, emailed Cunliffe again on 3 April, saying he had numerous conversations with the Treasury but “failed to get anywhere”.

Cameron wanted a change in the CCFF mandate, that would allow the Bank of England to buy bonds linked to supply chain finance. The former prime minister appears to have become exasperated by the refusal of officials to change policies to accommodate Greensill.

“Why are we potentially cutting off a market that already pumps cheap credit directly into SMEs [small- and medium-sized enterprises]?” he said in an email to Cunliffe. “I think I must be missing something here. Am obviously talking to HMT [Her Majesty’s Treasury], but would be grateful for any light you could shed on this ... All good wishes. Dc.”

He followed up three weeks later, saying the failure to push through changes to the CCFF – in a way that would mirror a similar scheme in 2008 – were “incredibly frustrating”.

While Greensill was ultimately rebuffed in its efforts to access the CCFF, it was later accredited to offer government-backed loans through the second-largest government-backed loans scheme in June 2020.

The shadow chancellor, Anneliese Dodds, said: “We need to follow the money. Greensill was carrying the begging bowl from the Bank of England to the Treasury and back.

“The chancellor can’t keep ducking this. He must come out of hiding and explain his role in the return of Conservative sleaze,” she said.

A spokesperson for [David Cameron](#) said: “Greensill were not asking for a government loan or direct support in any way. The Treasury letter rejecting the proposals in June makes clear that Greensill reported that market conditions were improving. So the idea that Greensill was in difficulty at that stage is nonsense.”

## **Key extracts from emails between David Cameron, the Bank of England and Greensill**



Britain's deputy governor of the Bank of England, Jon Cunliffe. Photograph: Reuters

**5 March 2020: email from David Cameron to the Bank of England deputy governor, Jon Cunliffe**

“I do a lot of work with Greensill Capital, now the world leaders in this space. We would be keen to help ... Do you have a moment for a quick word? I am on my old number or can call you whenever convenient. All good wishes. Dc.”

**5 March 2020: email from David Cameron to James Benford, private secretary to the governor**

“The purpose of this email is to introduce you to Lex Greensill, founder and CEO of Greensill Capital (GC)... I am an adviser to the company. We would be keen to step and help during the current difficulties. Perhaps a first stage would be for Lex and/or some of his team to meet with some of your experts to discuss how the market works and the role of GC within it.”

**3 April 2020: email from David Cameron to the Bank of England deputy governor, Jon Cunliffe**

“Jon, Am writing to ask for your help. Greensill – who I work with – have had numerous conversations with HMT but have failed to get anywhere.

The request is simple – please include in the CCFF the ability to purchase bonds issued in respect of supply chain finance. These allow us to pump billions into SMEs, (including every pharmacy that works with the NHS).”

“Why are we potentially cutting off a market that already pumps cheap credit directly into SMEs? I think I must be missing something here. Am obviously talking to HMT, but would be grateful for any light you could shed on this ...”

## **22 April 2020: email from David Cameron to the Bank of England deputy governor Jon Cunliffe**

“Apologies for bothering you about this again. We (Greensill) have had lots of conversations with HMT and while every question seems to have been answered, we haven’t yet got to the green light”

“It is incredibly frustrating because (as you know) trade finance paper was included in a similar scheme in 2008/9 and it would work again.”

“I don’t want to put you to the trouble of a long email chain when ultimately this is an HMT call (and we continue to talk to them at every level) but could I ask you to do a one to one call with Lex Greensill so that he can brief you on where we have got to. This comes with all good wishes.”

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## David Cameron

# David Cameron lobbied top Treasury official by phone, MPs told

Sir Tom Scholar says former PM called and texted his mobile phone seeking help for Greensill



Sir Tom Scholar during the public accounts committee hearing. He said Cameron was 'persistent'. Photograph: Parliament TV

Sir Tom Scholar during the public accounts committee hearing. He said Cameron was 'persistent'. Photograph: Parliament TV

[Rajeev Syal](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 09.12 EDT

David Cameron personally lobbied the Treasury's most senior civil servant on his mobile phone, securing nine meetings with another of the department's most senior officials.

## [What is the Greensill lobbying scandal and who is involved?](#) [Read more](#)

Sir Tom Scholar, the Treasury's permanent secretary, said the former prime minister called and sent "some text messages" to demand help for the now collapsed bank [Greensill](#), which was employing Cameron.

The texts were sent to Scholar's professional mobile phone number, which he said Cameron had because the Treasury official "used to work for him".

The disclosures at a meeting of the Commons public accounts committee will increase concerns over the access to government afforded to Greensill via Cameron.

MPs told Scholar and his colleague Charles Roxburgh, who held meetings to discuss three separate proposals with Greensill, that they remained puzzled as to why the Treasury spent so much time discussing what appeared to be a "Ponzi scheme".

## [What did Greensill Capital actually do? | Adam Leaver](#) [Read more](#)

Greensill [filed for administration](#) in early March this year after insurers refused to provide cover for the securitised loans it sold off to third-party investors for cash. The move caused Greensill's complex money-making machine to collapse, [threatening the loss of thousands of jobs](#).

Scholar appeared before the MPs on Thursday in the first of [at least seven inquiries](#) launched by parliamentary committees, the government and the civil service into the collapse of Greensill.

He said he was first approached by Cameron last March as Cameron sought meetings with Treasury officials so that Greensill could qualify for government-backed loans under the Covid corporate financing facility (CCFF).

"When somebody you know asks to speak to you, it's quite natural to take that," Scholar said. "If a former minister I've worked with asked to talk to



me, I would always do that.”

Scholar said Cameron, whom he had seen two or three times since the former PM stood down from office, was “persistent”.

It has previously emerged that Cameron [lobbied the chancellor, Rishi Sunak](#), and the Treasury ministers [Jesse Norman](#) and John Glen seeking access to Treasury funds and contracts.

Scholar said he was aware of [Cameron’s approach to Sunak](#) but could not recall if he was made aware of the approaches to other ministers.

Roxburgh, who had nine meetings with Greensill last year, said his contact with Greensill was through [Bill Crothers, a former senior civil servant](#) who was controversially cleared to work for the firm while still in government.

He said the firm came up with three separate proposals to work with the Treasury, but these were rejected after meetings between March and June 2020.

One senior committee member, the Tory MP Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, said he could not work out why the Treasury had spent so much time discussing “irregular” ideas with Greensill. “I’m sorry to use this word but it sounds to me like a Ponzi scheme,” he said.

Roxburgh said Greensill’s approach had come at a time when the government was looking for ways to provide credit, and so civil servants examined Greensill’s schemes before rejecting them.

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## 2021.04.23 - Coronavirus

- [Live Coronavirus: India reports world record cases for second day; Japan to declare emergency measures](#)
- [Australia Perth to enter snap three-day lockdown after Covid spreads from hotel quarantine into community](#)
- [Vaccines One dose of Pfizer or Oxford jab reduces infection rate by 65% – study](#)
- [Japan Targeted state of emergency to be declared as Covid cases surge](#)

[Coronavirus live](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

# EU to strike world's largest vaccine deal with Pfizer – as it happened

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## [Australia news](#)

# Perth enters snap three-day lockdown after Covid spreads from hotel quarantine into community

WA premier Mark McGowan announces restrictions after Victorian man, who contracted coronavirus at the Mercure in Perth, infected a friend

- [What you can and can't do over the Anzac Day long weekend](#)
- [Perth Covid-19 public exposure sites visited by confirmed cases](#)



WA premier Mark McGowan said a man who contracted coronavirus while in hotel quarantine was infectious for up to five days in Perth before testing positive. Photograph: Matt Jelonek/Getty Images

WA premier Mark McGowan said a man who contracted coronavirus while in hotel quarantine was infectious for up to five days in Perth before testing positive. Photograph: Matt Jelonek/Getty Images

[Mostafa Rachwani](#) and [Josh Taylor](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 04.13 EDT

Perth and Peel entered a snap three-day lockdown from midnight Friday after a Victorian man, who tested positive to Covid-19, spent five days in the community while infectious after leaving hotel quarantine.

The Western Australian premier, Mark McGowan, announced the lockdown – which will remain in place until midnight Monday – after a close contact of the Victorian man also tested positive.

McGowan said he had to do what was needed to quash the outbreak.

“We need to act and do what is necessary to prevent further community transmission. We have gone more than 12 months of no community transmission and our lives in Western Australia have been normal compared to what we have seen around the world. We do everything we can to protect our way of life.”

[Man tests positive for Covid after flying from Perth to Melbourne](#)

[Read more](#)

The Victorian man tested positive after quarantining in a hotel room adjacent to another positive case at the Mercure hotel in Perth.

He had tested negative towards the end of his two-week quarantine period and spent five days in Perth before he flew back to Melbourne on Wednesday and subsequently tested positive.

“We now need to assume he was infectious,” McGowan said.

The man stayed with a friend and her two children at their home in Kardinya and went to restaurants, cafes and a swimming pool. The friend he was staying with tested positive on Friday.

The man boarded flight QF778 from Perth to Melbourne and authorities are scrambling to contact all 257 passengers.

Victoria has told passengers on the flight they must get tested and isolate for 14 days. Anyone who was in Terminal 1 at the airport between 6.30pm and 7.30pm on Wednesday 21 April must also get tested and isolate until a negative result has been returned.

People in the Perth and Peel regions will not be able to leave home for the next three days except for essential reasons, including work where it is not possible to work from home, shopping for essentials, and exercise with a maximum of four people for an hour.

Masks must be worn from 6pm Friday until midnight on Monday night, except during “vigorous” exercise or while at home or in a vehicle.

Pubs, bars and clubs will be closed, with takeaway allowed. Gyms and indoor sporting venues, playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor recreational facilities, as well as cultural venues such as cinemas and libraries, will all be closed.

[Australia limits flights from India as Covid cases increase in hotel quarantine](#)  
[Read more](#)

Visitors will be barred from hospitals or residential aged care or disability facilities, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Weddings and funerals will be limited to a 100-patron capacity, while places of worship will also need to close.

McGowan also announced that Anzac Day dawn services will be cancelled across the Perth and Peel region, although drive-through dawn services will happen again this year.

He also said he had contacted the prime minister to request Western Australia’s international arrival cap be halved from 1,025 to 512 a week for the next month.

“Given the situation around the world, with cases increasing and the stress on our hotel quarantine system, it is important we have a pause on the

number of cases coming in to our quarantine facilities.”

McGowan called the virus “insidious”, saying authorities had made many changes to the hotel quarantine program but infections were still occurring.

“All these things we have done progressively in order to make sure that the system is as safe as we can make it. But what you’ve got to understand about Covid is that it is insidious.

“Somehow it has gotten from a room into another two other rooms. It is insidious despite all the other measures we have put in place. Other states have gone through the exact same experience.”

He said the government was still trying to make the hotels fit for the purpose of quarantine, based on the latest report into the hotel quarantine program, but that those upgrades were happening as people were coming through the system.

The police commissioner, Chris Dawson, urged people to follow the mask mandate and said sporting events would go ahead over the weekend but only players and officials would be allowed to attend.

He said the lockdown would be implemented from midnight to allow police to establish checkpoints around the Perth and Peel area.

[Australia set to host clinical trial of genetically modified Covid nasal spray vaccine](#)

[Read more](#)

“Logistically, the lockdown we have staged is from midnight tonight for a number of practical reasons. I can’t deploy police to these vehicle checkpoints on the Perth and Peel boundaries until about midnight.

“We have to get those in place and we will.”

He said people would be allowed to leave the region up to midnight, and encouraged people to be safe on the roads.



“This long weekend you should limit your movements but we accept the practicality of this is that people will be moving for the long weekend and from midnight tonight as the lockdown commences.”

McGowan said it had been more than a year since the last case of community transmission in the state but that the lockdown was necessary.

“We need to go back to what we know best. I know this is hard to take and I wish we didn’t need to do this. We can’t take any chances with the virus.”

In response, New Zealand has paused flights to and from Perth, including stopping a flight due to leave Western Australia on Friday night. The country’s Covid minister Chris Hipkins said NZ would await further advice from the West Australian government, and advised New Zealanders in WA to follow the local advice.

New South Wales Health will screen people arriving from Perth at Sydney airport to determine if they’ve visited any of the venues of concern in WA.

Those people will be asked to get tested and isolate until they get a negative result.

Anyone arriving in Sydney from Perth or the Peel region after midnight on Friday will be required to follow the same three-day lockdown rules as in place in WA.

“NSW will reflect the stay at home restrictions that apply to Western Australia,” a NSW Health spokesperson said.

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## Vaccines and immunisation

# One dose of Pfizer or Oxford jab reduces Covid infection rate by 65% – study

Analysis of test results from more than 350,000 people finds older people just as protected as younger

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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A pharmacist prepares to administer the Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine. Because the vaccine was rolled out later than the Pfizer jab, it is too early to assess the impact of second doses. Photograph: Chris Jackson/Getty Images

A pharmacist prepares to administer the Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine. Because the vaccine was rolled out later than the Pfizer jab, it is too early to assess the impact of second doses. Photograph: Chris Jackson/Getty Images

[Ian Sample](#) *Science editor*

[@iansample](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 19.01 EDT

One shot of the Oxford/AstraZeneca or Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine reduces coronavirus infections by nearly two-thirds and protects older and more vulnerable people as much as younger, healthy individuals, a study has found.

The results from Oxford University and the Office for National Statistics are a welcome boost to the vaccination programme and the first to show the impact on new infections and immune responses in a large group of adults in the general population.

By driving down rates of infection the vaccines will not only prevent hospitalisations and deaths but help break chains of transmission and so reduce the risk of a damaging resurgence of disease as the UK reopens.

The researchers analysed Covid test results from more than 350,000 people in the UK between December and April. They found that 21 days after a first jab – the time it takes the immune system to mount a decent response – new Covid infections dropped by 65%.

The vaccines were more effective against symptomatic than asymptomatic infections, reducing rates by 72% and 57% respectively, compared with those seen in the unvaccinated population.

A second shot of the [Pfizer](#) vaccine boosted protection further, causing symptomatic infections to fall by 90% and asymptomatic infections by 70%. Because the Oxford vaccine was approved and rolled out later, it is too early to assess the impact of those second doses.

Scientists on the team said the findings supported the UK's decision to prioritise giving first shots to elderly and more vulnerable people by delaying second doses. "There was no evidence that the vaccines were less

effective among older adults or those with long-term health conditions,” said Dr Koen Pouwels, a researcher on the team.

The results, released in a preprint on Friday, are particularly important because they demonstrate the protective effect of the vaccines in the real world against the highly infectious – and possibly more lethal – Kent variant, which was not around during the original clinical trials.

Further work by the team, reported in a second preprint, analysed antibody responses to the vaccines. Antibodies rose faster and to a higher level with one shot of Pfizer vaccine, but then dropped back down, particularly in older people, to a similar level reached with the Oxford shot. Although the immune responses differed, Dr David Eyre at Oxford’s Big Data Institute said a strong antibody response was achieved in 95% of people.

In younger people, one shot of vaccine raised antibodies to levels seen after infection with Covid, while in older people this took two doses. “Our findings highlight the importance of individuals getting the second vaccine for increased protection,” Eyre said.

The results build on other positive findings from the vaccine rollout, which began in December. In February [Public Health Scotland revealed](#) that a month after receiving a shot of Pfizer or Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, the risk of hospitalisation from Covid-19 fell by up to 85% and 94% respectively.

In a [separate report](#) released on Thursday, the ONS said that in recent weeks the percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus appeared to have levelled off, both in those who deal with patients and those who don’t. Adults and school-age children were having more contact with people outside their households as schools reopened and some restrictions eased, it added.

Sarah Crofts, a senior statistician at the ONS, said: “It’s good news that infection rates in both patient-facing and non-patient-facing job roles have remained low since decreasing from the start of the year, but it’s critical that

we continue to monitor Covid-19 infection levels in these roles as more restrictions ease.”

This article was amended on 23 April 2021. An earlier version described the Kent coronavirus variant as “more lethal”. This has been changed to “possibly more lethal” as study findings on the variant’s impact on deaths have varied.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/23/one-dose-of-pfizer-or-oxford-jab-reduces-covid-infection-rate-by-65-study>.

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## Japan

# Japan declares targeted state of emergency as Covid cases surge

Yoshihide Suga under pressure to act after sharp rise in infections in Tokyo, only months before Olympics

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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Pedestrians in Tokyo's Shinjuku area on Friday before the declaration of a new state of emergency to cover Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo regions. Photograph: Charly Triballeau/AFP/Getty Images

Pedestrians in Tokyo's Shinjuku area on Friday before the declaration of a new state of emergency to cover Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo regions. Photograph: Charly Triballeau/AFP/Getty Images

[\*Justin McCurry\*](#) in Tokyo

Fri 23 Apr 2021 08.12 EDT

Japan has declared a targeted [state of emergency](#) for Tokyo, Osaka and two other prefectures in an attempt to halt a surge in coronavirus cases, just three months before the [Tokyo Olympics](#).

The measures will go into effect in the four areas – covering about a quarter of Japan’s population and a third of its economy – from Sunday until at least 11 May.

“We absolutely have to limit the movement of people, and we have to do it decisively. We need powerful, short and focused measures,” the minister in charge of the pandemic response, Yasutoshi Nishimura, said, adding that people should remember the lockdowns of last spring and stay at home.

The government had come under pressure to take action after a sharp rise in infections in the capital, and evidence that new variants of the [virus](#) are driving serious outbreaks in Osaka and the two neighbouring prefectures of Hyogo and Kyoto.

Experts and local leaders have been warning for days that ongoing quasi-emergency measures were failing to keep the virus in check.

[Japan](#)’s third state of emergency since the start of the pandemic will coincide with Golden Week – several days of consecutive holidays during which there is normally a huge increase in domestic travel.

While Japanese authorities are unable to impose European-style lockdowns, bars and restaurants that serve alcohol will be asked to close, while other eateries will be encouraged to close early. Large-scale events, such as football and baseball matches, will be held behind closed doors.

Department stores and shopping malls will also be asked to close – although shops selling essential items will stay open – as well as theme parks, theatres and museums. Bus and train services will be reduced during public holidays and weekends, the Nikkei business newspaper reported.

### [Japan coronavirus cases](#)

Businesses that comply are eligible for compensation, while fines will be issued to violators.



Tokyo's governor, Yuriko Koike, urged residents to start taking precautions immediately, including avoiding drinking in the street after bars and restaurants close early.

She also urged businesses to turn their lights off in the evenings to encourage people to go home. "After 8pm, we ask that bright signage on streets, neon signs and illuminations be turned off," she said. "It will be dark at night, with only street lights on to curb the flow of people."

Japan has had a comparatively small Covid-19 outbreak, with [9,800 deaths](#) and just over half a million cases, despite the absence of the strict lockdowns seen in other countries.

But the emergence of the UK and other variants – which account for about 80% of cases in Osaka and Hyogo – and pressure on health services in some areas have forced Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's hand.

Tokyo recorded 759 new infections on Friday, while Osaka reported 1,162 cases, slightly down from a record number two days earlier.

Earlier this week, Suga insisted the emergency measures would not affect preparations for the Tokyo Games.

Yet the virus has already caused disruption to test events, qualifiers and the torch relay, which had to take place in an empty park in Osaka last week and will be kept off public roads in Okinawa prefecture next month. On Thursday, the governor of Ehime prefecture broke down in tears as he explained his decision not to allow the relay to pass through the local city of Matsuyama.

On Friday, Australia's diving team withdrew from the Diving World Cup, scheduled for 1-6 May in Tokyo, saying it was "not safe" to travel to Japan.

And in a move that could fuel doubts about the Olympics, the Tokyo Motor Show was cancelled for the first time in its history, with organisers citing Covid-19 concerns. The biennial event was due to take place in the autumn, several weeks after the Games.

The new emergency measures could be lifted days before the president of the International Olympic Committee [IOC], Thomas Bach, is due to arrive in Japan to encourage organisers, who have repeatedly promised to put on a “safe and secure” event.

Bach, who has insisted that the delayed Games cannot be postponed a second time, sparked anger this week when he said the state of emergency was a “preemptive measure” and “not related” to the Olympics.

On Friday, the president of the Tokyo 2020 organising committee, Seiko Hashimoto, said the emergency measures would not affect the Games. “We’re not thinking about cancellation,” she said. “We’re thinking about how we can prepare in a way that prioritises safety and makes people feel it can be held safely, and makes them want it to be held.”

The Japanese public is firmly opposed to holding the Games this summer, according to a recent poll by the Kyodo news agency, in which a combined 72% of respondents said they should either be cancelled or postponed again.

The situation in Osaka is causing particular alarm among health experts. Almost all of the prefecture’s beds for seriously ill Covid-19 patients are full, and dozens of nurses will be sent from other parts of the country to help deal with the rise in hospital admissions.

Japan’s [slow vaccination programme](#) has left it with little choice other than to request restrictions on business operations and people’s movements, with a focus on bars and restaurants, described by the government’s top spokesman, Katsunobu Kato, as “key points” of infection.

Since vaccinations began in mid-February, about 1.5 million people – mainly frontline medical workers – have received one dose, and 827,000 have been fully vaccinated.

The country’s vaccine chief, Taro Kono, has said vaccinations would speed up in the coming weeks with the arrival of more shipments of Pfizer doses, the only vaccine to have been approved so far in Japan.

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## 2021.04.23 - Spotlight

- [And the winner should be ... Peter Bradshaw's predictions for the 2021 Oscars](#)
- [Art or activism? The Oscars' identity crisis](#)
- ['Damn! This is a Caravaggio!' The inside story of an old master found in Spain](#)
- ['It reeked of hope and ambition' 30 years of riot grrrl label Kill Rock Stars](#)

## Oscars 2021

# And the winner should be ... Peter Bradshaw's predictions for the 2021 Oscars



In the running ... some of the contenders for this year's Oscars Composite:  
Guardian Design Team

In the running ... some of the contenders for this year's Oscars Composite:  
Guardian Design Team

Will Nomadland clean up this year? Will Anthony Hopkins get best actor?  
Our film critic gives the low down on the contenders for the Academy Awards



[Peter Bradshaw](#)

[@PeterBradshaw1](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 05.00 EDT

## Best picture

Will win: [Nomadland](#)

Should win: [Nomadland](#)

Shoulda been a contender: Quo Vadis, Aida?

## Best director

Will win: David Fincher for Mank

Should win: [Chloé Zhao](#) for Nomadland

Shoulda been a contender: Christopher Nolan for Tenet

## Best actor

Will win: [Anthony Hopkins](#) for The Father

Should win: [Anthony Hopkins](#) for The Father

Shoulda been a contender: Lance Henriksen for Falling

## **Best actress**

**Will win:** Vanessa Kirby for Pieces of a Woman

**Should win:** [Frances McDormand](#) for Nomadland

**Shoulda been a contender:** Rosamund Pike for I Care A Lot

## **Best supporting actor**

**Will win:** Daniel Kaluuya for Judas and the Black Messiah

**Should win:** Daniel Kaluuya for Judas and the Black Messiah

**Shoulda been a contender:** Michael Stuhlbarg for Shirley

## **Best supporting actress**

**Will win:** [Amanda Seyfried](#) for Mank

**Should win:** Youn Yuh-jung for Minari

**Shoulda been a contender:** Toni Collette for I'm Thinking of Ending Things

## **Best animated feature**

**Will win:** [Soul](#)

**Should win:** [Soul](#)

**Shoulda been a contender:** Kill It and Leave This Town

## **Best adapted screenplay**

**Will win:** Christopher Hampton and [Florian Zeller](#) for The Father

**Should win:** Chloé Zhao for Nomadland

**Shoulda been a contender:** Charlie Kaufman for I'm Thinking of Ending Things

## **Best original screenplay**

**Will win:** Aaron Sorkin for The Trial of the Chicago 7

**Should win:** Emerald Fennell for Promising Young Woman



**Shoulda been a contender:** Andy Siara for Palm Springs

## **Best documentary**

**Will win:** Time

**Should win:** Collective

**Shoulda been a contender:** Mother

## **Best international feature film**

**Will win:** Another Round

**Should win:** Quo Vadis, Aida?

**Shoulda been a contender:** Dear Comrades!

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## Oscars 2021

# Art or activism? The Oscars' identity crisis



The Hollywood thinker ... can the Oscars reconcile its desires to do the right thing and prioritise aesthetics? And does it need to? Composite: Getty/Composite Phil Partridge/GNM Imaging

The Hollywood thinker ... can the Oscars reconcile its desires to do the right thing and prioritise aesthetics? And does it need to? Composite: Getty/Composite Phil Partridge/GNM Imaging

This year's awards will be a battle between political propriety and cinematic excellence. But will medium or message finally triumph?

[David Cox](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

What is the point of cinema? For most people: entertainment; for some: art. And for a few: a means of shaping attitudes. Such purposes are not mutually

exclusive – just ask Ken Loach (or even, perhaps, the Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl).

Proudly political engagement isn't new. The movies fought the cold war, decried Vietnam and took sides on many grand issues of the past.

What is new is an increasing onus on films – awards films in particular – to clearly flag their ideological allegiances. And, after being [scolded for dragging its feet](#), the industry is [eagerly complying](#). Minorities' stories are being told and their causes championed; diversity is gathering pace on screen and behind the camera.

Of course, worthy purpose can invigorate. Artistic achievement can be galvanised by having something important to say. Nonetheless, advancing a message is different from pursuing excellence. These objectives won't necessarily be aligned.

Why should they? After all, trying to engineer a better society should clearly trump mere aesthetics. Cinema's leading lights can seem to prioritise the progressive cause above all else, to [judge by their pronouncements](#); however, many filmgoers have yet to see the light. In the service of righteousness, the big screen risks leaving its enthusiasts behind. Whether this will happen remains to be seen, but perhaps Sunday's verdicts will give us a hint of what is to come.

The claim of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to represent industry thinking is often derided. Oscars voters have long been disproportionately pale, male and stale and their selections have frequently been mocked. Now, though, steps have been taken to diversify the membership: female and ethnic minority participation has [doubled in the past few years](#).



Anthony Hopkins in *The Father*. Photograph: Film4/Allstar

Hollywood's share of global cinema may be [small and shrinking](#): its major studios have delivered only one of the eight nominees for best picture. Yet, for now, Hollywood's historic contest retains its glittering crown. This year's ceremony may be the [least watched for decades](#), but its decisions will still be telling. The field from which its choices will be made provides not just cinematic quality, but also an impressive reflection of current social concerns.

It is only six years since [the #OscarsSoWhite uproar](#). Now, however, of 20 acting nominees, nine are people of colour; most of the candidates for best actor are not white. Two women have been recognised in the best director category for the first time.

The best picture list boasts a feminist parable in the shape of [Promising Young Woman](#), a Black rallying cry in [Judas and the Black Messiah](#), a salute to immigrants in [Minari](#), a story of minority ethnic disability in [Sound of Metal](#) and an anti-establishment carnival in [The Trial of the Chicago 7](#). Ranged against these are [Mank](#) – which, as a clever-clever feast of Hollywood self-love, might have been the favourite in days of yore – and [The Father](#), an all-white, male-dominated exercise in value-free virtuosity.

Yet the [bookies' frontrunner](#) by a long way is none of the above. It is [Nomadland](#), the almost-documentary about life among the RV-homed, itinerant underclass who wander between the US's trailer camps. Its director, Chloé Zhao, is Asian American. Only one female-directed film has won best picture (Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*) and this factor alone must have weighed heavily with Academy voters keen to get with the programme.

Zhao's film records the lives of people who deserve better, but have been short-changed by an unjust world. It applauds their resourcefulness, indomitability and humanity. So far, so good, in terms of social justice credentials, but, as a campaigning blueprint, [Nomadland](#) doesn't bear close inspection. Its charismatic characters don't see themselves as victims. Instead of railing against late capitalism, they seem puzzlingly content with their fate.



Carey Mulligan in *Promising Young Woman*. Photograph: AP

The hero, Fern (Frances McDormand), loses her job when her company town is hit by corporate closure. Nonetheless, she chooses life on the road not solely out of necessity, but also as a way to mourn her dead husband and find her own way forward. When comfortable suburban Americans offer her a home, she turns them down, opting instead for old-fashioned self-reliance.

[Unforgivably for some](#), she even seems to enjoy being exploited in one of Amazon's warehouses.

If this seems heedlessly dismissive of progressive orthodoxy, Zhao is unrepentant. [She said in September](#): "I tried to focus on the human experience and things that I feel go beyond political statements, to be more universal." Time, then, to consider this top seed's claim to aesthetic excellence.

There are those who find the film exquisite, but it is hardly a cinematic masterpiece. It saunters through its gorgeous landscapes without tension or jeopardy to no particular effect. Sentimentality saps its portrayal of the community it celebrates: the human flotsam Fern encounters include none of the bad folks that their way of life must inevitably attract.

So, perhaps the favourite has fallen between two stools. If so, we could see the [biggest upset since Moonlight pipped La La Land in 2016](#). This might deliver a stark conflict between politics and art. None of the crusading nominees is badly made. Yet if excellence were the sole criterion, it is hard to believe that it wouldn't be [The Father](#) which would bag the statuette.

Florian Zeller's startling account of the impact of dementia might have landed a blow for better treatment of mental illness, a reasonably fashionable topic. Instead, it avoids any such pretension, focusing on conveying human experience without a hint of interest in any cause. In doing so, it yields insight, horror and heartbreak on such a level that compliance with dogma, however well intentioned, would inevitably have inhibited. In comparison, The Father's politically committed rivals lose much of their lustre.



Daniel Kaluuya in Judas and the Black Messiah. Photograph: Glen Wilson/AP

[Promising Young Woman](#) hits the spot in terms of current preoccupations in a way of which its makers could only have dreamed. It has successfully provided a totem pole for angry women to rally around. Yet doing this through a stylised, cartoonish romp ensures that the real issues are avoided. The sweet vengefulness of Carey Mulligan's Cassie makes no sense psychologically; nor does the instant penitence of her victims. Never mind – it is all as fantastical as a romcom; it is full of fun and twisty turns. Yet, as such, it obscures rather than illuminates its subject. In the end, it just tells us that rape is bad.

Other progressive candidates on the best picture list are less evasive, yet, on the whole, their tales comfort more than they illuminate. It is easier to challenge the system faced by the Chicago 7 than the more perplexing institutional failures of our day. Our racial woes are no longer those faced half a century ago by the Black Panther Fred Hampton. Taken together, these films can hardly claim that their social relevance pre-empts other considerations.

Nonetheless, according to the bookies, every one of them stands a better chance than The Father of knocking Nomadland from the top slot. This may



tell us which way the wind is blowing, but perhaps it is time for film-makers to start blowing back, at least a little.

*The [Oscars](#) take place on Sunday 25 April.*

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# ‘Damn, this is a Caravaggio!’: the inside story of an old master found in Spain

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## Music

# ‘It reeked of hope and ambition’: 30 years of riot grrrl label Kill Rock Stars

Born in the Pacific north-west scene that produced grunge – but often in opposition to it – Kill Rock Stars pushed women to the front of the stage, and also gave Elliott Smith a platform



Revolution girl style now! ... Bikini Kill. Photograph: Tammy Rae Carland

Revolution girl style now! ... Bikini Kill. Photograph: Tammy Rae Carland

[Daniel Dylan Wray](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 04.00 EDT

In 1991, something was brewing under the constant clouds of Olympia, Washington. Young people flocked there, DIY bands formed, fanzines were scrawled with fervour, and feminist politics galvanised young women. And a record label was founded to house it all.

“Everyone was in a band, usually three,” remembers Tinuviel Sampson, who helped launch Kill Rock Stars (KRS) with Matthew “Slim” Moon. Forged in this underground crucible alongside grunge in nearby Seattle, the label is celebrating its 30th birthday with the covers compilation Stars Rock Kill (Rock Stars), having launched artists such as Elliott Smith, [Sleater-Kinney](#), and the Decemberists, plus the riot grrrl scene of feminist punk into the US mainstream. In many ways, the scene still feels sharply relevant: the rallying cries and on-stage monologues the riot grrrl groups voiced are issues still being fought today, including abortion rights, body autonomy and women’s basic safety.



Strike a pose ... first-generation riot grrrls, Bratmobile Photograph: Michael Galinsky

John Goodmanson, the Seattle-based producer of many of the label’s acts, remembers Olympia as “tiny but super exciting. The joke was: by 17 you put out a record and by 18 you start your own label.” It was a magnet for young artists because of the progressive Evergreen State College, whose student radio station KAOS mandated that 80% of music be on independent labels, meaning obscurities flourished.

In April 1991, the label K – founded a decade earlier by a KAOS DJ, Calvin Johnson – hosted the International Pop Underground Convention, a week-

long event with ferocious sets from US punk bands such as Fugazi, Bikini Kill and L7. Thurston Moore, whose band Sonic Youth were touring Europe with Nirvana at the time, asked Kurt Cobain if he wished he were playing IPU instead. “Fuck yeah!” was his response.

To coincide, KRS put out a time-capsule compilation featuring Nirvana, Melvins, Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, Unwound and the Nation of Ulysses. Sampson hand-made silkscreen covers with Moon – wired on coffee and ephedrine – running back and forth to sell records once the covers had dried. The convention launched KRS but was also pivotal because of an evening known as Girl Night – a bill of all-women punk and queercore bands. “It was a really big deal,” says Corin Tucker of Sleater-Kinney, whose band Heavens to Betsy played their first gig. “This night was taking a feminist stance.”

The event crystallised a grassroots movement. Fanzines such as Jigsaw, Girl Germs and Bikini Kill, merging punk rock with feminist politics, fostered a growing community. In July 1991, the Riot Grrrl fanzine launched, giving it a name. Many attributed Bikini Kill’s Kathleen Hanna and Tobi Vail as catalysts. “Kathleen was a real force,” says Bratmobile’s Allison Wolfe. “She helped bring women’s voices to the fore by being on stage and being outspoken about violence against women.”

It was a literate punk community despite how ramshackle or aggressive the music was

### *Carrie Brownstein*

The activity pulled people to Olympia, such as Sleater-Kinney’s Carrie Brownstein. “The sense of innovation, imagination and freedom was really appealing,” she says. “We were in discussion with ourselves: through fanzines you created these epistolary conversations with one another, via polemics. It was a literate punk community despite how ramshackle or aggressive the music was; there was an underlying intellectualism and sensitivity that made it unique.”

Wolfe recalls a palpable change. “Something was happening,” she says. “A powerful coming to consciousness.” KRS became home to many of these women and their music. “It was about putting out bands that were meaningful,” says Moon. “Sometimes that was political, sometimes it was pushing boundaries by being experimental. For me, there were just more women doing interesting and meaningful work in the 90s than men.”

Although they shared the raucous heavy guitar spirit of grunge, some riot grrrl bands viewed themselves as antithetical to it. “There was a sexist shock-value imagery with grunge,” says Wolfe. “Especially from Sub Pop bands. It didn’t speak to us. I’m not that naked woman on the cover with blood dripping all over me [Dwarves’ 1990 single Drug Store]. It was about forging a path to have a voice and knowing even if we didn’t have the musical skills that we had something to say that would be more interesting than half the shit these guys are saying.”

Despite riot grrrl being initially regional, its impact was starting to spread. Brighton’s Huggy Bear – self-declared “boy-girl revolutionaries” – were kindred spirits. “The UK scene was terrible,” says the band’s Chris Rowley. “It was staggering in its attitudes to gender disparity. Sexism was rife and seen as a joke. We didn’t want to be centred around drinking culture, macho bullshit attitudes and intolerance.”

They looked on enviously from overseas. “That KRS compilation was key,” he says. “It had super-heavy bands next to singer-songwriter folk, spoken word and beatnik punk. That represented an idea of community we longed for: of DIY, politically minded kids under one roof. It reeked of hope and ambition.”

Huggy Bear signed to KRS and released a split LP with Bikini Kill; their 1993 performance of Her Jazz on Channel 4’s The Word remains fierce and joyous viewing. “So Terry, you think all fucking women are shit, do you?” the band’s Jo Johnson shouted at the host Terry Christian later on, after a vapid interview with models the Barbi Twins. The band were roughly ejected by security and Christian quickly cut to an ad break.

Riot grrrl may now seem palatable enough for major Netflix movies (Amy Poehler's Moxie) but it was dangerous. [Women](#) artists received written and verbal abuse, threats of rape and mutilation, and the most tragic vindication of the need for its existence came one night in Boston. As Bikini Kill rattled out a riotous set, an aggressive heckler got a taste of Hanna's chewing gum she spat at him. Things turned violent and he threw a punch but missed and knocked out the band's female roadie. A crowd member maced him and he fled. A month later that man, Michael Cartier, murdered his ex-girlfriend. "I felt sick to my stomach, just horrified," Vail said of the incident.

Unwanted attention from mainstream media grew. "Any woman making music got pigeonholed as riot grrrl," Wolfe says. "Then people would love to see the cat fight play out in the press. It was like: why can't we all exist? 'Girl in a band' is not a genre." It led to tension. "Riot grrrl was falling apart," says Wolfe. "There was backlash, the media attacking Kathleen, it got nasty. We were constantly misrepresented because we created our communities and platforms to represent ourselves. We never saw a use for the media." A media blackout was proposed but things were splintering and petering out. By 1995, many of the key bands on KRS – Huggy Bear, Bratmobile, Heavens to Betsy and Excuse 17 – had split.



Quiet storm ... Elliott Smith, also launched by KRS.



KRS was broadening, starting a sister label 5RC for experimental bands such as Deerhoof, and signing [Elliott Smith](#) to its main roster. While loud guitars continued to dominate – Pearl Jam’s Vitalogy had just sold 877,000 copies in its first week – Smith’s tender yet pained acoustic music was a step back from the noise. “Elliott was really against the grain of what was happening and people were befuddled: ‘Slim, why are you doing this?’” Moon says. “New York had anti-folk but it was quite clean; Elliott had grittiness.” Smith became one of the most revered and influential songwriters of his generation, releasing two albums on KRS, before leaving for a major label. He killed himself, aged 34 in 2003.

In 1997, KRS had a hit with Sleater-Kinney who, despite major-label interest, signed to the label for their third album, Dig Me Out. The label’s reputation was a blessing and a curse. “It opened doors but on the other hand it was exhausting,” says Tucker. “Promoting a record was just: how do you feel about being a woman in music? Over and over. Like we were meant to always be two-dimensional; you’re from the riot grrrl scene, so you’re this kind of band.”

As the years went on, KRS nurtured the successful likes of Gossip and the Decemberists, and soon the first wave of bands were shaping future ones. Supreme guitar shredder Marnie Stern adored Dig Me Out and sent KRS a demo because of it. Moon instantly signed her. “It was crazy,” she recalls. “I was 30 but felt 13 – jumping around all over. I had no audience at all, the label was the gateway to everything for me.”

Sampson left the label and the music business several years earlier and Moon stepped away from KRS in 2006 to A&R for Nonesuch briefly to “find the next Radiohead” but couldn’t locate them. Moon’s wife Portia Sabin ran operations for 13 years, overseeing crucial releases such as the posthumous Smith album New Moon and the influential post-punk reissues of Kleenex/Liliput, Essential Logic and Delta 5.

Moon – now a recovering drug addict and a practising minister – got degrees in religious studies and divinity. The deaths of Cobain and Smith, plus a drug overdose that killed the KRS artist Jeff Hanson, hit him hard. “Those losses led me to look for spiritual answers,” he says. “I had friends who were drug addicts and, after I got clean, I had friends in recovery but sometimes

they relapse, so I've known a lot of people die from overdose, suicide and misadventure. Plus my father died young. It's not just the musical loss but the personal; I feel the loss of Elliott, Kurt or Jeff the same as my father."



Generation next ... Kill Rock Stars' UK signings Big Joanie. Photograph: Helen Messenger

The label continues to release young, noisy, political bands: UK feminist punks [Big Joanie](#) are signed to KRS in the US. "It's awesome young people give a shit about what we did and we're able to do stuff now in the same spirit," says Moon. "We're also more consciously saying we are feminist, queer, and political than we did 30 years ago. In this era, you're not going to see many straight cisgendered white men on the label."

[‘I’ve got all this rage’: the feminist punk groups demanding to be heard](#)  
[Read more](#)

This generational handover also thrills Tucker. "I'm excited by new ideas the younger generation is bringing in," she says. "They are way more political, and in a more interesting way, than our scene was. And that's how it should be." Thirty years on, though, the label's anthems still ring with timeless anger and abandon. "The bands were transcendent and important,"

says Goodman. “When you hear Bikini Kill’s Rebel Girl, you’re fucking dancing. It’s like a Bat-Signal.”

- *The covers compilation, Stars Rock Kill (Rock Stars), is available now from [killrockstars.com](http://killrockstars.com).*
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## 2021.04.23 - Opinion

- This war graves report shows Britain must face its colonial past with honesty
- Johnson should make the most of his popularity, because it won't last
- As head of the UN's climate change agency, I know this year is crucial for the future of humanity
- How did the UK's most powerful civil servant fall for Lex Greensill?

## OpinionRace

# **This war graves report shows Britain must face its colonial past with honesty**

[David Lammy](#)



Hundreds of thousands of soldiers who died for Britain went unremembered, simply because of their race



Members of the King's African Rifles in 1916. Photograph: Culture Club/Getty Images

Members of the King's African Rifles in 1916. Photograph: Culture Club/Getty Images

Fri 23 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

Walking around the Voi cemetery in southern Kenya a couple of years ago while filming a [documentary](#) for Channel 4, I read the names of British captains and corporals who died in the country in the first world war and paid my solemn respects.

I then asked the caretaker where the bodies of the Africans who also served Britain were buried. He pointed into the distance, behind the fence of the neatly-kept grounds into the bush, where dogs pee next to discarded plastic bags, bottles and other bits of miscellaneous rubbish. There was no headstone, no memorial and no dignity to be found in their deaths.

As the [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) finally [admits](#) today, up to 54,000 casualties, from Indian, east African, West African, Egyptian and Somali units were treated with unequal dignity in death. Some were commemorated collectively on memorials, instead of being given individually marked graves like their European counterparts. Others had

their names recorded on registers, rather than in stone. As many as 350,000, mainly east African and Egyptian, personnel who fought for Britain were not commemorated by name. Some of them were not commemorated at all.

The logic for this outrage was explained by Gordon Guggisberg, the governor of the Gold Coast (now Ghana), who wrote in 1923: “The average native of the Gold Coast would not understand or appreciate a headstone.” A War Graves Commission document refers to African soldiers and carriers as “semi-savage”. Another states “they are hardly in such a state of civilisation as to appreciate such a memorial”, and “the erection of individual memorials would represent a waste of public money”.

As an organisation that prides itself on “equality in death” it’s difficult to imagine what the reaction of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission would be if it discovered that hundreds of thousands of white soldiers who fought for Britain were buried without graves. However, it is to be welcomed that the organisation [now admits](#) that the decision to exclude Black and Brown soldiers from equal commemoration was underpinned by “the entrenched prejudices, preconceptions and pervasive racism of contemporary imperial attitudes”.

No condolences can ever make up for the indignity suffered by the unremembered. No headstone erected today can fill the empty void of the century that has passed in which these people were viewed as superfluous. Nevertheless, the commission’s apology and commitment to implement the recommendations of the report does offer the opportunity for us as a nation to take a fresh look at our collective history.

When we think of the first world war, we think of the interminable trenches of the western front. We think of the battles of the Somme, Mons and Passchendaele. We think of wartime poets like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Rupert Brooke. We do not think of the [first shot](#) fired by a British soldier, Regimental Sergeant-Major Alhaji Grunshi of the Gold Coast, during the Anglo-French invasion of Togoland (now Togo), which was then a German colony. When we think of the end of the first world war, we think of the armistice of 11 November 1918, forgetting that conflict continued between German and British troops in east Africa for a further two weeks.



Whenever there is debate around decolonising the curriculum, there is a false assumption that those arguing for it are focused on removing what we do not like. This could not be further from the truth. We don't want to erase history. We want to tell it honestly. Until we are able to do this, we will be unable to properly understand the present.

Wilful ignorance of Britain's colonial past in part explains the refusal by Boris Johnson's government to accept the existence of institutional racism in modern Britain. The government's [Sewell report](#), [denounced by the UN](#), described the belief in institutional racism in the UK as being a product of "idealism" from young people. There can be no clearer evidence than this report that, in fact, the refusal to accept the existence of institutional racism is a product of ignorance.

There is not only one injustice in this story. The first is clear: hundreds of thousands of Black and Brown soldiers who died for Britain were not given the graves, memorials or commemoration that they deserved. The second is that it took so long for this travesty to be recognised, let alone corrected. It should not have taken me to present a TV documentary for action to be taken or for apologies to be made. The research that [The Unremembered](#) was based on was completed by academic Michèle Barrett a decade previously, but it was ignored. This fact reflects poorly on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, but it is typical of so many institutions in this country that are reluctant to see prejudice even when it is staring them in the face.

Let this teach us a lesson: we cannot hide from the worst parts of our history if we want to move forward as a nation. As Martin Luther King Jr once said: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

- David Lammy is the Labour MP for Tottenham



## [Opinion](#)Conservatives

# Johnson should make the most of his popularity, because it won't last

[Polly Toynbee](#)



The prime minister is riding high in the polls, but things will look more bleak next year when his renewed austerity bites



Boris Johnson arrives at Downing Street, 20 April 2021. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/Zuma Wire/REX/Shutterstock

Boris Johnson arrives at Downing Street, 20 April 2021. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/Zuma Wire/REX/Shutterstock

Fri 23 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

The sun shines on the prime minister, despite everything.

The mood of the people soars as the YouGov mood tracker [finds](#) nearly half happy, up from just 20% in early January. Many more are “optimistic” or “content”. Everywhere the talk is of pubs, hairdressers, relief at schools being open, hope for summer holidays and the joy of vaccinations.

See how the news favours the government. Take this week: the unpopular [European Super League](#) collapses after government threats, “Hiring picks up in sign of recovery”, “Businesses report strong trade”, “PM aims to supercharge hunt for Covid treatments” and “Johnson’s ambitious green target” – all this in one day’s Financial Times, no Johnson fanzine. Sidestepping the sleaze, the government is micro-managing the news ahead of the 6 May elections. Naturally those stories are not all they seem. But how wise it has been to [abandon that £2.6m newsroom](#) where reporters

would be daily shouting out rude words such as “Greensill”, “Arcuri” and “food banks”.

Most people, most of the time, think and talk about politics very little. The election expert Prof John Curtice says only a third, at most, are interested. There is a [correlation](#) between an intense interest in politics and unhappiness, which is all too familiar to Labour supporters. But out there most people are happily emerging from the greatest national trauma of our lifetimes, many with overflowing bank balances to spend. Rishi Sunak has deliberately set the property market booming, as his reckless stamp duty holiday [causes](#) a 16-year high in sales, gifting house owners an average 8.6% boost in property value. Yes, it’s disgusting that Foxtons estate agents [took almost](#) £7m in support from the taxpayer yet is giving its chief executive a monster bonus. But, hey, this is hedonism time, the perfect fit for Boris Johnson’s persona. There’s no luckier time for local elections in just two weeks. Polling [puts](#) the Tories nine percentage points ahead, with Johnson riding high.

In his first election outing, Keir Starmer is cast as a killjoy, pointing to all the reasons not to be cheerful – and there are plenty. Expectations of election results are low: Labour and Curtice [predict](#) as many losses as gains. Because of last year’s postponement, these elections will be complex to deconstruct, as they relate to seats won and lost last time in different years. For example, Labour entered the 2017 local elections as much as 19 points behind, so could make gains in some places. But in places with elections last in 2016, pre-Brexit, Labour was just three points behind, so may now take losses. Labour’s [best hopes](#) are the Tees Valley, West of England and West Midlands mayors, and maybe a couple of counties, Derbyshire and Lancashire, even if the party trails in the country overall. While the sun shines, stories of sleaze may take time to permeate through to politics avoiders. In the 1990s John Major set himself up for a fall with his “back to basics” campaign. Yes, bad behaviour is priced in with Johnson, but how much sleaze will be tolerated for how long?

Starmer has heaved [Labour](#) back from a 20-point abyss, and done well at skewering the government’s deadly Covid blunders, but any opposition party would have been silenced by vaccine success. After these elections, [Labour](#) will be forced into a serious confrontation with the elemental shape-shift in

British politics, a gradual evolution that suddenly exploded into Brexit. There is no going back to the old certainties of left and right or geography, warns Curtice.

Johnson's tanks are parked on acres of Labour's old lawns, with his "levelling up" and "left behind" talk and his shameless towns fund bribes to newly won northern seats. The danger is that all that's left for Labour is to defend poor and disadvantaged people, who don't vote much anyway: Labour's high score for caring doesn't earn many votes. The party founded to represent the working class reels in shock at losing seats in places long considered working-class heartlands. Labour may wish Brexit would vanish down a memory hole, but Curtice warns it remains the key electoral divide – and Johnson plans to make extolling Brexit benefits a centrepiece in the next election. As "80% of Labour's vote now comes from remain supporters, the only realistic choice open to the party is to craft an appeal that will maintain and enhance its support among remain voters, be they working class or not," [writes](#) Curtice.

A majority in the 2019 election, 52%, voted for parties backing a second referendum: Labour must come to terms with its new nature as the party backed by the urban and suburban, young, skilled, graduates and ethnic minorities. It needs to win seats like London's Bromley and Chislehurst, which Curtice tells me would take Labour into a majority – and that's not impossible, as young, well-educated people spread out to old Tory suburbs. Can Labour cope with such an identity change?

It will be more at ease contemplating the Johnson government's likely fall from grace by next spring. As last month's budget made cuts in virtually every department, Britain will be deep in a new austerity, for all Johnson's promises. The NHS has nothing like the money or staff to cope with unprecedented waiting lists, nor have schools a fraction of what it takes to help children catch up. Youth unemployment will be worse and local councils poleaxed again. The Tory party will be riven between fiscal old-timers demanding cuts to the deficit, and Johnson's desire to splash out on eye-catchers.

Cassandra-like doom warnings won't get Labour elected – but there will be an urgent yearning for it to paint a picture of a far better country, with Joe

Biden's boldness and borrowing suggesting the way ahead. The current euphoria will fade as people tire of Johnson's sleazy salesmanship. There will be no Tory levelling up, as his tanks on Labour lawns will be exposed as cardboard disintegrating in the austerity rain.

- Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist

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## [Opinion](#)**Climate change**

# As head of the UN's climate change agency, I know this year is crucial for the future of humanity

[Patricia Espinosa](#)

Fighting climate change may be the most important task we face today – and the US's renewed commitment to it is welcome



‘By promoting change within its borders and fostering stronger ambition overseas, the US government is helping to move the climate agenda forward.’ Photograph: Charlie Riedel/AP

‘By promoting change within its borders and fostering stronger ambition overseas, the US government is helping to move the climate agenda forward.’ Photograph: Charlie Riedel/AP

Fri 23 Apr 2021 05.00 EDT

Nearly three decades ago, during the [Earth Summit](#) held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, the international community acknowledged the need to address the growing challenges posed by the state of the environment. Several resolutions and agreements emerged from that historic conference, among them the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#). The ultimate goal of this multilateral initiative has been to prevent unchecked, runaway climate change from harming natural ecosystems, threatening food production or hindering sustainable development. In short, to preserve the world as we know it.

For three decades, countries – or parties, as they are known under the convention – have debated and deliberated on the mounting threat posed by human activities to the stability of the climate system and, consequently, to the future of our planet. Progress has been slow, often disappointingly so. But there have been major achievements, such as the [Kyoto protocol](#) in 1992 and, most significantly, the [2016 Paris agreement](#), which constitute landmarks in the development of an international regime that protects the climate.

The scientific evidence is now unambiguous, and its conclusions are compelling: over the past century the temperature of the Earth's surface has risen – and, in fact, continues to rise – at an alarming rate. The cause of this process is equally clear: the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Reversing this trend is possibly the most important and pressing task faced by humanity today.

Arguably, the world has never faced a greater challenge. The causes of global warming are so complex and pervasive, the process has been going on for so long, and the time available to reverse this trend is so short, that the goal of containing climate change may seem at times unattainable. The coronavirus pandemic, with its fear, loss and suffering, has only made this task even more difficult.

The challenge is indeed formidable. To overcome it, global leadership must be extraordinary. The economic and social transformation that needs to take place to set the world on a path to sustainable development and, crucially, to prevent the average temperature of the Earth's surface from rising by more than 1.5C, demands bold and decisive action. Above all, it requires informed

and inclusive leadership in the public and private spheres, from men and women alike – especially from women, whose role in this transformative process will be essential.

President Joe Biden's leaders' [summit](#) on climate, which has allowed heads of state and government from around the world to meet virtually to discuss this momentous issue, is a most welcome development. The United States' renewed commitment to the cause of climate change is a source of justified optimism. By promoting change within its borders and fostering stronger ambition overseas, the US government is helping to move the climate agenda forward.

The leaders convened by the US president have an opportunity to explore and, hopefully, agree on new, more ambitious goals and commitments in the key areas of mitigation, adaptation and finance, which are at the heart of the climate regime, and to seek common ground on other pressing issues. This will prove invaluable as the international community prepares for the upcoming Cop26, to be held in Glasgow under the presidency of the United Kingdom. This is a time for leadership, courage and determination: a time for tough decisions to lead the transformation towards an unprecedented era of growth, prosperity and hope for all.

- Patricia Espinosa Cantellano is a Mexican politician and diplomat and executive secretary of the [United Nations](#) Framework Convention on Climate Change

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## Opinion[Jeremy Heywood](#)

# How did the UK's most powerful civil servant fall for Lex Greensill?

[Andy Beckett](#)

Jeremy Heywood was lauded as ‘the greatest public servant of our time’. Did his veneration of the private sector lead him astray?



Jeremy Heywood (right) with the then prime minister, David Cameron, in 2012. Heywood was cabinet secretary to four UK prime ministers. Photograph: Tom Stoddart Archive/Getty Images

Jeremy Heywood (right) with the then prime minister, David Cameron, in 2012. Heywood was cabinet secretary to four UK prime ministers. Photograph: Tom Stoddart Archive/Getty Images

Fri 23 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

[Jeremy Heywood](#) was always a bit of a mystery. Even by the opaque standards of the British state, the motivations of the late cabinet secretary

and the enormous power he wielded in Whitehall – from 1997 until shortly before his premature death in 2018 – are hard to explain completely. For four successive prime ministers, he was a fixer, confidant, crisis manager, peacemaker, policy assessor and key contact with the outside world. For the civil service as a whole, he was a dominant figure: seemingly ubiquitous, forever laying out in his quick, soft voice exactly how things should be done. Often, this was not how they had been done before.

In February, his widow, Suzanne Heywood, published a memoir about him, *What Does Jeremy Think? [Jeremy Heywood](#) and the Making of Modern Britain*. There are quotes from all the prime ministers he worked with on the back cover. “The words ‘civil servant’ seem too dry to describe greatness,” gushes Tony Blair. Yet despite being more than 500 pages long, and full of sometimes revealing personal and Downing Street details, the book leaves intriguing gaps. There is little about Heywood’s political beliefs – or why he appeared to lack them, despite his era’s increasing ideological polarisation. And there is nothing about the controversial Australian financier Lex Greensill, whom Heywood reportedly brought into David Cameron’s administration as an adviser, and seems to have energetically supported despite widespread opposition from Whitehall.

The Greensill scandal broke just weeks after *What Does Jeremy Think?* was published. The book had received [admiring reviews](#), seemingly cementing Heywood’s status as a hero of the retreating centrist establishment, the kind of supposedly neutral and deft civil servant who might have reined in the crude Brexiters now running the country. Since then, his role in this growing scandal – in the blurring of boundaries between Conservative governments, corporate interests and the civil service – has become of great interest to the media and [multiple official inquiries](#). For others involved in the scandal, he may turn out to be a very convenient fall guy. For a Tory party that has often treated the civil service with contempt, the destruction of Heywood’s reputation, after he did so much to keep their inept recent governments functioning, would be a characteristic piece of opportunism.

Yet it’s possible to find that prospect distasteful while also believing that Heywood’s dealings with [Greensill](#) need probing. Already, the scandal and Heywood’s career tell us a lot about the British state since the 1990s. For anyone who believes that the civil service should be confident, independent

and well-resourced – or that mandarins such as Heywood are actually impartial – the story is not reassuring.

One of the actions that first made his reputation was a review of the Treasury, where he then worked, which he was asked to lead in 1994. John Major's Conservative government was looking for cuts and Heywood provided them, suggesting that senior Treasury posts be reduced by "around 30%" and that some of its work be given to the private sector. This willingness to try to make austerity work, and to involve business in government, became consistent themes in Heywood's supposedly pragmatic career. And this was not just him giving Tory and New Labour ministers what they wanted. "He can't stand waste," someone who worked with him under Blair told me, when I wrote a [profile](#) of Heywood in 2016. "He's like one of those time and motion men from the 60s: you can imagine him going round with a clipboard."

Like many high flyers of his generation, Heywood also venerated the private sector. He adopted business language and assumptions. "Ministers are customers for our advice," he would say. Whitehall reports were "product". He also sought to hire or collaborate with people from business. Suzanne Heywood says he saw them as "unencumbered by civil service history", and therefore able to "accelerate change in Whitehall". She herself had left the civil service to become a management consultant, and in 2003 he left too, spending four years at the US bank Morgan Stanley. When he closed his first big deal for them, she records, her usually calm husband was "exhilarated".

Morgan Stanley was where he met Greensill, who was working there as well. The young Australian banker reportedly impressed him. When Heywood resumed his career in Whitehall, they stayed in touch. In 2011, with Cameron's austerity programme forcing the civil service to save money in new ways, and Greensill offering what he claimed was a way for the state to make its procurement policies more efficient through supply-chain finance, Heywood seems to have swiftly created a privileged position for him in government.

Some of the emails that Heywood appears to have written to his subordinates on Greensill's behalf do not read well, in the light of the collapse of the Australian's company last month. One from 1 August 2011



says: “Lex and I have been working on this [supply-chain finance] stuff off and on for five years ... He is quite keen to ... come and work for us ... [I] really do not want to let this opportunity pass by.”

Greensill’s supply-chain finance system was not widely adopted by the Cameron government. But in 2017, Heywood successfully nominated Greensill for a CBE for “services to the economy”. Last week, a senior Whitehall contemporary of Heywood’s said, cuttingly, of his [relationship with Greensill](#): “He was perhaps a bit naive.” Last month, Suzanne Heywood felt obliged to state that her husband “was not personally involved in and took no personal benefit of any sort from Lex’s company”.

One lesson of this inglorious episode in Heywood’s long career may be that a single civil servant, however brilliant, can get involved in too much. A former colleague of Heywood’s told me in 2016, “Jeremy would quite often think he could do things better than someone else.” He was not an easy person to like if you had reservations about Whitehall. When I interviewed him in his grand office, off the record at his insistence, he was outwardly civil and modest, but a bit patronising underneath. In 2012 he told MPs: “There’s a lot of rhetoric in the newspapers, but the business of government goes on.”

But thanks to a decade of Conservative rule, the business of government has now changed so much that big business and government are often indistinguishable. Because “his heart was still in the civil service”, as Suzanne Heywood puts it, Jeremy Heywood couldn’t – or perhaps wouldn’t – see the dangers. Sometimes the people who are most committed to an institution, who will do almost anything to preserve it, are the ones who inadvertently betray it.

- Andy Beckett is a Guardian columnist



## 2021.04.23 - Around the world

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- [Sexual violence Rape victims in south Asia still face vaginal tests, report finds](#)
- [Philadelphia Bones of Black children killed in police bombing used in Ivy League anthropology course](#)
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## [Libya](#)

# More than 100 asylum seekers feared dead after shipwreck off Libya

Dozens of bodies have been spotted near a capsized vessel which had about 130 people on board



A rubber boat is seen after it capsized in the Mediterranean. Photograph: Flavio Gasperini/SOS Méditerranée/via Reuters

A rubber boat is seen after it capsized in the Mediterranean. Photograph: Flavio Gasperini/SOS Méditerranée/via Reuters

[Lorenzo Tondo](#) and agencies

[@lorenzo\\_tondo](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 18.49 EDT

At least 120 asylum seekers are feared dead after their rubber boat capsized in stormy seas off the coast of [Libya](#) while they were attempting to reach Europe, charities and the UN migration agency say.

Dozens of bodies were spotted near a capsized vessel on Thursday, which had about 130 people on board, a rescue charity said.

According to an initial reconstruction of events, the European humanitarian group SOS Méditerranée was alerted on Tuesday by the volunteer-run Mediterranean rescue hotline Alarm Phone to the presence of three boats in distress in international waters off Libya. Waves in the area were reaching heights of up to six metres.

The SOS Méditerranée's ship, Ocean Viking, as well as merchant vessels, headed to the area and found no survivors, but at least 10 bodies.

"Today, after hours of search, our worst fear has come true," [said Luisa Albera, search and rescue coordinator aboard Ocean Viking](#). "The crew of the Ocean Viking had to witness the devastating aftermath of the shipwreck of a rubber boat north-east of Tripoli. This boat had been reported in distress with around 130 people onboard on Wednesday morning.

"We are heartbroken. We think of the lives that have been lost and of the families who might never have certainty as to what happened to their loved ones."

[Alarm Phone said](#): "The people could have been rescued but all authorities knowingly left them to die at sea."

The hotline service claims it was in contact with the boat in distress over 10 hours on 21 April, and repeatedly relayed its GPS position and the dire situation to European and Libyan authorities and the wider public.

However, it said all the European authorities rejected responsibility to coordinate the search operation and instead pointed at the Libyan authorities as the "competent" authorities.

"The Libyan coastguard, however, refused to launch or coordinate a rescue operation, leaving the 130 people out in a rough sea for a whole night," it said.

"The lack of an efficient patrolling system is undeniable and unacceptable," [Flavio Di Giacomo](#), Italy's spokesman for the UN migration agency, said on

Twitter. “Things need to change.”

On Wednesday, the Ocean Viking spent all day searching for another vessel carrying about 40 people with no success.

After saving thousands of people from drowning in the Mediterranean, a number of NGO rescue boats are stuck in Italian ports after authorities ordered their seizure. [Dozens of investigations have been launched by Italian prosecutors](#) against NGOs in recent years, most of them later dropped.

In a joint investigation with the Italian public broadcaster Rai News and the newspaper Domani, published last Friday, [the Guardian has seen documents](#) from prosecutors in Trapani, Sicily, detailing private conversations between at least three Libyan senior coastguards and Italian officials, exposing the indifference of individuals on the Libyan side to the plight of migrants and to international law and their “uncooperative behaviour” which allegedly resulted in the deaths of hundreds of migrants.

More than 350 people have died in this stretch of sea this year – not including Thursday’s victims – SOS Méditerranée said.

Last week the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, and the International Organization for Migration said that at least 41 people, including a child, died after a boat carrying African migrants to Europe sank off Tunisia.

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## Sexual violence

# Rape victims in south Asia still face vaginal tests, report finds

Unscientific ‘morality’ examination linked to low conviction rates and violates women’s rights, says Equality Now



An artwork in Delhi made to highlight sexual violence after the gang rape of a Dalit woman last year. Photograph: Mayank Makhija/NurPhoto/PA

An artwork in Delhi made to highlight sexual violence after the gang rape of a Dalit woman last year. Photograph: Mayank Makhija/NurPhoto/PA

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[Sarah Johnson](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

Physical vaginal tests are still used to determine whether women and girls have been raped in India, Nepal and [Sri Lanka](#), according to a new report.

The practice remains widespread in all three countries and some courts refer to the test in judgments, despite it having no scientific basis and being banned in [India](#).

['I'll put those monsters behind bars': India's law school for rape survivors](#)

[Read more](#)

Divya Srinivasan, a human rights lawyer based in Delhi and co-author of [the report](#), from the women's rights organisation Equality Now and [Dignity Alliance International](#), labelled the test "a human rights violation by itself".

Sumeera Shrestha, executive director of the Nepali organisation [Women for Human Rights](#), added: "It is demeaning and inhuman. It is not just about whether rape has happened, but it's like testing your virginity."

She said that the examination was used by authorities to show that rape survivors were “immoral”, adding that, in the context of [Nepal](#), it was related to notions of “honour” and the belief that women and girls should be “pure”.

The test involves a medical practitioner inserting two fingers into the vagina of a rape survivor in an attempt to determine if the hymen is broken, as well as to test laxity in the vagina.

If the hymen is still intact, the test is used to declare that rape could not have taken place, though rape does not necessarily break the hymen.

The test is often used to label victims as used to having sex, says the report, and forms part of evidence to bring up past intercourse and cast doubt on the rape allegation.



Indian women protest after the gang rape and killing of a Dalit woman in Uttar Pradesh. Photograph: Anupam Nath/AP

Five countries in the region – [Bangladesh](#), Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka – permit the use of evidence detailing the sexual history of a rape survivor. Srinivasan said this was a relic from colonial times. “Penal codes in Sri Lanka and [Bangladesh](#) specifically say in rape cases you can bring



evidence of past ‘immoral character’,” she said. “Rape is seen as an offence against chastity and honour.”

The report, which focuses on the experiences of women in six south Asian countries, stated that the two-finger vaginal test was one of many factors making the process for reporting rape and seeking justice incredibly burdensome.

As in many developed countries, conviction rates for rape are extremely low across the region – in Bangladesh the rate is 3%. “It’s very disheartening,” Srinivasan said. “Our system is failing at all levels. There are various reasons which make it impossible to take prosecution forward and so many other problems in the system.”

Survivors face long delays in the justice system – cases can take several years to go to trial – and officials are susceptible to bribery, the report said. Accounts of police officers refusing to file complaints or failing to investigate allegations are widespread in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Shrestha said that in Nepal, survivors and families faced pressure and threats to drop cases as well as social stigma. “Women are threatened. Also human rights defenders who support women are threatened,” she said. “When we work with widows who have been raped by family members, they cannot openly say that because [the perpetrator] threatens her children.”

In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, more than 60% of the survivors interviewed reported coming under pressure to settle or compromise in their case. The report said that in some instances, survivors did not then receive the compensation promised under these extra-legal agreements.



A protest in Dhaka demanding justice for rape victims in Bangladesh, where the conviction rate is just 3%. Photograph: Barcroft Media/Getty

Survivors of sexual violence from socially excluded communities face even greater barriers to accessing justice as a consequence of caste, tribal, ethnic or religious prejudice and persecution.

The report laid out solutions to the multiple barriers that rape survivors face. Srinivasan called for police officers who fail to register rape cases to be held to account, and training for all justice officials and healthcare professionals. Judges should enforce bans on two-finger tests, she said.

“In countries where it is banned, implement the ban and make sure all health professionals are aware of it,” she said. “Take action against providers who still continue to perform it and make sure courts stop relying on evidence of the test.”

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## Philadelphia

# Bones of Black children killed in police bombing used in Ivy League anthropology course



Mourners of Move members stand in front of their former headquarters.  
Photograph: Bettmann/Bettmann Archive

Mourners of Move members stand in front of their former headquarters.  
Photograph: Bettmann/Bettmann Archive

Remains of those killed in 1985 Move bombing in Philadelphia serve as  
'case study' in Princeton-backed course

[Ed Pilkington](#) *in New York*

[@edpilkington](#)

Fri 23 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

The bones of Black children who died in 1985 after their home was bombed by Philadelphia police in a confrontation with the Black liberation group

which was raising them are being used as a “[case study](#)” in an online forensic anthropology course presented by an Ivy League professor.

It has emerged that the physical remains of one, or possibly two, of the children who were killed in the aerial bombing of the Move organization in May 1985 have been guarded over the past 36 years in the anthropological collections of the University of [Pennsylvania](#) and Princeton.

The institutions have held on to the heavily burned fragments, and since 2019 have been deploying them for teaching purposes without the permission of the deceased’s living parents.

To the astonishment and dismay of present-day Move members, some of the bones are being deployed as artifacts in an online course presented in the name of Princeton and hosted by the online study platform Coursera. [Real Bones: Adventures in Forensic Anthropology](#) focuses on “lost personhood” – cases where an individual cannot be identified due to the decomposed condition of their remains.

It uses as its main “case study” the events of May 1985, producing as prime evidence a set of bones belonging to a girl in her teens retrieved from the ashes of the Move house at 6221 Osage Avenue in [Philadelphia](#).

The professor is holding the bones of a 14-year-old girl whose mother is still alive and grieving

*Michael Africa Jr*

The revelation comes just days before Philadelphia stages its first official day of remembrance over the 1985 bombing, following a formal apology issued by the city council last year.

The disclosure, first reported by the local news outlet [Billy Penn](#), also lands in the middle of a fevered debate over academia’s handling of African American remains that has been rocket-charged by the nationwide racial reckoning in the wake of George Floyd’s murder in Minneapolis last year by a police officer.

On 13 May 1985, Philadelphia police [dropped a bomb](#) from a helicopter on to the roof of a communal house occupied by members of Move, an organization that bore comparison to the Black Panthers combined with back-to-nature environmental activism. In the ensuing inferno, the Move house as well as the entire surrounding neighborhood was razed to the ground.

Eleven people linked to the group were killed. Among them were five children, aged seven to 14.

Last year [the city apologized formally](#) for the “immeasurable and enduring harm” caused in the bombing, paving the way to this year’s inaugural commemoration.



Smoke billows over rowhouses in West Philadelphia after the 1985 bombing. Photograph: Bettmann Archive

The forensic anthropology course in which the bones of a Move child are being used has almost 5,000 enrolled students. It was filmed in February 2019 and is taught by Janet Monge, an adjunct professor in anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and a visiting professor in the same subject at Princeton.

The Move “case study” is broken up into five online videos, in which Monge relates the history of the 1985 catastrophe. In one video she picks up the bones and holds them up to the camera.

Monge describes the remains in vivid terms. They consist of two bones – a pelvis and femur – that belonged to a small girl probably in her teens that were discovered held together “because they were in a pair of jeans”.

The pelvis was cracked “where a beam of the house had actually fallen on this individual”. The fragment showed signs of burnt tendons around the hip joint.

“The bones are juicy, by which I mean you can tell they are the bones of a recently deceased individual,” Monge continues. “If you smell it, it doesn’t actually smell bad – it smells kind of greasy, like an older-style grease.”

The UPenn and Princeton academic does not inform her students that she is displaying the remains without permission of the girl’s family. She is, however, open about the tragic nature of the confrontation that led to the child’s death in Osage Avenue.

“It was one of the great tragedies, to witness the remains as they were found and moved from this location ... I still feel unsettled by many aspects of it,” she says. She also shares with the class that Move continues to exist to this day: “The organization is still active in Philadelphia.”

The display of the human remains of a Black girl who would be in her 40s today had she survived the police bombing that took her life is certain to intensify the debate over the way the remains of Black people are handled by academia. The subject has been a talking point for decades, but has intensified in recent months following the mass protests over Floyd’s death.

[The day police bombed a city street: can scars of 1985 Move atrocity be healed?](#)

[Read more](#)

The Move bones have never positively been identified. But given their small size and features, they almost certainly belong to one of the older Move girls

who died in the inferno.

The oldest was a 14-year-old called Tree Africa (all members of Move take the last name Africa to denote their collective commitment to Black liberation). Michael Africa Jr, a Move member who was a friend of Tree's and who was six at the time of the bombing, described her as a responsible kid who, as her name suggested, was passionate about climbing trees.

“When we went to a park, the first thing she would do is scout out the biggest tree. She was always the first one up, and she always went the highest,” he told the Guardian.

Tree's mother is Consuela Dotson Africa. At the time of the fire she was serving a 16-year prison sentence related to an [earlier police confrontation](#) with Move in 1978; she still lives in the Philadelphia area.



Michael Africa Jr in 2018. Photograph: Ed Pilkington/The Guardian

The other possible identification of the bones would be Delisha Africa, who was 12 in 1985. When she died, both her parents – Delbert Africa and Janet Africa – were similarly in prison in relation to the 1978 confrontation.

They were part of the so-called Move 9 who were each sentenced to 30 years to life for the contested shooting of a police officer.



Both Delisha's parents were [released from prison](#) after more than 40 years behind bars. Delbert died last June, five months after he was paroled.

Janet was set free in 2019, just three months after Monge recorded her forensic anthropology course using bones that potentially belonged to Janet's daughter. Janet Africa continues to be an active Move member living in Philadelphia.

Neither Janet nor Consuela have commented on the revelation that their daughters' remains are possibly being used to teach online anthropology courses. But it is understood that neither of them gave their consent for them to be used that way.

"Nobody said you can do that, holding up their bones for the camera. That's not how we process our dead. This is beyond words. The anthropology professor is holding the bones of a 14-year-old girl whose mother is still alive and grieving," Michael Africa Jr said.

Africa Jr said that the discovery of the online course just days before the inaugural day of remembrance of the 1985 bombing was "such a shame, such a tragedy. After 36 years we find out that not only were these children abused and mistreated and bombed and burned, they haven't even been allowed to rest in peace."

The precise sequence of events relating to the Move bones remains sketchy. For years they sat in a cardboard box at the Penn Museum, part of the University of Pennsylvania where Monge is the leading bones expert.

It transpires that a Penn anthropologist, Alan Mann, acquired the remains after he was asked in the immediate aftermath of the bombing to provide specialist advice to the Philadelphia medical examiner in an attempt to identify the fragments. Mann kept possession of the bones, and in 2001 took them with him when he transferred to Princeton.

What you are seeing here is the scientific manifestation of white privilege

*Michael Blakey*

The remains appear to have shuttled between the two Ivy League institutions until 2019, when Monge, who had worked closely with Mann over many years, filmed her online course using the pelvis and femur fragments.

Where the bones are now located remains a mystery. The University of Pennsylvania told the Guardian that a set of remains of two bones from one individual, who has never been identified, “have been returned to the custody of Dr Mann at Princeton University”.

But Princeton told the Guardian that it had only become aware of the issue this week and insisted it was not in possession of the bones. “We can confirm that no remains of the victims of the MOVE bombing are being housed at Princeton University,” a spokesman said.

Monge did not respond to Guardian inquiries.

The controversy over the MOVE bones comes just a week after Penn Museum [apologized](#) for the “unethical possession of human remains” in its Samuel Morton Cranial collection.

The collection was compiled in the first half of the 19th century and used by Morton to justify white supremacist theories; it contained the remains of Black Philadelphians as well as [53 crania](#) of enslaved people from Cuba and the US, which will now be repatriated or reburied.



A view of Osage Avenue in Philadelphia after the bombing. Photograph: Bettmann/Bettmann Archive

Anthropologists and historians have become increasingly sensitive to the issues around the handling of remains. Michael Blakey, professor of anthropology at the College of William & Mary, was involved in the first reburial of African American bones from the Smithsonian Institution, which took place a year after the MOVE bombing, in 1986, and involved the remains of Black Philadelphians.

In the 1990s he directed the development of the African Burial Ground in New York, which was turned into a national monument following the full involvement of the local Black community. “We decided then we would not conduct any research without the permission of the community, and we created the precedent for informed consent involving any skeletal remains,” Blakey said.

The Guardian asked Blakey for his reaction to the news that anthropologists were still deploying African American bones in their teaching to this day in the absence of community permission. He replied: “The United States continues to operate on the basis of white privilege. What you are seeing here is the scientific manifestation of that – the objectification of the ‘other’,

and the disempathy that is socialized in a society in which whites assume that they have control.”

The misuse of Black remains for scientific purposes has a long history in America. In 1989, construction workers in Augusta, Georgia, discovered almost 10,000 individual human bones under the former premises of the Medical College of Georgia.

The fragments came from corpses that were sold to the college by grave robbers and taken from Augusta’s cemetery for impoverished African Americans. The college used them in medical training and dissections.

Samuel Redman, a historian at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and author of *Bone Rooms: From Scientific Racism to Human Prehistory in Museums*, said the discovery of the Move bones was all the more disturbing given how recently the deaths occurred.

“There are people alive who are affected by this, not just in an emotional way but in a trauma-inducing way that could be harmful. The notion of ‘do no harm’ should be part and parcel of our research and teaching – we need to wrestle with this problem much more completely.”

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## US news

# Gender reveal party using 80 pounds of explosives sets off earthquake reports

New Hampshire man turns himself in to police after detonating explosives as part of a gender reveal party held in a quarry



These still images taken from a video provided by the US Forest Service show the moment a gender-reveal party sparked a wildfire in Green Valley, Arizona, in April 2017. A New Hampshire family have caused reports of earthquakes by setting off 80 pounds of explosives as part of their gender reveal display. Photograph: HO/AFP/Getty Images

These still images taken from a video provided by the US Forest Service show the moment a gender-reveal party sparked a wildfire in Green Valley, Arizona, in April 2017. A New Hampshire family have caused reports of earthquakes by setting off 80 pounds of explosives as part of their gender reveal display. Photograph: HO/AFP/Getty Images

[\*Helen Sullivan\*](#) and agencies

[\*@helenrsullivan\*](#)

Thu 22 Apr 2021 22.34 EDT

A New Hampshire family's gender reveal party was such a blast that it set off reports of an earthquake, and could be heard from across the state line, police said.

Police in Kingston, a town not far from the Massachusetts border, received reports of a loud explosion Tuesday evening. They responded to Torromeo quarry where they found people who acknowledged holding a gender reveal party with explosives.

00:22

Angry resident reacts after gender reveal party using explosives sets off earthquake – video

The source of the blast was 80 pounds (36 kilograms) of Tannerite, police said. The family thought the quarry would be the safest spot to light the explosive, which is typically sold over the counter as a target for firearms practice, police said.

Nearby residents said the blast rocked their homes and some reported property damage, NBC 10 Boston reported.

“We heard this God-awful blast,” Sara Taglieri, who lives in a home that abuts the quarry, told the television station. “It knocked pictures off our walls ... I’m all up for silliness and whatnot, but that was extreme.”

[I started the 'gender reveal party' trend. And I regret it](#)  
[Read more](#)

Taglieri's husband, Matt, told the TV station that neighbours reported cracks in the foundation of their homes from the explosion.

No injuries were reported, police said. The person who bought and detonated the explosives has turned himself in to police. He was not identified.



Gender reveal explosion at New Hampshire quarry rattles towns in 2 states <https://t.co/0wA7TMxrX2> [pic.twitter.com/7ZCubXZzd8](https://t.co/0wA7TMxrX2)

— The Oregonian (@Oregonian) [April 22, 2021](#)

Police said that they had seen a video of the reveal and could confirm that the child was a boy, [NBC Los Angeles](#) reported. An investigation was ongoing and they will make a determination on charges

The blast was the latest in a series of dramatic and hazardous gender reveals. The practice, during which expectant parents announce the sex of their soon-to-be-born infants in elaborate ways, became popular about a decade ago.

In March, two pilots were killed when their plane crashed into the waters off Cancun while it was streaming a pink substance as part of a gender reveal, [Fox News](#) reported.

In 2020, smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used as part of a California gender reveal party caused a fire that damaged [more than 7,000 acres](#) (2,800 hectares) of land. In April 2017, an off-duty US border patrol agent, Dennis Dickey, caused \$8m of damage to 19,000 hectares (47,000 acres) of Arizona forest when he [shot at a target full of blue-coloured explosive](#) as a means of announcing the gender of his unborn child.

In July 2019, one of the pioneers of the gender-reveal movement – Jenna Karvunidis – said it was [time to “re-evaluate” the practice](#), and that her own daughter, announced to friends via a cake with pink icing inside, had begun to explore her gender and defy gender norms.

*With Associated Press*

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## [Indonesia](#)

# Missing Indonesian submarine: rescuers find unidentified object as oxygen runs low

Race to find missing navy vessel as authorities warn oxygen in KRI Nanggala-402 will run out within 24 hours



An Indonesian navy submarine searches for the missing KRI Nanggala north of Bali. Photograph: Eric Ireng/EPA

An Indonesian navy submarine searches for the missing KRI Nanggala north of Bali. Photograph: Eric Ireng/EPA

*Guardian staff and agencies*

Thu 22 Apr 2021 20.11 EDT

Indonesia's president has ordered an all-out effort to find a [missing submarine](#) in a race against time to save the 53 crew, whose oxygen supply

was only expected to last another 24 hours.

As the US military said on Thursday that it was joining the search, the Indonesian navy said its ships had found an unidentified object at a depth of 50-100 metres (165-330ft).

[Indonesia continues search for missing submarine carrying 53 people](#)

[Read more](#)

But hope was beginning to run out for the crew on board the KRI Nanggala-402, which went missing early on Wednesday during a torpedo drill.

“I have ordered the military chief, navy chief of staff, the search and rescue agency and other instances to deploy all the forces and the most optimal efforts to find and rescue the submarine crew,” Indonesia’s president, Joko Widodo, said on Thursday. “The main priority is the safety of the 53 crew members.”

[mapp](#)

Yudo Margono, the navy chief of staff, said the search was being aided by calm conditions but the crew’s air supply would last only until Saturday.

“Hopefully before they can be found, the oxygen will be enough,” he told a news conference in Bali, adding that the submarine had been cleared for use and was in good condition.

The diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 was participating in a training exercise on Wednesday when it missed a scheduled reporting call. Officials reported an oil slick and the smell of diesel fuel near the starting position of its last dive, about 96km (60 miles) north of Bali, though there was no conclusive evidence that they were linked to the submarine.



An aerial photo shows oil spills are seen in the water where the search operation for the Navy submarine KRI Nanggala that went missing  
Photograph: Eric Ireng/EPA

Yudo Margono said rescuers had found an unidentified object with high magnetism at a depth of 50-100m (165-330ft) and that officials hoped it was the submarine.

He said they were waiting for a navy ship with underwater detection facilities to arrive in the area before they could investigate further.

Indonesia said several countries had responded to requests for assistance, with Malaysia and Singapore sending ships, and Australia offering “help in any way we can”. The US defence department was sending “airborne assets” to assist in the submarine search, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said on Twitter.

The Indonesian navy believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700m (2,000-2,300ft) – three times greater than the depth at which pressure would begin to crush the vessel.

Ahn Guk-hyeon, an official from South Korea’s Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering, which refitted the vessel in 2009-2012, said the submarine would collapse if it goes deeper than around 200m. He said his

company upgraded much of the submarine's internal structures and systems but lacked recent information about the vessel.

Frank Owen, secretary of the Submarine Institute of Australia, also said the submarine could be at too great a depth for a rescue team to operate.

“Most rescue systems are really only rated to about 600m (1,970 feet),” he said. “They can go deeper than that because they will have a safety margin built into the design, but the pumps and other systems that are associated with that may not have the capacity to operate. So they can survive at that depth, but not necessarily operate.”

Owen, a former submariner who developed an Australian submarine rescue system, said the Indonesian vessel was not fitted with a rescue seat around an escape hatch designed for underwater rescues. He said a rescue submarine would make a waterproof connection to a disabled submarine with a so-called skirt fitted over the rescue seat so that the hatch can be opened without the stricken vessel filling with water.

Owen said the submarine could be recovered from 500m without any damage but could not say if it would have imploded at 700m.

The German-built submarine, which has been in service in Indonesia since 1981, was carrying 49 crew members, along with its commander and three gunners, the Indonesian defence ministry said. It had been maintained and overhauled in Germany, Indonesia and most recently in South Korea.

More than 60 of the Type 209 class submarines have been sold and have served in 14 navies around the world, ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems spokesperson, Eugen Witte, said.

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands, has faced growing challenges to its maritime claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands.

Last year, Widodo reaffirmed the country's sovereignty during a visit to the islands at the edge of the South China Sea, one of the busiest sea lanes

where China is embroiled in territorial disputes with its smaller neighbours.

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