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BBC boss Davie resigns over allegations of bias

Director-general and head of news quit after criticism of corporation's coverage

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Tim Davie resigned as director-general of the BBC yesterday as the corporation prepares to apologise for doctoring a clip of President Trump.

The BBC chief quit alongside Deborah Turness, the chief executive of BBC News, after a torrid week for Britain's national broadcaster.

Davie said he bore "ultimate responsibility" for mistakes and suggested he had struggled with the "very intense personal and professional demands of managing this role over many years in these febrile times".

He and Turness were undone by an edition of *Panorama* last year in which two different parts of a speech by Trump given in January 2021 were spliced together to make it seem as though he had told supporters to go to the Capitol and "fight like hell".

Trump posted a message in which he celebrated Davie's demise. "The TOP people in the BBC, including TIM DAVIE, the BOSS, are all quitting/ FIRED, because they were caught 'doctoring' my very good (PERFECT!) speech of January 6th," said Trump.

The BBC has been criticised for its failure to tackle the allegation of doctoring the clip and apologise quickly, despite internal pressure to do so.

Samir Shah, the BBC chair, is expected to apologise for the mistake today, a week after it emerged.

It featured in a dossier — compiled by a former adviser, Michael Prescott, and leaked to The Daily Telegraph — which also accused the BBC of failing in its coverage of Gaza and trans issues.

There was a stream of negative stories about the news output last week based on reports conducted by David Grossman, a senior editorial adviser.

The concerns raised with the BBC's editorial guidelines and standards committee included an assessment that BBC Arabic showed bias against Israel after consistently "painting [it] as the aggressor" over the war in Gaza.

Insiders described Davie's fall as "death by a thousand cuts" after he



Tim Davie and Deborah Turness quit after the BBC misled viewers by splicing together parts of a speech by President Trump



MAX MUMBY; RAY BURNSTON/BBC

decided he could no longer continue in the role. Scandals have included the disgraced newsreader Huw Edwards, controversial social media posts by the *Match of the Day* presenter Gary Lineker, Bob Vylan's antisemitic performance at Glastonbury, and the airing of a Gaza documentary featuring the son of a Hamas official.

In a note to staff yesterday, Davie, who earned £547,000 last year, referenced the challenging circumstances in

which he had led the corporation as he admitted that the turmoil of the past week had prompted his departure.

"I have been reflecting on the very intense personal and professional demands of managing this role over many years in these febrile times," he said. "In these increasingly polarised times, the BBC is of unique value and speaks to the very best of us. It helps make the UK a special place; overwhelmingly kind, tolerant and curious.

"Like all public organisations, the BBC is not perfect, and we must always be open, transparent and accountable.

"While not being the only reason, the current debate around BBC News has understandably contributed to my decision. Overall the BBC is delivering well, but there have been some mistakes made and as director-general I have to take ultimate responsibility."

Davie explained that he had chosen

Continued on page 2

Reeves 'will doom Labour with income tax increase'

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Cabinet ministers have warned Rachel Reeves that increasing income tax in the budget may spell electoral disaster for the Labour Party.

Colleagues increasingly believe that the chancellor is set to break a manifesto promise but are urging her to set out an "off-ramp" of tax cuts to reverse the rise in time for the next election.

The Treasury will receive revised forecasts today from the Office for Budget Responsibility, which will cost up a series of "major measures" being considered by Reeves.

These include a 2p increase in income tax coupled with a similar decrease in employee national insurance contributions, limited to those on lower incomes. This would leave those workers paying the same tax, but would hit higher earners and other groups who do not pay NI, such as pensioners and landlords.

Economists believe that this could raise more than £6 billion a year, helping to close the £20 billion hole in the public finances.

Only basic-rate taxpayers, earning below about £50,000, are likely to be exempt from the NI cut, to ensure that only the wealthier pay more.

However, ministers are wary about the political consequences and backbench Labour MPs are agitating against Downing Street.

One cabinet minister called on Reeves to set out an "off-ramp" for reducing taxes. They urged her to spell out how an income tax rise would be used for investment in public services and capital projects to boost growth, which would allow cuts to income tax before the next general election.

"We need to show this is being done with a heavy heart and there has to be an off-ramp," they said.

Other cabinet sources said they were "alive to the political dangers" of raising income tax, in spite of Sir Keir Starmer's insistence until July that there would be no manifesto breach.

They noted that there was less than six months for the fallout to "sink in" before national elections in Scotland

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IN THE NEWS

Unwelcome baggage

The fashion brand Coach is alleged to have sourced leather from a tannery linked to deforestation near the site of the Cop30 climate talks in Brazil. **Page 3**

RAF aid for Belgium

Britain is sending a specialist RAF unit to Belgium after repeated incursions by "uncrewed aerial systems" above the country's airports and military bases. **Page 6**

No surrender in Gaza

Renegade Hamas fighters are holed up in tunnels under Israeli-held territory in Gaza, disobeying their commanders and potentially jeopardising the ceasefire. **Page 26**

AI job cuts

One in six employers expect AI to reduce the size of their workforce over the next year, with clerical, junior managerial and administrative roles most at risk. **Page 31**

Norris races ahead

Lando Norris took control of the Formula 1 title race with a commanding performance in Sao Paulo, stretching his lead to 24 points with three races left. **Page 58**



News

Today's highlights

- 7.05am** Louise Sandher-Jones, the veterans minister
8.05am Nadine Dorries, pictured, the author and former culture secretary
12.30pm Mike Joyce, the former drummer with the Smiths
3.35pm Laura Hackett, the deputy literary editor of The Times, shares her book picks for the week
4.05pm Simon Case, the crossbench peer and former cabinet secretary

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TODAY'S EDITION

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The club where the top dogs hang out (for £210 a month)

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Will Kelleher's blueprint for how to beat the All Blacks

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SPOILER ALERT
Esther Walker defends doting on one's children

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Britain's Bill Gates, his sunken yacht and the bitter fight for £700 million



Last year the tech entrepreneur Mike Lynch and six others died when his superyacht sank. This week deliberations begin over how much his estate owes to the company he defrauded. The payments could lead to bankruptcy

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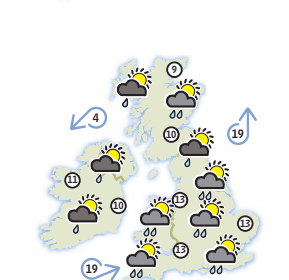
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THE WEATHER



A cloudy day with spells of rain and showers, heaviest across southern Britain later. Full forecast, page 47

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Forcing state bidders to show social value 'is a pantomime'

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Ministers have been urged to ditch the "pointless pantomime" of forcing companies to prove their "social value", amid warnings big defence contracts take more than six years to award.

The co-chair of a caucus of pro-growth Labour MPs is backing a push to reform the way Whitehall procures goods and services worth about £400 billion a year.

The current system locks out smaller companies and does not always represent the best value for taxpayers, according to Chris Curtis, who runs the Labour Growth Group.

Concerns have been raised over the requirement of businesses to prove their "social value", under legislation applied to all new procurement activity since 2021.

Contracts must give a minimum weighting of 10 per cent of marks for the contract, based on promises about social, economic and environmental additional benefits.

Experts say companies get marked highly for saying they will use small and medium-sized businesses or charities

in their supply chain, as well as diversity initiatives.

However, Curtis said in reality large companies had teams "dedicated to ticking boxes and gaming the process", adding: "Meanwhile, smaller firms who could deliver better outcomes for taxpayers, which should always come first, can't afford the burden."

Curtis backed calls by Re:State, a cross-party think tank, which include urging the government to scrap the "social value" regime. In a report titled "Procure and Simple", issues were also identified with how long the tendering process could take.

Big defence projects valued at more than £20 million take six-and-a-half years on average for a contract to be awarded, meaning many requirements are out of date by the time the work begins, let alone by the time it ends, according to the report.

Even though the Ministry of Defence is exempt from requiring social value on its bids, it still often does this.

A live tender for nuclear deterrence research says in the assessment criteria that bidders should "demonstrate how their project meets at least one of the social value criteria". These criteria

include tackling workforce inequality, fighting climate change and boosting community cohesion.

Other recommendations made in the report by Re:State include starting to award some contracts directly.

It said that the government's efforts to ensure competition for as many contracts as possible were having the opposite effect, making the market less competitive overall. The only companies capable of meaningfully engaging, therefore, are big firms, meaning new entrants are effectively banned from competing, the report said.

A new kind of "smart award" should be created, with a target of 5 per cent of contracts set for awarding bids directly to crowd in suppliers who could make the overall market more competitive, it added.

To make the market more competitive, a target of 10 per cent should be set for start-ups and scale-ups to prioritise high-growth companies, it was argued.

Joe Hill, policy director at the think tank, said that the changes would help to streamline the procurement process and cut wasteful spending.

MoD keeps wasting its budget, leading article, page 25

More help for colleges in push to drive up standards

Georgia Lambert

New regional teams of experts will seek to help underperforming colleges turn things around by the next academic year, ministers will announce today.

Reforms will aim to raise standards through structured professional development for further education teachers and a requirement for colleges to provide at least 100 hours of face-to-face English and maths teaching for students who have not passed these GCSEs.

Regional teams made up of sector and industry experts will analyse colleges' performance against local skills and employment priorities, with a focus on improving outcomes for students with special educational needs and disabilities.

Colleges will receive targeted support, such as mentoring, access to performance data, and best-practice guidance. Those farthest below expected standards will receive closer interventions, including regular monitoring and mandatory action plans.

The teams will be rolled out nationwide by the next academic year and will support about 70,000 young people

across the country. Bridget Phillipson, the education secretary, said: "By providing targeted support where it's needed most, we're delivering on our commitment to break down barriers to opportunity and give young people the best possible start in their careers. This is about raising aspirations, improving outcomes and building the skilled workforce Britain needs for the future."

The teams are understood to be modelled on the regional improvement for standards and excellence teams introduced this year to work with schools defined by the Department for Education as "stuck" based on their previous two Ofsted inspections and those with low attainment.

Pepe Di'lasio, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "The principle of boosting the amount of support that is available is something that we welcome [but] these support models aren't a magic wand. Colleges do an incredible job despite facing significant challenges because of systemic problems with teacher shortages and funding pressures as a result of underinvestment ... over the last decade. These are the issues that most need to be fixed."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Tax rises 'may doom Labour'

and Wales next May, as well as local elections.

Yesterday Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, signalled her support for Lucy Powell, Labour's deputy leader, who warned against the party breaking its manifesto promise.

Nandy told *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* on the BBC: "I agree with Lucy Powell that promises matter. I also agree with her that the situation that this government inherited is very challenging. We've got to make those choices. And like she said ... she will of course always support the chancellor to make the right decisions in the interests of the country."

Jo White, an MP and chair of the "red wall" caucus in Labour's northern heartlands, said: "My ask of the chancellor is that she looks at those with the deepest pockets ... There are things that can be done to ensure that we can move forward to protect the people in my constituency who work hard and contribute to the country."

Reeves is considering limiting the NI cut to earnings below £50,270 by reducing the rate from 8 to 6 per cent for those earning between £242.01 and £967 per week. Some insiders believe a smaller change — a 1p income tax rise and a similar cut to national insurance — may be chosen as a softer blow.

Politics, pages 8-9

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
BBC boss Davie resigns

to resign now to give a successor "the best conditions and space" to shape the BBC's next charter ahead of its renewal in 2027. Davie defended recent work ensuring the BBC had the "right culture", describing it as "important and motivating", and praised staff for delivering the broadcaster's digital transition and "gold standard" journalism.

"I hope that as we move forward, a sensible, calm and rational public conversation can take place about the next chapter of the BBC," he said.

In her resignation note Turness denied the *Panorama* edit was the sign that the BBC has a wider impartiality problem. "The ongoing controversy around the *Panorama* on President

Trump has reached a stage where it is causing damage to the BBC, an institution that I love," she said.

"In public life, leaders need to be fully accountable, and that is why I am stepping down. While mistakes have been made, I want to be absolutely clear recent allegations that BBC News is institutionally biased are wrong. In a polarised world, BBC News journalism is more vital than ever."

Shah said that it was "a sad day" for the BBC. "Tim has been an outstanding director-general for the last five years," the BBC chair said. "He has propelled the BBC forward with determination, single-mindedness and foresight."

"He has had the full support of me and the board throughout. However, I understand the continued pressure on him, personally and professionally,

which has led him to take this decision. The whole board respects the decision and the reasons for it."

Phil Rosenberg, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, welcomed the resignations of Davie and Turness but warned that they "must be seen as the beginning, rather than the end, of a process of renewal."

Rosenberg said: "The Jewish community has long had profound concerns about the BBC's coverage of the Middle East, but this has sunk to ever greater depths over the last two years."

Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, thanked Davie for his service to public broadcasting: "He has led the BBC through a period of significant change and helped the organisation to grip the challenges it has faced in recent years." Reports, pages 4-5



Elle Fanning, the actress, models Coach bags for the brand's Christmas advert campaign. Its leather goods were linked to deforestation in Brazil, which is hosting Cop30, by Earthsight, a non-profit organisation

Hip handbag brand 'linked to Brazilian deforestation'

Ben Cooke
Environment Correspondent

With fans including Jennifer Lopez and Charlie XCX, the fashion brand Coach has won over Generation Z — not least because its handbags are far cheaper than those from other designer brands. It appears, however, that there may be a considerable cost to the planet.

Coach, which prides itself on its green credentials, is alleged to have sourced leather from a Brazilian tannery linked to deforestation near the site of the Cop30 climate talks.

Global sales of Coach's bags, which start at £169 for a small canvas model and rise to £950 for a large leather backpack, more than tripled last year.

In 2020 the company, which operates 16 stores in Britain, joined the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, an industry group "with a shared vision to produce no unnecessary environmental harm".

However, after undercover interviews and analysis of satellite imagery, court rulings and shipping records, investigators at the environmental non-profitmaking organisation Earthsight have claimed the company's bags

may be made from the hides of cows illegally ranching on deforested land in the Brazilian state of Para. The region's capital, Belem, is hosting Cop30.

The investigators alleged that between 2020 and 2023 an Italian tannery supplying Coach called Conceria Cristina sourced 2,400 tonnes of leather from the Brazilian tannery Durlicouros, which gets some of its hides from the meatpacker Frigol.

In the same period Frigol sourced more than 17,000 cattle from 13 ranchers facing lawsuits from the Brazilian government for purchasing animals illegally raised on the land of the Parakana people, an indigenous group in Para.

Since 2008, the Parakana have lost an area of the Amazon larger than New York to land-grabbers who clear the forest for cattle, before selling the animals to middlemen.

Last year the Brazilian government fined Frigol approximately £246,000 for sourcing 3,643 cattle raised in two illegally deforested areas in Sao Felix do Xingu, in the south of Para.

Posing as interested buyers, Earthsight investigators heard claims from

representatives of Conceria Cristina that the company supplied Coach and that the brand regularly used hides from Brazil.

Neither Coach nor Conceria Cristina responded to requests for comment from Earthsight. "When contacted by us, Coach provided no evidence to suggest the company currently knows the origins of its leather," a spokesman for Earthsight said.

When contacted for comment by The Times, Coach's owner Tapestry said: "Tapestry's values dictate that we stay true to principles and practices of responsible sourcing across our full value chain, including the small proportion of leather sourced from Brazil (less than 10 per cent of total leather used in our products)."

"We recognise that the system for tracking raw materials in Brazil is com-

plex and imperfect; however, Tapestry is working to be part of the solution to improve traceability and transparency through our programs with WWF [the World Wide Fund for Nature] and other organisations."

Durlicouros said that all its operations "strictly comply with Brazilian laws and responsible sourcing principles". Frigol said it had "a robust tracking system for all the cattle" arriving at its slaughterhouses.

Earthsight has called on Britain and the EU to follow through on their pledges to require retailers to root out products linked to deforestation from their supply chains.

The EU passed a law banning products linked to deforestation in 2023, but has repeatedly postponed its implementation. The UK launched a consultation on its own law in 2020, but went

no further. The Labour government has shown no appetite for pursuing the legislation. Brazil, which has cut a four-lane highway through Para to help delegates reach Cop30, is seeking support for the Tropical Forest Forever Facility, which will pay tropical countries to keep their forests intact.

Norway, Brazil, and Indonesia have committed £3.8 billion to the fund, and France and Germany have also pledged to contribute, but Britain has not.

More than 90 per cent of deforestation in the Amazon is due to cattle ranching. It peaked under Brazil's previous president, Jair Bolsonaro, who earned the nickname Captain Chainsaw. The northeastern state of Para, known as the gateway to the Amazon, has been the hardest hit of the Brazilian states, losing an area almost twice the size of Portugal to deforestation.

Bolsonaro's successor, Lula da Silva, has made saving the rainforest a priority and oversaw a 30 per cent drop in deforestation between August 2023 and July last year, the steepest fall in 15 years.

Miliband: Cop30 will prove net-zero doubters wrong, page 9



Tipple to the top: youthful drinking may promise career success

Eden MacLachlan

The evils of drink are as much a staple of public discourse today as for Victorian moralists and the satirists of imperial Rome, and study after scientific study has documented the negative health impacts of high alcohol consumption.

However, a sociology professor from Norway argues that bibulousness has its upsides, too. In his book *The Beauty and Pain of Drugs*, Willy Pedersen of the University of Oslo says that decades of research have identified some benefits from intoxicating substances, including alcohol. His work suggests that breaking down social inhibitions through

communal binges can help to advance young adults' careers. Pedersen and his colleagues spent 18 years tracking the drinking habits of more than 3,000 Norwegians from the age of 13 to 31.

Those who started regularly having heavy drinking sessions in their late teens and twenties were later found to have higher levels of education and income compared with those who had abstained or drank very little.

"There is a correlation," Pedersen said. "The statistical findings are quite strong, so clearly significant."

As a case study, Pedersen points to the Bullingdon Club at Oxford University, which is notorious for its lavish

parties, wanton destruction of property and other forms of alcohol-saturated bad behaviour. Its alumni include three former prime ministers: Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, Boris Johnson and Archibald Primrose, the 5th Earl of Rosebery.

Correlation does not necessarily imply causation. As the Bullingdon Club example suggests, it is possible that young people already on more promising career paths are also more willing and able to drink heavily, particularly in Norway, where high alcohol taxes make the habit unusually costly.

Yet Pedersen believes alcohol may also function as a social lubricant that

tends to smoothen career paths and ease the intrinsic awkwardness of networking. "It's obviously not the fact that you drink alcohol, that it sort of comes into your body and does something with your brain," he said. "The most likely explanation is that all alcohol is a kind of marker of sociality and that habit comes with some types of benefits."

There is no evidence that alcoholism itself is a sensible career strategy: the study found that those who routinely engaged in heavy drinking from their early teens were less successful in later life. Pedersen also warned against getting drunk in solitude.

Linda Granlund, director of public

health at the Norwegian government's directorate of health, who was not involved in the research, said she was aware of the social and cultural functions of alcohol but that it still remained a significant public health risk.

She emphasised consuming even small amounts of alcohol could have dire consequences for people's health.

"I will encourage reduction. If you have a high alcohol intake, reduce it. And if you have a low intake, you should still consider if it could be lowered," she said. "Lower intake means higher life expectancy and lower risk of illness. Every glass you choose to skip is good for your health."

News BBC crisis

Panorama error was final straw for Davie

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

In the end, it was one crisis too far. After weathering a series of scandals during his five years at the top, last night Tim Davie concluded he had had enough.

The BBC director-general, 58, ended his two decades at the corporation and resigned over allegations of bias at Britain's national broadcaster.

He is said by friends to have been left "furious" by a dossier of allegations — compiled by a former adviser and leaked last week to The Daily Telegraph — that precipitated his departure.

Chief among its litany of accusations was the revelation that the BBC show *Panorama* had "misled" viewers last year over a speech given by Trump before the Capitol riots in 2021. But it also highlighted failures in the broadcaster's coverage of Gaza and trans issues.

Insiders said it was the "straw that broke the camel's back" after a series of controversies. In his resignation note, Davie highlighted the personal impact that working in such "febrile ... polarised times" had on him.

"He has faced five years of intense scrutiny on him and the organisation and to be at that level in public life takes its toll," an insider said. "Tim's decision is not only about the events of the past week but years of build-up."

Davie is understood to have returned to work revitalised after a summer break, and brief hiatus from scandals, but his bubble was burst by the leaked documents.

"It didn't take that much to bring it all back," they added. "A weight was lifted after he made the decision [to go]."

Allies said that the

increasingly hostile tone of public discourse was encapsulated by a post on X by the White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt mocking Davie's fall.

Leavitt posted a headline of a news story "Trump goes to war with 'fake' news BBC" under the word "Shot", next to the breaking news of his departure under the word "Chaser".

But some staff were unmoved by his decision, pointing to the £547,000 he was paid last year.

"The battering of the Beeb feels unrelenting and no one is sure how much more they can take," one producer said. "But it is the biggest job in media and he is paid to put up with it."

The board was understood to have been left "shocked" by Davie's decision when they were informed this afternoon. But the writing had perhaps been on the wall for some time.

At recent events Davie had started to quip, "You should see my inbox" when asked about the difficulty of running the BBC. His jocular tone masked a genuine build-up of pressure.

In an interview with the BBC in July after the decision to drop the *MasterChef* presenters Gregg Wallace and John Torode over allegations of inappropriate behaviour, Davie admitted he had been having a "very, very tough time".

Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, had accused him of presiding over a "series of catastrophic failures" including the Gaza documentary, in which a child narrator turned out to be the son of a Hamas official, and the outrage



Tim Davie, and Deborah Turness, head of BBC News, below left, resigned. Davie has had to navigate a series of scandals, including over a Gaza documentary, below. The editing of a speech given by President Trump was the final blow



surrounding Bob Vylan's Glastonbury Festival set. Davie was thrust into the centre of the scandal after it emerged he had been at the festival and made aware of Vylan's antisemitic chants.

The director-general has also had to weather scandals involving some of the

corporation's biggest stars. The newsreader Huw Edwards's four-decade career with the broadcaster ended in disgrace in 2023 after he pleaded guilty to making indecent images of children.

Davie was also forced to navigate the suspension of Gary Lineker, host of

Match of the Day, in 2023 for posting a tweet comparing the language used to launch a new government asylum seeker policy with 1930s Germany.

One insider said Davie had been exposed by his decision not to appoint a deputy who could have shielded him from some of the criticism.

"He didn't have anyone to take the bullets for him," they said. "He went into the firing line himself every single time and now he's exhausted."

Another ally said that as the former boss of the BBC's commercial arm BBC Studios, Davie was disappointed to have felt forced to cut short his tenure before having the opportunity to see through the negotiations with the government for the next charter.

"He is really cut up and sad about how things have ended. He loved the



Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, mocked the BBC resignations

'We remain the most trusted news brand ... I was proud to lead it'

Dear all,

I wanted to let you know that I have decided to leave the BBC after 20 years. This is entirely my decision, and I remain very thankful to the chair and board for their unswerving and unanimous support throughout my entire tenure, including during recent days.

I am working through exact timings with the board to allow for an orderly transition to a successor over the coming months.

I have been reflecting on the very intense personal and professional demands of managing this role over many years in these febrile

times, combined with the fact that I want to give a successor time to help shape the charter plans they will be delivering.

In these increasingly polarised times, the BBC is of unique value and speaks to the very best of us. It helps make the UK a special place; overwhelmingly kind, tolerant and curious. Like all public organisations, the BBC is not perfect, and we must always be open, transparent and accountable.

While not being the only reason, the current debate around BBC News has understandably contributed to my decision. Overall the

BBC is delivering well, but there have been some mistakes made and as director-general I have to take ultimate responsibility.

Our organisation is a critical ingredient of a healthy society, as well as a thriving creative sector. We should champion it, not weaponise it.

Despite a hugely competitive market, I am proud that the BBC remains the most trusted news brand globally. We have continued to ensure that it is used by almost everyone in the UK as well as hundreds of millions of people globally. Despite the inevitable issues and

challenges, our journalism and quality content continues to be admired as a gold standard.

Our transition to a digital organisation has been deeply impressive, and our thriving commercial businesses are admired globally. Also, our work together on ensuring that we have the right culture has been important and motivating. I could not be more impressed by what you are achieving.

You will ask why now, why this moment?

I am BBC through and through, having spent the last 20 years of my life working for this organisation

as director of marketing, communications and audiences, director of audio and music, acting director-general and chief executive of BBC Studios.

I care deeply about it and want it to succeed. That is why I want to create the best conditions and space for a new DG to come in and positively shape the next Royal Charter.

I hope that as we move forward, a sensible, calm and rational public conversation can take place about the next chapter of the BBC. This timing allows a new DG to help shape the next charter. I believe we are in a strong

position to deliver growth. Thank you again, it has been a wonderful ride, which I have loved. I count myself very lucky to have served as DG for 17.

I will have a proper chance to see many of you before I go but I have been incredibly proud to lead the BBC as DG for over five years.

It is a precious UK institution and you are a world-class team. Thank you all for the tireless support and friendship.

I will always be a passionate cheerleader for civilised society, a strong BBC and a thriving UK.

Best wishes, Tim

ANDREW MILLIGAN/PA; ERIC LEE/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES



What's the point if the Beeb can't be impartial?

Sonia Sodha
Comment

This is a perilous time for the BBC, its director-general and head of news forced to resign in the midst of an explosive row about a lack of news impartiality that has even drawn in the White House. Some at the corporation may want to lay the blame wholly at the door of dark forces seeking to bring the BBC down. But the BBC is also very much a co-author of this story, and only by properly confronting evidence of its serious failures can it successfully take on its critics.

The BBC is funded by the public, for the public. The first of five missions set out by its charter is the provision of accurate and impartial news, current affairs and factual programming that offers analysis and content not widely available elsewhere.

That mission is critical in an increasingly polarised online world beset with misinformation. But a leaked 19-page memo by a former independent adviser to the BBC's editorial standards committee sets out grave allegations of failures of impartiality, in relation to reporting on President Trump, the Gaza conflict, and on sex and gender.

As a journalist who has closely followed the coverage of this last area it is clear to me that the memo is right to raise it as evidence that BBC News is not always impartial.

The BBC's coverage of gender ideology too often takes as fact the quasi-religious belief everyone has a "gender identity" and that to dissent is bigoted.

This has led the BBC to ignore important stories about children's healthcare, such as the young people who detransitioned after irreversible hormone treatment. Other stories are grossly one-sided: for example, congratulatory tales of male athletes self-identifying into women's competitions that don't include any voices on legal issues raised, or mention the risks to fairness and safety in women's sport.

Decisions of the BBC's editorial complaints unit appear racked with bias. It has dismissed complaints about the corporation obscuring the fact that male killers who identify as female are male, by referring to them as women and using female pronouns for them.

But it found the presenters Justin Webb and Martine Croxall had

broken impartiality guidelines, the former for clarifying trans women are male, a critical fact to help listeners understand the story; and the latter for a facial expression it claimed gave the impression of personal opinion, as she corrected the ideological "pregnant people" in her script to "pregnant women".

BBC executives might argue this is just one issue, and feminist supporters of public service broadcasting should drop our obsession and rally behind a Beeb under bad-faith fire. This is to spectacularly miss the point.

If the publicly funded BBC proves

as easily captured by partisan ideology as the next institution, the argument for it disintegrates.

It was right that Tim Davie and Deborah Turness stepped down, given their failure to grip the issue on impartiality. But their resignations are not a fix. Reading the BBC's news reports, you would be forgiven for thinking these scalps were claimed as a result of just one egregious error: the editing together of two parts of a Trump speech for a *Panorama* documentary in a way that made him appear to encourage the 2021 Capitol Hill riots explicitly.

As she resigned Turness asserted

"recent allegations that BBC News is institutionally biased are wrong." This complacency is misplaced: the BBC's output bias on a contested subject like sex and gender is not just the product of "mistakes" as she claimed, but of cultural and institutional capture.

In assuming a bit part in the culture wars instead of rising above them, the BBC is risking its own demise. It is solely by ruthlessly examining what governance and editorial failures made it so vulnerable to unrepresentative groupthink that it can defeat its critics. Only the BBC can save itself.



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job, was BBC through and through." Dame Caroline Dinenage, chair of the cross-party culture select committee, said that charter review should be brought forward in light of his "regrettable" resignation.

"The BBC board must now begin the long process of rebuilding the corporation's reputation at home and abroad, after the damage caused by what has become a seemingly constant stream of crises and missteps," she added.

During a speech at the Lowry theatre, Salford, in May titled "The BBC — a catalyst for building trust", Davie used the word trust more than 50 times.

Talk in media circles is already turning to who might be the best person to take over from "Teflon Tim" — whose nicknamed ultimately proved wide of the mark.

Search begins for new face to head the broadcaster

Sanchez Manning

Three women are the early front-runners to replace Tim Davie.

JAY HUNT

Australian-born Hunt, 58, has served as controller of BBC1, chief creative officer at Channel 4 and director of programmes at Channel 5. She has been creative director for worldwide video and Europe at Apple TV+ since 2018.

At Channel 4, Hunt commissioned hits including *Gogglebox* and *Derry Girls*. At Apple TV+, she commissioned *Slow Horses* and *Bad Sisters*.

ALEX MAHON

Mahon was chief executive of Channel 4 until July. Born in London but

raised in Edinburgh, she began her career as a technology consultant, before joining Fremantle, the TV production company. Mahon became Channel 4's first female chief executive in 2017. She is chief executive of Superstruct Entertainment, one of the world's largest festival promoters.

CHARLOTTE MOORE

Moore was the BBC's chief content officer until February when she became chief executive of Left Bank Films.

At the BBC Moore, 57, was responsible for its "creative vision" and editorial strategy across all platforms. She was previously director of BBC content and controller of BBC1. Moore, 57, is known as the brains behind commissioning *The Great British Bake Off*.

Asylum seekers may be paid £100 a week to leave hotels

Nadeem Badshah

Asylum seekers may be offered £100 a week to leave taxpayer-funded hotels, it has been reported.

Home Office officials are proposing an initiative that would allow migrants to use the money to pay to live with a family or person they know in the UK.

The weekly sum would be provided on top of taxpayer-funded support for living costs of £49.18 a week, The Daily

Telegraph reported. It is understood that the proposal is one of several options put to ministers as they try to reduce the reliance on hotels.

A source told the newspaper: "It's important that officials provide advice to ministers that sets out a range of options but it doesn't mean ministers will pursue every option."

A Home Office spokesman said: "The government is furious about the number of illegal migrants in this

country and in hotels. That is why we will close every single asylum hotel."

Officials are offering asylum seekers of nationalities whose applications are routinely rejected up to £3,000 through a voluntary returns scheme, the paper said. Among those targeted are Albanians, Bangladeshis, Brazilians, Chinese, Indians, Nigerians and Pakistanis.

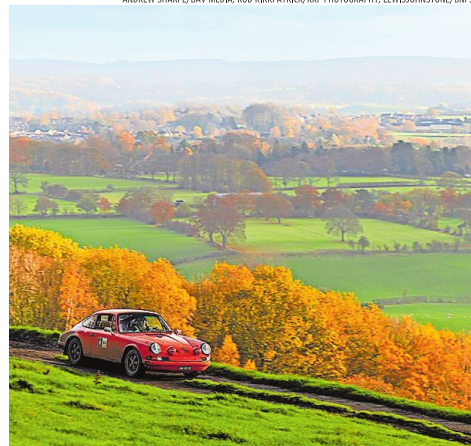
The Home Office said the voluntary returns service played a "vital" role. A spokesman said: "We make no apology

for saving taxpayers millions of pounds by removing individuals who have no legal right to remain ... or who are seeking to leave voluntarily."

More than 32,000 migrants were housed in 200 hotels in June, the latest month for which figures are available.

Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, said: "The idea of handing out taxpayers' hard-earned money to people who illegally entered the country is morally repugnant."

ANDREW SHARPE/BAW MEDIA; ROD KIRKPATRICK/RKP PHOTOGRAPHY; LEWIS JOHNSTONE/BNIPS



Hazy Sunday
The sunrise over Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire heralded a mild day for many. Crisp conditions at the weekend were ideal for drivers passing Red Earth Farm near Leek in Staffordshire in the RAC Rally of the Tests – and for surfers at Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset – but more traditional November rain is expected today
Forecast, page 47



RAF to protect Belgian air space from 'rogue drones'

Bruno Waterfield Brussels

Britain is sending a specialist Royal Air Force regiment counter-drone unit with advanced equipment to Belgium after repeated incursions by "uncrewed aerial systems" above the country's airports and military bases.

The drone incidents over the past week, which are thought to have been organised by Russia, are regarded as a big challenge for Nato, bringing travel chaos and regular breaches of security at Belgian and Nato military bases.

John Healey, the defence secretary, said: "When our Nato allies call, we step up. Belgium requested urgent support to counter rogue drone activity at their military bases, so I've directed a small team of RAF specialists to deploy immediately. As hybrid threats grow, our strength lies in our alliances and our collective resolve to defend, deter

and protect our critical infrastructure and airspace."

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, head of the armed forces, said the units were being sent because Belgium had asked for urgent help after almost six days of incidents involving uncrewed aerial systems.

"Russia is the biggest threat right now, and their illegal invasion of Ukraine has shown what they're capable of," he added. "Russia is something we should be concerned about. We know they're carrying out sabotage and waging a hybrid war against us."

Belgian intelligence agencies have been unable to confirm whether Russia is behind the incursions, which are professional, deploying larger drones, often in formation, using encrypted 4G or 5G networks and operating during hours of greatest darkness.

When asked who was behind the

incursions, Knighton said: "We don't know for sure. But they are disrupting airports and have been spotted over Belgian bases. The UK and other Nato allies support each other, and that's why we're sending equipment and personnel to Belgium."

France and Germany have also provided specialist units to help defend the sites and counter the drone threat, with Berlin deploying specialised air force units to secure airspace around the Kleine Brogel military base after drones were thought to have crossed from Germany.

Instead of using radio frequencies the drones use global positioning satellites, allowing them to be controlled from as far away as 125 miles from the scene of the incursions.

Alliance intelligence services have conceded that the drones, which are potentially being operated by freelance

criminals recruited by Russia's spy networks over messaging apps, are being deployed to intimidate Belgium into stopping the transfer of €140 billion in frozen Russian assets to fund Ukraine's defence.

Boris Pistorius, the German defence minister, said on Friday: "We all see this connection. The Belgians too. This is a measure aimed at spreading insecurity, at fearmongering in Belgium. 'Don't you dare to touch the frozen assets.' This cannot be interpreted any other way."

Russia has denied any connection with the incidents.

Over the weekend Belgium agreed an emergency counter-drone plan with purchase of detection equipment and systems to take down drones. Theo Francken, the Belgian defence minister, said: "The safety of our airports and military areas is an absolute priority."

Quintagram® No 2408

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Coastal landform (5)

— — — — —

2 Timepiece (5)

— — — — —

3 Fire-tending implement (5)

— — — — —

4 In a direct line (8)

— — — — —

5 Apparent or stated worth (4,5)

— — — — —

A	A	A	C	C	C	C	E
E	E	F	F	F	G	H	I
I	K	K	L	L	L	O	O
P	R	R	S	T	T	U	V

Solutions see MindGames
Cryptic clues see MindGames

Ryanair snubs hero

A hero passenger who confronted the Huntingdon train knifeman has been refused a refund by Ryanair after he was too injured to fly to Austria last Wednesday. Stephen Crean, 61, was stabbed six times while he fended off the attacker. A Ryanair spokesman cited the airline's policy, which recommends passengers purchase travel insurance.

Gaza activist on run

A Palestine Action activist failed to return to HMP Wandsworth after he was granted temporary bail to attend his brother's wedding. Sean Middlebrough, 32, was on remand over alleged involvement in an incident at the Elbit Systems weapons facility in Bristol, in August last year. He was granted bail last weekend but did not return to the London jail.

Benefits axed in error

HM Revenue & Customs is reviewing its decision to strip about 23,500 claimants of child benefit after a crackdown on fraud in which travel data was used to determine whether they had emigrated, it is understood. It has apologised to those "affected incorrectly" by the pilot and said immediate action had been taken to update the process.

Nitro out of Strictly

The Olympian Harry Aikines-Aryeetey has become the sixth celebrity voted off *Strictly Come Dancing*. The Gladiator known as Nitro, 37, lost yesterday's dance-off against the *Drag Race UK* star La Voix and Aljaz Skorjanec. Aikines-Aryeetey and his partner Karen Hauer danced their samba to a Gloria Estefan song before the judges cast their votes.

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Bookshop will tailor your reads, at a price

For Matthew De Morgan, the £1,200 tailored book subscription he takes out annually from Heywood Hill is “like having an intellectual personal trainer” (Ed Halford writes).

He said: “The subscription is properly clever as it broadens my scope and breadth of reading. It’s like having a personal trainer making sure I’m on top form.”

For a busy executive, the book consultations that come with the costly subscription are “good value” as the booksellers “ferret away” and “fine-tune” book suggestions based on his feedback.

Heywood Hill, a quaint bookshop on Curzon Street, was loved by the late Queen Elizabeth. As the Christmas shopping season draws nearer it is celebrating its 90th anniversary with “London’s greatest book subscription”.

Hundreds of books are wrapped daily in the shop’s distinctive brown paper and tied together with a blue ribbon before they are shipped

off to bibliophiles across the world.

Nicky Dunne, the bookseller-in-chief since 2011 and the son-in-law of the owner Peregrine Cavendish, the 12th Duke of Devonshire, said: “People are drawn to us for that mix of trust, literary heritage and the contemporary curation of books.”

Founded in 1936 by the old Etonian George Heywood Hill, whose wife was the daughter of the Earl of Cranbrook, the bookshop’s four tailored subscriptions, which range in price from £235 to £1,200, all include a reading consultation with one of the shop’s booksellers. The most expensive subscription, known as the “Tailored Quarterly”, provides 40 hardback books over 12 months and the bespoke collection is described as ideal for “insatiable readers”.

With a customer base spanning 75 countries, there is the option to have these consultations over the phone but the majority of Heywood Hill’s clientele are either in the UK or the US, so they often choose



Customers are asked a series of questions during their consultations to find out what they would most like to read

the in-person option. The consultations, which last about 20 minutes, are aimed at “trying to find out where someone is in their reading”, Dunne said.

He added: “We are very fortunate to be situated in Mayfair as it’s such a marketplace and meeting place for the world.” Dunne said that “Anglophiles all over the

world” who “appreciate British and European publishing” were at the core of the shop’s clientele, and added: “They want a trusted gateway that is human, rather than an algorithm.”

De Morgan also gives subscriptions to friends as gifts and his recipients are never disappointed.

Despite the shop’s wealthy clientele, Dunne said its subscriptions were also given to work colleagues and even sometimes to prisoners.

When Heywood Hill’s busy booksellers are not catering to their subscriptions service, they are putting together libraries tailored to private clients’ fishing lodges,

ski chalets, boardrooms and yachts.

To cater to customers with diverse reading interests, the staff have “lots of different types of reading sensibilities”.

Two things Dunne said that he looks for when recruiting are “being a good reader and a good listener”. Saving you the bind, leading article, page 25

Pick of the plots

I told Nicky Dunne I enjoyed reading about politics, crime thrillers and would like to learn more about President Putin’s rise to power (Ed Halford writes).

To feed my appetite for reading about political drama, it was suggested I read *Why We Get the Wrong Politicians* by Isabel Hardman, *Killing Thatcher* by Rory Carroll and *Lessons in Diplomacy: Politics, Power and Parties* by Leigh Turner.

My interest in finding out more about Putin was met with *Red Notice* by Bill Browder, *Second-hand Time* by Svetlana Alexievich and *The Spy and the Traitor* by Ben Macintyre.

Finally, to respond to my request for crime thrillers and stories which were told by multiple narrators, I was given the following recommendations: *Box 88* by Charles Cumming, *Gabriel’s Moon* by William Boyd and *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout.

All of the recommendations came with thoughtful notes and information about why they matched my interests.

Maxwell raves about life in minimum security prison

Andrew ‘may be linked to other victims’

Will Pavia New York Correspondent

Ghislaine Maxwell felt like she had “dropped through Alice in Wonderland’s looking glass” to a cleaner, brighter place after being moved to a prison camp for non-violent offenders.

Maxwell, 63, who was sentenced to 20 years after being convicted in 2021 of aiding Jeffrey Epstein in the abuse and trafficking of minors, was transferred to a minimum security prison in Texas a few days after meeting Todd Blanche, the deputy US attorney-general.

The interview with Blanche was held in July as the US administration came under fire over its failure to release more documents relating to Epstein, and President Trump faced questions about his relationship with the late financier and sex offender.

Maxwell told Blanche, who was once the president’s defence attorney, she had “absolutely never” seen Trump behaving inappropriately, according to a transcript of their conversation.

Days later she was transferred from the prison in Tallahassee, where she had been incarcerated after her conviction, to Federal Prison Camp Bryan, a minimum security prison about 100 miles northwest of Houston.

“Bryan is a different beast in every possible respect to Tal,” she wrote to a relative just over a week later, according to NBC News, which said it had obtained emails that were released to a



Ghislaine Maxwell, right, with Andrew and Virginia Giuffre, who claimed she was trafficked by Jeffrey Epstein and Maxwell

House committee investigating her treatment.

She is thought to have written: “The food is legions better, the place is clean, the staff responsive and polite, I have not seen a single fight, drug deal, passed out person or naked inmate running around or several of them congregating in a shower! In other words I feel like I have dropped through Alice in Wonderland’s looking glass.”

In her emails, Maxwell also praises the prison warden, Tanisha Hall, as “the best representative of the (Bureau of Prisons) I have ever met”.

Her emails suggest she was able to meet the warden in person. In one, apparently sent to her lawyer, she said

the warden suggested “a creative solution” to her problem getting documents before an appeal to the Supreme Court, that “you EM/scan it to her and she will scan back any changes. Of course that is fantastic as it saves days and days.”

Maxwell had told Blanche in July that “in prison, where I am ... somebody can pay a prisoner to kill you for \$25 worth of commissary. That’s about the going rate for a hit with a lock today.”

According to the leaked emails, life in Bryan was safer. She wrote: “The kitchen looks clean too — no possums falling from the ceiling to fry unfortunately on ovens and become mingled with the food being served.” Maxwell is a vegetarian.

The House judiciary committee is said to have been given the emails after its leading Democrat, Jamie Raskin, wrote to the warden at Bryan. He asked about reports that other inmates faced punishment if they spoke to reporters about Maxwell’s treatment.

Raskin wrote that Maxwell had been transferred to Bryan, “a plum minimum security facility ... in apparent flagrant violation of BOP policies, including one that prohibits sex offenders from placement in such facilities”.

Raskin, citing a report by The Wall Street Journal, said the prison was locked down during what would have been recreation time “while Ms Maxwell met with multiple unidentified visitors in the prison chapel”. She was also reported to have meals delivered to her room, escorts to the recreation area for late-night workouts, and permission to shower after other prisoners had been confined to their quarters.

“These new revelations are consistent with the Trump administration’s broader pattern of breaking the law to silence critics and reward allies like Ms Maxwell,” Raskin wrote. He said his staff planned to visit the prison and interview inmates.

Last month, the Supreme Court declined to hear Maxwell’s appeal. David Markus, her lawyer, who has argued his client was made a scapegoat for crimes committed by Epstein, said she was transferred for her own safety.

Ben Ellery Crime Editor
Will Pavia New York Correspondent

Jeffrey Epstein may have allegedly trafficked more women to meet Andrew Mountbatten Windsor than the case involving Virginia Giuffre alone, a US congressman has claimed.

Suhass Subramanyam, a Democratic member of the House Oversight Committee, said survivors had provided testimony implicating the King’s younger brother and “other powerful men”. The committee is conducting an inquiry into the “Epstein Files”, a list of the financier’s alleged associates.

“We have reason to believe that there are others,” Subramanyam told The Mail on Sunday. “Many of the survivors came to Capitol Hill and we spoke to them. They’ve been so courageous and gave us very valuable information as far as where to look.”

Subramanyam and 15 other committee members wrote to Andrew last week demanding he give evidence under oath about his dealings with Epstein, who killed himself in jail in 2019.

Giuffre, who took her life in April, alleged that she was not the only person trafficked by Epstein to Andrew. She claimed she was trafficked to Andrew three times when she was 17.

Andrew has always denied wrongdoing. He settled her civil claim in 2022 for a reported £12 million without admitting liability. Subramanyam said Andrew’s difficulties “may only just be beginning”. Andrew did not respond to a request for comment.

News Politics

Bosses warn 'exit tax' will push

Max Kendix Political Correspondent

Rachel Reeves's plan for an exit tax on wealthy emigrants will hold entrepreneurs to ransom and push investment away from Britain, more than 150 business leaders have warned.

Founders of some of Britain's most successful start-ups and investors have written to the chancellor to say the tax would "not only tell founders that their ideas and innovations aren't welcome, but that they should either get out early or not come at all".

Currently any emigrant can sell their British assets after leaving without being liable for capital gains tax, which is normally levied at 20 per cent. Under Reeves's plan they would be required to pay this charge at the point of departure, although there would be an option to delay payment for several years.

Reeves hopes a so-called "settling up charge", which would bring Britain in line with other G7 countries, will raise about £2 billion as she attempts to fill a hole in the public

finances of up to £30 billion. The Treasury declined to comment.

Harry Stebbings, who runs one of Europe's largest venture capital funds, said of the plan: "It shows the complete lack of understanding that we have already lost the most wealthy people, and this will be the final nail in the coffin that will make those few stragglers who remain — including me — leave."

Stebbing said he had received calls from about 15 founders of British companies worth more than £500 million in the last few days, telling him they planned to leave the country. He accused Reeves of "a lack of interest in growth or understanding of how an economy functions".

Last month, it was revealed that Nik Storonsky, the co-founder of Revolut and whose fortune is estimated at about \$14 billion, has changed his residency from the UK to the United Arab Emirates.

The letter to Reeves warned that the exit tax would mean "holding founders for ransom rather than fixing the issues

that make them want to stay". Among the signatories of the letter to Reeves is Alex Stephany, the chief executive of AI company Beam. He was previously one of the 120 business leaders to back Labour as the "party of change" before the election last year.

Stephany said: "When people signed that letter, including me, there was an expectation that the government would come in and they would capitalise on what they inherited and improve the UK as a place to start and scale a business. I don't think that is happening, I think we're losing momentum."

He said there was a "twinge of sadness" in being a British entrepreneur who was increasingly expanding his business abroad and not domestically. The businesses argued in the letter that changes to capital gains tax announced last year had already caused global investors to "question the competitiveness of the UK". They added: "Instead of rebuilding trust with entrepreneurs, a potential exit tax sends the opposite message: the beatings will continue until morale improves."

"We share the government's ambition for growth and sound public finances. Progress on these will only be achieved by making the UK the best place to scale the next generation of global companies, not by punishing those who choose to leave. At a time when founders are being courted around the world, we should be building bridges, not walls."

Other signatories of the letter included the founders of five "unicorns", which are privately held start-ups worth more than \$1 billion.

Stebbing said the tax showed the government was willing to "encroach on freedom of movement" for businesses. The introduction of the full charge would be possible only thanks to Brexit, as the UK was previously restricted by EU rules on freedom of movement.

Dom Hallas, executive director of the Startup Coalition lobby group that organised the letter to Reeves, said: "The strength of feeling from founders of the UK's most innovative businesses is clear: anything that punishes them for success instead of working to keep them growing, hiring and creating value in the UK will only serve to make things in the UK worse. Any action at the budget should be focused on motivating entrepreneurs to stay here, not holding them for ransom."

Malta's tax rate lures Britons, page 17
Bold action can end the rolling crisis, Rupert Harrison, page 22

Fears of small business exodus

Jack Barnett
Economics
Correspondent

As many as 680,000 small businesses have drawn up plans to leave the UK due to higher taxes, research suggests.

A survey of 1,024 founders, owners or executives found that 12 per cent had plans to leave. Extrapolating that across the country would amount to 680,000 small businesses, said Rathbones, a wealth management firm that commissioned the poll by Viewsbank.

The survey found that 42 per cent of respondents thought the government was holding back the private sector, and

63 per cent thought that Labour was not doing enough to motivate entrepreneurship and promote economic growth.

Ireland was ranked as the top possible relocation destination, chosen by 26 per cent of small business owners, followed by Dubai on 21 per cent and the United States on 18 per cent.

Adebola Babatunde, a senior financial planning director at Rathbones, said: "SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises] are the backbone of the UK economy ... Their departure would mean the loss of valuable tax revenue and much-needed employment opportunities."

Rachel Reeves's budget last October included a £25 billion payroll tax raid. The chancellor told bosses she was "not coming back with more borrowing or more taxes".

However, she is now preparing more tax rises for her November 26 budget, which could include limiting tax breaks for employee and employer pension contributions.

A Treasury spokesman said: "We are a pro-business government." They pointed to trade deals with the US, EU and India which would help to cut business costs, adding: "We have also capped corporation tax at 25 per cent and we are reforming business rates."

Lammy 'a bum' says driver he accused

Will Humphries

A French chauffeur who was taken to court by David Lammy accused of stealing his luggage and money has been reading about the minister's political troubles with relish.

Last week Nassim Mimun, 40, a VIP chauffeur from Avignon, was cleared of all charges after driving off with Lammy and Lammy's wife's bags in Flaine, a ski resort in the French Alps, before returning them the next day with €700 (£615) allegedly missing.

"Oh dear, it is scandal after scandal with your deputy prime minister," Mimun said after reading that Lammy was in hot water for refusing to answer questions in the Commons about whether a second immigrant sex offender had been released from jail by accident.

"Your minister is a bum," Mimun told The Mail on Sunday. "Lammy brings great shame on your country, but I'm glad he's in trouble because he is a shameful, wicked man."

Lammy took legal action against Mimun after the driver was booked to pick up Lammy and his wife, Nicola Green, in Forlì, near Bologna, on April 10. Mimun drove Lammy and Green 365 miles to Flaine.

A court was told that an €850 fare



Nassim Mimun was accused of stealing luggage and cash from David Lammy

had been agreed through a booking platform, GetTransfer, but when Mimun learnt that he was to drive a British government minister he demanded £1,500, arguing that there was a security risk. He said that a British government official had told him he would receive the extra €650, only for Lammy to raise objections.

Boris Duffau, the state prosecutor,

rejected Mimun's claims that Lammy had acted aggressively.

Mimun said that, when they arrived in Flaine, Green went to withdraw cash to meet the €1,500 bill but the cash machine was not working. He said that Lammy yelled "F***ing French" and snatched the bill out of his hands. Mimun said he had driven off in fear, forgetting that he had the couple's bags in his car. He returned the luggage within a day but the couple said that €700 of the €2,700 they had left in the bags was missing.

Mimun said Lammy had been "cruel" to accuse him "as the sum he says I took in cash was the exact equivalent of what I was owed. This made the police think I was guilty." He added: "Thankfully the court believed me."

A government source told The Mail on Sunday: "The driver's claims about David Lammy and his wife are total nonsense, just like his claims that they didn't pay — which GetTransfer has confirmed was paid in full."



Nandy referred to watchdog over football regulator error

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Lisa Nandy has been referred to parliament's standards watchdog by the Conservatives as she admitted the process of picking a new football regulator was not "perfect".

The culture secretary apologised yesterday, after being found to have breached the code on public appointments by failing to declare donations she had received from the man chosen to run the watchdog.

An official investigation concluded she had not properly made public two donations totalling £2,900 by David Kogan in 2020 for her Labour leadership effort to replace Jeremy Corbyn.

Nandy said that when she learnt that Kogan had donated to her campaign she recused herself from the process. The cabinet minister added that she

asked him to make that information public at a vetting session.

Nandy told Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg on BBC1: "I take full responsibility for it. We didn't meet the highest standards throughout this process. That is on me."

The Conservatives have written to Daniel Greenberg, the standards commissioner, calling for an investigation. The commissioner has powers to sanction MPs if they are found to have broken the Commons code of conduct.

Sir Keir Starmer said in a letter to Nandy last week that he noted "the error was unknowing and I accept your assurance there was no intentional or deliberate action on your part".

Nandy has maintained that she complied with Electoral Commission rules and did not have to register the donations from Kogan because they fell below the declaration limit.

more entrepreneurs to flee UK

Britons face a new carbon levy on flights under EU reset deal

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

Holidaymakers face a carbon tax on flying as part of Sir Keir Starmer's reset with the European Union.

Ministers have agreed to align the UK with European rules on carbon emissions to reduce trading friction with the bloc. This means the government will be forced to adopt plans for a carbon tax on long-haul flights, pushing up the cost of fares.

The Resolution Foundation think tank has calculated that the move could raise as much as £1.5 billion for the Treasury. This would add, on average, about £21 to the cost of a flight on top of existing air passenger duty, it said.

The charge would then rise over time under the rules of the EU scheme as governments seek to use market mechanisms to reduce emissions. Some estimates suggest that by the end of the decade the carbon charges could amount to more than £60 per flight.

Those who support tying Britain's emissions trading scheme (ETS) to that of the EU say it will ensure UK exporters avoid European carbon border taxes due to come fully into effect at the end of the year. However, the UK will now be expected to follow the EU's scheme rather than having the flexibility to set its own rules.

Brussels plans to extend its ETS, which applies to short-haul journeys, to cover long-haul flights from 2027. Under the Brexit reset deal, expected to be agreed next year, the UK must follow suit. "The trouble is that we're going to be aligning to what they're doing rather than the other way round," a government source said.

A senior aviation source said: "It is a very low-margin industry, with an average profit of less than \$10 [£7.60] per passenger, and these costs... will eventually start to bite in terms of our international competitiveness."

Tim Alderslade, the chief executive of Airlines UK, which represents

carriers, said above-inflation rises in air passenger duty (APD) announced last year by Rachel Reeves "will already see families paying up to 15 per cent more in tax from next April, rising to over £100 for an economy long-haul ticket".

He said further tax increases, taken alongside the cost of the government's sustainable aviation fuel mandate — under which the proportion of jet fuel from sustainable sources must account for 2 per cent of demand this year, rising to 22 per cent by 2040 — would "risk clipping the wings of one of our UK success stories, making it harder to keep travel affordable".

Airline bosses already fear further APD rises in this month's budget. The tax is due to rise to £15 for a short-haul economy flight in April next year and £106 for the longest flights.

The Resolution Foundation suggested Reeves should embrace the move and ask the budget watchdog to score it as a tax-raising measure in the budget: "Given the pressing need to set out a substantial revenue-raising package, the budget would seem a good time to pencil in this sensible change."

The think tank said long-haul flights leaving the UK emitted about 25 million tonnes of carbon which would face taxes of about £60 per tonne, raising about £1.5 billion for the Treasury. The cost of using ferries is also set to rise under plans to extend the ETS to cover ships. Extending the scheme to maritime shipping would raise another £500 million, the think tank said.

Claire Coutinho, the shadow energy secretary, said: "We warned Labour not to align with the EU's carbon tax scheme as it will hammer families at a time when people are still struggling."

A government spokesman said: "We are working together with the EU to implement the package agreed at the UK-EU summit. We will only agree deals that provide value to the UK and UK industry. Nothing has been agreed, and we will not give a running commentary on ongoing talks."



Feeling the heat
An 11-metre effigy of Sir Keir Starmer was set ablaze during Bonfire Night celebrations in Edenbridge, Kent, before Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, faced a grilling from the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg. David Lammy, the deputy prime minister, was described as a "wicked man" by the chauffeur who drove him and his wife, Nicola Green, days after they attended a gala dinner in Rome in April



Cop30 will prove net zero doubters wrong, claims Miliband

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor
Ben Cooke Environment Correspondent

International talks in Brazil to curb climate change will prove doubters wrong and show that most countries are shifting towards clean energy, Ed Miliband has said.

Speaking in Brazil, the energy secretary said acting to rein in the greenhouse gas emissions driving global warming would create jobs and protect future generations.

"The action and the atmosphere at this summit, in my view, already demonstrates that the doubters are wrong. The vast majority of the world continues to act on clean energy," he told The Times as the Cop30 climate summit got under way in Belem.

The fortnight-long conference, which starts today, is effectively the deadline by which nations must present plans for cutting emissions, but is taking place in the shadow of a backlash led by President Trump. No high-

level American official is at the summit, despite the US being the world's second-biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions after China.

"The world is moving on climate and clean energy, but it needs to move faster," Miliband said. "We are going to unashamedly say that this shows that multilateralism can work. Working together is the right thing for Britain."

The minister cited the prediction that the Earth had been on course for 4C of global warming before the 2015 Paris Agreement, a temperature rise that would have been disastrous, but is now heading for about 2.5C. "That shows the progress that has been made," he said.

Miliband said the Cop30 talks with 196 other countries and the EU mattered for Britons with more immediate concerns such as inflation. "It matters precisely because of the cost of living, because if we are going to create good jobs for the future, this is the biggest potential opportunity we have," he said.

A book published on November 5 by Lord Stern of Brentford, a renowned economist who produced a climate report for Gordon Brown, said action on climate change was not an obstacle to prosperity but "the only really sensible way of driving growth". Stern told



Ed Miliband hailed the "action and atmosphere" at the climate summit

The Times his message to the Tories, who have joined Reform UK in calling to scrap Britain's 2050 net zero target, was that renewables and green technology were "your growth story".

Miliband echoed that view. "We need to move faster, because it's in our national interest in terms of jobs and economic growth," he said.

The government's plans would

create 400,000 clean energy jobs by 2030, the energy secretary added. He also said action on climate change would create "huge opportunities for exports" including for "mini" nuclear power stations devised by Rolls-Royce.

Labour has been criticised by environmentalists for refusing to pay into a new fund to save rainforests, launched by Brazil on November 6. Miliband blamed the coming budget, which is expected to bring in tax rises to repair public finances. "We've obviously got a difficult fiscal event coming up, so we weren't in a position to make a financial contribution at this stage to the TFFF," he said, referring to the rainforest fund.

One architect of the Paris Agreement said progress on climate change was being driven more by the falling cost of clean energy than by government talks. Christiana Figueres, who was UN climate chief when the deal was reached, said: "Ten years ago, the logic of climate was climate politics. Today, the logic of climate is climate

economics, because the technologies that we're using [to replace fossil fuels] are cheaper, they're better-performing, and they're faster to build."

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, solar power is on average 41 per cent cheaper today than fossil fuels. Electric cars are already cheaper to run than petrol ones.

"The implementation of the Paris Agreement is not just working but is accelerating beyond what we possibly could have thought," Figueres added. "Investment in renewables is already two times higher than in fossil fuels."

She said countries were shifting to clean energy faster than implied by their climate targets, some of which she said had been less ambitious than planned because of "the bullying we see from Washington". Figueres said: "Are we going in the right direction? Absolutely. Do we have to go to more scale and more speed? Absolutely. But you cannot argue that the Paris Agreement is unsuccessful."

News Remembrance Sunday



Sir Keir Starmer and Kemi Badenoch laid wreaths, and were joined by all eight living former prime ministers



King leads an emotional tribute to fallen heroes

Kate Mansey Assistant Editor

The applause said it all. It echoed around Whitehall as veterans lined up in rows to attend the national service of remembrance at the Cenotaph.

The royal family and politicians were yet to arrive, so this moment was for the veterans and their families — all 10,000 of them, who had gathered to march through the streets of the capital.

Even the London plane trees

appeared to show their appreciation, dropping autumnal leaves on the ground like confetti.

"It is a celebration," said Philip Dawson, 100, who served with the Commandos and was dispatched to fill

dead men's shoes in 1944 in the aftermath of D-Day. "A celebration of comradeship for those we served with and those comrades we lost and the comradeship I've found now as a veteran."

Dawson, who joined the procession

yesterday "in a wheelchair because, well, my legs won't keep up", said: "I want to tell people, 'Don't forget. Never.' And to remember the Commando motto: united we conquer."

United they were, in one long



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The King seemed deeply moved by the service. Above from left, Cherie Blair, Akshata Murty and Lady Starmer joined their husbands to see the military parade, right



procession. Some came in wheelchairs and others walked with the help of a stick or a friendly arm to lean on. There were guide dogs and, for the second year running, the Afghanistan Veterans Community joined the march.

For sheer style, however, it was hard to beat the veterans from Blesma, the Limbless Veterans, who took part on matching red mobility scooters.

Before the procession, the King, who became patron of the Royal British Legion last year, led the nation in a two-minute silence.

The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery signalled the start of the silence by firing a minute gun from Horse Guards Parade. Captain Lucy Henry was the only one permitted to interrupt the silence, giving the command to "Fire!" a second gun at the end. The Last Post was then sounded by buglers from the Royal Marines.

The King, who appeared deeply moved, laid a wreath of 41 poppy petals, a copy of a wreath produced for his grandfather George VI, who was on the throne during the Second World War.

Another was laid on behalf of the Queen, who watched the service from the central balcony of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with the Princess of Wales.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester looked on from another balcony as did the Duchess of Edinburgh, who was accompa-



The Queen and Princess of Wales watched from on high as veterans, some in wheelchairs, below, joined the procession



nied by the Duke of Kent.

Below, the Prince of Wales, wearing RAF uniform with great-coat, poppy and sword, and the Duke of Edinburgh laid their own wreaths on the steps of the Cenotaph.

The Princess Royal, who would usually lay a wreath at the Cenotaph, is currently in Australia on an official visit and took part in a



Remembrance Day commemoration in Sydney.

As has been the case for several years, Andrew Mountbatten Windsor and the Duke of Sussex were absent.

Sir Keir Starmer laid a wreath as did Kemi Badenoch as leader of the opposition.

All eight living former prime ministers stood in a line behind them: Sir John Major, Sir Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, Baroness May of Maidenhead May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak.

Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform

UK, was not an official part of the service, in accordance with a 1984 protocol which dictates that only leaders of political parties that have six or more MPs are invited.

An amendment was made to the rule in 2024 to allow the Democratic Unionist Party to lay a wreath.

Dame Sarah Mullally, the Bishop of London who will be installed as Archbishop of Canterbury next year, led those gathered at the Cenotaph in a short but moving service.

After the national anthem, the King saluted the Cenotaph and received a round of applause from

the crowds. The service was particularly poignant this year as the nation marks 80 years since the end of the Second World War.

About 20 surviving veterans from the war, including six 101-year-olds, joined the 10,000-strong procession organised by the Royal British Legion.

In May celebrations were held to remember VE Day, followed by events to mark VJ Day in August.

Last year services were held in both the UK and Normandy to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

As part of the commemorations for D-Day, Arthur Osborne, now 101, recalled the way in which his friend Walter "Gummy" Gummerson had saved his life after he was shot through the lung after landing on Gold Beach as part of the D-Day +3 landings.

The following day, while Osborne was in hospital, his unit was ambushed and all his comrades, including Gummy, were killed.

After attending the procession on Sunday, however, Osborne said that since the D-Day events last year, Gummy's family had been in touch and he had bought them all dinner.

"I can't thank Gummy for saving my life but I could thank them," Osborne said as he sat in Horse Guards Parade after the procession. "I've got another 80 years of life that I wouldn't have had."

Osborne, who began attending the Cenotaph service three years ago after his wife, Enid, died, added: "I still see their faces, oh crumbs, yes. I remember all the people who didn't make it."

Lest we forget, Letters, page 24

Military father and sons march for their comrades at the Cenotaph

Tom Gould

A father and two sons who all served in Afghanistan were among the veterans marching at the Cenotaph for fallen comrades on Remembrance Sunday.

Phil Hubbard and his sons, Lee and Gavin, who have collectively served 65 years in the military, joined the Royal British Legion's march past the Cenotaph for the first time as a family.

The father, 71, with 38 years of service, rose to the rank of colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps and served

in the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan. Lee, 44, spent 21 years in the army, mostly in the Royal Engineers, and completed tours in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, while his brother Gavin, 46, served in Afghanistan with the Territorial Army. Gavin said marching with his brother and father was a "once in a lifetime" privilege.

All three were remembering friends lost in action, including three of Phil's colleagues killed in the Falklands conflict when the landing ship RFA Sir Galahad was bombed by Argentinian



Phil Hubbard with Lee, left, and Gavin

warplanes as it was unloading soldiers. "We lost a couple of TA lads on my tour," Gavin said. "I met some incredible people doing exceptional stuff with courage so I want to represent that."

Lee paid tribute to his friends Rob Thomson, who was his first loss as a young soldier in Iraq, and Dave Barnsdale, who was killed in Afghanistan, as well as the wounded.

The family never served in Afghanistan at the same time, but Phil and Lee overlapped in Iraq during Operation Telic in 2004. Phil, commander of med-

ical services at the time, said: "One of the big challenges was to put being a father aside. There were times that something would happen and I would be thinking, 'Where is Lee?' ... That was very difficult."

The two had the opportunity to meet once while in theatre. Lee joked: "Considering my dad was a colonel at the time and I was a private soldier it was mortifying. When they called me into the office, I thought I was getting a promotion, so it was good and bad really. I got to see my dad, but no promotion."

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Protected

Welby returns to preaching with a joke in US sermon

Kaya Burgess
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Right Rev Justin Welby has made a return to public preaching almost a year after a damning report led to his resignation as Archbishop of Canterbury, giving sermons at services in the US.

He joked that archbishops were used to feeling “trodden on” during their ministry in a sermon about death and grief to mark All Souls Day at an Anglican church in Georgia last week.

Welby cannot currently preach in England as it is thought that he has not applied for permission to officiate in Church of England churches, after he stepped down in January. This came after criticism in a report published last November over his handling of abuse allegations against John Smyth, a Christian barrister who beat and abused boys and young men.

He would need to seek permission from the local bishop if he wished to accept any invitation to preach or lead a service at a church in their diocese.

The Times understands that Welby did not travel to the US specifically to preach, but has been visiting to do reconciliation and mediation work on global crises. While in America he was invited by the Anglican Bishop of Atlanta, the Right Rev Rob Wright, to give the homily at a service at Emory University and then to preach at Holy Trinity in Decatur, Georgia.

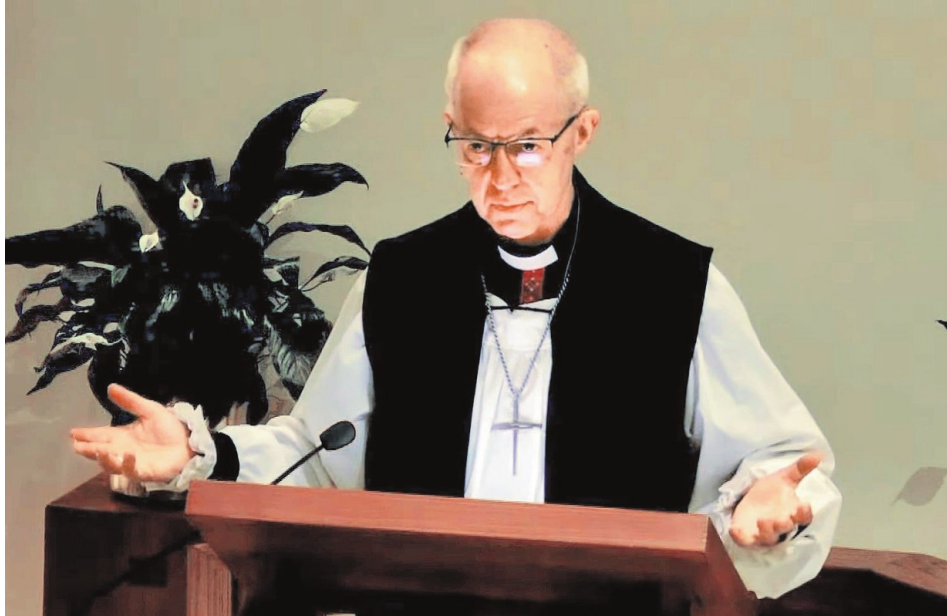
Welby also dined with Wright and met Cornel West, an American philosopher, while in Georgia.

Welby donned his robes for the first time since his retirement to preach on All Souls Day and also offered Holy Communion but did not preside over the service.

He said in his sermon that he had heard people at funerals being asked “not to grieve” for a lost loved one. He said: “As I get older and, I’m afraid, grumpier, I tend to mutter under my breath: ‘Don’t tell me what to do. I want to grieve. Grief is what rises in my heart and mind.’”

Welby said that faith in Jesus reassured Christians that death was not the end. He added that Canterbury Cathedral was full of memorials to “forgotten battles” and departed deans, canons and bishops.

He added: “The archbishops, of course, [they] quite rightly put their



Justin Welby, who cannot currently preach in England, was invited to give a sermon in Georgia by Rob Wright, far right, and also met the philosopher Cornel West, centre



memorials on the floor so they can be trodden on forever more, a feeling they will have become familiar with during their ministry.”

Footage of the service, including Welby’s sermon, was removed from public access and marked as “private” on YouTube after The Times asked about who granted him permission to preach.

Canon 4, section one, of the rules of

the Episcopal Church — the Anglican church in the United States — states that bishops can grant permission to someone who is “a confirmed communicant in good standing” to preach at a service.

Wright said: “Bishop Welby was invited with my permission to give remarks at [Emory University’s] Candler School of Theology and to preach at Holy Trinity, and the rector there

spontaneously invited Bishop Welby to join him behind the altar and distribute communion.”

Andrew Graystone, an advocate for survivors of Smyth’s abuse, said: “It is 12 months since the Church of England published the Makin Report into its handling of John Smyth. It is 12 months since Justin Welby [announced his resignation] over his failings in that case.

“In that time no survivor has received any form of redress; none of the scores of church leaders who knew about Smyth’s abuse and covered it up have faced any form of disciplinary action. The leaders of the church have simply ploughed on as if nothing has happened. The Bishop of Atlanta apparently thinks that Justin Welby is ‘in good standing’ with the church. He is not.”

Church rules permitted Welby to remain living at Lambeth Palace for several months after resigning as he did not own any property in the UK and needed to look for a house. It is understood that he now lives in the Diocese of Southwark, an area covering south London and parts of Surrey.

Welby declined to comment.

Dickens was racist about the Chinese, students told

Charles Dickens held racist views because he wrote critically about Chinese society, student have been told.

A module in Manchester University’s English literature degree warns that an essay co-authored by the 19th-century novelist “expresses racist views, particularly against Chinese people”.

Undergraduates with concerns about reading the article are invited to discuss it with their course tutor, The Mail on Sunday said. The university has nearly 9,000 students from mainland China, the largest international cohort.

Critics suggested there could be sensitivities around upsetting Chinese students. The Times reported last week that an academic at UCL compared China’s influence on British universities to “termites eating a house”.

Sheffield Hallam University is facing an investigation about whether it broke national security laws when it halted an academic’s research into the treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Manchester University’s warning was issued in a module called Victorian Rights: Victorian Wrongs.

It applies to an 1851 article entitled *The Great Exhibition and the Little One* which Dickens co-authored with Richard Horne, a poet. This contrasted western civilisation with the authors’ perceptions of China, by comparing the scientific and technological wonders in the Great Exhibition of 1851 with an exhibition of traditional Chinese arts and crafts in London.

Frank Furedi, emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Kent, said: “Highlighting the economic and political superiority of the West in the middle of the 19th century was a self-evident fact, as factually correct as the observation that today China’s economy is superior to that of the UK.”

“What we should worry about is not so much Dickens’s racist views but the historical illiteracy of the University of Manchester’s sensitivity police.”

Lord Young of Acton, founder of the Free Speech Union, said: “This episode is precisely why Bridget Phillipson should commence the clause in the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act requiring universities to disclose their dependence on foreign funding.”

A university spokesman said: “Our approach to teaching and research is guided by academic integrity and intellectual curiosity, not by any external relationships or partnerships.”

Holocaust jest doctor ‘is not antisemitic’

Will Humphries

A junior doctor who tweeted about “Jew banker goblins” has been let off with a warning by the medical regulator after it judged that he did not intend to be antisemitic.

Martin Whyte, a former executive member of the British Medical Association (BMA), was suspended by the union in 2023 after his offensive tweets came to light. The paediatrician and deputy chairman of the junior doctors’ committee joked in one online post that videos about the Holocaust being a sham were “pretty convincing”.

However, an investigation committee was told the General Medical Council (GMC) did not believe it was his “intention” to be antisemitic or that he “holds antisemitic views himself”. The GMC concluded his conduct “falls

just short of that which would be considered serious enough to pose a risk to public protection”. John Anderson, chairman of the GMC committee, wrote: “If there were to be a repetition, the threshold for restrictive action on



Martin Whyte said he could not recall the context of his posts from 2018

his registration would likely be met. As such, this is a case where a warning should be considered.”

A spokesman for the Campaign Against Antisemitism said: “Is there any level of racism against Jewish people that the GMC would consider

worthy of actual disciplinary action? If so, we have yet to see it.”

Whyte had said he was “not antisemitic” but accepted it was “possible” that a reader without any knowledge of his personal views might “misunderstand” the meaning of what he had written. He said the offending tweets were posted in 2018 in response to messages that were no longer available, and he was unable to recall the context.

A BMA spokesman said Whyte would not be allowed to return to represent the association “in any elected office again”. He said Whyte was “immediately removed from taking part in any and all BMA business” when the Daily Mail unearthed his offensive tweets. The spokesman stressed that “the decision about whether he can continue to practise as a doctor is a matter for the GMC, not the BMA”.

Music venue turning down Jewish events, claims rabbi

Ed Halford

A popular music venue in the East End of London has been reported to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) after Jewish community leaders claimed it turned down events “because they are Jewish”.

The Troxy theatre in Limehouse had declined to host the American Jewish singer Benny Friedman’s concert, and a charity event for Crohn’s and Colitis, which largely supports the Jewish Ashkenazi community who suffer disproportionately from the diseases.

The Jewish Community Council alleges the theatre has adopted an anti-Jewish policy since the attacks on October 7, 2023, and claims its evidence

submitted to the EHRC shows the venue’s management “appear to have adopted a discriminatory policy”.

Rabbi Levi Schapiro, a director at the council, told the EHRC: “I personally attempted to hire the Troxy for a community event and was likewise refused again, without justification.”

The Troxy says the claims are “entirely false” and “without foundation”.

The grade II listed art deco music venue was built as a cinema in 1933 by Maurice Cheepan, a Jewish immigrant.

Tom Sutton-Roberts, director of the Troxy, said: “We do not operate any discriminatory policies when hosting events of any faith group.”

The EHRC said: “We consider each complaint carefully.”

News

Little wonder Pam the pony, pictured with her mother, Sophie, is one of the smallest foals in the 20-year history of Glenda Spooner Farm, a rescue and rehoming centre in Somerton, Somerset. She weighed less than 3st upon arrival this summer — about the same as an adult springer spaniel — and is just 2ft tall



TOM WREN/SWINS

Musk's online encyclopaedia glosses over his 'fascist salute'

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

Elon Musk has taken a keen interest in his Wikipedia page over the years. So have the site's editors: 4,221 of them have made more than 17,000 changes to his page since 2008.

The billionaire tweeted in 2019: "My wiki is a war zone with a zillion edits. At least it's obviously not curated! Some day, I should probably write what my fictionalised version of reality is."

Six years later and Musk has, according to some, done exactly that by creating Grokopedia, an alternative to Wikipedia — or "Wikipedia" as he calls it. It is part of his campaign to rebalance what he sees as a left-wing bias permeating media, the web and AI chatbots. Grokopedia is an online encyclopaedia, like Wiki, but there the similarities end. It has about 800,000 articles, created by artificial intelligence; Wiki has more than 65 million, written by humans.

Not much else is known about how Grokopedia is written and updated, but it draws on Wikipedia as a source. It is part of Musk's xAI company.

Andrew Duffield, head of AI at Full Fact, said: "It's quite hard to work out what it is, why it exists and how it is working. That's part of the challenge."

He added that unlike Wikipedia, which is fully transparent about its editorial process, Grokopedia was a bit of a black box. Duffield said: "We need to be able to understand what information was used to create this content, what the model underlying it was trained on, what rules it has, what the trust and safety policies are, how we can ask for corrections, what the corrections process will look like, which humans have been involved in it. In their absence it's very hard to place trust in something."

Musk and his allies consider Wikipedia to be a propaganda tool because it blacklists the New York Post, Daily Mail, Fox News, Breitbart and similar outlets as sources of information. He has claimed that it is "controlled by far-left activists" and once offered \$1 billion to rename it "Dickipedia".

In August, Congress opened an investigation into Wikipedia and how it countered "efforts to manipulate information on the platform for propaganda aimed at western audiences". Grokopedia's entries are largely factual and long, but they do have hints of Musk in them.

AN 'IRREVERENT VISIONARY'

The Grokopedia page on Musk calls him an "irreverent visionary" and says he has "influenced broader debates on technological progress, demographic decline and institutional biases". It adds that his ownership of X has drawn "criticisms from legacy media outlets that exhibit systemic left-leaning tilts in coverage".

Wikipedia's version references Musk's grandfather's support of Nazism and the billionaire's alleged "fascist" salute during the US election. That incident,

which is not mentioned in Grokopedia, has its own Wikipedia entry. It prompted Musk to call for Wikipedia to be defunded — a move that backfired by inspiring record funding, according to Jimmy Wales, the co-founder.

Wikipedia's references to increased hate speech and misinformation after Musk's purchase of Twitter and his attempts to silence critics are not mentioned on Grokopedia.

OMISSIONS ON FAR-RIGHT FIGURES People such as Tommy Robinson and Sir Oswald Mosley also get a subtle gloss. Robinson is described as a "citi-



Tommy Robinson is described as a "citizen journalist"

zen journalist" who "advocates against Islamist extremism and organised child sexual exploitation networks".

Wikipedia calls him an "anti-Islam campaigner and one of the UK's most prominent far-right activists".

Mosley has a section called "historiographical assessments and debates" on Grokopedia. It said: "Recent reappraisals, particularly in 21st-century studies of interwar economics and populism, counter anti-fascist tropes by validating Mosley's policy prescience."

Previous challengers such as Conservapedia, Wikinfo, MyWikiBiz, Citizendium and Everipedia have failed to rival Wikipedia. But Stephen Harrison, a writer who has focused on Wikipedia, said: "Some Wikipedians pointed out that there have been competitors over the years that have risen and fallen ... [arguing] this is another flash in the pan. My view is this might be a little bit different, because none of those other projects ... had the backing of a billionaire."

Henry Shevlin, an associate director at the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence at Cambridge University, said Grokopedia might provide balance. He added: "It's probably good to have multiple online encyclopaedias covering different parts of the political spectrum ... All media involves a degree of slant and opinion, and specific 'power editors' have a huge amount of influence."

Selena Deckelmann, chief product and technology officer at the Wikimedia Foundation, said that "no single individual, company or agenda can exert influence over the work" of Wikipedia. She said: "Our commitment to knowledge as a public good extends beyond information integrity to how our content is re-used. Even Grokopedia needs Wikipedia to exist."

xAI was asked to comment.



Grokopedia is part of Elon Musk's xAI company

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Teenage Southport 'copycats' arrested

Duncan Gardham
Ben Ellery Crime Editor

Two teenagers have been arrested in separate "copycat" cases after allegedly seeking to emulate the Southport killer.

The boys, aged 17 and 16, cannot be named. Neither has been charged with preparing terrorist acts because prosecutors do not consider attacks on schoolchildren or misogynistic violence to be "ideological". Both are charged with lesser offences.

Axel Rudakubana was 17 when he murdered Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice Aguiar, nine, in a knife attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class in Southport on July 29 last year. He was later jailed for life.

In the case of the 17-year-old boy, from Cwmbran, South Wales, he is said to have discussed copying Rudakubana and researched obtaining large knives.

Police found a phone note titled "places to attack" containing images of a dance school near his home and directions on how to reach it.

Location data suggested he had been close to the school days earlier. He had also researched potential attacks on his own school and told others on Snapchat he planned to target the Oasis reunion concert in Cardiff on July 4.

He has pleaded guilty to possessing a document useful for terrorism — the same offence for which Rudakubana previously received an 18-month sentence — and is due to be sentenced

in January. The case was adjourned for psychiatric reports amid concerns he has autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the same condition as Rudakubana.

In the second case, a 16-year-old from Merseyside allegedly planned to attack a Taylor Swift-themed event while wearing a green hoodie, mirroring Rudakubana.

Prosecutors say he travelled to Southport, collected knives, researched a Swift-themed event and downloaded the same al-Qaeda manual Rudakubana used to produce ricin.

He had allegedly researched high-school shootings and misogynist incels and considered attacking his former school after dropping out. He was arrested in August and charged with possessing documents useful for terrorism and making threats to kill. He is due to enter pleas next month.

Under the Terrorism Act, violence must be intended to advance a political, religious, racial or ideological cause. Young men who do not display such an ideology are not charged with preparation of terrorist acts, even if multiple deaths are intended. Yvette Cooper, the former home secretary, said in March she planned to "tighten legislation".

The first phase of the Southport inquiry, examining missed chances to prevent the attack, ended last week. The second will assess whether police, social services and mental health teams are equipped to manage young people with a fixation on extreme violence.



Light on her feet Luma Artistas SL uses glowing costumes to bring its ballet production of *Sleeping Beauty* to life at the Shaw Theatre in north London

Wait 103 years for road repair, residents told

Nadeem Badshah

Residents who complained that their potholed road had not been resurfaced in 42 years were told that the average wait time was more than 100 years.

Homeowners on Horsham Close in Banbury said the cul-de-sac had not been resurfaced since 1983. Oxfordshire county council told them the average cycle for resurfacing was 103 years, according to the Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance survey by the Asphalt Industry Alliance.

Ian Bowyer, 66, who has lived on the road for 42 years said: "There's lots of potholes that keep coming up but they just do a quick patch job. Like all pot holes, once you get moisture, it freezes and comes up again. I don't know how they could get a 103-year wait. If that's true, that is ridiculous."

Dianne Hart, 76, a retired print finisher who lives on the road, said: "We won't have a road in 103 years."

Andrew Crichton, a county councillor for Banbury Hardwick, said the road was in a "parlous state and desperately needs resurfacing".

The council said: "Because of budgetary restrictions, we have to prioritise roads based on a number of factors, including prioritising roads that receive more use. Members of the public can report issues via Fix My Street. If this is done along with photos, defects can be actioned quickly."

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JOHN LEWIS

NEVER KNOWINGLY UNDERSOLD

Move to Malta suits British tax exiles down to Valletta

Laurence Sleator

It has only been a few months since Louise Burley and her family moved from Wakefield to Ta' Xbiex in Malta but they are already loving it: "They drive on the same side of the road, there are red postboxes, HSBCs on the corner and they have Marks & Spencer."

She is not the only Briton to have packed up and moved abroad since Labour came to power. Malta, a sunny southern European archipelago, is proving to be a particularly popular destination.

"I don't think we could have coped with being in the UK much longer," Burley, 46, said. "We were getting ... squeezed every day, taxed on everything. We have a couple of houses we rent out and there is hardly any point in keeping those."

Her husband Kevin, 70, a former car dealership owner, secured a retirement visa which offers Britons a flat 15 per cent tax rate on any income — including pensions — remitted to the country. Gains from assets overseas are tax free; there is no inheritance, wealth or estate tax to pay; and the visa includes access to statutory healthcare.

To qualify the applicant must purchase a property of at least €275,000 (about £240,000) or rent somewhere for no less than €9,600 per year (£8,440, or just over £700 a month), making it very accessible for many.

Similar visas are available for those who have not retired, affording many of the tax perks of the non-dom status abolished by Labour earlier this year.

The possibility of Rachel Reeves raising capital gains tax (CGT) again at the next budget also concerns wealthy individuals, according to Jamie Favell of the Tax Advisory Partnership, which specialises in cross-border tax planning. "Crucially, capital gains are exempt from Maltese tax," Favell



It was 22C yesterday in Sliema, on Malta's east coast. Bradley Thurston said he and his wife would never return to Britain

said. "If you were a Maltese resident and sold a UK business, you wouldn't pay any UK CGT or any CGT in Malta — a saving of up to 24 per cent."

He added Malta's status as a former British colony with similar tax laws meant the system was "straight-forward", so many were considering it alongside places such as Dubai, Portugal and Italy.

"Our client base is predominantly wealthy foreign clients," Favell said. "They are very unsettled by the changing tax landscape in the UK. They had the abolishment of the non-dom tax regime, now there is so much speculation about exit taxes and taxes increasing generally ... they are looking at their options and a lot are consider-

ing leaving. The more tax changes the government makes the more wealth they are going to drive out the UK."

Malta and the UK share strong cultural ties. After the British helped liberate the island from Napoleon, Malta was part of the empire for 150 years until it achieved independence in 1964. Elizabeth II lived on the outskirts of Valletta, the capital, for two years while Prince Philip was serving in the Royal Navy. A part of the Commonwealth, Malta's tax, legal and education systems are strongly influenced by the British. The country's two official languages are Maltese and English.

Education is another selling point. Malta has many well-respected independent schools that are cheaper than their equivalents in the UK. The Maltese government offers tax breaks to parents who go private, for easing pressure on the state sector. Burley said moving had cut school fees in her half for her 13-year-old son, Freddie. "The

money we will save on the tax will pay for the school," she said.

Louise Salmond Smith, the founding head teacher at Haileybury Malta, which charges up to €19,158 (£16,845) a year, said there had been a "clear" rise in inquiries and applications from British families over the past year. "Families are generally fond of the UK, but are not inclined to live there at the moment," she said. "The cost of living versus quality of life is often ... cited as a reason to think about moving elsewhere, and many say they don't think things are likely to improve very soon."

Bradley Thurston, 54, made the decision to move permanently to the Maltese suburb of Xemxija in July when he was faced with a large bill to renew his wife's British visa. "[She] is putting her salary in the bank and we are living off mine. It's a no-brainer," the security operations manager said.

"We will never come back. The only thing I miss is the football."

New Yorkers eye London to escape Mamdani

Andrew Silvester London Editor

During the "Donald Dash" Americans who could not abide President Trump began moving to the UK in droves.

Now another US politician could be driving more across the Atlantic. The phone is "already ringing" in the offices of high-end London estate agents as wealthy New Yorkers look for alternatives to four years under the mayoralty of the self-declared socialist Zohran Mamdani, one broker told The Times.

Mamdani has focused his policies on New York's cost of living and a proposed "millionaires tax" — 2 per cent on incomes over \$1 million — has proved hard to swallow for the 34,000 or so households who fit in that category.

Becky Fatemi, an executive partner at Sotheby's International Realty in London, said inquiries rose 28 per cent

Becky Fatemi said there had been a flurry of inquiries from clients in New York



in the past month as Mamdani's lead in the polls increased. She added: "We see things globally and we've had a flurry [during the mayoral election]. The sentiment among many New York residents is they're considering leaving."

"American clients don't want to live in the Middle East, they want to live in Notting Hill and South Kensington."

Joanna Cocking, head of private office at Hamptons, said the UK was not necessarily helping itself in the race for the world's mobile wealthy.

Treasury officials are in discussions about a potential mansion tax on properties worth more than £1 million. Another option is the removal of the primary home exemption to capital gains tax on more expensive properties.

Cocking said finances were increasingly important to relocation decisions.

"Decisions are made around tax. We're already seeing people leaving the UK as a result of political decisions taken against non-doms," she said.

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News

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forming the
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"festival" at the
Nag's Head, a
grade II listed
pub on an island
in the Thames



ANDRE CAMARA

Calls to tackle 'shock' rise in homelessness

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Almost 300,000 people are facing the "worst" forms of homelessness, as ministers were urged to tackle a "shocking" 20 per cent rise in rough sleeping in just two years.

Children are increasingly being forced to move between "unsuitable" temporary accommodation while waiting for the government's strategy to end rough sleeping, according to homelessness charity Crisis.

New figures showed that homelessness levels stood at 299,100 across England in 2024, a 21 per cent rise since 2022, and an increase of 45 per cent since 2012.

These cover people sleeping on the streets, in tents or squats, nightly-paid bed and breakfasts, or hostels.

However, the number forced to sleep rough has risen from 12,000 in 2022 to more than 15,000 past year amounting to a 20 per cent rise.

The findings came in a report from the homelessness charity, which warned many people are being forced to live in "unsafe" conditions exposing them to violence and abuse.

Councils have also reported that the number of approaches for help with homelessness has jumped by 70 per cent, with London and the north of England seeing the biggest rises.

Labour's early release scheme to ease prison overcrowding has been partly blamed for the increase. The policy allows some inmates to be released on licence after serving 40 per cent of their term.

Crisis said that the number of people made homeless as a result of discharge from hospital, prisons and other institutions rose by 22 per cent in the past year. "This is likely in part the result of the government's early prison release scheme which has added pressure on council finances," the charity said.

Efforts to reduce the use of asylum hotels have also contributed to the issue, according to the study published today. "Homelessness resulting from evictions from asylum accommodation

was up by 37 per cent in the last year, influenced by the acceleration of Home Office decisions on claims," it said.

As well as an attempt to reduce the backlog of asylum claims, the Home Office's decision to halve the number of days most people granted asylum can stay in government accommodation has been blamed for leaving refugees homeless.

Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, is facing calls to unfreeze the amount of housing benefit that private renters can claim, known as the local housing allowance.

Matt Downie, chief executive of Crisis, said the "shocking new findings require a rapid response from the government". With winter approaching, he said that pressure on councils was growing and the chancellor should use her budget to "fix the sharpest end of the housing crisis".

Downie called for Reeves to uplift housing benefit "so that it covers the true cost of rents" to "stop thousands of households from losing their homes".

The findings were compiled in a "state of the nation" report, commissioned by Crisis and led by Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh.

A government spokesman said: "Everyone deserves a safe place to call home, which is why we are investing more than £1 billion in homelessness services, launching a cross-government homelessness strategy, and investing a record £39 billion in affordable and social housing."

"This is alongside accelerating efforts to tackle the root causes of homelessness by working across government to ensure support is in place for those most at risk, abolishing Section 21 no-fault evictions, and expanding access to safe accommodation."

There has also been a £1 billion investment in homelessness services in 2025-26. Prisoners are offered 12 weeks of basic accommodation upon release if they are at risk of becoming homeless, while more than 40 local authorities have a specialist team to help those leaving asylum accommodation.

Letters, page 24

The price of terror

November 8th, 1987, an IRA bomb tore through the Northern Irish town of Enniskillen. 11 dead, over 60 injured. Questions left unanswered.

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Dangerous fungus spreading in hospitals, NHS is warned

Nicola Woolcock

A fungus that can kill people with weak immune systems is spreading in British hospitals, according to a memo reported to have been sent to the NHS.

Candidoyma auris has only recently been discovered and rarely causes infections in healthy individuals, but can pose a risk to people in hospital.

A memo from the UK Health Security Agency has warned about outbreaks of *C. auris*, the Mail on Sunday reported. The newspaper said that a map in the memo showed the fungus had spread to 72 hospitals in the past two years.

A blog post by the UKHSA said its resilience was "particularly concerning" and that the fungus could survive on surfaces for long periods. It said *C. auris* was "often resistant to first-line

medical treatments and disinfectants" and that it spread primarily through contact with contaminated surfaces or medical equipment, or via direct contact with "colonised" individuals carrying it on their skin.

Rohini Manuel, consultant medical microbiologist at UKHSA, said: "*C. auris* rarely causes infections in healthy people, although it can pose a risk to people in healthcare settings with weakened immune systems."

"Rates of *C. auris* in hospitals in England are very low, however they have been rising ... UKHSA is working with the NHS to investigate the reasons behind this. Factors may include a rise in the fungus globally."

"Hospital outbreaks in this country are rare but we are supporting a small number of trusts to limit the spread."

Dog's life is so sweet at private club

Lucy Holden

Scent dens, indoor parks and reggae nap times are among the perks on offer at a private members' club for dogs in London.

As with private members' clubs for people — and with prices to match — WagWorks puts its applicants through an onboarding process before they are allowed to join.

Less of a Soho House for dogs and more of a Daylesford Farm, prices range from £210 per month to £925 for the unlimited package.

WagWorks, which opened in Islington last month and also has a branch in Fulham, is all about letting dogs be dogs, according to Ollie Hudd-Williams, the club's 31 year-old co-founder.

Given there are more dogs in London than children under the age of five, according to the Office for National Statistics, Hudd-Williams is confident that demand will be strong.

WagWorks is uninterested, however, in what it claims is the growing humanisation of dogs in western culture.

"We have on-site vets and groomers but WagWorks isn't about sound baths and massage — we don't like the gimmicky stuff," Hudd-Williams said, adding: "Here they can exhibit all their natural behaviours via holistic solutions."

Zen Dog Club in Mayfair offers ultrasonic dental treatments, "de-shedding masks", aromatherapy massage and a full concierge and "chauffeur service" for dogs. Meanwhile, in the Cotswolds, Woodwolds markets itself as a "wellness club for dogs".



Winnie, a West Highland terrier, is pampered at WagWorks

Yet there is nothing rough and ready about the subtly palatial WagWorks in Islington. Bathrooms have been designed with white and baby pink tiles and huge stainless steel baths to mirror a homely set-up.

The scent room, designed to provide smelling, licking and chewing experiences, has a revolving, seasonal array of options to keep its members interested. Lavender, leaves and wellington boots are among the stimuli on offer.

"There's all sorts of science to show that sniffing reduces a dog's heart rate

and relaxes them," Hudd-Williams said.

While the canine members arrive with packed lunches, treats are bestowed upon them during their stay. They are, of course, all natural.

Hudd-Williams said: "We serve lamb braids, buffalo horns, but the favourite is a pizzle — a dried bull's penis. Beef tendons are also very popular."

All temperatures in the building are controlled to meet the pets' needs throughout the day, and they are

soothed into "enrichment rests" by classical music or reggae. "Dogs love reggae," Hudd-Williams said, adding: "It's very calming to them."

Winkie Spiers, a dog behaviourist, runs café simulations at the club to help dogs become more accustomed to urban living. On the top floor, the club offers three indoor playparks spanning 8000 sq ft. To keep things civil between members, the dogs are organised into groups according to play style.

Emily Jeffery, 31, a director with a five-year-old spaniel, said the private members' club model was perfect for a working breed because it did not apply a one-size-fits-all formula.

"They even have designated downtime with relaxing music — we thought it sounded ridiculous at first, but honestly, he's such a happy dog and always comes home calm rather than overstimulated," she said.

Andy Burton, 47, a sports agent founder with a four-year-old pomsky (a Pomeranian-husky mix), said: "Between running a business and managing everything else, having a place I trust for all my dog's needs means one less thing to juggle. There's loads of communication so I always know what he's done, how he's been and what he's enjoyed — and he clearly loves it because he charges through the door."

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Police leak poses risk to rape victims

Ed Halford

Dozens of sensitive passwords to safe houses and personal information about prison officers and police staff have been released by a police force.

The data breach at Wiltshire police included door codes to safe houses for victims of rape and sexual assault, codes which enable access to systems containing digital files of evidence, and a password for police computers.

The prison officers affected by the data breach are working at HMP Erlestoke, HMP Winchester and HMP Isle of Wight. The leak included 13 codes and 13 passwords for police systems and buildings. A list of 32 police contacts were also compromised, including their phone numbers and email addresses.

A source told The Telegraph: "If this fell into the wrong hands, this could put lots of vulnerable people at risk. It could also lead to evidence being tampered with and cases collapsing."

In 2023 a report found that the biggest data breach in the history of UK policing was missed by six officials. The breach led to the publication of the personal details of nearly 10,000 Police Service of Northern Ireland officers.

Wiltshire police said: "We have launched an investigation to understand the circumstances surrounding a suspected leak of information. We will be taking appropriate actions to address any security concerns."

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**It's too easy to blame
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Libby Purves

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Comment

Diversity has to be more than a mere pose

The focus on institutional representation that consumes old-school DEI activists has become an obstacle in itself



@TREVORPTWEETS

I won't be joining the hue and cry over David Lammy's performance standing in for Sir Keir Starmer at last week's prime minister's questions. Have a heart. The poor fellow's had it in the neck from all sides.

It is true that this was not his finest hour, but let's not go over the top. Anyone who has had the weary duty of watching Starmer and Kemi Badenoch trade blows week after week will attest that it's not as though Lammy and his Tory opposite number James Cartledge were subbing for Gladstone and Disraeli.

Of course, I'm biased. Even though we are separated in age by a couple of decades Lammy and I are both north London boys of Guyanese heritage, both with ambitious immigrant parents, who escaped modest backgrounds by virtue of scholarships not commonly available to our sort; Lammy boarding at an ancient cathedral school in Peterborough, me dispatched to one of the Caribbean's elite high schools. We were both elected to public office for the first time at London's City Hall on the same day in 2000. So excuse me if I don't bang on about his shortcomings. I identify too closely with the DPM to be objective.

However, I do have a bone to pick with the team who lined up the planted questions for him last week. Was it absolutely necessary to start the session with the toe-curling obsequiousness of Connor Rand's

"Can I start by congratulating the deputy prime minister on being the first black person to ever answer prime minister's questions, a landmark for this place and our country. I hope he is proud?"

I really don't think he needs to be. A surfeit of melanin is hardly a career achievement. Lammy had the grace to acknowledge that Rishi Sunak and Badenoch had both, in their different ways, got there before him. But the Labour tactic merely reminded us, at the end of a disastrous week for this administration, that this is a government that places the symbolism of representing something ahead of the hard reality of actually doing anything.

The Starmer government is now routinely criticised for not having a "story", by which people mean a guiding objective. For most of its first year I mistakenly believed that the Starmer team had an incrementalist project — a thousand upticks in the

Labour's delusion is that what you are governs what you do

operation of the state would add up to a material improvement in the living standards of the people. But I think I was wrong.

I reckon that the Labour team never had a strategy. They simply convinced themselves that they would succeed because they were better people — harder-working, more virtuous, more organised, more moral — than their predecessors. And at the heart of their delusion lies the idea that the type of person you are governs what you do.

Think back to Rachel Reeves's first budget. Before we had any idea what the chancellor planned to do with

the nation's money, we were reminded that she was the first female to hold that office. And nobody in the known universe can be unaware of the prime minister's own occupational antecedents.

More recently, after Shabana Mahmood's appointment to the Home Office, her copious online mentions are summarised in this fashion: "Significance: first Muslim woman to serve as home secretary." The AI search turns up no reference to her emerging leadership of the party's reawakened social conservatism, which is probably the most important thing about her, and unrelated to her ethnicity.

To her credit, Mahmood's own website makes no mention of religious belief; she merely describes herself as "born and brought up in the heart of Birmingham, attending a local school as a child and living within the constituency".

There are many reasons for eschewing this kind of performative identity politics. Here are two that I think should matter. First, it's just so last century. Only people who still live in the 1970s imagine that anyone is surprised by the sight of a woman or a person of colour at the pinnacle of any profession. My own company makes several hundred top-tier appointments each year purely on merit; more than half are female, more than a third from minorities.

I accept that in many sectors women and people of colour remain thin on the ground. But to greet every novel appointment as a miracle echoes Samuel Johnson's distinctly unwoke remark: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

Second, the focus on an inherited characteristic marks everyone who shares that attribute with the same



David Lammy wasn't helped by Connor Rand's lame question at PMQs

qualities, including their failings. It gives free rein to bigotry. Hardly had the DPM left the chamber before the former Boris Johnson adviser Dominic Cummings took to social media to tell us that "Lammy is the logical conclusion of multiculturalism + DEI ... if he were assistant manager in JD Sports, the 18-year-old staff would say 'over-promoted prick, get rid of him.'" Lovely sentiment.

I wonder. Had some individual claimed to have broken lockdown rules in order to test their dodgy eyesight with a bizarre 50-mile drive to a beauty spot, would we explain their hypocrisy as the logical outcome of half a century of efforts to tackle disability discrimination? Would Cummings call for those tiresome wheelchair users and people with guide dogs to be put

back in their proper places as second-class citizens?

Of course humanity comes in many forms, shades and configurations. But the disproportionate focus on recognition and representation which obsesses old-school DEI activists can become an obstacle in itself. For example, the BBC last week took the step of censoring one of its presenters for the crime of rolling her eyes in

Martine Croxall was right, and the BBC out of its collective mind

exasperation at being asked to say the ludicrous, meaningless phrase "pregnant people" out loud. Martine Croxall, remembering that her job is to communicate in English to viewers, correctly and professionally substituted the word "women". She was right, and her employer out of its collective mind.

We need to get all this back in perspective. Being a colour, whatever it is, really isn't an attribute that matters much, unless you're auditioning for a tanning advert; I know that I wouldn't get the job. Similarly being female or disabled or LGB. We need to bring our understanding of diversity discrimination and equality back to a practical level that helps employers and workers navigate the modern world, rather than waving diversity as a flag of virtue.

There is one key step that could start the change. It is now 15 years since we passed the legislation that governs this area and sets its norms. Ministers should have demanded a review of the Equality Act 2010 on its tenth birthday. We are late, but it's never too late to do the right thing.

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Comment

Reeves can end this rolling crisis by being bold

History shows the chancellor that the best tax-raising budgets focus on one major lever

Rupert Harrison



The last time there was this much speculation about which taxes will go up in a budget was, well, last year's budget. To have two major tax-raising events within the first 18 months of a new government is unprecedented and it tells us something important: chancellor Rachel Reeves's first budget didn't do the job.

Strangely, despite the sheer volume of noise about stretched public finances and jittery gilt markets, the UK isn't facing a fiscal crisis. Our national debt is high, yes, but unlike some other countries we do at least have a government committed to reducing the annual budget deficit and meeting its fiscal rules. As a result, government borrowing costs don't look alarming compared with other major economies. When you look around the world, the interest rates that markets charge governments to borrow for long periods — 30 years or more — have been rising everywhere.

It's true that the interest rates on UK government bonds have been higher than some of our neighbours but that is mainly due to what looked like sticky and persistent inflation, with the result that markets have been predicting fewer rate cuts from the Bank of England. At PIMCO we

think the causes of that inflation are mostly temporary and the Bank will end up cutting more than most observers expect to support a weakening labour market. After some softer recent inflation data markets seem to be reaching the same conclusion, and gilt yields have been falling fast.

So why the sense of constant crisis? It is almost entirely self-inflicted, thanks to the chancellor's decision to meet her crucial fiscal rules by such a narrow margin. It is like setting off on a 100-mile journey with only 102 miles' worth of fuel in the tank. When the buffer against unexpected shocks is so small, every minor change in the forecasts sparks

The 2012 budget had a long list of smaller taxes, which backfired

speculation about another round of tax rises to get back in the black. This is a cycle that is presently on repeat every six months.

Now, Reeves can fairly say that the size of her fiscal headroom is similar to that set out by Jeremy Hunt in his last few budgets. But that was at the tail-end of an exhausted government with ever-shortening political horizons. The average headroom after previous changes of government was almost three times as big. With a buffer on that scale she would not be in this situation.

The sense of permacrisis has clear political costs and is a distraction from longer-term priorities. But it also has very real economic costs. Constant

speculation about new taxes has clearly dampened business confidence and delayed vital investment. On top of doing whatever is necessary to meet the fiscal rules, there is a very strong case for going further and delivering a meaningful increase in headroom against those rules.

It appears this message has been heard loud and clear in the Treasury but it is easier said than done. If we assume that meaningful spending reductions are off the table, then the 30 billion-dollar question, to be decided in Downing Street this week, is whether to do it mainly with one big, manifesto-busting increase in income tax or with a long shopping list of smaller tax rises on property, pensions and capital.

Successful tax-raising budgets in the past have generally pulled one big lever — VAT under Geoffrey Howe and George Osborne, national insurance under Gordon Brown. These major, broad-based taxes raise predictable revenue with fewer distortionary impacts on behaviour or the economy.

In contrast, a long list of smaller and more complicated taxes can easily backfire. The 2012 "omnishambles" budget is a classic example. Remember the pasty tax? It is seared on my memory, as I helped put that budget together and then had to deal with the fallout. Osborne needed to raise significant sums to deliver his coalition partners' demands for a large increase in the personal allowance. The list of tax rises made sense inside the Treasury but fell apart on contact with the public.

The problems with a shopping list approach are both political and

economic. There are almost always good reasons why ideas for novel tax rises have been passed over by previous chancellors. Targeted groups understandably respond "why me?" when told they are being singled out to make the chancellor's sums add up. And concentrating tax rises only on business, savings, mobile capital and footloose investors risks causing much worse economic side-effects and delivering less predictable revenues.

The chancellor therefore faces a simple dilemma: prioritise market confidence and the economy by breaching the government's manifesto promises or prioritise political expediency at the risk of unintended side-effects.

Don't underestimate the political pain from breaking your promises. There's always another video of you making the original pledge to go viral on social media. I vividly remember sitting in the cabinet room as Osborne advised Nick Clegg to abstain on the vote to increase tuition fees, as the coalition agreement allowed him to do. But he chose governing credibility over honouring his manifesto and the result was devastating at the next election.

Reeves will be mulling over his example. By establishing meaningful fiscal headroom there is a clear path to ending the cycle of speculation and instability, but it will take political bravery and a clear story about the gain that will come from the pain.

Rupert Harrison is a senior adviser at PIMCO and a former chair of the UK Council of Economic Advisers



Russia's frozen assets are vital for Ukraine's fightback Andriy Yermak

November is a month of remembrance. As one of the UK's closest allies, we recognise the symbolism and the importance of Armistice Day to the British people. When I first saw the poppy worn by millions at this time of year and asked what it meant, I was told that it is a quiet reminder of the sacrifice given by many and to reflect on the ordinary heroes who, calm as saints when called upon, stood up for their country.

In Ukraine, while we look forward to a similar day when the guns will fall silent and we can rebuild our future, we have many extraordinary heroes who continue to take the fight to the Russian invaders. And yet Vladimir Putin has no desire for peace.

We live with daily and heinous attacks on our people but our resilience and ability to increasingly carry the fight deep into Russia heighten the Kremlin's fear and knowledge that it will lose this war.

In response to sustained Russian attacks on our civil infrastructure, in the past week alone we have successfully targeted energy infrastructure deep within Russian territory, including Bashkortostan and Kstovo. Unless the aggression stops, there will be more to come.

Ukraine stands on the front line of a struggle for freedom. We need your continuous support to maintain our momentum, something echoed by your King when he met President Trump.

What is vital is that the discussions in Europe over using frozen Russian state assets to deliver reparations to Ukraine are done with speed.

Moscow needs to be accountable and to pay for its bloodshed. Russia continues to use aggression to test the resolve of our allies through hostile drone activity and fighter aircraft entering the skies over Poland, Estonia, Denmark and Norway. In the UK, you have seen Russian cyberattacks and chemical warfare at first hand.

We should speed up the drive to use frozen Russian assets to fund Ukraine's defence and, by extension, Europe's defence. That means ensuring Ukraine has access to the weapons and intelligence it needs when it needs them, and planning actively for the day when Russia is compelled to accept a ceasefire. A firm commitment over the coming weeks will put further pressure on Putin.

Ukraine and the UK may be at opposite ends of the European continent but our shared interests and our common cause in stopping Russian aggression make us close friends and allies. We are determined to see that friendship and alliance deepen still further in the months and years ahead.

Andriy Yermak is head of the Office of the President of Ukraine

Juliet Samuel Notebook

Alarm clock calls are for wimps when feeding baby

Reform is for "alarm clock Britain", Nigel Farage declared last week. Not to quibble, but breastfeeding mothers (or those bottle-wielding dads who do the early shift) have ample reason to consider the alarm clock crew the real wimps. The point at which one's baby can sleep in enough to necessitate an alarm clock is always a great relief. For some parents, it takes years. So here's to "baby mewl Britain", exhausted, overwhelmed, carrying on.

Grim imprint

Many psychologists believe that there is an "age of sensitivity" for children and adolescents during which events in their lives have a particularly strong impact on their future emotional habits and loyalties. Number-crunching of sports fandom by the data scientist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz suggests

that for boys, this may be between the ages of eight and 12.

He looked at which American baseball teams won the World Series in particular years, compared this with the ages of their adult fans and found that higher production of fans corresponded to the team winning when the men in question were between the ages of eight and 12. As he put it: "The odds of being captured as a perma-fan peak with those aged eight to 12 at the time of the championship." Like little ducklings, the boys "imprint" on the team and never quite shake off the feeling.

If it happens this way with sports teams, just imagine what the mass exposure of boys to pornography via their smartphones during this period is doing to their sexuality and ability to form relationships for the rest of their lives. It's grim.

Lost in thought

I tuned in to the victory speech of newly elected New York mayor Zohran Mamdani expecting to

hear blood-curdling expressions of antisemitism and promises to nationalise the Empire State Building. Now I don't want to downplay his baleful politics but to my surprise, the address was mostly an exercise in extremely tedious grandiosity. He quoted Eugene Debs: "I can see the dawn of a better day for humanity." And Nehru: "A moment comes ... when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

Give me a break. This guy's job is to run the buses and make sure stuff doesn't burn down. Something tells me he'll find it hard to focus on the bread and butter.

Hope springs...

One of Britain's most successful tycoons is funding the building of a vast monument to the power of prayer in a Midlands field. Mock-ups of the thing show what looks like a massive white elastic band twisted and balanced on its side, towering 51 metres above onlookers. It's to be called The Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer. Lord Edmiston, a



devout Christian who says he has seen wheelchair-bound congregants healed at prayer gatherings in Nigeria, said the point is to give people hope.

That will be a welcome thought for any rush-hour commuters passing the monument on its plot between the M6 and M62 motorways near Birmingham, although come to think of it, the statue's Mobius strip shape may be a little too evocative of trying to get anywhere on Britain's roads.

Furlough fallout

There'll be "no return to austerity", we keep being told, while being all but promised tax rises. Do they not know what "austerity" means? Austerity refers to fiscal contraction — the government taking money out of the economy and borrowing less, rather than ceaselessly stimulating it by borrowing. It can do this either by cutting spending or raising taxes. Both are austerity.

This should be obvious. Raising taxes makes the lives of taxpayers that bit more austere, after all. Not so, of course, for net recipients from the state. We're now at the stage where this group are allowed simply to pretend the money they're getting comes from nowhere and no one. This is the fruit of furlough.



Buy the Peter Brookes 2026 calendar at timescartoons.com and Morten Morland's 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle at timescartoons.com/puzzles

It's too easy to blame Southport killer's parents

Society demands that families value and support children but offers little assistance when they become dangerous

Libby Purves



@LIB_THINKS

Fresh sadness emerged from the Southport inquiry with the bereaved families' devastating condemnation of Axel Rudakubana's parents.

They say starkly that Alphonse Rudakubana and Laetitia Muzayire should be "held to account", considered culpable rather than be protected: "They knew how dangerous he was, yet they stayed silent ... They failed not only as parents but as members of our society."

It opens rarely asked questions: one bereaved family claims it a fundamental moral duty to ensure that your child does no harm. The killer's father, too, accuses himself of being "immoral" in not doing enough because love "overruled good judgment". It is easy to see why those who lost small daughters would equate Axel Rudakubana with some dangerous dog left irresponsibly unchained by his "keepers".

But he was 17: nine days short of adulthood, still himself under the legal protection of the Children Act and modern presumptions which

condemn once-common parental disciplines as abuses, breaches of children's rights. Anyone dealing with young Axel would have needed a DBS check; he couldn't yet vote, get a tattoo or a lottery ticket.

We have gradually extended childhood to assume a long vulnerability without responsibility: middle-class parents openly tremble at the idea of teenagers suffering exam stress or having to do their own laundry at university. Yet the physical reality of a grown boy-child is formidable. The Rudakubana parents lived for years in fear, but when their son kicked his father in the groin and poured cooking oil over his head in 2021 the incident would, as he was under 16, have been

Axel was caught with a knife but was merely taken home by police

in social-work language "viewed through the lens of child protection".

A well-intentioned social construct of long childhood and family privacy, alongside familiar shortages of resources and policing, left father, mother and disabled brother helpless. Both parents worked and went to church; Mr Rudakubana paid for private counselling sessions for his son, took parenting lessons in

2020 and repeatedly contacted social services. Grilled at the inquiry, he protested: "I have not stopped social workers, in fact it's me who called them in the house. Each time they came, it's me who had called them." Different agencies "knew enough", he said, but didn't help. When at 15 Axel was caught with a knife he was merely taken home by police, who "gave advice to his mother regarding securing knives in the home".

In that home, fear ruled. Challenged on why his 17-year-old watched internet horrors the father said that if he banned it, "I wouldn't have been able to manage his destructive behaviour". His isolated anger and refusal to wash, his chaotic bedroom and boxes of weapons bought online filled the house with dread. When the desperate father spoke of making him live elsewhere the boy replied that if he did, he'd come back and kill him.

Public services did not serve that family well: not social workers, a youth offending team, police, a pupil referral unit, Prevent or a dismissive "risk and care plan" written six days before the Southport attack. Enrolled at a school for children with autism Axel barely turned up, and its attempt at a welfare check met so much red tape that the safeguarding lead observed that short of breaking in, she couldn't find a way even to

see him. Official "risk thresholds" weren't met and the only psychiatrist who actually saw him never read his full medical notes.

But moral blame is laid on the parents as if their strong, angry child was an XL bully they should have chained up. In this case both of them were scared, but students of femicide report plenty of son-to-mother violence. Although partners and ex-partners are the most frequent killers of women, more die at the hands of

Rudakubana referred to his son's 'mental pain' and loneliness

their own son than of a stranger, and many live with danger. One woman, attacked for years since her son was 12, was rebuked after calling the police 60 times. "You're told to sit and watch an hour of TV with them and show that you still love them."

Child assaults, most commonly on mothers by boys, are far from rare but, as one researcher observed, they meet little specialised or statutory support. Any such intervention would certainly have to be expert, and sometimes willing to defy parental instinct. It was moving that Alphonse Rudakubana referred to his son's "mental pain" and loneliness: the boy was deranged and

brutal but he was also unhappy. In cases of violence against mothers (often single and undefended) that irrationally desperate wish for your child never to be unhappy or thwarted can extend the dangerous situation longer than is safe.

Interestingly, violent stepsons and adoptees are less likely to get as far as murder: one researcher suggests that it's biological mothers who find it hardest to close the door: "Mums are the last person to have your back." Rather they blame bad company, gang influence, drugs (more than likely) or simply themselves.

Belief in the sacred rights of childhood should not make us optimistically idle, because when young-male violence erupts it imperils not only family but all of us. Society has both a right and a duty to step in. Yet, again and again come stories of beleaguered families offered only soft, leaflet-borne parenting advice. One Durham University sociologist, Nikki Rutter, calls it a culture of "silence and shame" and points out that without a statutory duty, services easily step away.

But why should respect for childhood and family privacy blind us to real danger? It takes a village to raise a child, and sometimes it takes state, law and community to control one. Blaming parents is too easy.

Letters to the Editor



The Reeves effect

Sir, Your leading article "Workers' Pay" (Nov 8) flags rising domestic uncertainty as a result of Rachel Reeves's tax and economic policies. Even more striking is the negative response of international investors. Forget the UK borrowing costs that Reeves keeps monitoring. The latest OECD data on foreign direct investment (FDI) inward flows, as an authoritative measure of robust investment commitment to the UK, are very telling. FDI inflows were negative in the first half of 2024, arguably because investors got fed up with the non-stop infighting in the Tory party. Since Labour came into power, however, FDI inflows have followed a rollercoaster pattern: these turned extremely negative in late 2024 before recovering their losses in early 2025 and then losing their steam again in mid-2025. The blame lies with Reeves and her policies.

Professor Costas Milas
Management School, University of Liverpool

Sir, In all the clamour about non-doms and the rich fleeing the UK's tax regime, the most important leavers have been ignored. They are the young British entrepreneurs and wealth creators who sadly see no future for them in this country. They may not have fortunes today, but even if there's only one budding Elon Musk among them, the potential revenue lost to the Exchequer is alarming.

Lord Lloyd Webber
London

Sir, As I picked up my folded Times from the mat on Saturday, my joy was beyond measure to read your headline: "Reeves set to announce retirement". Imagine how cruelly my happiness was shattered to unfold your paper and read underneath the words "savings raid".

Vanessa Travers
Epsom, Surrey

Prayer monument

Sir, Regarding your report on the construction of the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer, which will be the UK's largest Christian monument at 51m tall (news, Nov 8), the last thing we need is another gigantic landmark cluttering the countryside. If there was a genuine desire to promote the Christian faith, the £40 million raised for the project near Birmingham could have been far better spent supporting the church's mission.

Colin Marsh
Gillingham, Dorset

Corrections and clarifications

ipso. Regulated The Times takes complaints about editorial content seriously. We are committed to abiding by the Independent Press Standards Organisation ("IPSO") rules and regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces. Requests for corrections or clarifications should be sent by email to feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to Feedback, The Times, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

BBC bias and Trump's 'fake news' fury

Sir, On July 14, 1940, at the height of the Battle of Britain, the BBC radio reporter Charles Gardner was sent to cover an aerial dogfight over the white cliffs of Dover. He was criticised at the time because his excitable commentary at seeing a German Messerschmitt being shot down was judged to be inappropriate. His job was to report, not to comment. Eighty-five years later, Martine Croxall's reprimand (news and letters, Nov 8) because her facial expression "indicated a particular viewpoint" appears on the face of it to follow that same reasoning, but it fails to recognise that whoever wrote the script that was thrust in front of her had deliberately chosen words which themselves undoubtedly "indicated a particular viewpoint". That put her between a rock and a hard place, because to repeat those words with a straight face would be to promote that viewpoint. Her instinctive and courageous decision not to violate her own integrity should be applauded.

Dan Lyon
Lytham St Annes, Lancs

Sir, In a world that accepts outright lying by many politicians and other prominent figures, I find it rather ironic that a BBC newsreader should be castigated for telling the truth.

Michael Matthews
Henley-on-Thames, Oxon

Sir, The responsibility in the BBC's eye-rolling affair surely lies with the person who drafted the autocue text. It is unacceptable that Martine Croxall has been censured. These ridiculous synonyms for women must cease. After all, are men ever referred to as "people with prostates"?

Jennifer Galton-Fenzi
Totnes, Devon

Sir, Those of us brought up on the BBC as the ultimate source of reliable live news from around the world are dismayed by its editorial decline. Its claim of impartiality has been dealt a blow, particularly by the revelations about misleading edits of Donald Trump's speech in Washington on January 6, 2021 ("Trump goes to war with BBC over 'fake news'", Nov 8).

Trust, once lost, is hard to recover and clearly reforms are required if confidence in the BBC is eventually to be restored.

Ronald Thwaites KC
Esher, Surrey

Sir, Your leading article highlighting the BBC's left-wing liberal bias ("Imbalancing Act", Nov 8) omitted one important aspect of the issue, namely, that anyone who owns a television in the UK is obliged by law to fund this bias through the licence fee. This is a matter that should be resolved as a matter of urgency.

Alec Gallagher
Potton, Beds

Sir, There are a number of bromides regularly delivered by newsreaders which would benefit from being accompanied by an eye-roll à la Martine Croxall. Top of my list would be: "The government was approached for comment, but no one was available."

Brian Eastly
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

Soldiers' salaries

Sir, I was shocked to see that the starting salary for a fully trained soldier in the UK is just £23,500 a year ("Navy wants wave of recruits for gap year", Nov 8). This is well below the minimum income standard, now estimated at around £28,500 — the amount needed for a person to afford a basic but acceptable standard of living. It is nothing short of disgraceful that the men and women who put their lives on the line for this country are paid less than what is considered the minimum for a decent life at home. We rightly expect courage, discipline, and sacrifice from our armed forces. The very least they should be able to expect in return is a living wage.

Denise Greenspan
Stoke Poges, Bucks

Lest we forget

Sir, Ann Treneman asks if poppies are purely performative (Notebook, Nov 8). Our MPs are elected to represent us and when appearing in public, and on television, they should visibly show respect for those who died for their country. They should also ensure that the poppies are worn properly and on the correct side, as David Lammy omitted to do when

given one in parliament last week. It smacks of being too busy to care.

Barbara Foster
South Barrow, Somerset

Justice failings

Sir, There was a time when the office of lord chancellor, now sadly diminished into justice secretary, was held by men of distinction, of eminence, authority and repute, who discharged their responsibilities with integrity to ensure that the legal system — which is, after all, the foundation of our country — was conscientiously administered with candour and dignity. That age appears to have departed. Decaying courts are underused, the part-time judiciary is kept idle, criminals come late or never to trial, and it is now apparent that our jails have become ill-administered sieves, wrongly discharging potentially dangerous prisoners in substantial numbers, which puts the public in peril. The justice secretary must appreciate the simple but vital principle of ministerial responsibility. Where there is such gross failure, the person in charge should resign, not bluster, evade and prevaricate.

His Honour Charles Harris KC
President of the Council of Her Majesty's Circuit Judges 2010

Homeless crisis

Sir, Research published today demonstrates the urgent need for this government to get a grip on rising homelessness across England. The charity Crisis has found that nearly 300,000 families and individuals are now experiencing the worst forms of homelessness. Many are sleeping in hostels or cars, or on sofas. Parents are moving with their children from one unsuitable B&B to the next. More than 15,000 people are sleeping rough, exposed to the elements and at significant risk of violence and abuse.

In its election manifesto last year, the Labour Party promised a major cross-government strategy aimed at ending homelessness. After much anticipation, we understand this strategy could finally be published in the next few weeks. To make the difference required, it will need to carry the prime minister's support, prioritise the building of social homes, and restore housing benefit so people can keep their homes.

Paula Barker MP, Labour
Bob Blackman MP, Conservative
Layla Moran MP, Liberal Democrat
Ellie Chowns MP, Green Party

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited.

NIGHTMARE ON WATERLOO BRIDGE

FROM THE TIMES NOVEMBER 10, 1925

The report made by Sir Edwin Lutyns upon the artistic effect of the proposed scheme for widening Waterloo Bridge, in which he declared that the bridge must eventually be rebuilt, was the subject of comment yesterday. Those engineers who have fought the battle of the bridge see in the appeal to the eminent architect a sign that the London County Council concede the point that the bridge should be preserved. The suggestions of suspended bridges for foot passengers and vehicular traffic are described as fantastic.

Sir Reginald Blomfield, in a letter to The Times to-day, says the prospects opened up by this report are indeed alarming. The suggested gigantic arch in a single span above the existing bridge would have the effect of some hideous nightmare. Sir Reginald Blomfield suggests that the solution of the problem will be found not in the destruction or mutilation of Waterloo Bridge, but in a new bridge at Charing Cross.

Mr Dalrymple-Hay, who prepared a report at the request of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in which he set forth a scheme for the replacement of the existing timber foundations of the piers by solid concrete, said yesterday that the proposal of a suspended vehicular bridge above the present structure struck him as a most remarkable one. As a layman he felt sure that although it might be architecturally sound, it was a thing the public would not stand for one

moment. It would involve the carrying of the elevated structure and suspension cables right above the buildings, and somewhere or other those cables would have to come down to form an anchorage at each end. Where those anchorages were to be did not seem quite clear. The cost of an overhead structure of that kind would be colossal.

"In my view," said Mr Dalrymple-Hay, "the strengthening of the foundations of the piers is a simple engineering proposition. If that were done, the work could be carried out in a less costly manner than by any other proposal that has yet been made. In fact, the bridge, when strengthened in the way I proposed in my report to the Society, would be a stronger structure than it has ever been, and would, in my opinion, last for all time."

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Net zero targets

Sir, Sir Dieter Helm is right to highlight the costs of the shift to renewable energy, but I disagree with his points on international climate policy ("The Cops have failed", Nov 8). He bemoans the UK's dash for net zero emissions but demands an even tougher net zero goal that includes imported carbon. He advises against a "top-down legally binding global treaty", but that goal is not on the Cop30 agenda; it died in Copenhagen in 2009. He blames international climate diplomacy for failing to save the planet, but his alternative, a bottom-up coalition of unilateralist countries, is hardly more promising as three of the largest emitters — China, Russia and the US — continue to push fossil fuels. Where Helm is right is that polluters must pay, and that politicians should be honest about the costs of the net zero transition. But this transition also comes with huge benefits — a greener economy, climate stability, and a healthier environment — and international co-operation is needed if we are to turn this greener future into reality.

Robert Falkner
Professor of international relations, London School of Economics

RIP with the VIPs

Sir, Giles Coren warns that the wealthy are able to buy prime spots in famous cemeteries (comment, Nov 8). The consequences of this were brought brutally home when my pilgrimage to Marilyn Monroe's grave in Westwood cemetery, Los Angeles, led to the chilling discovery that Hugh Hefner had bought the adjacent crypt for \$75,000 in 1992.

Stephen Pound
London, W7

Religious education

Sir, It is good to see that religious education is now to be in the national curriculum (letters, Nov 5-8). It's been a long time coming, but it is a clear recognition of the importance of this subject in developing knowledge and understanding of world cultures, and also its contribution to moral reasoning and critical thinking. As the subject faces a rebranding as "religion and worldviews", I hope that does not lead to a watered down approach to religious literacy and that more teaching time is allocated so we can meet the new curriculum objectives.

Christine Crossley
Teacher of religion studies; Chipping Norton, Oxon

Clean-up classes

Sir, Sebastian Cox (letter, Nov 8) should not have been surprised by the lack of litter in Japan. Most Japanese schools observe a daily *soji* no *jikan* (cleaning time), during which pupils and teachers spend 10 to 20 minutes sweeping classrooms, wiping desks, mopping floors and cleaning toilets, with duties rotating. No doubt this creates lasting habits. At a time of straitened budgets, British schools might consider doing the same.

David Osmond
Barnoldby le Beck, Lincs

Sir, Your letter on littering reminded me of my son at school once seeing the headmaster stoop to pick up a discarded cigarette end. Ever the gentleman, my son exclaimed: "Oh no, Sir, have one of mine." He did not win the form prize that year.

Paul Worsley KC
Scarborough, N Yorks

Daily Universal Register

UK: Booker prize winner is announced.
Brazil: Cop30 UN climate conference begins in Belem, until November 21.
Egypt: Parliamentary elections are held.

Nature notes



In winter, our resident chaffinches are joined by many more, which arrive from Scandinavia for the season.

However, in many parts of the UK, these visiting flocks are not an equal mixture of the sexes due to a phenomenon known as differential migration. The chaffinch's Latin name, *Fringilla coelebs*, means "bachelor finch": the naturalist Carl Linnaeus had noticed that in Sweden the females seemed to disappear over winter, leaving males behind. In fact, some males do migrate, but the females will travel further; males remain closer to home, the better to claim a breeding territory in spring. Here, wintering chaffinches in the West Country, Ireland and Wales are usually disproportionately female, whereas flocks in eastern areas tend to include more males.

MELISSA HARRISON

Birthdays today



Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, pictured, chief of the Defence Staff (2021-Sep 2025), 60; Ajay Banga, president, World Bank Group, 66; Hugh Bonneville, actor, *Notting Hill* (1999),

Downton Abbey (2010-25), 62; Deborah Cameron, Rupert Murdoch professor of language and communication, Worcester College, University of Oxford, 67; Baroness (Ruth) Davidson of Lundin Links, leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party in the Scottish parliament (2020-21), 47; Taron Egerton, actor, the Kingsman film series, *Rocketman* (2019), 36; Roland Emmerich, film-maker, *Independence Day* (1996), 70; Lord (Graham) Evans of Rainow, Conservative MP for Weaver Vale (2010-17), 62; David Flood, music director, organist and master of the choristers, Canterbury Cathedral (1988-2020), 70; Vicky Fox, chief executive, UK Supreme Court and judicial committee of the Privy Council, 57; Neil Gaiman, author, The Sandman comic book series, and creator of TV series *Good Omens* (2019-23, based on the 1990 novel), 65; Prof Martin Green, chief executive, Care England (care services charity), 66; George Herbert, Earl of Carnarvon, owner of Highclere Castle, 69; Eddie Irvine, Formula One racing driver (1993-2002), 60; Jens Lehmann, goalkeeper, Arsenal (2003-08, 2011) and Germany (1998-2008), 56; Horacio Pagani, founder of Pagani Automobili (supercar company), 70; Jon Rahm, golfer, winner of the US Open (2021) and the Masters (2023), 31; Sir Tim Rice, lyricist, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970), *The Lion King* (1994), 81; Baroness (Maeve) Sherlock, minister for Lords (Department for Work and Pensions), vice-president of the Bible Society and priest vicar, Westminster Abbey, 65; Jean-Marie Tritant, chief executive, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (including Westfield shopping centres), 58.

On this day

In 1969 the US children's television series *Sesame Street* was broadcast for the first time. It is now shown in 150 countries.

The last word

"Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves." Marie Curie, Nobel prizewinning physicist and chemist, quoted in *Madame Curie: A Biography* (1937)



Striking Recklessness

Yet again the BMA's junior doctors are preparing to walk out. Ministers must make clear there is neither money nor public support for their extravagant demands

Given the alacrity with which the British Medical Association resorts to industrial action, strikes have become a fixture of the NHS calendar. Last week the BMA announced that, after stalled negotiations, the next walkouts by its junior doctors (who now prefer to be called resident doctors) will last five days, beginning on November 14. This will be the 13th wave of strikes in a protracted bout of industrial action that has inflicted needless suffering on patients and alienated the public.

Just as wearily familiar as the strikes themselves are the baleful consequences they bring. Unending industrial action has stymied efforts to tackle the catastrophic post-Covid treatment backlog. A million appointments and operations have been cancelled over the 49 days of industrial action that have taken place over the past two years. Ipsos polling at the end of the last walkout, in July, indicated that public sympathy for the doctors' cause had, unsurprisingly, collapsed from a healthy majority to 26 per cent. Wes Streeting, the health secretary, has rightly emphasised that the country will not be "held to ransom" by the pay demands of doctors. He must stand firm and refuse to meet these extravagant demands.

A particularly galling feature of the coming action is that it is predicated on the doctors' wish that their real wage be restored to pre-2008 levels. Against a backdrop of soaring public debt, an oncoming budget all but certain to include hikes to headline taxation and a long-running context in which public sector wages across the board have stagnated since the 2008 crash, this agenda is nothing but a self-involved fantasy. Resident doctors have secured some of the most generous public sector pay awards for the past two years in a row: a 5.4 per cent uplift this year on top of the 22 per cent increase they won after agreeing to end strikes last year. In clamouring for more, they are losing touch with reality.

In the BMA's recent negotiations with the government, Mr Streeting tabled a wholly reasonable set of reforms. Offers to waive fees for mandatory professional exams and membership fees for the medical royal colleges, amounting to thousands of pounds, were proposed. Welcome changes to increase the number of specialist training places and to give priority to British-trained doctors were also in the offering. One obvious and counter-productive effect of more strikes will be to undermine the government's capacity to fund these generous measures.

The strike will cripple the health service just as it is preparing to deal with an unusually virulent flu strain. Influenza cases are already several times higher than normal and hospital admissions were up by 60 per cent at the end of last month. Necessary contingencies, on top of another strike, will inevitably exacerbate structural weaknesses in the NHS. These, too, are glaring. A report published by the Health Foundation last week revealed that the cumulative effects of waste and inefficiency in the NHS, largely accrued after the pandemic, have resulted in a "lost decade of productivity growth". According to the Office for National Statistics, the service's productivity in 2024 was 8 per cent below that in 2019. One important drag factor is underinvestment in capital infrastructure, which competes with the BMA's insatiable demands.

Given its track record of ruthlessly pursuing the unreasonable cause of unilateral pay restoration, whatever the consequences for patients, there is little hope that the BMA will think again. But Labour must not buckle to the union's demands, despite the considerable damage that walkouts will cause. When it comes to determining the best and fairest use of public money, doctor does not, unfortunately, know best.

Bang for Buck

Britain's defence budget is too small and much of it is simply wasted by the MoD

There were some knowing chuckles when the Trump administration rebranded America's Department of Defense as the Department of War. But President Trump and his war secretary, Pete Hegseth, have a point. Like its counterpart in the United States, the job of Britain's Ministry of Defence is to ensure this country's armed forces can prevail in a conflict with a peer adversary if it breaks out tomorrow. That means being able to mete out extreme violence for a prolonged period. As General George Patton, refashioning a British war poem into more earthy language, told his men: "No dumb bastard ever won a war by going out and dying for his country. He won it by making the other dumb bastard die for his country."

The MoD has the simplest mission statement in Whitehall. Or should have. Yet among the veterans marching past its vast Main Building in Whitehall yesterday to pay their respects at the Cenotaph there were plenty who could attest to its chronic failure to provide them with the tools for the job. Procurement failures are as old as the armed forces themselves. But the MoD of today has refined dysfunction into an art.

Yesterday, before he attended the Remembrance Sunday wreath-laying ceremony in his capacity as the new chief of the defence staff (CDS), the country's most senior officer, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton spoke to the BBC. Sir Richard is known as the "money guy" in defence circles, an accomplished Whitehall warrior who can read a spreadsheet. In his interview he emphasised the need to refashion Britain's armed forces to mirror modern reality. Drawing on experience in Ukraine, he said the country needed to invest heavily in drones, cyber and especially space. "We can't be sentimental about capabilities that we have today that might not be relevant in the future," he warned. "That might require us to make some difficult choices as we go forward."

That sounded like a warning. The problem is that the government is talking big on defence but failing to provide the funds needed to develop new systems and at the same time fill the holes that keep appearing in those MoD spreadsheets. Some £18 billion extra is being spent on defence up to 2027, taking the defence budget to 2.7 per cent of GDP. But if the experience of Boris Johnson's last

one-off defence splurge is anything to go by, much of that will be gobbled up by existing liabilities. The MoD is notorious for failing to deliver on projects, spreading scarce funds across too many systems, some of which then get delayed to make emergency savings, costing more money in the end. Botched purchases are everywhere in evidence. And added to these now wearily familiar woes is the huge and unexpected bill for resettling Afghans forced to flee to Britain after their identities were betrayed in an MoD data fiasco.

Sir Richard's predecessor as CDS, Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, is now free in retirement to tell the truth. He says senior civil service roles in Main Building have soared by 85 per cent since 2018. These bureaucrats prioritise process over outcomes and never pay the price for failure. Until the penpushers are culled this malaise will continue. The government is skimping on defence: Britain should be spending 3 per cent of GDP now. But until the MoD remembers what it is for, giving warfighters the means to win, it will be vulnerable to those who argue that a bigger defence budget simply means throwing good money after bad.

Volume Business

If choosing your next book is a bind, a Mayfair bookshop will save you the trouble

Bookshops are beautiful things, places of infinite possibility. Browsing on a rainy afternoon is such sweet bliss, the hurly-burly of the outside world for a moment stilled as shelves high and low are inspected at a leisurely pace for the perfect fireside companion. The more cosy, the more dusty, the more labyrinthine, the better. The bookstore of bibliophile dreams is a warren, deliberately chaotic, where the voice instinctively descends to a whisper and readers secrete themselves in corners, escaping to other worlds. There is another view, however: of the bookshop as an overwhelming warehouse of print, mocking one lifetime.

Nicky Dunne's mission is to make things a little easier for those who find themselves so inundated with choice that making one becomes nigh impossible. Mr Dunne is the chairman of Heywood Hill, a bookshop on Curzon Street in London that was a favourite of the late Queen. Opened in 1936, it was described by Evelyn Waugh as the "centre for all that was left of fashionable and intellectual London". If this sounds a little intimidating, Mr Dunne doesn't want it to be. He offers not only a subscription delivery service for readers around the world but a team of impossibly well-read staff who will choose your titles for you.

Of course, this being Mayfair, the top end of this bespoke service does not come cheap. Costing £1,200, it is called the Tailored Quarterly and promises 40 hardbacks over a year selected by booksellers, informed by a consultation with the reader. Mr Dunne stresses that the consultation is not an inquisition but a gentle teasing out of tastes. There are cheaper subscriptions, down to £190.

Purists may deride this as the literary equivalent of a wine club, a curated cop-out that leaves the thinking to someone else. This is too harsh. Better, surely, for the busy and bamboozled to have their next read chosen by a human, not an algorithm.

World

Hamas renegades trapped in tunnels 'won't surrender'

Israel

Gabrielle Weiniger Tel Aviv

A group of renegade Hamas fighters are holed up in tunnels under Israeli-held territory in southern Gaza, disobeying their commanders and potentially jeopardising the ceasefire.

About 150 fighters are disobeying Hamas's central command from behind the yellow line, which is controlled by Israeli troops, in at least two areas — the Jenina neighbourhood of Rafah and a region near Khan Yunis — according to a source involved with the US-led negotiations for the Gaza truce.

They have been responsible for the deaths of three Israeli soldiers since the ceasefire came into effect and are said to be frustrated that they have been abandoned by their leadership.

On Sunday, Hamas called on mediators to "find a solution", adding that none of the renegade fighters would surrender. "The enemy must know that the concept of surrender and handing oneself over does not exist in the dictionary of the Al-Qassam Brigades," the group said on Telegram, referring to the military wing of Hamas.

There is very little communication between Hamas central command and the militants, who have stayed underground in the tunnels since the Israeli takeover of Rafah began in May last year. Israel Defence Forces (IDF) troops did not venture into the tunnels as they feared endangering hostages.

The US has made a plan to guarantee the renegades' safe passage and avoid confrontation with IDF troops. Under the plan, the fighters would hand over their weapons to a mediating country and return to Gazan territory outside Israeli control. The tunnels would then be destroyed.



The remains of Hadar Goldin, a soldier who was taken in 2014, were returned

As negotiations continue, Hamas has returned the remains of Lieutenant Hadar Goldin, an IDF reconnaissance officer who was killed in 2014. Israel confirmed that the remains were his.

Michael Milshtein, an Israeli analyst and former military intelligence officer, said: "It's a mystery if ... there was a behind-the-scenes deal that enabled Hamas and Israel to promote the return of Hadar Goldin's body, and what the price for that was. But I assess that there was a deal to return the 100 or 200 [Hamas militants]."

Goldin's return is a milestone for the Israelis, who have a policy to leave no person behind. Tens of thousands of Israelis protested on Saturday night for the return of the bodies of the five remaining hostages. Under the ceasefire, Hamas is obliged to return all the hostages and Israel must send back the bodies of Palestinians it has held since the start of the war, in October 2023.

The remains of another hostage,

Lior Rudaeff, were handed over via the Red Cross on Friday night. He will be buried on Monday.

Twenty living and 23 dead hostages have been returned to Israel since fighting stopped. Israel must return the remains of 360 militants it holds in a facility, and has so far returned 300, many of whom remain unidentified.

The office of the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, said: "We said at the start of the war that we would bring back all of the hostages." Of the 255 people taken, it said — "including four who were taken hostage previously" — 250 had been returned.

The trapped fighters are not the only threat to the ceasefire. Israel has shot and killed several Palestinians crossing west of the demarcation line and carried out airstrikes against "terrorist infrastructure". On Sunday, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said that 241 people had been killed and 619 wounded during the ceasefire.

Under the American plan, Israel, which holds 50 per cent of the territory at present, will withdraw further when an international stabilisation force takes over. Last week President Trump said this would happen "very soon".

Israel has ruled out Turkish armed forces operating in Gaza as part of the multinational force. "There will be no Turkish boots on the ground," a spokeswoman reiterated yesterday.

Turkey has criticised Israel's conduct in Gaza, and issued arrest warrants over the weekend for more than 30 leaders, including Netanyahu.

It is not yet clear who will fund the mission or whether Hamas will disarm. Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, arrived in Israel last night for talks on implementing the plan. He is expected to meet Netanyahu today, a source said.

October 7 'supporter' wanted by police

Belgium

Bruno Waterfield Brussels

Belgian police are investigating a report that a Hamas supporter who was present at the October 7 attacks in Israel lives in Brussels and travels widely in Europe, attending pro-Palestinian demonstrations.

According to the Jewish Information and Documentation Centre (JID) in Belgium, footage has shown Mohanad al-Khatib, who claims to be a journalist, celebrating with Hamas fighters as the massacre of 1,200 Israelis took place.

Khatib appears to have entered the passport-free Schengen travel zone without security checks and has been seen at demonstrations in Amsterdam, Ghent and Brussels.

Ralph Pais, vice-chair of the JID, said: "It is incomprehensible that volunteers and citizens could identify this man

through open sources while our security services apparently never noticed him.

"Anyone in Europe who wants to protect synagogues, schools, churches, metros or events has every interest in ensuring that terrorists do not enter



Mohanad al-Khatib was present during the October 7 attacks on Israel

unnoticed. This is not a Jewish problem, but a European problem."

Social media videos appear to show Khatib walking among Hamas fighters as they entered Israel during the October 7 attacks in 2023.

In one video, he appears joyful and

excited as the massacre in villages and kibbutzim is carried out. "Come on, bring it on. Go go go. God bless. God bless. How great is God," a voice is heard shouting. There is no evidence that Khatib participated in the attacks.

A photograph shows him posing with Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas leader who was assassinated by Israel in Tehran on July 31, 2024.

Pais said: "The material clearly shows that he filmed the violence, applauded it and openly expresses support for Hamas, rocket attacks and martyrdom."

Khatib claims to be a journalist and a photographer and often poses wearing a press vest and carrying a camera in Gaza. According to the JID, "he doesn't seem to write for any newspaper" and "mainly uploads propaganda videos to Instagram". Khatib has not responded to the report.



Let the games begin A performance before the opening ceremony of China's 15th

AI firm hopes its drones

Tom Kington

A jet-powered drone that can take off vertically like a rocket from the back of a lorry, fly more than 1,000 miles, drop bombs from its weapons bay and head home to slot back into its launcher is about to revolutionise air warfare, its makers have claimed.

The war in Ukraine has proved this is the age of the drone, as the skies fill with small kamikaze versions or propeller-driven drones firing a few missiles.

The American-built X-Bat, which will test-fly next year, is touted as the next step. It will carry nearly the same

amount of missiles and bombs as the larger, manned F-35 fighter, but can fly from almost anywhere.

Driven by an AI program that was used in trials by an unmanned fighter to take on and beat a piloted jet in a dog-fight, it is designed to work alongside fighters like the F-35, or replace them.

Armor Harris, the senior vice-president at Shield AI which created the X-Bat, said: "In the Ukraine-Russia conflict, strategic bombers [on runways] are being taken out by quad-copters which cost a couple of hundred dollars. In Pacific war games we lose more aircraft on the ground to

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How a royal palace rose at last from the ruins of 1945
Page 29



National Games in Guangzhou yesterday. The games will be held in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau until November 21

will compete with F-35 fighter jets

long-range missiles which are used by Russia and China.”

The drone's foldable wings and vertical storage mean it takes up a third of the room required by an F-35, so 80 of them could fit on the UK's new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

With no pressurised pilot cabin slowing it down, it has double the range of an F-35 and, at about \$27 million, costs about a quarter of the price of the US fighter the UK is flying.

If the planned vertical landing of the X-Bat into its launcher recalls last year's landing of Elon Musk's Starship vehicle into its launch tower, it is no coinci-

dence. Before joining Shield AI, Harris worked with Musk at SpaceX and had a role in the landing there. The rocket engineer, 32, also helped to ensure Musk's Starlink satellite communication service was delivered to Ukraine as it fought the Russian invasion in 2022.

His career demonstrates how Silicon Valley is moving into warfare, which is why a firm like Shield AI is competing with Lockheed Martin, the builder of the F-35.

Justin Bronk, a researcher at the UK think tank RUSI, said that the X-Bat could face the same problems that have stumped aircraft makers for decades.

He said: “Almost all combat aircraft end up being significantly heavier by the time they enter service than early design studies predicted. I personally remain somewhat sceptical that X-Bat will achieve the promised 1,000-nautical-mile combat radius with a full load of weapons, but am very happy to be proven wrong.”

Another question is what happens when the other side are also using unpiloted drones like the X-Bat.

Harris said: “The winner of a future conflict between autonomous systems will be the one who can update their software fastest.”

Zelensky pins power cuts on ex-energy boss

Ukraine

Maxim Tucker Kyiv

President Zelensky has blamed the former head of the Ukrainian state energy company for the extraordinary damage being done to the country's power grid.

Although Russia is responsible for attacks on the grid, there is a growing domestic row as Ukraine faces its fourth winter of war about why its infrastructure is not better protected.

Large sections of Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities lost power on Saturday after one of the heaviest missile and drone attacks of the war, which killed 11 civilians and injured more than 40. In one night, President Putin's forces launched 458 long-range drones and 45 missiles, battering infrastructure across the country. Kyiv was without power again last night.

Centrenerg, one of the biggest energy suppliers, said four of its main power stations were unable to produce electricity as they were hit by Russian ballistic missiles and drones. The power stations had only recently been repaired after strikes in 2024. Ukraine has imposed rolling power cuts to ease pressure on the grid, raising questions about why many of its substations are unfortified and a tender for distributed power generation has stalled.

On Friday, Zelensky sought to shift blame for the power cuts on to Volodymyr Kudrytsky, former head of the state grid operator Ukrenergo. “He led a large system that was supposed to ensure the security of our energy sector,” Zelensky said. “He was obliged to do this, and he did not.”

Kudrytsky, who was dismissed last year, was arrested a fortnight ago and has been charged with “large-scale fraud, abuse of office, and money laundering”. He denies the charges and has been released on bail.

Anti-corruption campaigners have said that Kudrytsky was an ally in the fight against graft and is being targeted for speaking out.

Daria Kaleniuk, executive director of the Ukrainian Anti-Corruption Action Centre, said: “This is pure political persecution. He was explaining how and why the authorities failed to prepare critical infrastructure for new attacks from Russia.”

Kudrytsky said that although Ukrenergo had started fortifying transformers against drone strikes in 2023, other state energy companies had delayed the work. He asked: “Why did Energoatom, Centrenerg, distribution operators, heating plants and Ukrainian Railways only start building protection against Shahed drones in late 2024 and 2025?”

He also pointed to a critical tender for new generation that

was halted in April, and asked why it had not been revived.

Kudrytsky is accused of signing a \$325,000 contract in 2018 under which a contractor was paid by Ukrenergo to build fences at substations. When the contractor did not do the work, the bank that underwrote the contract returned the money to Ukrenergo. No evidence of Kudrytsky's personal enrichment has been presented.

In July, Zelensky sacked the energy minister, Herman Halushchenko, who had been called “the worst energy minister in Ukraine's history” by anti-corruption campaigners. His replacement, Svitlana Hrynychuk, told The Times in Kyiv: “In previous years there were massive missile barrages — different types of missiles. Now we have hundreds of drones almost every night.”

According to the US Energy Information Administration, Russian airstrikes have disrupted 30 gigawatts of capacity — roughly half of Ukraine's pre-war generation. The energy ministry has drafted plans for smaller, decentralised power plants that are easier to conceal, harder to hit and less catastrophic when damaged, but progress has been slow.

Hrynychuk said: “We have already implemented many gas turbine projects — and distributed energy for us means not just gas turbines, but also solar, wind, storage, and small-scale generation. In 2025 alone, we've added 647 megawatts and plan at least 200 more by year's end. Last year we installed over 800 megawatts.”

Even so, these projects will replace less than 6 per cent of the capacity destroyed by Russia. Distribution has become a problem as the Kremlin shifts its attention from larger substations, many of which Ukraine has now protected, to smaller ones.

“It's very difficult to protect everything,” Hrynychuk said. “We protected the biggest objects because Russia didn't attack the smallest before, they just started to attack them this year.”

Critics have said that this switch should have been anticipated.

This weekend's attacks left much of Kyiv without power for ten hours. Businesses and wealthy Ukrainians have private generators and heavy duty batteries, but poor neighbourhoods are left without lights, heating and even running water.

Oksana Storozhko, 37, who runs a charity for people with disabilities, said: “There are families who lived in a house where everything was electric, and they couldn't even cook for their children. The fridges don't work and their food spoils.”

Russia's frozen assets are vital for Ukraine's fightback, Comment, page 22



Svitlana Hrynychuk, energy minister, is adding capacity

World

Rivals seeking cinematic supremacy try to reel in Egypt

Egypt

Magdy Samaan

For more than a century, no other Arab nation came close to Egypt's output or influence on the film industry. It became a crucial source of revenue and made the Egyptian dialect the most widely understood in the region.

The country's first feature film was made in 1927, though production of silent short films in Egypt dates back to the 1890s. However, its formula for success — a rich culture, the freedoms of a semi-liberal system and cosmopolitan societies in Cairo and Alexandria with links to the West — has begun to wear away under almost uninterrupted

military rule since 1952. Egypt is now struggling against, among other things, Saudi Arabia's push to claim the leading spot in regional cinema.

"We were raised as cinema lovers and directors on Egyptian cinema," said Abbas Fadel, an Iraqi director whose documentary *Tales of the Wounded Land* premiered at the El Gouna Film Festival (GFF) last month.

"Since the late 1980s, there has been a decline into commercialism, leaving a void in the Arab world," he said. "No one has filled that void yet."

The struggles have intensified since Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's rise in 2013, after the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood president, Mohamed Morsi. The

security agencies now intervene directly in film production, imposing political agendas and censorship that threaten the industry's survival.

Marianne Khoury, a director and producer, who curated the GFF, said: "Egyptian cinematic production is in a big crisis. The films are few."

Since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's ascent to power in 2017, Saudi Arabia has funnelled lavish investments into cultural initiatives, including the Riyadh Season and the Red Sea International Film Festival.

Egypt's unique blend cannot be replicated overnight, however. Fadel said: "Yes, Saudi Arabia can take the leading role in terms of funding. [But] the art it-

self remains Egyptian. Egypt has a profound cinematic heritage. I don't think Saudi Arabia can replace that."

Egypt is trying to rally its industry through the GFF and the Cairo International Film Festival, from November 12-21 at the Cairo Opera House.

The GFF was crowded with young film-makers seeking opportunities. Ahmed Malek, 28, made history as the first Egyptian to win best actor at the GFF, for *My Father's Scent*.

The actress Tarnim Hany, who is studying in London but returned for the festival, said the industry was rebounding. "It's in a good place compared to ten years ago. We're returning to raw, real-life storytelling."



A sausage dog's life Dachshunds at a gathering to celebrate Salchi Day — dachshund day — at Cerro Primo de Rivera park in Santiago, Chile, on Saturday

Group linked to al-Qaeda threatens to topple Mali junta

Mali

Jack Denton

A months-long siege of its capital city by an al-Qaeda affiliate threatens to topple the Malian junta and turn the nation into the first in Africa to be ruled by an Islamist terrorist group.

Jamat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) has paralysed the Malian economy with a fuel blockade that has prevented harvesting in several regions and forced the government to ration power, close schools and restrict civilian movement.

JNIM fighters have surrounded the capital, Bamako, isolating the regime that seized power in successive coups in 2020 and 2021. Having broken ties with former western military allies, including France, the former colonial power, the junta turned to Russian mercenaries to fight the jihadists.

Bakary Sambe, from the Timbuktu Institute think tank in Dakar, said "the Malian state no longer controls anything" within its territory and was "concentrating its forces around Bamako to secure the regime".

Foreign countries consider Bamako to be near breaking point. The American, British and French embassies have told their citizens to leave Mali, maintaining only essential staff.

The takeover of an entire country by an al-Qaeda affiliate is not out of the question, nor unprecedented. The Taliban retook Kabul in August 2021 and a former al-Qaeda affiliate, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, has effectively seized power in Syria since December 2024.

Nina Wilén, a director at Egmont, the Royal Institute for International Relations, in Belgium, wrote in a report: "Speculation is running wild about different scenarios. These include the fall of Bamako, a negotiated settlement between the jihadists and the regime and a military surge allowing the Malian authorities to break the blockade."

JNIM began blockading fuel bound for Bamako, which has a population of about three million, in early September, targeting convoys travelling from Senegal and Ivory Coast. The terrorist group set fire to more than 50 tankers on October 17 and attacked another big convoy on October 28, according to the



International Crisis Group (ICG). The non-profit organisation estimates that 200 tankers have reached Bamako each week since the start of the blockade, down from the usual 1,000.

"You take to the road with fear in your heart," Souleymane Traore, an Ivorian lorry driver, told the AFP news agency, adding that he had seen 52 burnt-out tankers on his last run back to Ivory Coast.

Analysts say that JNIM is trying to overthrow the Malian government. Another coup in Mali, or the collapse of the current regime, led by General Assimi Goita, would further destabilise

the Sahel region, allowing militant groups to expand their operations.

The Malian government has cracked down on dissent in its military ranks. Goita replaced the chief of staff of ground forces, the head of military security and the deputy chief of staff of the armed forces on October 22.

A popular revolt or coup appears more likely to end the regime in Bamako than an outright military assault by JNIM. The Islamist group, led by Iyad Ag Ghali, was formed in 2017 from the merger of disparate militants in the region and operates in seven countries across the Sahel and west Africa. It is estimated to have 8,000 operational members, according to the Turkish strategic studies think tank Orsam.

Wilén said: "A takeover by JNIM following armed attacks currently seems far-fetched."

Human Rights Watch has said that Islamist militants in Mali have "raped women and girls, imposed *zakat* [religious tax], and implemented sharia and punishments via courts that did not adhere to fair trial standards" in areas under their control.

Swiss Guard 'insults' Jews at the Vatican

Vatican City A member of the Swiss Guard is being investigated over allegations that he insulted two Jewish women attending a general audience at the Vatican.

Michal Govrin, an Israeli author and theatre director, said that she and another Jewish woman had been insulted by a member of the Holy See's military unit in a passageway leading to St Peter's Square.

"A Swiss Guard said '*les juifs*' [the Jews] in our direction with deep contempt. We looked at each other and were shocked," she told the Austrian Kathpress agency.

Govrin, whose mother was a Holocaust survivor, said she had confronted the guard, who denied making the insult. She accused him of lying and he made a spitting gesture "with clear contempt".

The alleged incident took place on October 29, when the Pope held an audience celebrating *Nostra aetate*, Pope Paul VI's ecumenical declaration in 1965 condemning antisemitism and recognising Jews' and Catholics' shared heritage.

"All my predecessors have condemned antisemitism with clear words," Leo said. "The church does not tolerate antisemitism and fights it."

Corporal Eliah Cinotti, the Swiss Guards' spokesman, told the Ansa news agency that "a contentious incident was reported" and an investigation had been launched.

Super typhoon strikes

Philippines More than a million people have fled their homes after Super Typhoon Fung-wong hit the eastern seaboard last night, killing at least two people. The storm, with a radius almost spanning the country, made landfall in Aurora province on the main island of Luzon only a week after more than 200 people were killed by Typhoon Kalmaegi.

Trump's G20 boycott

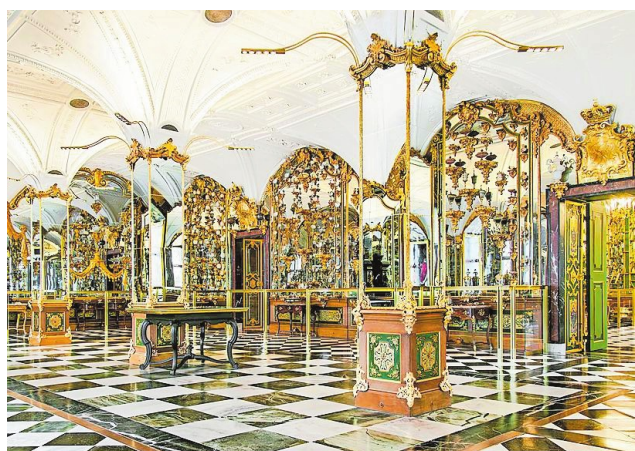
United States President Trump has said that no US government official will be at the G20 in South Africa this month because of "human rights abuses" there. The South African foreign ministry said the decision was "regrettable" and dismissed Trump's claim that white Afrikaners faced persecution. JD Vance had been expected to attend the summit.

Tennis star backlash

Italy The Wimbledon champion Jannik Sinner angered people in his native South Tyrol by saying he was "proud to be Italian". Cultural groups in the German-speaking region wrote to Sinner, 24, saying South Tyroleans risked "our uniqueness" by identifying as Italians. Sinner was defending his decision not to represent Italy in the Davis Cup finals this month.

Napoleon's jewel sale

Switzerland A diamond brooch worn by Napoleon Bonaparte is to be sold by Sotheby's in Geneva on Wednesday. The emperor pinned the piece to his bicorne hat on special occasions, but it was left in a baggage train that was bogged down in mud after the French were driven from Waterloo on June 18, 1815. It has an estimated value of £188,000.



How a royal palace rose at last from the ruins of 1945

From our correspondent

OLIVER MOODY
DRESDEN



In its heyday, the court of Saxony was among the most colourful and extravagant in northern Europe.

Maurice, the state's Machiavellian ruler in the mid-16th century, built a sprawling Italianate palace at his new capital in Dresden, covering the walls of its grand courtyard with frescos and reliefs that would not have been out of place in Medici Florence.

At the start of the 18th century, the Saxon king Augustus the Strong, a Rabelaisian figure who enjoyed catapulting foxes and badgers in his spare time and was rumoured to have fathered as many as 380 illegitimate children, filled its halls and vaults with exquisite porcelain and diamond-encrusted ceremonial knick-knacks. The palace would retain its splendour for almost 150 years.

Then came the firebombing of February 1945. In three days, the Royal Air Force and its American allies

obliterated much of Dresden, killing as many as 25,000 people and reducing the palace to a blackened shell.

It was only in 1985 that the socialist East German regime started restoring the complex to something resembling its past glory. Now, after four decades of meticulous toil and the reinvention of traditional crafts that had been lost for centuries, the €407 million project is finally nearing completion.

Today the state of Saxony will officially reopen Maurice's magnificent chapel. Upstairs, the builders are still tinkering with the finishing touches to the last two rooms. The final dust-sheets and power tools will be gone at the start of 2027.

Holger Krause, the architect in



The royal palace in Dresden was left to fall into ruin after the allied bombing

charge of the reconstruction, has dedicated 25 years of his life to the palace. He likens his job to that of a doctor patiently healing a critically injured patient who has slipped into a coma. "When you first arrived and smelt the decay in the building, it just made you miserable," he said.

After the war, as the authorities set about rebuilding the old city centre, the seat of the old Saxon monarchs was stranded in a political no man's land, too sentimentally valuable to demolish, but too costly and ideologically suspect to revive.

For 40 years, it was simply stabilised with a few slugs of concrete and then left to moulder, until trees started sprouting from the stonework. At last,

the cultural winds shifted and the East German cabinet approved the restoration. Room by room, wing by wing, the palace came back to life.

Each of these milestones has been celebrated as an event of national or even European significance.

When the Green Vault museum of the former monarchs' most valuable treasures was opened to the public in 2006, Angela Merkel, the chancellor, attended with President Putin of Russia, who had spent five years in Dresden as a spy for the KGB.

Krause and his team have had to use imagination as much as attention to detail. Often they have had little more than faded photographs, engravings or even written descriptions to go by.

Maurice's lavishly decorated courtyard was devastated by a fire in 1701 and its Renaissance ornamentation had to be largely reconstructed from a handful of old pictures. Most of the motifs needed to be etched by hand through two layers of plaster using an old Italian technique known as *sggraffito*.

The work on the chapel, based on a copperplate print from 1676, was even more ambitious. The vaulted roof had been made from sandstone ribs in a pattern of interlocking circles so unusual that the only surviving example is in Prague castle. The



masons had to rediscover the method, for the first time since the 16th century, through trial and error.

To get the bricks to stick together between the ribs, the renovators had to examine samples of the old mortar under a microscope and replicate its precise mixture of lime, milk protein and extremely fine sand.

Krause said that although this painstaking loyalty to the original had involved a great deal of time and energy, it had not only kept costs down but also turned Dresden into a leading centre of expertise in skills that have long been forgotten across the rest of Europe.

"It's often unthinkable to visitors from Scandinavia, America or even Austria — countries that have not been through the same devastation as Germany — that we would rebuild this palace so faithfully. They just can't understand it," he said. "But here it really means something."



Artisans have rediscovered lost techniques as they worked to restore the glory of chambers including the Hall of Treasures in the Green Vault, above left

Blow for residents as entire town is relocated into a wind tunnel

Sweden

Elizabeth Rushton

Town planners in Sweden have achieved an extraordinary feat: moving an entire town three miles eastwards.

For the past 21 years, Sweden has watched Kiruna, its northernmost settlement, gradually relocate to avoid the growing safety risks associated with iron ore mining at its original location.

However, the masterminds of the project have failed to account for a significant side effect: although the

town has moved only a short distance, its new location is up to 10C colder.

One resident likened the town's new centre to "a damn wind tunnel" in a report by the University of Gothenburg suggesting that several oversights by town planners were to blame for the problem. "Decision-makers did not optimise the design for the urban climate when they planned the city," Jennie Sjöholm, the author and a specialist in built heritage, said.

Sjöholm said the new town's position, in a depressed valley chosen for its

proximity to existing infrastructure, meant that cold air was easily trapped there, especially in winter.

Decisions about layout only made the situation worse. The town's narrow streets and grid layout have created strong wind tunnels, and high buildings in the centre block light from the low winter sun from reaching the ground.

Sjöholm said the role of urban planning in mitigating the harsh Arctic climate was well known, but "that knowledge was not fully used". Instead, planners focused on "adding value" to



the town with three shopping centres, a square and town hall.

The state-owned mining company LKAB, which runs the mine at Kiruna and is overseeing the relocation, has come in for criticism for other reasons, too. The indigenous Sami population has said that centuries-old reindeer migration routes are being disrupted.

However, the Swedish government has insisted on the need to preserve the mine and make the most of its resources, especially since rare earth minerals were discovered there in 2023.

World

Thanksgiving threatened as flights are cancelled

United States

Will Pavia New York

Commercial flights in the United States will slow "to a trickle" if the government shutdown continues, causing massive disruption for Thanksgiving, Sean Duffy, the transportation secretary, said yesterday.

More than 2,000 flights were cancelled over the weekend and 6,000 were delayed as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) began cutting back the number of flights permitted from large airports.

The cuts, rising from 4 per cent over the weekend to 10 per cent by Friday, were imposed as air traffic controllers, who are no longer being paid, steadily abandon their posts.

On Saturday, "18 of 22 controllers in Atlanta didn't show up", Duffy told CNN's *State of the Union*. He said that staffing issues were being reported all over the country as the shutdown reached its 40th day.

Many air traffic controllers had told him that "we can miss one paycheck" but almost none of them could afford to miss two and were obliged to find a side job to support

their families, he said. "They make less than \$100,000 a year and they live in a really expensive place ... It's very challenging."

Duffy said that Pete Hegseth, the war secretary, had offered to supply air traffic controllers from the military. Duffy was unsure if they could be deployed to civilian towers as "they're not certified in the airspace that we need them", he said. "But, if I can, I'm going to use them."

On Fox News, Duffy appeared to raise the possibility that a private donor could pay the salaries of controllers. "The president found a donor to pay the military," he said. "If we can find a way to pay air traffic controllers, we want to do that as well."

The shutdown began after Democrats refused to back a Republican plan to keep the government funded, demanding concessions on health-care subsidies that are about to expire.

Duffy said the cuts had been recommended by a safety team at the FAA, which warned of planes coming closer to each other in the skies and pilots complaining that controllers appeared stressed and generally less responsive.



Cambodia at 72 Phnom Penh celebrated the 72nd anniversary of Cambodian independence from French colonial rule yesterday

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White House given a Mar-a-Lago makeover

President Trump appears to be bringing his golden touch to Pennsylvania Avenue, writes **George Grylls**

When Donald Trump bought Mar-a-Lago in 1985, the historic Florida mansion had suffered decades of neglect.

The new owner was particularly concerned about the state of the lavatories. Gentlemen had to use a urinal trough, and the cubicles were fitted with plastic sliding doors.

Trump had a vision, however. He wanted to create sumptuous facilities with golden taps, marble floors and glittering chandeliers.

"He did add the gold and the chandeliers," said Tamara Peacock, 67, the Florida architect who oversaw the refurbishment. "I don't think I'd ever ordered gold plumbing."

As Trump forges ahead with his renovation of the White House, he has not concealed the garish decor he wants to recreate. This month, he proudly shared pictures of a new lavatory at the White House, complete with golden taps, marble floors and a glittering chandelier.

It is not the first time Trump has imported the Mar-a-Lago aesthetic to the White House. When Trump paved over the lawn of the Rose Garden this year, journalists noted that the striped yellow umbrellas installed on the patio resembled the poolside parasols at Mar-a-Lago. Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, said: "Yeah, I mean, they are literally the umbrellas."

When Trump demolished the east wing of the White House to make way for a \$300 million ballroom, critics likened the renderings of his planned

entertainment space to the Versailles-inspired banqueting hall he opened at Mar-a-Lago in 2005.

Peacock believes the White House is in good hands as it undergoes its biggest refurbishment in three quarters of a century. "I have a lot of confidence in him," she said. "He grew up with his dad as a builder, so he knows."

Mar-a-Lago was once America's most expensive home. Built in the 1920s for Marjorie Merriweather Post, a cereal magnate, the house is a gaudy blend of Moorish, Hispanic and Venetian architectural motifs.



Golden basins at Mar-a-Lago, a lavish style Trump is expected to replicate at the White House

It was recognised as a National Historic Landmark in 1980, when the listing said the estate embodied the "baronial way of life" enjoyed by Floridian plutocrats during the roaring twenties.

However, by the time Trump set about refurbishing it in the 1990s, the mansion was looking forlorn.

Trump was determined to restore the property once known as the winter White House to its former opulence, and hired Peacock to

oversee the construction.

Every Friday night he flew down from New York so he could stroll the grounds for two or three hours on Saturday morning, articulating his vision to Peacock. "He made every small decision," she said. Thanks to fire regulations, Trump was told he must install sprinklers. So he plated them with gold.

Trump insisted on the highest-quality materials, a fact donors paying for the construction of the White House ballroom probably ought to bear in mind.

"I've seen the headlines about how expensive it will be," Peacock said. "I will tell you, from a cost standpoint, he didn't cut corners. When I worked with him, he didn't say, 'Oh, get me prices on this and we'll decide.' It was, 'This is what it needs to be and we're just going to do it.'"

Although the relationship between architect and client is often bumpy, that between Trump and Peacock survived the stresses of the Mar-a-Lago redevelopment. "I remember a discussion at the house about whether he would ever run for president," Peacock said. "I remember him saying something like, 'Well, the country would have to be really in bad shape for me to do that.'"

There were missteps along the way. Trump admitted that his decision to match pink marble with yellow walls in one of the bathrooms had been a mistake. "He wasn't afraid to backpedal on a decision," Peacock said.

Despite his love for Mar-a-Lago, Trump has described the White House as his favourite building in the world. If there are any blunders during the construction work there, Peacock believes that the president has the architectural expertise to correct them.

"I would have some confidence that he's gonna make it better," she said. "It won't disappoint."

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Business

WORLD MARKETS (Friday's close. Change on the week)

FTSE 100

9,682.57 (-34.68) ▼



Dow Jones

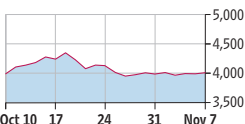
46,987.10 (-575.59) ▼



COMMODITIES

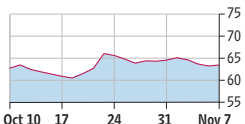
Gold

\$4,006.79 (+19.64) ▲



Brent crude (6pm)

\$63.30 (-1.37) ▼



CURRENCIES

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\$1.3167 (+0.0035) ▲



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Lazard predicts a wave of companies floating in London next year

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

The head of Lazard's investment banking arm in the UK is predicting a wave of large and mid-sized stock market debuts in London next year, as companies grow too big to stay in private equity hands and the fashion for Wall Street listings fades.

Cyrus Kapadia told The Times that London was "the natural destination" for a number of very large private equity owned businesses in the market

value range of more than \$10 billion. "Some of those private companies have now grown so large because of either having successive rounds of private equity money and/or continuation vehicles, that they are now too large — they're in the deca billions — they're too large to just go round and round in the private domain. And the only exit, if you like, or the principal exit, is an IPO."

He added: "We are aware of a number of very large potential IPOs and I imagine going into 2026 and onwards, we

are going to see a number of them listing. I think the London IPO market is going to be a beneficiary of this."

Kapadia gave no names, but very large companies seen as keen to consider initial public offerings include NMMC, the Uzbekistan gold miner, and Visma, the Norwegian software group, which Lazard advises. Visma was valued at €19 billion in a 2023 capital-raising and could be the biggest new IPO in years if it chooses London.

Revolut is reportedly considered

dual listings in London and New York, while Monzo is also seen as a candidate. The pan-European veterinary healthcare group IVC Evidensia is also mooted as a possible flotation candidate in the \$10 billion-plus category.

Among the smaller UK names, the bookshop chain Waterstones and the finance groups Oaknorth, Starling and Ebury are the subject of float speculation. Indurent, the warehouses group, is seen as another potential candidate.

London has suffered a dearth of IPOs

in recent years. Kapadia said the "fashion" for UK companies to seek listings in the US was now fading. "You hear it less and less. And the stats speak volumes, don't they?" he added, referring to research rebutting the myth that a move to the US automatically confers a valuation bump.

Lazard is one of the big advisers in larger company IPOs, last year advising on the flotation in Switzerland of Galderma, the skincare company now valued at about £33 billion.

AI will cut workforce, say bosses

Surveys reveal the threat to white-collar jobs

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

One in six employers expect artificial intelligence to reduce the size of their workforce over the next year, amid weak business confidence, according to new research.

In the latest sign of the threat to white-collar workers posed by AI, 62 per cent of those employers believed that clerical, junior managerial, professional or administrative roles were most likely to be lost.

The findings, before this month's budget, are in the latest labour market outlook survey of more than 2,000 employers by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the professional body for human resources. The challenge is greatest among large private sector companies, where 26 per cent expected headcount to fall. That compared with 17 per cent in the private sector overall and 20 per cent in the public sector.

Amazon, the American technology company, announced last month that it would be cutting its corporate headcount by 14,000, with Beth Galetti, vice-president of people experience and technology, saying generative AI "is the most transformative technology" the world has seen since the internet.

PwC, meanwhile, cut its global workforce by 5,600 in its 2025 fiscal year, which concluded on June 30, with the reduction including accountants and consultants. It was the first time since 2010, in the wake of the financial

crisis, that the Big Four professional services firm had reduced its global workforce. PwC spent almost \$1.5 billion in the year to June expanding its "AI capabilities".

Separate research by ManpowerGroup, which captures quarterly hiring intentions from more than 40,000 companies in 42 countries, found in September that the UK was expected to record one of the sharpest slowdowns in recruitment globally in the final quarter, faced with a "perfect storm of cost pressures, AI disruption and policy uncertainty" before the budget.

The CIPD said that the government needed to support people whose roles were most exposed to AI, particularly those in early-career or lower-level professional roles, and in industries including finance and insurance.

It said this meant avoiding further undermining of hiring in the budget and the Employment Rights Bill and making progress developing the government's growth and skills levy.

James Cockett, a senior labour market economist at the CIPD, said AI had "great potential for improving productivity and performance, but it also risks leaving many people behind".

A government spokesman said: "We're working with leading tech firms to train a fifth of our workforce in AI over the coming years and investing £187 million to bring digital and AI learning directly into classrooms and communities."

Artificial intelligence saves Treasury staff three hours a week, page 34



The industry could be facing a 40 per cent jump in its rates bill when changes to the system are introduced next April

Horse racing faces business rates hit

Alex Ralph

The horse racing industry could be facing a £10 million hit from the government's business rate changes, compounding the impact from a potential tax raid on the betting sector.

Racing yards are among those excluded from benefiting from new reliefs set to be introduced from April as part of a shake-up of the rates system.

It means the horse racing industry could be facing a rise in its rates bill of at least 40 per cent, an average increase to more than £7,000 a yard and over £10 million in total next year, according to new research by Colliers, the property agent.

Labour vowed in its election mani-

fest to replace the system by raising the "same revenue but in a fairer way" to "level the playing field" between the high street and huge online companies and to tackle empty properties.

Business rates are calculated based on the rateable value of a property, which reflects the rental value on the open market. Businesses pay a percentage of this value based on a tax rate known as the multiplier.

From 2026-27 the Treasury has said it will introduce two permanently lower tax rates for retail, hospitality and leisure properties with rateable values below £500,000. That will be "sustainably" funded by a higher multiplier to all properties above £500,000.

The lower multipliers are designed to

compensate for the loss of a relief, which since the pandemic has been repeatedly rolled over as a temporary stopgap to reform. Racing yards have been among those to have benefited from the relief, currently at 40 per cent.

However, they will not qualify for the new lower multipliers because it is restricted to properties or venues "wholly or mainly" used for in-person retail, hospitality, or leisure activity provided to "visiting members of the public".

A spokesman for the Treasury said: "We're making business rates fairer by introducing permanently lower rates for retail, hospitality and leisure from April, funded by a higher rate on less than 1 per cent of the most valuable business properties."

JTW EQUINE IMAGES/ALAMY

Business

Need to know

1 One in six employers expect artificial intelligence to reduce the size of their workforce over the next year amid weak employer confidence, research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development shows. **Page 31**

2 The head of Lazard's investment-banking arm in the UK is predicting a wave of stock market debuts in London next year, as companies grow too big to stay in private equity hands and the fashion for Wall Street listings fades. **Page 31**

3 The horse-racing industry could be facing a £10 million hit from the government's business rate changes, adding to the impact from a potential tax raid on the betting sector. **Page 31**

4 Treasury officials are reported to be working on 100 possible tax and spending measures as the clock ticks down to the most closely watched budget in decades; but they have one new tool at least — artificial intelligence. **Page 34**

5 Passed over to run PwC, the Big Four accountancy firm, Marissa Thomas, its former chief operating officer, launched Unity Advisory, with AI baked in, to challenge established players. In many ways Unity is a traditional consultancy, advising "mid-market" corporate clients on anything from tax to deal-making to technology. In others, mainly in its use of artificial intelligence, it hopes to be a "disruptor". **Pages 36-37**

6 Mountain Warehouse is back in the hands of its founder after Mark Neale and his senior team bought out their private equity partner for an estimated £80 million, with plans to double sales at the British outdoor retailer to £1 billion. **Page 37**

7 It used to be market traders but today commercial property is among the keenest industry for a good haggle. Agents sit between tenants, developers and landlords navigating their clients through the tricky sea of choices, costs, returns and risk. One person's fair price is another's rip-off. **Times Entrepreneurs Network, pages 38-39**

“

There is no strategy, no sense of direction. What is this government's aspiration for tax policy? I have no idea.

Paul Johnson,
page 35



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How Mike Lynch hid his

In an extract from her new book, **Katie Prescott** writes that the tech billionaire was too proud to let the market know that his firm was selling computer kit

From humble beginnings, Mike Lynch rose to become one of the UK's richest men, driving the development of his business Autonomy before selling it to Hewlett-Packard for more than £11 billion in 2011. Famously abrasive and hard to read, he soon found himself embroiled in one of the biggest fraud cases in Silicon Valley history. After a legal battle lasting more than a decade, a British judge found that Lynch had fiddled the accounts. A mere two years later he was exonerated by a US jury. Just as he was celebrating his freedom, Lynch's yacht, Bayesian, sank off Sicily, taking the lives of Lynch, his daughter and five others.

Today and tomorrow The Times is serialising The Curious Case of Mike Lynch. Drawing on extensive research and exclusive access to key sources, Times journalist Katie Prescott, working with her former BBC colleague Sarah Treanor, explores the life and death of this elusive maverick.

In the warm summer of 2009, some 20 Autonomy employees, including Sushovan Hussain, the CFO, Stouffer Egan, the US chief executive, and Mike Sullivan (chief executive of Autonomy Protect), gathered for a couple of days at Loudham Hall to talk shop.

During a coffee break, Sullivan overheard Lynch, Egan and Hussain talking about reselling products to a customer, and offering them a steep discount to get the deal over the line. Rather than the software that Autonomy was famous for, this was to sell mice, keyboards and monitors. In other words: hardware. "I bet I can do that," Sullivan piped up.

Lynch laughed: "If you can sell up to ten million dollars of hardware, you can have a Porsche." Sullivan did not care about a car, but he did care about the massive commission. The deal was struck. Afterwards, Sullivan sent a buoyant message from the US to Lynch and the team back in the UK: "I have verbal commitments for up to \$20 million and could probably get twice that if you want. My biggest concern is that



Mike Lynch in 2024, in 1999, and at the Royal Courts of Justice in 2023 after learning he was to be extradited to the US to

four or five Porsches are not practical for me. Perhaps we need to discuss a small plane or yacht?"

Lynch's argument for the new strategy was always that the hardware sales gave Autonomy a foot in the door to sell companies the more valuable software.

On the face of it, nothing about the loss-making hardware sales was wrong ... except that Autonomy did everything it could to not publicly reveal it was booking revenue by selling other people's IT equipment and it accounted for this revenue in a very fishy way.

In its annual reports, Autonomy stated that the company was: "one of the very rare examples of a pure software model". As a result, investors were actively misled about how the company was generating revenues.

A quick accounting lesson: gross profit equals sales minus cost of sales. It shows how much money a company

makes after covering the direct costs of producing its goods or services — but before other expenses like marketing. Autonomy set great store by the size of its gross profit margin, which is gross profit expressed as a percentage of sales. It was, the accounts said, "an indicator of the success of its business model". The gross profit margin is usually big for a software business, because software costs very little to manufacture. The bigger the gross profit margin, the better. As Lynch once put it: "The thing about software is, it's an amazing business in that you can sell a product for a million dollars and the actual production cost is one dollar, so it's not like trying to make a tiny margin on selling biscuits".

While it kept the new strategy to itself, Autonomy did, however, have to reveal information to Deloitte, its Cambridge-based auditor.

The lead Deloitte partner on the Autonomy account was named Richard Knights. A tall, kindly man with a Roman nose and a thoughtful manner, he had been at Deloitte forever and had worked with Autonomy since 2006.

The scale of the hardware sales started to cause a stir within Deloitte, which raised eyebrows at how Autonomy wanted to account for the losses on them: as "sales and marketing expenses". This was significant as it did not cut into the company's gross margin as much as it should have done.

Autonomy tried to spin the planned accounting treatment to Deloitte through an elegantly titled "Strategic Deals Memorandum", referring to the \$45 million it was spending on hardware as "partnership costs", and claimed that selling at a loss was an "incentive to deepen and widen the relationship" with EMC, its supplier.

Tech regulation holds Europe back, says investor

Katie Prescott
Technology Business Editor

The UK and Europe are "losing the innovation game", one of the world's biggest tech investors has warned.

Fabrizio Bloisi, the new chief executive of Prosus, attacked regulation on the continent, saying it was holding Europe back from growing the type of major technology companies that could compete with those from the United States and China.

People thought about the rules first and commercial concerns second in Europe, he said. "We are losing, and we are even writing regulations that make us move even slower."

Speaking while in London at Luminate, an event organised by Prosus to promote European competitiveness, he argued that it would be more effective to

let companies grow first, and then step in with local rules if problems came up, or to set limits once they had succeeded.

There was so much regulation at present, he said, that it was hard for anything new to get off the ground.

Prosus was created in 2019 when South Africa's Naspers spun off its international internet assets and listed them in Amsterdam. Its \$110 billion holdings were built around Naspers's long-held stake in Tencent, China's biggest tech conglomerate, which remains the cornerstone of its value.

Since then, Prosus has expanded into a global portfolio of online businesses in food delivery, fintech, classifieds, ed-tech and ecommerce and aims to prove it can thrive beyond Tencent. The management's long-term goal is to grow the rest of the portfolio to \$100 billion.

It has almost \$20 billion to invest and

plans to spend much of that in Europe, where Bloisi sees the opportunity to grow the first trillion dollar European business.

In February, Prosus bought Just Eat for €4.1 billion in a process that, Bloisi complained, was an example of too much red tape. The investor had to reduce its €1.6 billion stake in another of the world's biggest food delivery groups, Delivery Hero, in order to allay competition concerns in Brussels.

Europe has led the way in enforcing rules on the world's largest tech companies, such as with online safety and digital competition. While Bloisi acknowledged that some rules, such as internet safety laws for children, were beneficial he said they could have the "unintended consequence" that significant technology companies emerged from the West Coast of America.

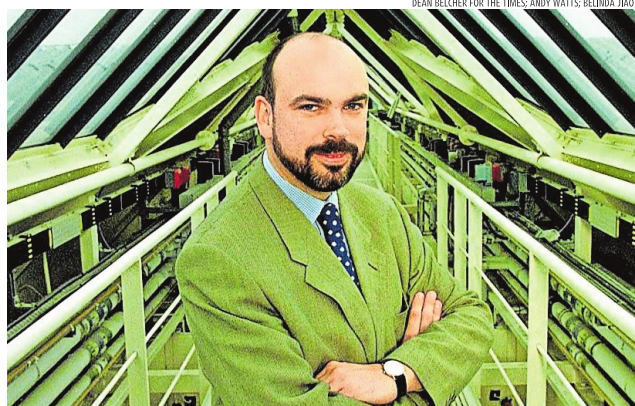
For ten years, Bloisi ran iFood in Brazil, the delivery group owned by Prosus (which had a \$1.2 billion turnover in 2024, up 22 per cent), and took over as boss of the investor last year, focused on investments in Europe, South America and India.

It has made a series of smaller investments, including leading an £8.8 million funding round in Clarity in the UK, an AI-powered customer support platform. Oxford Ionics, a quantum business in its portfolio was recently sold to Ion Q, a larger US rival.

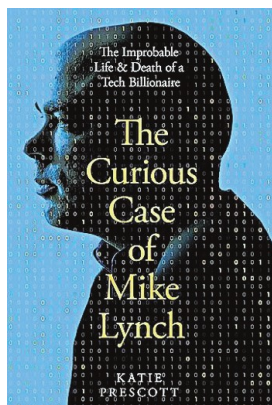
He described his "amazing" remit to create "the next big tech company outside the US, and to do that with 40,000 people, 2 billion customers and \$20 billion in the bank".

"Many people were not focusing on European tech at all and to me, this is absurd because it is a big opportunity."

hardware wheeze



DEAN BELCHER FOR THE TIMES; ANDY WATTS; BELINDA JIAO



face fraud charges. Katie Prescott's book about him is published on Thursday



Deloitte wanted to see some paperwork about the nature of the transactions, proof they were for relationship-building and marketing — and the two sides went back and forth on how the hardware sales should be recorded on the company's books.

Tempers were fraying. Knights went home from the office on the evening of October 13, 2009, and decided to pour oil on troubled waters by striking a jovial, light-hearted tone and pulling together all of the documents that had been ping-pong back and forth, to try to reach some conclusion. He sent the note from his wife's email account, because, he later said, he was not allowed to take his computer out of the office.

This is the typo-ridden missive that would later come back to haunt him: "After a glass or two of red wine and a plateful of Mrs K medieval pasta i've

had a stab at writing the Autonomy paper ... This needs to come form [sic] you to us. I need it to sqaure [sic] the position on cost of goods allocation".

Knights went so far as to write out a plan, with convenient gaps left where the company should fill in the blanks. He concluded his note with a flourish: "As mentioned above this was rattled out pretty quickly and fortified with a few liveners so as a modest bookkeeper it would benefit from the cutting edge of you software gurus ... !!"

The Autonomy software gurus eventually got their way. The final press release was a masterstroke in public relations obfuscation, proclaiming "RECORD Q3 RESULTS WITH 'STRONG ORGANIC GROWTH'" and explaining, misleadingly, that "the unexpected demand for our new product programs had a small depressing effect on gross margins. We do not expect this

to be a trend." It made no reference to hardware.

In that 2009 report, almost a fifth of Autonomy's standout sales numbers came from selling computer equipment made by other companies, at a loss. You would not know it from the accounts.

The hardware sales were bundled into "revenue" alongside licence sales, with only \$17 million of a total of \$45 million in hardware costs being allocated to the "cost of sales" — what it costs to develop a product, keep it running and deliver it to users. The remaining \$28 million was reported as sales and marketing expenses.

But changing numbers in the accounts is a bit like squeezing a balloon — it creates a bulge somewhere else. Autonomy's sales and marketing costs shot up exponentially.

Lynch knew the market was going to react to this and he embellished the launch of a whizzy new product: the Structured Probabilistic Engine, or SPE. He claimed that Autonomy had spent almost \$24 million on the launch of this shiny piece of software.

Like many of Lynch's stories, the SPE was not a total fabrication, but Autonomy had only spent around \$100,000 on marketing the product. Creating it took a few small tweaks from the technology team to software that Autonomy already owned. Over the coming years, the hardware sales, characterised internally as "Strategic Deals", would continue in the same vein. Hardware was referred to by one employee in the accounts department as the "bouncing number at the bottom" of the company's sales forecasts, an elastic figure adjusted as needed to close gaps in quarterly targets.

Revenue generated by the ruse was huge. From 2009 to 2011, hardware sales made up about 11 per cent of total reported sales, \$200 million, including \$105 million in 2010 alone.

Had Autonomy revealed it was selling computer kit, as it should have done, it would have led to a fall in the share price and ribbing from the razor-toothed City and media. Lynch was far too proud to allow it. In the months after the 2009 report, Autonomy appeared to have got away with its scheme, but some people were getting increasingly suspicious.

Extracted from *The Curious Case of Mike Lynch* by Katie Prescott (Macmillan Business, £22), published on Thursday. To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk. Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members.

to reduce the risk of them going bankrupt in the event of a sharp rise in energy prices, like the one that happened after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when about 30 suppliers failed.

Energy providers must be above a certain capital threshold or be working towards a specific level if they are beneath the target. They can be given time to work towards the target if they agree a plan to do so with Ofgem.

Last month, Ovo said that it was one of three suppliers that had not met the capital target, alongside Octopus, the UK's biggest energy provider, and one other firm that has not been named.

The agreement, first reported by the Financial Times, comes as the chief executive of Ovo's households retail unit, David Buttress, resigned, as did its finance chief, James Davies, previously an executive at Monzo, the digital challenger bank. Buttress was replaced by Chris Houghton, a former chief executive of Ovo.

Ovo, which serves about 4 million

households in the UK, warned in September that there was a "material uncertainty" about its future after it fell short of Ofgem's relatively new regulations.

Ofgem's decision to provide a reprieve for Ovo is likely to annoy other suppliers that have already complied with the rules. In July, Chris O'Shea, the chief executive of Centrica, which owns British Gas, the UK's second-biggest provider, said that companies not meeting the capital targets should be barred from taking on new customers and he has previously complained of Ofgem not properly upholding its own regulations.

A spokesman for Ofgem said: "The financial resilience of the energy sector has improved significantly, moving from net negative assets during the crisis to a positive £75 billion of adjusted net assets now ... Capitalisation plans come with restrictions and controls. We expect suppliers to deliver on those plans and adhere to any restrictions, and we monitor this closely."

The week ahead

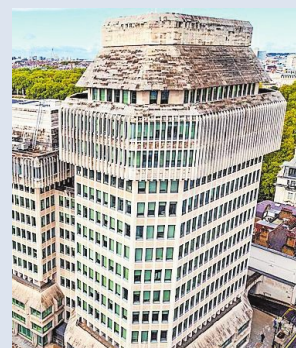
For a long time it seemed that Land Securities was either unable, or unwilling, to do anything other than own offices or shopping centres. That all changed this year.

In February, Mark Allan, the chief executive, laid out plans to sell off £2 billion of offices and use the money to buy £1 billion of malls and establish a £2 billion residential platform by 2030. The landlord has had a busy few months, selling — or agreeing to sell — more than £600 million of properties, including the Ministry of Justice's headquarters in central London.

Its half-year results will give investors a chance to scrutinise Landsec's progress with this strategy. There is talk that the plans, particularly around the residential pivot, may have been watered down somewhat.

Few like big shopping centres as much as Allan, and some felt Landsec's recent capital markets day suggested a shift to retail over residential.

Its most recent update, at the end



The Ministry of Justice headquarters was sold to a developer for £245m

of September, reminded investors of the "ongoing strength in occupational demand" for all its buildings, but mostly its malls, which include Bluewater in Kent and Gunwharf Keys in Portsmouth. Expect confirmation that demand remains strong.

TOMORROW

Vodafone's second-quarter numbers could, for the first time in over a year, be untainted by a change in the law to unbundle cable TV, broadband and telephone services offered by landlords to tenants in Germany, its largest market. City analysts have forecast a slowdown in the

organic decline of service revenue in Germany to 0.4 per cent over the second quarter, from 3.2 per cent in the first. Management has flagged a return to topline growth at some point this year, but there is no guidance on when profits will follow suit.

Interims: Oxford Instruments, DCC, Dialight
Finals: AB Dynamics, Abingdon Health, Shearwater
Trading update: Vodafone, 4imprint, Dowlat, Hilton Food, Informa, Vesuvius
Economy: ONS monthly employment figures

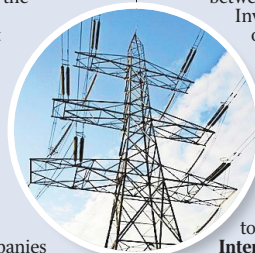
WEDNESDAY

These are nervous times for SSE and its investors as it reports half-year results amid concern that energy network companies might face a windfall tax in the budget. Analysts at Barclays spotted that the select committee on energy security and net zero had recommended a windfall levy on the industry to help tackle the cost of energy crisis.

They identified £4 billion in windfall profits made by companies such as SSE and National Grid.

Investors will also be interested to see how much the energy group has invested in its networks. Last month SSE said that adjusted investment is expected to increase by about

60 per cent year-on-year to approximately £1.1 billion. It has committed to investing at least £22 billion in grid infrastructure between 2026 and 2031.



Investors have questions over how such capital expenditure, which could rise to as much as £31.7 billion, will be funded. Analysts at Bernstein suggested recently that SSE would need new equity only if its investment reaches the top end of its ambitions.

Interims: Experian, Fuller Smith & Turner, Motorpoint, SSE, Volex
Finals: Avon Technologies, Ten Lifestyle Group
Trading updates: Marshalls, Taylor Wimpey, Flutter

THURSDAY

With the gold price reaching new records this year it is little wonder that precious metals miners have been in demand. Against a backdrop of conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, with the added uncertainty created by President Trump's trade tariff policies, investors have been seeking alternative asset classes with gold being a popular choice.

One beneficiary has been Endeavour Mining, the FTSE 100 group which has gold mines in Senegal, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso, and whose shares have risen almost 110 per cent in 2025. Shareholders will be hoping that at the third-quarter update, the miner is still confident that it

will deliver on production guidance.

Interims: B&M European Value Retail, Burberry, Marks Electrical, Premier Foods, United Utilities, Qinetiq, Wizz Air, Young & Co
Trading updates: Alfa Financial Software, Atalaya Mining, Aviva, Endeavour Mining, Grafton, Convatec, Kier Group, Persimmon, Rolls-Royce, Spirax
Economy: ONS first quarterly and monthly estimates of GDP

FRIDAY

Interims: Land Securities
Trading update: Melrose

Ovo reprieve over capital safety net

Jack Barnett

One of Britain's largest energy providers has been given breathing space so that it can comply with regulations that are intended to prevent a repeat of the wave of failures in the sector that occurred after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Ofgem, the energy watchdog, has given Ovo more time to build up its capital buffer so long as the company marks out clear steps that will show its progress towards the objective.

Since March, energy companies have been required to have a capital safety net

Business

Artificial intelligence saves Treasury staff three hours a week

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

Hard-pressed Treasury officials are reported to be working on no fewer than 100 possible tax and spending measures as the clock ticks down to the most closely watched budget in decades. But they have one new tool at least — artificial intelligence.

A proprietary new AI platform, nicknamed HMT-GPT, is saving the finance

ministry officials an average of three hours a week, it was claimed last week.

News of the 8.5 per cent boost to productivity — based on a 35-hour week — was revealed by James Fairburn, a Treasury deputy director, in evidence to MPs on the Treasury select committee.

The trial of HMT-GPT was saving the average Treasury staff member “about three hours a week”, he said.

A Treasury source added that the

system was helping officials to operate faster in areas including research, document drafting and data analysis. “The effect varies by team and task but the overall effect is a notable reduction in manual effort on repetitive or information-heavy tasks.”

The system was provided by OpenAI, the US firm behind ChatGPT, but with deployment and operation managed within the UK government’s secure in-

frastructure, ensuring compliance with data protection rules and security standards. MPs heard how the “closed” system meant “sensitive documents” could be fed into the platform. However, it is understood that HMT-GPT was not “trained” on proprietary Treasury data and did not retain confidential information inputted by officials.

Low levels of productivity growth in the public sector is one of the major

headaches facing policymakers. The cost of HMT-GPT is understood to be seen as low relative to the efficiency gains made.

The Treasury, which employs 2,600 full-time equivalent people, also uses Microsoft Copilot, a rival AI tool. Several other government departments are deploying similar AI tools, with the Cabinet Office said to be coordinating the approach.



BT to increase use of AI to reverse declines

The new boss of BT’s business division is preparing to increase the use of artificial intelligence across its operations and is more heavily scrutinising staff performance as part of a fresh efficiency drive aimed at reversing declines at the unit (Emma Powell writes).

The enterprise arm, which serves small and multinational businesses as well as the public sector and emergency services, is understood to have introduced new incentive structures for its sales teams and made

a fresh push to tackle underperformance in a shake-up of its workplace culture, as it attempts to return the business to revenue growth.

BT reported another 2 per cent slide in revenue for the division over the first six months of the year, caused by the continued fall in landline services and weaker handset sales.

Jon James, who was appointed to lead a turnaround of the division in April, is thought to be planning to overhaul its legacy IT systems and eliminate much of the manual



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JACK HILL

data processing work through AI, which is likely to lead to further job losses.

The division, which employs just under 12,000 staff, has cut

hundreds of roles since April as part of a broader headcount reduction programme embarked upon by Allison Kirkby, who was appointed to lead the former telecoms

monopoly at the start of last year.

Kirkby, 58, has doubled down on plans set out two years ago by her predecessor, Philip Jansen, to cut up to

55,000 jobs and reduce costs by £3 billion by 2030, as BT tries to become a “leaner” business and deliver a sustained improvement in its share price. The

BT wants to use artificial intelligence to streamline its business unit. Allison Kirkby, BT chief executive, is looking to cut costs

shares have risen 22 per cent since the start of the year, boosted by Kirkby’s promise that the company would reach an “inflection” point in its cashflows next year and start to deliver sustained revenue growth.

BT Business was carved out from the international arm into a standalone unit earlier this year, as the group refocused on the UK. BT has also begun a review of the future of its overseas division led by Bas Burger, which could include an outright sale.

The performance of its business-to-business operations has disappointed for the past decade as it has battled fierce competition in the mobile and broadband markets, as well as a decline in legacy landline contracts.

Burger, who previously ran BT Business, admitted in 2023 that some of the “previous promises of growth have not all materialised”.

BT declined to comment.

British buyers call time on gold watches as cost soars

Guy Taylor Retail Correspondent

Surging gold prices are leading British buyers of luxury watches to trade down to less precious metal alternatives, according to the UK’s biggest seller of Rolex and Omega timepieces.

Watches of Switzerland’s boss, Brian Duffy, said he had seen “more price sensitivity in the UK”, although in the United States there was still a “real preference” for 18-carat gold.

“We can change the mix in a relatively small way, but still change it and just make sure that we’ve got choices, options [and] affordability for the client,” Duffy said.

Gold prices have hit record highs this year, driven by global economic and geopolitical uncertainty, a weaker dollar and strong central bank buying. The precious metal is seen as a safe-haven asset by investors and has also benefited from the expectation of further interest rate cuts.

Spot prices for gold reached a record high of \$4,381.21 an ounce on October 20, taking its gains over the past two

years to 170 per cent. While it has since slipped back to hover around the \$4,000 an ounce mark, analysts have forecast prices could rise to \$4,500 by mid-2026.

“The increased cost of gold has been passed through to prices to some degree,” Duffy told The Times, noting the importance of variations such as gold-incorporated straps and bimetal, or two-tone; combining stainless steel with the glamour of gold. Other methods to reduce cost include stripping out complexity by using a three-hand date instead of a chronograph.

“You can get pretty much the same watch or movement and functionality standpoint at very different price points, and it’s again one of the strengths of the industry,” Duffy said.

“They’re getting a great timepiece, but you may not choose to stretch all the way up to what are high prices if you’re looking at pure 18-carat gold.”

Founded in 1924 by Maurice Lane, Watches of Switzerland employs about 3,000 people across the UK, Europe and United States, selling watch brands including Rolex, Cartier, Omega and

Audemars Piguet. The Rolex Cosmograph Daytona in yellow gold retails for £41,200 on Watches of Switzerland’s website. Duffy said that price increases among Rolex watches had been the most modest of all brands this year.

The mettle of the industry has also been tested by President Trump’s tariffs, which have led to price increases in the United States. Duffy, however, described Watches of Switzerland’s US business as a “standout performer” in its most recent half-year update as sales rose by a fifth year on year. The stock has gained 18 per cent over the past six months despite the tariff salvo.

In the UK, a cocktail of rising product prices and the increase to national insurance contributions have impacted profitability at a number of showrooms, leading to 20 closures this fiscal year, higher than the 15 the company had said it planned to shut down in April.

Duffy was keen to stress the success of the group’s Rolex boutique on Old Bond Street, which is the largest in Europe. The store is performing “very, very well”.

Credit where it’s not due: crackdown on score-builders

Ben Martin Banking Editor

There is “little proof” that products that may have been used by more than 1.5 million people to build up their credit histories actually help to improve credit scores, the City regulator has warned.

The Financial Conduct Authority revealed it had cracked down on a certain type of unregulated so-called “credit builder” product in which consumers pay between £2.50 and £25 a month to a company. These payments are then reported to credit reference agencies and the idea is that this helps an individual to establish a payment history and they will eventually be able to borrow on affordable terms.

However, the regulator said it had reviewed these services and found “there’s little proof that these products will help improve your credit score or make it easier to get affordable credit”.

It also warned that the risks involved were often not properly explained to consumers and that the companies reporting to the credit reference agencies “can potentially misrepresent a customer’s financial circumstances and help facilitate access to unaffordable credit”.

Alison Walters, the authority’s di-

rector of consumer finance, said: “We urge people to think twice before paying to use products that claim to boost your credit score. There are usually better, more cost-effective ways to build up your credit.”

It said that five firms had withdrawn this type of service and others had made changes as a result of the authority’s review. The regulator estimates that more than 1.5 million people are using the products, or have done so in the past.

Peter Tutton of StepChange, the debt charity, said: “Advertising of these types of products can exaggerate the benefits of having a good credit score, and lead consumers to believe it will help them get access to credit.”

Other ways of improving credit scores, such as through some credit cards and rent reporting services, were not examined by the FCA.

The authority has stepped up its consumer protection work in recent years in part through the introduction of its consumer duty, a new set of rules that require financial services firms to put the interests of their customers first. It is also trying to force motor finance providers into an industrywide £1 billion consumer redress scheme for mis-sold car loans.

Paul Johnson

These are the tax reforms that Britain needs, but is the chancellor listening?



JUSTIN TALLIS/REUTERS

“ The barrage of stories about possible tax rises being considered by the chancellor seems never-ending. It has been reported that she is considering more than a hundred policy options. As I understand it, with just over two weeks to go to budget day, final decisions have yet to be taken. Her peculiar breakfast-time speech on Tuesday helped not at all.

There is a price to be paid for the uncertainty that all this creates. If you don't believe me, ask the Bank of England. It has to be pretty careful in commenting about government policy, but in its quarterly monetary policy report published last week, it makes no bones about the damage being done. The very first thing it says in explaining poor recent GDP growth is that it “may reflect uncertainty ahead of the upcoming autumn budget”. And its first explanation for “subdued” investment intentions? “Elevated uncertainty, including ahead of the autumn budget.”

There is an underlying problem here, one that has existed for decades, but seems more acute than ever right now. There is simply no strategy, no sense of direction, no coherent policy. What is this government's aspiration for tax policy? I have no idea. If you have no sense of direction then every year at every budget you just look around a bit randomly for where to raise more money, if that's what's needed, or where to offer tax cuts, if they can be afforded. The result? Chronic uncertainty and a chaotic tax system.

What makes this even more depressing is that there is, in fact, something close to a consensus among those of us who have studied tax, about what needs doing. Last week a report, *Tax reforms for growth*, was published. Big deal. Reports on tax are two a penny. Actually, this was a big deal. It was authored, and agreed, not just by leading academic specialists but by representatives of right-wing think tanks like the Centre for Policy Studies and the Adam Smith Institute, and the very much left-leaning New Economics Foundation and Institute for Public Policy Research. These are not organisations that agree on very much.

Their proposals were structural, rather than designed to raise money.



Rachel Reeves's breakfast speech last week left onlookers feeling queasy

But their point was to make the system more coherent and growth friendly such that, for any given amount of money needed, the economic costs of raising it are minimised. I am particularly happy to write about their proposals as they closely reflect ones that I have supported ever since co-authoring the Mirrlees review of the tax system more than a decade ago. Here are the headline proposals.

First, sort out our dreadful property tax system. Base business rates on site values — effectively a land value tax — rather than on property values, get rid of stamp duty (hurrah!), and base council tax on up to date valuations rather than values from 1991. There is no excuse for not doing this. The current system is outrageously unfair and appallingly economically damaging.

Second, lower the rate of VAT and broaden the VAT base. The UK has just about the narrowest VAT base in the advanced world. This creates complexity and economic inefficiency. Some of our finest legal minds have devoted their lives to existentially important questions such as: “is a Jaffa cake a cake or a biscuit?” “Are Pringles crisps, or are they in fact cakes?” and “what exactly is the legal definition of a flapjack?”

Third, get rid of the idiocy of the 60 per cent income tax rate on incomes between £100,000 and £125,140; and end the cliff edge on childcare subsidies which kicks in at £100,000 and means some people are made worse off by a £30,000 pay rise. You can get the same revenue more efficiently and more equitably by some combination of

changing thresholds and tax rates.

Fourth, tax all income from work equally. Sounds obvious but the current system signally fails to achieve this. Those who earn their living through self-employment, including through being partners in big law and consultancy firms, pay much less tax than regular employees, in particular because employer national insurance is not levied. Again, the lawyers are happy as arguments rage over exactly how to define an employee.

Fifth, allow landlords to deduct the cost of borrowing in full before calculating tax. Currently they pay tax partly on revenue rather than on actual profit. As a quid pro quo they should pay NICs, or an equivalent, as well as income tax on their actual profits. (They should, like the rest of us, be spared stamp duty altogether.)

Sixth, in a similar vein get rid of some of the distortions on incentives to invest. The current system over-taxes many, not least by taxing purely inflationary gains, and under-taxes others. We should give an investment allowance against capital gains tax, end the full relief from CGT at death, and ensure that all capital gains made in this country, and only those made here, are taxed in this country.

Finally, reform corporation tax by giving upfront tax relief for all business expenditure, and the bias towards debt finance and remove limits on loss deductions.

Obviously, there is a lot more complexity behind each proposal, but these are the right ways forward. Here is something to aspire to in a tax system, a guiding light for future reforms. Every one of the proposals will, of course, be resisted by those who currently benefit. But remember, they gain at the expense of the rest of us. Where they pay less, we pay more. And we all suffer from the lower economic growth caused by the current mess.

Sadly, I don't expect this budget to do much of the above. But if Reeves could just give us a hint that she has some idea of where she'd like to take the tax system, that would be a start.

Paul Johnson is Provost of the Queen's College, Oxford and a senior adviser at Frontier Economics

Hospitality bosses urge Reeves to spare pain

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

More than 300 chief executives of hospitality businesses have written to the chancellor urging the government not to raise taxes or business rates on the sector in this month's budget.

In a letter to Rachel Reeves, the bosses said she needed to deliver “urgent action” in the budget on November 26, so that the sector can play its part in the government's goals of hiring young people, boosting tourism, regenerating high streets and “ultimately, drive economic growth”.

After Reeves's maiden budget last year, in which she laid out unprecedented increases in employers' national insurance contributions (NICs) and guided rises to the national minimum wage, the hospitality sector now has the highest tax bill in the economy, UKHospitality said.

“The impact of the last budget was devastating”, Kate Nicholls, chairwoman of the trade body, said, adding that the £3.4 billion in extra annual costs to the sector had led to job losses, reduced investment and business closures.

“Without action, we will see these impacts continue and intensify”, Nicholls said. “In two weeks time, these businesses and the millions of people they employ need to see measures to reduce hospitality's cost burden and back our sector.”

Hospitality bosses are calling for the government to cut business rates by delivering the maximum discount for hospitality properties with a rateable value of less than £500,000 and to apply no penalty charges to businesses with larger premises over that value.

Business rates, which generated £27 billion in the 2023-24 tax year, have long been criticised for being outdated and last autumn Reeves promised to bring in a “fairer business rates system”.

UKHospitality, which represents 130,000 venues, including pubs, bars, restaurants, hotels, indoor leisure facilities and contract catering, is also urging the government to extend NIC exemptions to include young people and individuals returning to work from welfare and to cut VAT on hospitality to drive investment and make the industry more competitive.

The 340 signatories of the letter include Big Table Group, the owner of Bella Italia and Café Rouge, Butlin's, Fuller's, Greene King, Loungers, Merlin Entertainments, the owner of Madame Tussauds, Stonegate and Wagamama.

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Business

PwC snub transformed into a 'disruptive opportunity'

Passed over to run the Big Four firm, its ex-executive launched an 'AI-born' rival, **Tom Howard** writes

Had things panned out differently 18 months ago, this interview might be with Marissa Thomas, the first female UK senior partner at PwC.

Thomas was widely viewed as one of the favourites to succeed her old boss, Kevin Ellis, but to the surprise of many of her peers she did not even make it on to the final shortlist.

"It's always a disappointment, especially when something like that happens quite publicly," she says. "But it's in the past for me. PwC has an established leadership team who have been elected, and I'm in a fabulous position building something based on a disruptive opportunity. I think we're all in a good place."

When Thomas found out that she was not in the running for the top job at PwC, she told Ellis she wanted to leave. "My departure was not a flick of the hair and I'm off". The obvious thing to do would've been to go sideways into yet another leadership role, but I thought I've got a good ten years ahead of me to go and do something very different."

Having grown up in Dartford, Thomas, 56, still has some of that affable southeast London twang to her accent. She studied quantity surveying at the University of Salford but a year in industry, spent on a building site during a recession, convinced her to pursue other avenues. Accounting, she decided, was not that dissimilar to quantity surveying.

Professionally, she has known little else beyond PwC, where she spent three decades, rising up the ranks from a tax adviser to partner and then, finally, chief operating officer.

For much of her time there she worked closely with private equity firms, advising them on everything from tax to transactions and, in some cases, overseeing their relationships with PwC. When she left in August 2024 it was these contacts who put her in touch with Steve Varley, the former UK boss of EY, one of PwC's Big Four rivals.

"We were both having similar conversations with similar people and actually shared some very strong and similar views on some of the disruptive opportunities in the industry."

The pair, along with Sharon McKeown, Thomas's chief of staff at PwC, launched Unity Advisory, their new venture, this summer. Thomas is the chief executive and Varley, 57, is the non-executive chairman. They have been backed with \$300 million from Warburg Pincus, the world's oldest private equity firm, which was one of Thomas's main clients for 20-odd years.

In many ways Unity is a traditional consultancy, advising "mid-market" corporate clients on anything from tax to deal-making to technology. In others, mainly in its use of artificial intelligence, it hopes to be a "disruptor".

The established players have poured hundreds of millions of pounds over the past couple of years into AI, which most expect will allow accountants and consultants to do more work, more quickly. Thomas still thinks it will take them a long time to fully get to grips with modern tech, though, given their size and history.

"We're AI-born, not AI-retrofitted, which makes a big difference culturally, but also the technology that we're using; everything is created with AI at the foundation from day one," she says.

That extra reliance on tech, Thomas and Varley hope, will give them an edge on the incumbents and allow them to do more with less. In fact, it is what Warburg is betting on.

That is not to say humans are redundant. A few months in and Unity has close to 50 staff and that will be up to 100 or so come the spring, once more new joiners have served out their notice periods.

The make-up of its workforce will be a bit different to its rivals though. Rather than being

Steve Varley is Unity's non-executive chairman



bottom-heavy, with an army of clever graduates and twentysomethings, Unity is hiring more mid-level and senior people. Thomas describes the structure as a "fat vase" as opposed to the traditional pyramid, although she insists that grads are in her plans too.

The other side of Unity's pitch deck is a promise that clients will get more face time with partners, something many mid-sized businesses complain about when using one of the industry giants.

"The experts you see at the beginning are the ones that are going to be with you throughout," Thomas promises. "With bigger pyramid organisations, you only see [partners] at the beginning and the end and when stuff goes wrong. We're more hands-on in our delivery."

Much has been made about the potential for AI to make a lot of roles redundant, particularly professional services, rooted in data and knowledge. Thomas is not so sure, however. "I don't think AI is going to take people's jobs," she says, "but people that know how to [use] AI and large language models might take people's jobs."

Unity is only offering advisory services; by eschewing audit, it will avoid the conflict-of-interest rules that its rivals complain stop them from bidding for as much work as they would like. The Big Four, for example, are limited to how much advisory work they can provide to audit clients and vice versa.

EY, famously, looked at splitting itself into separate audit and consulting businesses in 2023. That plan collapsed, at great cost to

EY, but Thomas says it was not a "bonkers thing" to look at. "[Conflicts of interest are] definitely a barrier to doing some work and I think anything that is creating some type of business tension, you should consider."

If AI and the future of the multidisciplinary model have been the major industry talking points in recent years, so too has the arrival of private equity in

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TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE



Mountain Warehouse in £80m buyout

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Mountain Warehouse is back in the hands of its founder after Mark Neale and his senior team bought out their private equity partner for an estimated £80 million, with plans to double sales to £1 billion.

Neale and three senior executives have purchased Inflexion's near-20 per cent stake in the British outdoor retailer, with backing from the group's lenders NatWest, HSBC UK and RBC Capital Markets, as well as Citi and Lloyds.

The deal, which completed late last month, valued the retailer at close to £400 million and returned it to full management ownership. Neale, 57, who

previously held about 70 per cent of the company, now owns more than 90 per cent. The remainder is split between Simon Neale, 53, his brother, who is chief technology officer of Mountain Warehouse, and two others.

Neale founded the no-frills retailer in 1997, selling waterproofs, ski jackets, walking boots and camping gear. It now employs more than 4,400 people across 403 stores worldwide and reported revenue of £449.2 million in its most recent financial year, up from £386 million the year before, while profit before tax rose to £33 million from £26.2 million.

He said Inflexion, which bought its stake for about £45 million in 2018, was "keen to realise their investment after

seven years" and after a "cracking" set of results last year. The exit is thought to have delivered Inflexion a return of about £35 million.

The Mountain Warehouse boss has now set his sights on doubling sales over the next five to ten years. "The plan is to get to a billion pounds," he said, predicting turnover could reach £500 million this year, largely driven by store expansion overseas.

The group plans to open 12 more stores by the end of November across the UK and Australia, with about 50 new sites in the pipeline for next year. A renewed push into North America is also under way after being stalled by tariff uncertainty.



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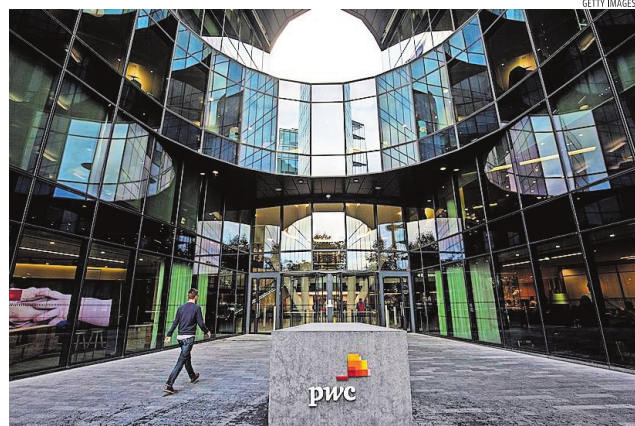
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Marissa Thomas, formerly chief operating officer of PwC, now runs Unity Advisory

professional services. Cinven, for example, acquired a majority stake in Grant Thornton, Britain's sixth-largest audit firm, this time last year.

Thomas says private equity has been attracted by the predictability of earnings — a lot of firms' income is recurring — as well as the fact that technology means the industry "is potentially ripe for disruption".

Given the money Warburg has committed, there is undoubted pressure on Thomas and Varley to deliver. "Private equity rightly demand results," Thomas says. "I always feel personal pressure to deliver. Warburg have backed us and a lot of people have taken a leap to come and join us."

Most of those making the move, especially the more senior hires, will have taken a pay cut to join. Even so, Thomas insists it has not been a difficult sell to new recruits. "We want people that love working with clients and so our commitment to them is that's exactly what they'll do here. We won't be asking them to take on different leadership or governance roles; just do what made you famous."

Longer-term, the money they are missing out on now should come, and possibly even more, as staff are incentivised with equity. "If we build successfully, the partners can do very

well," Thomas says. "You just get paid out in a different form and it's long-dated."

If history is anything to go by, private equity firms generally look for an exit after five or six years. By that point, Thomas wants Unity to have maybe 400 staff and 50-plus partners with a "commercially viable book of business".

She has another, bolder, ambition too. Professional services firms have, as the name suggests, offered exactly that to clients — services. Reflecting Unity's "tech-enabled delivery", she thinks there is an opportunity for the company to also build "products", integrate them into clients' operations and monitor them from afar.

"I don't want to call it software, because software is a bit different and I'm sure there are people who can build software better than us. But it would be a real hallmark of success if we can provide products to clients that embed some of the advice currently led by humans directly into [businesses'] ways of working."

Thomas seems genuinely enthused at the project ahead of her and has not been burnt out by the relentlessness and ruthlessness of a private equity shareholder, or at least not yet. "Do I wish I was now running PwC instead?" she asks aloud. "No."

Get ready to haggle — even in a tenants' market

THE TIMES
ENTREPRENEURS
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PROPERTY



It's still challenging for growing companies to navigate the search for rental property, **Richard Tyler** writes

It used to be market traders but today, of all industries, commercial property is among the keenest for a good haggle. Agents sit between tenants, developers and landlords navigating their clients through the difficult seas of choices, cost, returns and risk. One person's fair price is another's rip off.

A good tenant for one landlord could be an awful one for another.

The devil is always in the details. Standard contract terms may look simple enough but rarely end up that way. Even in today's "tenants' market", where in many parts of the country there is more property available than tenants looking to rent, the renters are often still the ones with the weakest hand to play.

They cough up the cash (and stamp duty, advisory fees, deposits and, later on, dilapidation charges) but property is an unfamiliar world. Business owners typically enter the market only once every five to ten years, either when their lease is up for renewal or when they need to expand or contract their property commitments.

Even experienced hands get caught out. Charles Skinner, the chief executive of Restore, the listed services group, has acquired 100 businesses in the last two decades, most with their own property commitments. In his new book, *Buy, Run, Build*, he recalls buying one business with only a short time left on its 25-year lease. When it ended "the landlord gouged us for the cost of returning it to its original state and pocketed the money, which was far more than we'd paid for the business itself. All entirely legal and very, very painful," he writes.

Amy Knight, co-founder and director of Must Have Ideas, a homewares retailer, has just finished a two-year search for a 250,000 sq ft warehouse and offices in Kent. It has not been an easy process. "There are only two things in the history of our business that have restricted our growth. In the early days it was cash and now it is space," she says.

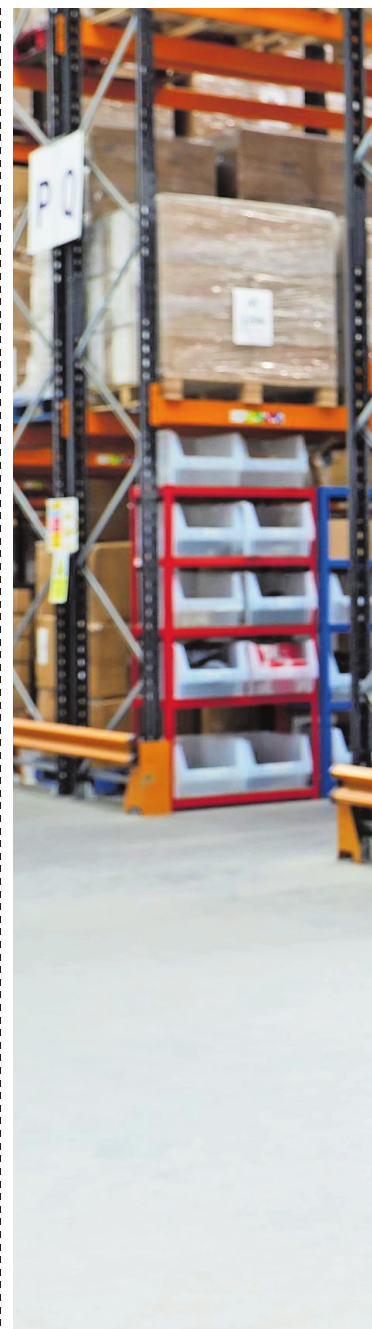
They are trading up from a 60,000 sq ft site that has been their home for the last four years. The business, founded in 2018, saw revenues rise 50 per cent last year to £40 million, and is expected to post an even higher rate of growth this year. Last year's pre-tax profits jumped from £3.3 million to £5.5 million. But landlords and agents still hesitated to help.

Knight, 29, said: "Nobody believes we need the amount of space that we do. We are planning for future growth and want the new unit to last us at least five years. So many landlords say to us, 'you are doing £80 million, you can't possibly need that much space,' and completely dismiss us. We have had people refuse to let us look around units because they also think we can't possibly afford it."

She adds that the choices available were also limited. "We found five units in the entire county that were big enough for us. And we have had issue after issue, landlords getting desperate and saying yes to us and then pulling out. We have had ones offered to us to be built but we can't afford to wait."

Renting commercial property is different to the residential equivalent. It may surprise some to know that stamp duty is due when renting. It's a bill of £500,000 for Must Have Ideas. Then there are deposits: landlords asked Must Have Ideas for a cool £3 million. "We don't have a spare £3 million lying around to put down as a deposit," Knight says.

There are also rules of thumb that landlords use to guide them on how to judge prospective tenants. One is



Amy Knight, holding her Hygiene

where they look for the annual rent to be covered by the company's post-tax profits for each of the last three years of trading. Such formulas suit large, established companies but not young, fast-growing ones, where their profitability three years ago may be very different to what it is today.

Knight says: "They want some kind of blue chip company moving in that they feel safe in the hands of. I think the only reason we have got the unit we have managed to secure is because the landlord has five empty buildings of this size that no one can fill. We reviewed the unit in December and were told we were too small a business and then they got back in touch in early summer and were suddenly interested." Must Have Ideas signed the ten-year lease at the end of September and are planning to move in March next year.

Agents know how to play the game. Their research teams helpfully point to rising rents — Savills says vacancy rates in retail warehousing are "very low" at the moment. The lower the vacancy rate the higher the chances that rents will rise.

But developers and agents out in the field in London tell a slightly

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Hero sponges, struggled to find landlords and agents ready to help her search for large premises for a growing business

different story. Speaking on a site visit to Croydon, south London, a few weeks ago, Alex Schofield, a senior director at advisers CBRE, said: "It is more of a tenants' market at the moment. In some cases they are introducing break clauses, for example. In a market where there is not much product and availability, it would be a landlords market and they can dictate longer leases, more aggressive rent review provisions. In this market there are more options for the tenant to look at."

Mike Best, head of UK for American developer Bridge Industrial, said: "Property is always a negotiation. Supply and demand, the amount of options a tenant has or doesn't. Landlords may want to drive longer lease terms, others don't want that."

"Given we [property investors] sit in between a stock and a bond, lease length is quite a big driver of value for us. We are happy to give flexibility [to a tenant] but it comes with a cost and sometimes occupiers, while they like the flexibility they don't like the cost, so we have to find a balance."

Best showed your reporter around one of its 63,274 sq ft, top of the range

warehouses in west Croydon, which is on the market. In addition to its position between the A23 and A264, the marketing material tells you that delivery drivers need to drive less than five miles to reach 976,773 people. It also has all the mod cons, is operational carbon neutral thanks to the solar panels on its roof and its heat pumps, and has a generous loading area for HGVs to drive up and drop off their pallets.

With average warehouse rents in London at £25 a sq ft, this little beauty will set a business back around £1.25 million a year in rent. I ask Best about his ideal tenant. "Someone with a strong covenant so we can be confident," he said. "A business of sufficient financial standing; a good credit rating. And we like tenants that invest in the building and the location because that is a commitment."

A solid credit rating — the best are known as 5AIs and never get asked for deposits — equates to the rent "is secure". Schofield, the site's agent at CBRE, said: "In a red hot market, it would only be looking for 5AI covenants. It would be 'we can't help you Mr New Business', which is a difficult situation to be in."

Cutting red tape helps, but clarity is a real superpower

Alex Wright



When Rachel Reeves recently promised a bonfire of bureaucracy for UK businesses, it was a "two cheers" moment. The idea of less form-filling is hard to argue with. However, the biggest drag on productivity isn't external factors such as bureaucracy: the misalignment that can happen in your use of your own resources.

As a football fan, one thing that always fascinates me is how a 0.1 per cent misalignment in a team can be the difference between winning and losing. The smallest variations — how two players interpret the same tactics, how different backroom staff analyse the same data — ripple outwards. Before you know it, those fractions have cost you.

It's the same in business. When people in your team have slightly different ideas of *what* you're doing and *why*, those small differences compound until you end up miles away from your intended goal. It doesn't happen overnight, but it's relentless.

Thinking positively, this means that for most businesses, the biggest productivity gains aren't reliant on politicians in Westminster; they come from within our own teams.

Every business needs two things to thrive: a vision and a mission. Your vision is what you ultimately want to change or achieve in the world. Your mission is how you move towards that vision in everything you do, from product development to how you answer customer emails.

Sounds simple? Not so much. Simplicity takes a lot of effort, which is a lesson the Dash team certainly learnt. When we started, we were a small team with a lofty vision and a lot of energy, but not a strong proof of concept. Everyone was running around doing different things: chasing retail leads, tinkering with packaging, brainstorming new flavours. Our pint-sized team would all work around a kitchen table. Everyone knew all aspects of the business.

That chaos is perfectly normal in start-up mode, but when you want to scale, it risks becoming a bottleneck. We realised we needed to change how we operated and paint a much clearer picture of where we were headed.

So over the last few years we have developed a rigorous "objectives and key results" framework that shapes everything we do. Every quarter, the entire team, from the senior leadership to the newest joiner, takes part in reporting and refining goals. Everyone knows how their

work affects the bigger picture.

We've mapped out our objectives all the way to 2028, then worked backwards to identify the stepping stones that will get us there. That includes everything from market expansion to innovation cycles. Our product development process, for instance, is now mapped in granular detail. When a retailer has a fixed launch window, you must be meticulous in everything from research, to sourcing wonky fruit, to product development, production, launch and marketing of the product in-store.

The results to date have been transformative. Our launches are faster, our teams are more focused, and we waste less energy chasing short-term wins that don't fit the long-term plan. Perhaps most importantly, the sense of ownership across the company has deepened. I've found that when everyone can see how their contribution moves the business forward, motivation seems to come naturally.

This isn't unique to Dash. You see similar systems in some of the world's most successful organisations. Amazon famously has an empty chair in each meeting — a reminder of the customer they are serving. The New Zealand rugby team has long embraced the mantra "better people make better All

Blacks", an ethos about culture as much as performance.

Perhaps my favourite is the apparel brand Finisterre, one of the first UK brands to become a certified B Corp in outerwear, and pioneers in using recycled and traceable fabrics. It's the opposite of "fast fashion" and all the waste that comes with that; Finisterre's approach is all about circularity, getting the most life out of every product, and promoting re-use and

repair over new sales. To me, that restraint is testament to how clear the brand's vision of making great products transparently is.

Clarity is what unites all these examples. Everyone in those teams understands not just what they're doing, but why they're doing it. And alignment is what turns good teams into great ones.

Cutting bureaucracy is fine. Even if the challenges facing entrepreneurs today go much deeper than paperwork, few of us will object to simpler forms or quicker approvals. But it won't fix the deeper issue. Productivity isn't about ticking fewer boxes. It's about ensuring every person in your organisation is pulling in the same direction.

So as you plan for 2026, put clarity at the top of your agenda. Make sure every person in your business knows exactly what your overarching goal is and how their work helps you reach it. The results will amaze you.

Alex Wright is co-founder and chief executive of Dash Water, a £35 million-turnover healthy soft drink brand sold across 25 countries

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Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Mkt cap (million)	Company	Price (p)	Wkly +/-	Yld%	P/E
Automobiles & Part					
599.28	Aston Martin Lag	59%	- 3%	...	-1.5
Banking & Finance					
3,707.26	Aberdeen Group	201%	- 1%	7.2	15.3
2.16	Acuity RM	0%	...	...	-1.0
9,936.52	Admiral	3244	- 32	6.4	15.0
2,163.02	AJ Bell	537%	2.4	26.3	
56,795.10	AON Corp	26424%	+ 633%	0.9	...
146.49	Arbutnot	905	- 7%	5.6	5.9
1,196.69	Ashmore Group	167%	- 20	10.1	13.8
54,031.00	Australia & NZ	1811	- 15%	5.9	16.4
20,653.50	Aviva	675%	+ 7	5.5	28.6
115,659.00	Banco Santander	777	+ 13	2.1	44.2
56,409.60	Bardays	404%	- 2%	2.1	11.2
5.23	Blue Star Capital	11	- %	...	-0.6
241.18	BP Marsh & Ptns	668	+ 2	2.0	2.5
2,398.03	Bridgepoint Grp	290%	- 10%	3.2	36.3
640.48	Chesnara	277%	+ 2%	8.6	...
19,157.71	City of London Grp	378	+ 2	8.7	12.4
642.44	Close Bros	426%	+ 8	...	-6.4
591.81	CMC Markets	211%	- 4	5.4	9.4
53,486.40	Deutsche Bank	2745%	+ 27%	1.2	22.3
1,091.64	EEG-Hermes Hldgs	76	- %	...	...
40.33	EPE Special Opps	145	- %	...	...
76.69	Fiske	6	- 5	1.7	5.7
88.04	Foreisght Ventures VCT	85	...	4.5	13.4
62.09	Frankel Topping	48%	- %	2.8	21.1
883.81	Georgia Capital	2505	- 85	...	-9.2
61.63	Hansard Global	44%	- %	8.9	34.5
146.13	Helios U/W	210	- 9	2.9	8.2
4,541.11	Hiscox	1374	- 1	2.4	9.9
183,912.00	HSBC	1070%	+ 7%	4.7	11.3
3,819.01	Hydro	1112	- 2	4.2	10.5
240.72	Impax Asset Mgmt	107%	- 3	14.3	6.6
5,618.03	ICG	1933	+ 2	4.3	12.3
441.52	Inf Personal Fin	201%	+ 3	5.9	7.4
2,237.36	Intl Public P'ship	122%	- 3%	7.0	3.3
3,712.91	Investec	575%	+ 2%	6.3	7.9
5.88	Investment Co	64	- %	...	0.0
52.85	IP Group	60%	- 1%	2.1	-3.0
7.60	Jarvis Securities	17	- 3%	20.6	1.9
787.66	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	149	- 3%	2.9	11.9
2,207.24	Just Group	212%	...	1.2	32.7
192.57	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	666	- 2	11.1	6.5
1,625.11	Lancashire Hldgs	666	- 2	11.1	6.5
13,741.40	Legal & General	241%	+ 3%	8.9	83.5
3,302.98	Lion Finance Group	7585	- 420	3.8	4.7
6,493.61	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	302	- 8%	23.8	11.5
58,129.10	Livermore Invs Grp	49%	...	13.1	16.1
53,526.10	Lloyds Banking	90%	+ 1%	3.7	14.4
12.19	LMS Capital	15%	- %	6.1	...
47,873.90	London Stock Exchange	270	- 216	1.5	72.0
6,493.61	M&G	270	+ 6%	7.5	-17.9
2,392.22	Man Group	267%	- 2%	6.2	10.6
31.13	Manx Financial Grp	26	- 1	2.6	3.9
1.91	Marcheale Capital	1%	- %	...	-5.0
747.35	Metro Bank	111	- 6	...	-17.6
65,479.70	National Australia	2137%	- 35%	1.9	19.7
48,035.90	NatWest Group	598%	+ 14%	4.2	11.2
436.18	PayPoint	687	- 10	6.1	23.9
6,801.17	Phoenix Group	677%	+ 3%	8.1	-6.1
27,351.30	Prudential	1068%	+ 13%	1.7	16.7
9.16	Quantum Blockchain	0%	...	...	-3.2
2,556.88	Quilter	182%	+ 1%	3.4	-72.8
1,653.11	Rathbones Group	1790	+ 6	5.3	28.4
134.22	Rockwood Strategic	274	- 9	...	0.0
219.93	S & U	1810	+ 30	5.8	12.3
2.63	Sancus Lending	0%	...	...	...
266.56	Schroder REIT	182%	+ 1%	6.6	12.4
6,175.47	Schroders	383%	+ 4	5.6	14.5
6,901.85	St James's Place	1309%	+ 12	1.4	17.9
36,505.40	Standard Chart'd	1600	+ 40%	1.9	14.9
24,907.40	Sun Life Canada	4429%	- 204%	4.5	...
20.62	Swirestock Invs	4%	+ 1%	2.2	3.5
2,142.04	TBC Bank Grps	3830	- 525	5.9	5.8
3.20	Tem	0%	...	...	-0.6
43.71	Time Finance	47%	- 2%	...	7.5
4.20	Tourus	0%	...	...	-1.9
1.65	Trueidest	2%	...	...	-1.2
285.22	Vanquis Banking Grp	111%	- 2%	...	-2.4
54.78	Volere	2490	- 20	...	-14.1
3.54	WH Ireland	1%	+ %	...	-0.4
3.19	Walker Crips Grp	7%	6.7	-1.3	
202,113.00	Wells Fargo	6438%	- 180%	2.1	...
65,611.30	Westpac Bk Grps	1918%	- 12	...	19.4
9.04	Worsley Investors	26%	- %	...	...
78,342.20	Zurich Insurance	53528%	+ 527%	4.9	17.7
94.85	Alumasc	262%	- 6%	4.2	10.1
13.76	Aseana Properties	5%	...	...	-1.3
6.58	Built Cybernetics	1%	...	...	-3.4
3,264.01	Balfour Beatty	661	- 11	2.0	19.3
5,372.97	Barratt Redrow	376	- 1%	4.7	27.6
3,122.85	Bellway	2634	+ 10	2.7	19.8
3,748.27	Berkelley	3916	- 112	1.7	10.5
2,203.80	Big Yellow Grp	1120	+ 8	4.1	...
40.45	Billington Hldgs	305	8.2	4.6	
296.24	Boat (Henry)	221	3.6	12.7	
1,125.58	Bredon	324%	- 19%	4.5	11.6
3,995.13	British Land	399%	+ 20	5.7	...
26.09	Cardiff Property	2600	0.9	25.3	
1,986.43	Derwent London	1769	+ 9	4.6	...
47.72	DCI Advisers	5%	...	...	-30.0
22.92	First Property	15%	...	...	9.4
3.57	Fletcher King	34%	- 1%	6.5	23.5
154.68	Foxtons Group	52%	- 2%	2.3	11.4
496.93	Galliford Try Hldgs	487%	- 31%	3.9	14.5
885.80	Genuit Group	355%	- 14%	3.5	26.3
202.75	Gleeson (NU)	347	- 22	3.2	12.8
1,780.66	Grafton Grp Units	930	- 22	4.0	15.3
1,422.41	Grainger	191%	+ 4%	4.1	45.7
1,383.07	Groat Portland Est	340%	+ 7%	2.3	0.0
1,642.25	Hammerson	399%	+ 4%	5.2	0.0
532.75	Harworth Group	163%	- 1%	1.0	9.2
8.62	Heath (Samuel)	340	3.8	9.8	
256.54	Helical	208	- 1%	2.4	9.1

Mkt cap (million)	Company	Price (p)	Wkly +/-	Yld%	P/E
508.35	Ibstock	128%	- 7%	3.1	33.9
583.50	James Halstead	140	+ 1%	3.3	14.4
1,038.68	Keller	1466	- 122	3.5	10.4
10,495.50	Kingspan Group	5806%	...	0.8	18.1
4,786.57	Land Securities	642%	+ 21	6.3	...
131.95	Life Science REIT	37%	+ 1%	...	...
3.61	London & Assoc Props	4	- 1%	...	-9.1
4,550.94	LondonMetric Prop	194%	+ 4	6.4	...
7.98	Macau Prop Op Fd	12%	- 1%	...	-0.7
421.95	Marshalls	166%	- 2	4.6	13.6
79.08	Michelmersh Brick	86	- 3	5.3	13.1
3.55	Mindfair	0%	...	...	0.7
2,105.72	Morgan Sindall	438%	- 265	3.2	15.6
371.38	Mountview Estates	9525	- 75	5.5	15.8
298.67	NewRiver REIT	70	- 1%	9.3	...
42.78	Palace Capital	211%	- 4%	7.1	47.0
51.19	Panther Securities	295	4.1	7.7	
3,845.39	Persimmon	1200	- 9	5.0	14.4
1.37	Plaza Centers	20	- %	...	-0.0
57.00	Primary Health Proprs	97%	+ 3%	7.3	...
1,612.46	Real Estate Inv	32%	- 1%	5.2	-25.1
1,415.72	Safestore	738	+ 23	4.1	...
51.47	Savills	979	- 29	2.2	24.8
2.26	Secur Prop Dev & Inv	11%	...	...	-2.0
9,784.12	Segro	721%	+ 24	4.1	...
2,808.67	Shafterbury Capital	143%	+ 3%	2.6	10.4
104.80	SIG	8%	- 1%	...	-2.1
1,224.11	SigmaRox	109%	- 5%	...	52.3
1,543.44	Sirius Real Estate	102	+ 2%	5.3	9.5
51.47	Smart (U)	132%	...	2.4	31.4
39.42	Steppe Cement	18	- 1%	...	-51.5
3,638.82	Taylor Wimpey	102%	- 2%	9.1	16.6
56.50	Town Centre	134	+ 1	3.7	...
1,294.18	Travis Perkins	609	- 20	2.2	-16.6
4,128.84	Tritax Big Box	152%	+ 2%	5.2	...
2,758.95	Unit Group	563	- 4	6.7	...
2,031.62	Vistry Group	631%	- 12%	5.1	28.7
787.52	Workspace Group	409%	- 8%	6.9	...
22.38	Wynnstay Proprs	830	3.3	14.3	
9.51	Aireas	23	- 1	2.6	-11.5
509.63	Anglo-East Phtnts	1310	- 90	5.0	10.1
171.78	Animalcare	249	- 2	2.1	8.2
16,198.40	AB Foods	2263	- 32	2.8	16.0
1,271.84	Bakkrava Group	219%	- 2%	3.6	22.9
761.20	Barr (AG)	680	+ 11	2.5	19.0
90,178.70	British Amer Tob	4130	+ 226	5.8	30.2
4,140.47	Burberry Group	1147	- 90%	...	-54.9
506.19	C&K Group	136%	- 1%	4.0	44.4
27.30	Capital Metals	5%	+ 1%	...	-45.6
38.49	Churchill China	350	- 20	9.6	6.0
12,933.60	Coca-Cola HBC	3558	+ 104	2.5	18.0
48.08	Colefax	920	+ 10	0.6	8.5
2,667.91	Cranwick	4915	- 20	2.1	19.6
38,438.80	Diageo	1726%	- 23%	4.6	21.4
24.64	Distill	0%	...	...	-1.3
6,676.72	Evens (MPL)	1295	- 55	4.3	10.0
66.75	Favara	129	- 8	3.1	-21.1
5,045.18	Games Workshop	15300	- 630	3.1	25.7
3,152.91	Glanbia	1293%	- 15%	2.7	26.9
998.64	Greencore	225%	- 13	0.9	22.3
42.36	Headlam	52%	+ 1	18.1	-1.7
577.19	Hilton Food	642	- 2	5.5	14.7
25,461.40	Imperial Brands	3171	+ 146	6.0	10.5
11,130.20	Kerry Group	6879%	- 17%	1.7	18.4
202.08	McBride	113%	- 4	2.7	5.8
63.52	Mulberry Group	90	- 5	1.1	-1.8
380.32	Nichols	1040	+ 5	3.1	21.3
258.15	Norcross	287	- 13	3.6	7.6
351.89	Origin Ents	328%	- 2%	4.6	7.5
0.32	PACSCo	0%	...	...	-0.1

Mkt cap (million)	Company	Price (p)	Wkly +/-	Yld%	P/E
14.37	Portmeirion	102%	+ 1%	1.5	41.0
13.37	Provest	0%	...	...	-28.5
299.68	PZ Cussons	69%	- 4%	5.2	-90.7
47.24	REA	108	- 1%	...	3.4
9.66	Tandem	175	- 7%	...	-19.1
48.91	The Character Grp	275	5.1	10.6	
136.48	Trealt	230	- 10	3.7	9.7
4,550.94	Ultraproduct Grp	8%	+ 1%	...	-1.7
114,068.00	Unilever (NV)	4652%	3.4	23.0	
113,228.00	Unilever	4618	+ 29	3.4	22.8
53.29	Victoria	46%	- 8	...	-0.2

Engineering					
0.82	Assoc Brit Eng	40			-13.8
564.01	Avon Technologies	1864	- 50	1.0	...
5,936.46	Babcock	1186	- 27	0.5	24.2
54,277.10	BAE Systems	1807	- 64	1.9	27.8
10.08	Braine A N/V	1050		1.5	6.6
7.20	Braine Group	1500		1.1	9.5
12.95	Calfins	475		2.1	74.2
16.21	Cap XX Ltd	0%	- 1%		-0.1
104.24	Castings	240	- 3%	7.7	25.0
18.36	Checkit	17	+ 2%		-5.2
1,480.18	Chemring Group	543	- 30	1.5	37.4
12.95	Chesterfield Spec Cyl	33%	- 2%		-5.3
584.57	Cohort	1246	- 94	1.3	27.6
103.73	Dialight	258			-9.9
3.75	Feedback	8%	- 1%		-0.3
145.25	Gooch & Housego	534	- 40	2.5	42.0
1,592.04	Goodwin	21200	- 500	1.3	64.8
12,877.60	Halma	3392	- 154	0.7	43.2
1,673.30	Hill & Smith	2095	- 60	2.4	22.1
1.92	Image Scan	1%			9.3
5,997.26	IMI	2428	+ 40	1.3	25.3
0.16	Inspirit Energy				-0.5
52.24	Judges Sci	5320	- 380	2.0	37.3
35.84	LP4	42%			-1.0
7,664.12	Melrose	608%	- 17%	1.1	44.4

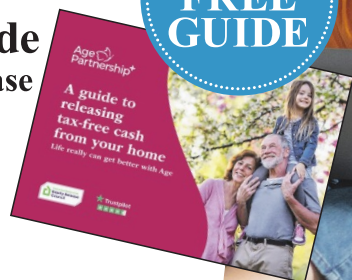
INVESTMENT COMPANIES

Mkt cap (million)	Company	Price	Wkly (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1436	Bezan Resources	0%	0%	—	-8.5	
105,743.00	BHP Group	2082	-	83	4.0	15.4
90.52	Border & Shn Pet	10%	-	1	—	-84.7
181.58	Bougainville	45%	-	27%	—	-76.2
71,919.10	BP	458½	+	16%	5.4	6.9
2.14	Buccaneer Energy	0	—	—	-0.2	
14.34	Cadence Minerals	3½	-	½	—	-0.1
9.17	Cadogan Energy	3½	—	—	-1.8	
389.96	Caledonia Mining	2020	-	160	2.1	29.1
50.62	Caspian Sunrise	2½	—	—	6.0	
280.89	Cent Asia Metals	156½	-	2%	8.6	7.1
24.45	Chariot Ltd	1½	-	½	—	-1.0
2.05	Clontarf Energy	0	—	—	-2.5	
26.80	Corcel	0%	—	—	-1.8	
4.80	Crim Therapeutics	12	+	½	—	-6.7
1,715.52	DRD Gold	197½	+	4%	1.6	17.3
5.35	ECR Minerals	0%	—	—	-2.9	
3.57	Empyrean Energy	0	—	—	-0.5	
7,260.41	Endeavour	3008	-	66	3.0	-32.2
212.44	EnQuest	11½	-	½	5.5	3.0
101.82	Eurasia Mining	3½	-	½	—	-15.0
16.07	Europa Oil & Gas	1½	-	½	—	-2.4
314.62	Ferrexpo	52½	-	4%	—	-8.1
16,152.70	Fresnillo	2192	-	3.0	1.6	—
6.95	Galantas Gold	5½	—	—	-4.9	
17.62	GCM Resources	5½	-	½	—	-8.7
4.90	Gem Diamonds	3½	+	½	—	-2.2
3.28	Getech	2½	-	½	—	-1.3
42,212.60	Glencore	357½	-	6%	2.1	-36.2
15.20	Geo Exploration	0%	—	—	-13.6	
26,411.90	Gold Fields	2951	-	26%	2.1	—
15.37	Goldplate	9	-	½	1.0	3.6
4.27	Goldstone Res	0%	—	—	-0.8	
2,427.07	Greatland Resources	369	+	1½	—	-11.8
332.03	GriFFin Mining	188	-	2	—	40.7
378.02	Gulf Keystone	174½	-	7	10.0	70.3
1,724.46	Hochschild	335½	+	4%	0.7	23.2
562.31	Hunting	350½	+	9	2.6	-26.2
16.49	Indus Gas	9	-	½	—	-0.1
7.04	Ironvelo	0	—	—	-1.1	
458.71	ITM Power	74½	-	4%	—	-10.0
94.39	Jubilee Metals	3	-	½	—	-17.6
1.28	Karel Diamond Res	0%	—	—	-3.2	
138.15	KEFI Gold and Copper	1½	-	½	—	-16.3
223.07	Kenmare Res	250	-	10	8.1	4.5
15.41	Landore Res	4½	-	½	—	-4.2
1.39	Lansdowne Oil & Gas	0%	—	—	-5.0	
17.84	Lexington Gold	4½	+	½	—	-36.0
366.01	Metals Exploration	12½	-	½	—	-12.7
1.74	Native Resources	0%	—	—	-49.3	
5.92	Nistrum Oil & Gas	3½	—	—	-3.7	
10.38	Orlote Resources	0%	—	—	-8.5	
	Ormonde Mining	0	—	—	—	—
74.39	Orosir Mining	19	-	3	—	—
1,992.26	Pan African Res	85½	+	1%	1.9	15.7
351.12	Pantheon Res	26½	-	1%	—	-27.6
14.75	Parkmead Group	13½	-	½	—	3.0
36.90	Petra Diamonds	19	—	—	-0.6	
1.77	Petrel Resources	0%	—	—	-3.7	
21.84	Petra Metals	1½	-	½	—	-1.9
12.30	Plexus Holdings	7½	-	½	—	-2.5
356.19	Porvair	766	—	—	0.8	21.4
16.29	Prosper Energy	3½	-	½	—	-38.0
60.18	Quadris	3	—	—	-17.6	
4.84	Reaboll Resources	0	—	—	-1.6	
2.83	Red Rock Res	0	—	—	-0.4	
23,573.10	Rio Tinto Ltd	6350½	-	270%	4.6	11.7
65,548.20	Rio Tinto	5226	-	260	5.4	9.7
14.30	Rome Resources	0%	—	—	-1.8	
185.55	Serahi Gold	245	+	9	—	8.8
848.94	Serica Energy	216	-	1	7.4	11.8
164,454.00	Shell	2849	+	1½	3.0	14.7
3.51	Shuka Minerals	5½	-	½	—	-1.6
13.00	Sound Energy	0%	—	—	-0.1	
10.14	Star Energy	7½	-	1½	—	-0.9
7.17	Star Energy	0	—	—	-2.9	
2.34	Sunrise Resources	0	—	—	-2.0	
3.04	Synergia Energy	0	—	—	1.0	
20.08	Tertiary Minerals	0	—	—	-3.1	
7.31	Thor Energy	0%	-	½	—	-0.8
104,015.00	Total Eng SE	4713½	-	25%	4.6	7.1
9.70	Tower Resources	0	—	—	-4.1	
135.70	Tullow Oil	9½	-	½	—	3.3
7.31	UK Oil & Gas	0	—	—	—	—
8.12	URU Metals	8½	-	½	—	-5.5
9.12	Vest Resources	0%	—	—	-0.8	
3.67	Westmount Energy	2½	+	½	—	-4.9
148.75	Wood Group (J)	21½	+	3	—	-0.1
3.70	Woodbois	0	—	—	-0.2	
6.85	Xtract Resources	0%	-	½	—	-8.0
51.47	Zephyr Energy	2½	-	½	—	-2.9
33.33	PCI-PAL	46	+	1½	—	—
4.55	Petards	7½	+	½	—	-3.9
0.98	PHSC	9½	—	—	-7.9	
23.48	PowerHouse Energy	0%	—	—	-4.8	
112.27	Record	56½	-	3%	8.2	11.2
722.70	Renew Holdings	913	-	13	2.1	17.4
10,374.40	Rentokil	410½	-	11	2.2	33.7
326.56	Restoro	238½	-	12%	2.5	26.2
16.49	Roebuck Food Group	16½	—	—	-1.5	
2,748.45	RS Group	584	+	27%	3.9	18.0
11.93	RTC Group	95	—	—	6.5	7.3
267.37	RWS Holdings	72½	-	5%	17.2	5.6
240.26	Science Group	545	-	5	1.5	20.6
2,502.47	Serco	248½	-	5%	17	59.6
164.94	Smiths News	66½	+	5%	12.8	5.7
13,946.00	Smurfit Westrock	2671	-	75	4.9	—
97.52	Software Circle	45	+	½	—	-58.0
56.54	Staffline Group	45½	+	½	—	-7.7
200.68	SThree	157	-	½	9.1	4.2
97.52	Synectics	282½	-	5	1.7	15.0
4.49	Thruvision Group	1	—	—	-0.4	
131.84	Tribea	61½	-	2%	2.1	23.7
17.91	Vianet	63	-	2%	2.1	21.6
6.32	Westminster	1½	—	—	-1.6	
791.78	ZIGUP	346	-	1	7.6	9.7
595.17	AO World	103½	-	3%	—	60.7
1,645.25	B&W European	163½	-	16	18.3	5.1
342.23	Card Factory	97½	-	6%	5.0	7.1
863.18	CVS Group	1208	-	34	0.7	16.4
346.53	DFS Furniture	148	-	11	—	14.1
2,254.59	Dunelm	1119	+	1	7.1	14.5
3,143.21	Fraser Group	698	-	31	—	10.3
1,592.12	Groceries	1557	-	56	4.4	10.3
307.81	Halfords	140	-	9	6.3	-9.1
4,353.09	Howden Joinery	806½	-	57	2.6	17.7
2,714.09	Inchcape	746	-	18	3.6	7.2
1.85	Imaging Biometrics	0%	—	—	-5.0	
947.71	JD Sports	84½	-	8%	1.2	8.9
5,348.72	Kingfisher	310	+	1½	4.0	30.7
7,864.36	Marks & Spencer	382½	-	15%	1.0	26.2
13.53	Mothercare	2½	-	½	—	2.2
51.21	Naked Wines	71½	-	4	—	-10.8
17,490.10	Next	1425	-	15	1.7	-32.2
1,652.00	Ocado	197	-	22%	—	-4.8
947.71	Pets at Home	209½	-	5	6.2	11.0
414.36	Pinewood Tech Group	360	-	8%	—	-7.6
375.18	Saga	259	-	7%	—	-20.2
8,003.54	Sainsbury's	349½	-	4%	4.4	33.6
799.82	VHS Smith	632½	-	43%	5.4	12.2
15.57	Sosandar	6½	-	½	—	-29.1
30,655.80	Tesco	474½	+	14%	3.0	19.9
71.76	Topps Tiles	36½	+	2	5.5	-5.5
2.22	Aferian	2	—	—	-0.2	
643.65	Alfa Financial	217	-	10%	2.9	25.0
159.17	Aptitude Software	285	-	13	1.9	-26.6
73.90	Bango	96	-	2%	—	-3.5
69.43	BATM Adv Coms	15½	-	2%	—	-4.1
115.91	Berkley Res	26	-	4	—	-72.4
9.85	Blackbird	2½	-	½	—	-3.5
56.06	Celebrus Tech	142½	-	4	2.3	11.6
23.53	Crato	18%	—	—	-2.2	
1.24	CloudCo	0%	—	—	-0.4	
2,968.46	Compucenter	2794	-	72	2.5	18.1
205.37	Concurrent Tech	237½	+	2%	0.5	43.3
49.94	Corero	9%	+	1	—	—
788.87	CraneWare	2170	-	8	1.5	50.8
4.11	Crimson Tide	62½	-	2%	—	-2.5
22.25	CyanConnote Hds	6½	—	—	-5.3	
1.94	Dillstone Group	9½	—	—	47.5	
1.62	EQTEC	0%	—	—	-40.7	
136.06	FDM Group	124	+	3%	14.9	6.6
285.69	Filtronic	130	-	6	—	20.2
553.75	GB Group	229	-	6%	1.9	67.4
84.09	Illiax	46½	+	2	—	-13.1
13.49	Ingenta	93	-	½	4.7	10.6
82.84	Intercedo	138½	-	9	—	20.1
27.11	Ionair	23%	-	1%	—	-0.5
53.67	IQE	5%	-	½	—	-1.4
209.05	LG Electronics	1216½	+	303	1.6	—
34.05	MTI Wireless	39½	-	1½	5.1	10.4
19.48	Nanoco Group	10	+	½	—	-23.2
207.63	Netcall	124½	-	1½	0.8	50.8
7.59	Northamber	28	21	-	5.8	
49.51	Oxford Metrics	43	-	1%	7.6	74.1
10.22	Pennant Intl	21½	-	½	—	-3.4
740.76	Playtech	239½	-	24	—	-34.9
46.78	Pulsar Group	34½	-	1	—	-5.8
2,383.54	QinetiQ	444½	+	34%	2.0	-13.5
109.86	Rim	112	+	1	—	-19.6
188.64	Seeing Machines	3%	+	½	—	-9.1
13.82	Shearwater Group	58	-	4%	—	-6.4
2,961.22	Softcat	1481	-	117	3.1	22.2
2.67	Sorted Group	35	—	—	-0.7	
23,064.70	Tele Ericsson	741½	-	29%	3.1	—
The Sage Grp	1101½	-	48	1.9	34.3	
6.38	Touchstar	80½	+	6	4.0	18.0
90.73	Tracsis	305	-	40	0.8	—
49.65	Triad Group	285	-	10	2.1	28.7
48.15	Water Info	284	+	21	—	13.9
93.75	Xaar	117	-	9	—	-8.7
10.08	Zoo Digital	10½	½	—	—	-1.7
10,785.00	Airtel Africa	295½	+	19	1.7	64.8
17,876.80	BT Group	179%	-	6%	4.6	16.6
1,428.80	Currys	128%	-	11%	1.2	8.6
891.30	Gamma Comms	967	-	26	2.1	13.4
1,764.19	Hellas Towers	167½	+	1%	—	73.3
65.62	Mobile Streams	0%	—	—	-32.4	
1,375.79	Telecom Plus	1718	-	58	5.5	17.8
21,081.40	Vodafone	88%	-	3%	4.3	-6.3
70.83	Braemar	221	-	14	2.3	11.4
1,079.19	Clarkson	3505	-	120	3.1	12.6
3,573.26	EasyJet	471½	-	13%	2.6	7.8
1,145.31	FirstGroup	203%	-	6%	3.2	9.6
202.49	Fisher (James)	400	+	2	—	64.3
16,787.80	Intl Cons Air	366½	-	51%	2.6	7.5
804.50	Irish Cent	512	-	2%	2.7	16.0
156.72	Mobile Group	25%	-	½	—	-4.2
319.68	Ocean Wilsons	1130	-	10	3.8	7.3
6.29	Sutton Harbour	4%	—	—	-0.4	
1,013.49	Wizz Air	980	-	67	—	5.1
8,179.17	Centrica	174%	-	4%	2.8	6.8
2,473.49	Drax Group	721½	—	4.0	5.2	
54.71	Jersey Electricity	470	-	5	4.4	12.4
58,074.80	National Grid	1170½	+	30%	4.0	19.0
23.44	ONG Power</					

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Register

Obituaries

James Watson

Nobel prizewinner who co-discovered DNA structure and was hailed as a genius only to be shunned later for controversial remarks

On April 25, 1953, the journal *Nature* published a rather dry paper entitled "Molecular Structure of Nucleic Acids". The work related, its two authors wrote, to something called deoxyribonucleic acid, a chemical with "novel features which are of considerable biological interest".

After describing the acid's key attributes, the authors allowed themselves a brief indulgence. "It has not escaped our notice," they concluded, in the only allusion to the fact that this was the most important biology publication since Darwin, "that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism".

If that all still feels a bit cryptic, you might prefer the description the scientists, James Watson and Francis Crick, used when they announced their findings a few weeks earlier — not in a journal, but in the Eagle pub in Cambridge.

The legend goes that on the lunchtime of February 28, the pair burst in and interrupted drinkers to proclaim that they had discovered "the secret of life".

It was not hyperbole. Modern biology can be divided in two by that date — the date on which the structure of DNA was determined. Before, it was not only that we did not know the mechanism by which children looked like their parents — we did not even know why they looked like humans and not chimpanzees or amoebas. Afterwards, at last, science had an answer for the most important question of biology: how does life replicate itself?

Watson and Crick gained instant scientific immortality and Watson, the junior partner, was only 25.

In his Nobel prize banquet speech in 1962, Watson would describe the day that they burst into the Eagle as the most wonderful in his life. In a race against Linus Pauling, the pre-eminent American structural chemist of the time, they had triumphed.

Watson would also acknowledge that his success came as a consequence of a single-mindedness and arrogance that some found off-putting. "I knew many people, at least when I was young, who thought I was quite unbearable," he said.

The story of the flustered diners in the Eagle, of the mischievous outsiders beating the stuffy establishment to biology's greatest prize, is how Watson always wanted to be remembered. This was a man whose autobiography would be titled *Avoid Boring People*, a category from which he implicitly excluded himself.

He viewed himself, with some cause, as a puckish rebel against stick-in-the-mud dogma. He saw farther, in other words, by standing on the toes of giants. But in later life he occasionally indulged in self-pity.

It was not so much that the giants were irritated by him, although they were. Edward Wilson, the Harvard scientist, once described him as "the Caligula of biology". Crick complained that Watson's gossipy book on the discovery was a "violation of friendship".

No, it was that so many others were irritated by him too. His repeated pronouncements on women, the genetics of race and even whether mothers should be allowed to abort foetuses containing "gay" genes led to him being



SHUTTERSTOCK: CORBIS

ostracised, losing his position at the laboratory that had been his home for 50 years, and his friends.

Before his death he had become, he declared in a maudlin moment, an "unperson".

It was because of a physicist that James Dewey Watson, one of the 20th century's finest biologists, did not become an ornithologist. Watson was born in Chicago in 1928, the only son of James, a businessman, and his wife, Jean (née Mitchell).

Ferociously intelligent, he took advantage of an experimental degree programme to begin studying at the Uni-

**Watson with a
molecular model
of DNA in 1957,
and, right, in
1959 delivering a
lecture with
Francis Crick, his
scientific partner,
who later
accused him of
violating their
friendship in an
autobiography**



They burst into the pub and proclaimed they had cracked the secret of life

versity of Chicago at the age of 15. At the time his great passion, inherited from his father, was birdwatching, and he enrolled in zoology.

However, in 1946 he read *What Is Life?* by Erwin Schrödinger and his career took a different course.

Schrödinger, one of the founders of quantum mechanics, had decided to mark his retirement by dabbling in biology. To Schrödinger, heredity — the way in which an organism passed on genetic information to its offspring — was not a biological problem, but one of information theory and atomic science.

Traditional biologists, whom Watson would cheerfully deride as merely "stamp collectors" dutifully categorising species, simply did not have the skills to make progress. Schrödinger thought he did. So he sat in a room and

prepared a lecture series, later a book. In a tour de force that biologists found in equal parts infuriating and dazzling, he deduced the molecular form that he thought genetic information must take.

Watson was captivated. Later, he would say: "From the moment I read Schrödinger's *What Is Life?* I became polarised toward finding out the secret of the gene."

He just had to convince someone to let him study it. That opportunity came, in a roundabout way, in 1951 when, aged 23, he was given a postdoctoral position at Cambridge's famous Cavendish Laboratory. In theory, he was there to work with John Kendrew, helping him with x-ray studies of the protein myoglobin. Watson had other ideas.

"Almost as soon as I set foot in the Cavendish, I inwardly knew I would never be of much help to John," he later said. The reason? "For I had already started talking with Francis."

So began one of the great partnerships of science: Watson, the maverick

American, and Crick, the diffident elder Englishman.

Today, it is difficult in what follows to separate the fact from the myth, and the myth-making. The story of DNA is not only a story written about Watson; it is a story in a large part written by Watson.

From the dramatic race to uncover the double helix to the anecdote about the Eagle pub, with his charisma he created the narrative, in some cases against the wishes of his colleagues — in others arguably at their expense.

What is certain is that in a few exhilarating months of inspiration and dogged obsession, Watson and Crick were able to see into the centre of every cell in our bodies, to the code inside us that made life possible.

For them, this task was a race. Watson was not the only scientist who had been inspired by Schrödinger. Throughout, they were aware that Pauling, the great California Institute of Technology chemist, was surely closing in on the answer. At King's College

London, Maurice Wilkins and Rosalind Franklin were also seeking the solution, through a different, more methodical approach.

There had been strong hints from other experiments that the molecule DNA was the mechanism of heredity that Schrödinger had posited. To prove it and to understand how DNA did this required working out what the chemical was at a molecular level.

It was known that DNA had four building blocks called "bases" — adenine, guanine, cytosine and thymine. But how did they encode information? How did they fit together? How did they then pass that information on? The clue had to be in the structure.

Wilkins and Franklin thought the route to answering these questions was through x-ray crystallography. They could not see a molecule directly — no microscope is powerful enough. Instead, scientists try to understand the atomic world through sideways glances, through the shadows left when x-rays pass through. This method is inexact and very hard to interpret.

Imagine building an image of the Eiffel Tower from its shadow at different times of day, and not getting a strut out of place.

Watson and Crick took a less painstaking course. Rather than work out what DNA was by looking at it, they were going to work out what it was by making it. In a room in the Cavendish, they struggled to piece together an atomic model. They knew the proportions of its constituent chemicals, they knew in theory the rules by which they could join and they had good intuition about what the end result should look like: a twisting triple helix.

It was like Lego, but with maths. Working with bits of wire, they assembled the helix, fudging a chemical bond here, pushing the chemistry to its limits there. "After tea, a shape began to emerge," said Watson. "Ebullient spirits prevailed." Finally, they had placed all the required chemicals. And it was a mess.

Franklin and Wilkins, whom they invited to see it, were not impressed. They had data that directly contradicted the model that the pair had presented them with — it proved that their trip to Cambridge had been wasted. They did not stay long. "Maurice mentioned that, if they moved with haste, the bus might enable them to get the 3.40 train to Liverpool Street station," Watson later wrote, disconsolately.

The two scientists realised that they had to start again. They also realised that they needed all the information that Franklin had gained from the careful x-ray photographs taken by her and her students.

At a meeting in King's, Wilkins passed Watson a picture, known as "Photo 51". It was so clear, he said, that "my mouth fell open and my pulse began to race". Separately, a report from Franklin describing in detail her precise observations reached them. Passed via several intermediaries, she was unaware that they had received it.

If the discovery of DNA, with all the ethical dilemmas that would follow, was humanity's bite from the tree of

Continued on page 44

Register

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43
James Watson

knowledge, this moment was the original sin. Later, the minutiae of this data transfer would be returned to again and again. Forever after, Crick and Watson — especially Watson — would have to deal with accusations that their discovery was stolen, that the information they relied on was not theirs to use.

It did not help their case that Franklin was a woman in a field dominated by men. Neither did it help that she died young, before the Nobel prize. And it definitely did not help that after her death Watson would describe “Rosy” — a name she never used — as a bolshy bluestocking who “was not unattractive and might have been quite stunning had she taken even a mild interest in clothes”. For good measure, he added: “The thought could not be avoided that the best home for a feminist was in another person’s lab.”

Sixty years later, more than 50 years after her death, Watson would still find reasons to denigrate her, unprompted, to an interviewer for *The Times*.

But if Watson’s attitudes to woman were in part a product of their time, so is our later judgment of his use of Franklin’s data. Her treatment by him has, justifiably, become emblematic of the position of women in science. Unfairly, this has sometimes necessitated her becoming a victim she was not.

Franklin was brilliant, and given time she might have come to the same conclusions about the structure of DNA, but the fact is that she didn’t. Watson and Crick did. They were the ones who pursued a trial-and-error approach using atomic models.

No scientist would have hesitated to use the data they received, which was far from secret. Franklin had earlier presented her numerical findings at a conference attended by Watson. If he had taken notes, rather than musing (as he did) on whether she would look better without glasses, the question of data ethics would have never arisen.

With the new information, Watson began work on a different structure: a double helix. This time, there was no need to fudge the chemical bonds. Better still, now that they had two strands curving around each other like a pair of helter-skelters, the structure offered an obvious copying mechanism.

With the spine of each helix curving on the outside, each “base” was attached to a complementary opposite base, like a lock in a key. This meant the information contained in the molecule was encoded twice, once in positive and once in negative. Separate off the negative, and you could make a new strand.

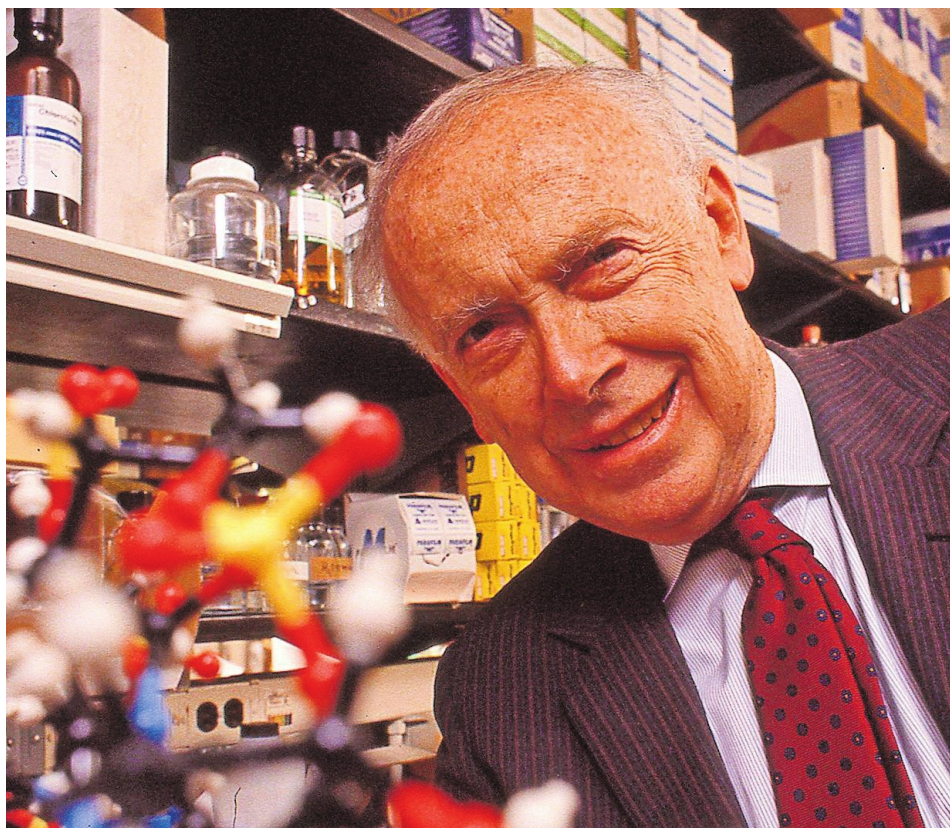
As soon as they finished the structure Watson knew what they had done. They had indeed unlocked the secret of life. At an age when most scientists have just finished their PhD, Watson knew he had attained greatness. The question was what was he going to do with the rest of his career.

His first academic move was to Harvard, where in 1956 he was given a position in the biology department. He had liked the idea of the change of scenery in part because it was a “girl-containing university”. To ensure it contained even more girls, he immediately went about employing secretaries and research assistants from Radcliffe, a nearby women’s college.

He also had ideas about science. Buoyed by his new stature, he lobbied for a switch in focus of the Harvard laboratory from classical biology — the taxonomic “stamp collecting” — to molecular biology.

This did not always make him friends. This was when Wilson, who preferred studying ants to molecules, came up with the “Caligula” epithet. “He was given licence to say anything that came to his mind and expect to be taken seriously,” he said. “And unfortunately, he did so, with a casual and brutal off-handedness.”

While at Harvard, Watson’s laborato-



Watson in 1989 when he was head of the Human Genome Project. Below, in his lab at Harvard displaying a model of DNA

ry was one of the co-discoverers of messenger RNA — later the basis of the Pfizer Covid vaccine. Here, he also branched out from pure science into writing. He wrote three textbooks, which remain in print. At the same time, Watson was working on an account of the discovery of the double helix for a more popular audience.

The first sign that his approach to science writing was going to be as unorthodox as his approach to science was the working title, *Honest Jim*. Crick was horrified when he read an early manuscript — understandably so, given that the first line, somewhat ironically given the propensities of the author, was: “I have never seen Francis Crick in a modest mood.”

‘He was given licence to say anything, and unfortunately he did so’

“The book is not a history of the discovery of DNA, as you claim in the preface. Instead it is a fragment of your autobiography,” Crick wrote to his former collaborator, in a fury. The science was, he continued, dodgy. “Absolutely no attempt is made to document your assertions, many of which are not completely accurate because of your faulty memory.”

Still Crick was not done. The style too, he wrote, was in “poor taste”. In fact the whole manuscript, he argued, was merely a vehicle for Watson’s self-aggrandisement. “It shows such a naive and egotistical view of the subject as to be scarcely credible.” History, he added for good measure, “will condemn you”. Watson changed the book’s name to *The Double Helix*, but did little else to accommodate his collaborator’s objections.

Crick was right and wrong. *The Double Helix* is partial, bitchy and occasionally unreliable. It is completely lacking in gravitas, skates over important details and is full of irrelevancies. It is also brilliant — one of the finest popular science books ever written.

In between accounts of the mechanism of protein synthesis

by ribonucleic acid, Watson discusses his aspirations to visit parties populated by “popsies”. A sentence before writing about the “stereochemically reasonable configuration” of bases in DNA he describes the “violent booing” of undergraduates in a cinema, prompted by the decision of the censors to excise the fruity bits of a skin flick.

Fifty years later Jennifer Doudna, one of the scientists responsible for the revolutionary DNA editing technique Crispr-cas9, cited the book as an inspiration. “It was the first time I saw science presented as it happens, as a very human endeavour. There were rivalries, competitions, conflicts — and despite that, science gets done,” she said. “I could suddenly imagine myself engaging with other people. That was the first time I thought to myself, ‘Gee, could I spend my life figuring things out?’ It all seemed so exotic.”

An estimated one million copies later, the book remains in print and continues to inspire both scientists and anger.

The same could be said of its author. In the year of its publication he took over the directorship of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York state, a position that would be his longest. Aged 39 he took with him a Radcliffe sophomore, Elizabeth Lewis, 19, whom he had married.

His employment policy had paid off. “The conventional argument was I was looking for good genes,” he told *The Guardian*,

“and she was very pretty.” They had two sons, Rufus and Duncan. Duncan, born in 1972, works in the computer industry. Rufus, who is two years older, suffers from mental health issues and lives at home.

The laboratory, for all the lustre of its reputation, was underfunded and decaying. In the space of a few years, Watson transformed it into one of the world’s leading and most affluent centres of virology and cancer research. He attracted government funding on an unprecedented scale and obtained money from the affluent local community.

Watson built housing for his scientists at Cold Spring Harbor and embellished the grounds. Elizabeth would write a guide to their flora, fauna and architecture. He attracted a galaxy of scientific talent to the opulently refurbished and extended laboratories, kept himself minutely informed of research and remained an exceptionally acute judge of ability and of where the next breakthrough might come.

Colleagues at the time, male and female, talked extremely fondly of a man who supported their careers. Mary-Claire King, now at the University of Washington, said that she saw a change in his attitude. “When Jim Watson was

young, the only woman he knew in science, Rosalind Franklin, was his direct competitor,” she said. “He didn’t have the experience of knowing women at all levels of scientific experience, younger and older, in his field, in related fields and so on. He made serious errors of judgment about Rosalind in consequence. He eventually did have this experience, and his views changed.” For all the accusations of sexism, then, it should be noted that he nurtured prominent female scientists at a time when few male professors would take them on.

As an elder of the American scientific establishment he could use his influence to great effect. He will be remembered for the central part that he played in establishing the Human Genome Project, the success of which

he accurately predicted. In 1988, Watson was appointed head of the project at the National Institutes of Health in the US, a post he held until 1992. Here, he could have ended a stellar career, but Watson was not a man to go gentle into the good night.

Being a Nobel laureate can be intoxicating. Ever after, your every pronouncement, even ones outside your expertise, takes on an air of gravitas. Some laureates respond by retreating from public life.

Others do the reverse. In his later years, Watson’s scientific contributions were modest, but his public statements were not. In the same way as he once needed his fellow scientists, he seemed to delight in the annoyance he could cause. To the public at least, who never spotted him in the quiet moments, it was sometimes as if he merely bounced from scandal to scandal.

In 1997, he made the comment suggesting women should have the right to abort a foetus with a “gay gene”, although he argued, with justification, that it was taken out of context. In 2000, the context defence was harder to deploy when he said: “Whenever you interview fat people, you feel bad, because you know you’re not going to hire them.” In 2003, he advocated “curing” the “genetic disease” of stupidity and genetically engineering women to be prettier.

The comments could be dismissed, with varying credibility, as jokes. But eventually he made a statement that could not. In 2007, speaking to *The Sunday Times*, he said he was “inherently gloomy about the prospect of Africa” because “all our social policies are based on the fact that their intelligence is the same as ours — whereas all the testing says not really”.

He added that the idea of genetic equality in intelligence was nice but “people who have to deal with black employees find this not true”. In the ensuing furore he lost his position at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, but kept an honorary role.

That too would eventually go when, in a 2019 documentary, he repeated the assertion. This time, he had run out of defenders. At the age of 19 Ewan Birney, now a distinguished academic in his own right, lived with the Watsons on a molecular biology gap year at Cold Spring Harbor.

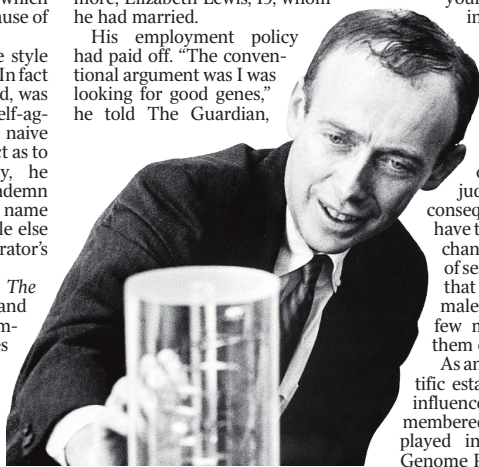
He remains friendly with the family, but said: “Jim Watson is one of these scientists who has used his gut to think a lot, often with remarkable success, but this is a case where his gut is plain, flat wrong. He has had many people tell him that he is wrong and he has decided not to listen to that. And he has decided not to engage with people who know more than him in this area.”

After the documentary was broadcast Cold Spring Harbor removed Watson from his last position and, for good measure, from the wall. Today, there is a rectangular patch of less faded paint in the main lecture hall that marks where Watson’s portrait used to hang.

While no colleagues defended him, some did try to contextualise. One blamed age. “For those of us who have had the honour of knowing the man and his deeds there is only anguish over the present situation,” said Mike Wigler, who worked with him at Cold Spring Harbor. “It is not news when a 90-year-old man who has lost cognitive inhibition and has drifted that way for decades as he aged speaks from his present mind.”

Another colleague, exasperated, said simply that his desire to shock, to be the *Honest Jim* who tweaked the nose of authority, had eventually been his undoing. “For most men their words would have you believe they are better than their deeds,” he said. “For Jim it is the reverse.”

James Watson, molecular biologist, was born on April 6, 1928. He died of complications from an infection on November 6, 2025, aged 97



Quentin Willson

Wry but sometimes scathing Top Gear presenter and campaigner for motorists

Quentin Willson held the distinction of receiving the lowest recorded score on *Strictly Come Dancing*. He took part in the show's second series in 2004, wearing an L-plate on his back, but was voted off after a single dance having been awarded only eight marks.

Fortunately, he knew more about motoring than dancing and in 1991 became the other half of Jeremy Clarkson's double-act on *Top Gear*, the BBC's motoring show which had been running since 1977. As the show's used-car expert he was known for his wry delivery and scathing reviews, once describing Jaguars of the 1960s as "the domain of spivs, crooks and book-makers". In his telling, Aston Martins were the "King Kongs" of classic cars; a Bentley Turbo R was "a large aristocratic super saloon" with "the looks of Blenheim Palace"; and the most powerful thing about the old Porsche 911s was "that they can kill you in a heartbeat ... it's like having the Grim Reaper saying, 'Just how hard are you?'"

Willson later became a determined campaigner for motorists. In 1996 he bought a car in Amsterdam for £7,000 less than its price in the UK and parked it outside the car plant in Birmingham. "The newspapers followed my lead and we soon created a consumer backlash, forcing the industry to bring down their prices on imported cars," he said.

He also co-founded FairFuel, claiming to have saved motorists billions of pounds by persuading the government to end the fuel duty escalator. In 2021 he quit, saying the organisation was guilty of peddling "urban myths" about electric cars, for which he had been an early advocate. Having driven the original General Motors EV1 in 1996 and owned countless other electric models, he became a self-described "electric car evangelist", giving evidence on the subject to



Willson takes a driving test for a TV show; he also wore an L plate when he got the lowest score yet on *Strictly Come Dancing*

select committees and lobbying ministers for greater incentives and infrastructure.

Quentin McDonald Willson was born in Leicester in 1957, the son of Professor Bernard Willson, a linguist and academic who worked in Hut 4 at Bletchley Park during the Second World War, and his wife Agnes (née Gullon), known as Nan, also an academic, who hoped that her son would become an English lecturer; he had a twin, Ashley, and two other siblings, Vivian and Chloe.

While studying English literature at the University of Leicester he began dabbling in used cars. "I'd buy them, enjoy them, sell them and make a bit of profit," he said. "I bought an Austin-Healey Frogeye for £50 and later sold it for £150. It grew naturally from there and by the end of university I sold a Jaguar E-type for £1,500 that I had bought for £750. It certainly funded an intense nightlife and the girls loved it."

Despite his reputation as a "petrol head" intoxicated by the "heady, narcotic cocktail of noise and speed and vrum-vrum", Willson would "much rather go to an art gallery or pore over a TS Eliot poem than discuss Ferraris in the pub", and in his twenties appeared with the Halcyon Singers, an amateur choir in Leicester. However, his motoring interests continued, evolving from Austin-

Healey Sprites and MG Midgets to large American cars. He started his own business, though on one occasion was convicted of supplying a "clocked" car. Having bought it at auction, unaware of the true mileage, he came unstuck after selling it on to a private buyer.

In 1988 Willson married Michaela Stevens. She survives him with their son Max and two daughters, who were named after cars: Mercedes and Mini. In 2015 the family were in the papers when Max, then 16, drew on his Combined Cadet Force training to stem Mini's bleeding after she severed an artery in a fall against a window at the family's remote French vineyard, where Willson produced his award-winning Château Gourgues wine.

Soon after his marriage he was recruited as deputy editor of *Buying Cars* magazine, telling readers that there was more to buying a second-hand car than asking themselves: "Can I pull it in?"

He had an eye for a story, describing how one of his customers got so fed up with having radios stolen from his BMW 535i that he simply stuck a note over the aperture saying: "Don't bother, it's already gone". Some nights later, he again found a side window smashed and a scribbled note on the seat that read: "Just checking". Newspapers and radio shows began

soliciting his opinions, which led him to television. *Top Gear* was cancelled in 2001 and he did not return when it was revived the following year, instead jumping ship to host Channel 5's *Fifth Gear*, which had a similar format to *Top Gear*. Meanwhile, he had been presenting *The Car's the Star* about classic vehicles on BBC2 (1994-99). He also wrote several books and in 2004 was named motoring journalist of the year by the Press Association.

His other television work included *Britain's Worst Driver* and *Britain's Worst DIYer*. The latter did not impress Victor Lewis-Smith, the Evening Standard's acerbic critic, who wrote: "I wondered what hold the writer of this dismal rubbish (Quentin Willson) could possibly have over the executive producer (Q Willson) and the format deviser (Q Willson) that prevented him from being sacked on the spot." There was worse to come with *Britain's Worst Wife* in 2004.

Willson not only traded cars but also commodities, including oil and vintage watches. He bought gold at \$800 an ounce before selling it two years later for \$1,250, and owned art by Picasso, David Hockney and Andy Warhol. "I used to go to New York in the early Eighties and I met one of Warhol's dealers, who showed me a big chest of paintings she had. I bought some and they have since gone up in value by around 1,000 per cent," he said.

He was unashamed of his score on *Strictly Come Dancing*, even claiming to be proud of such a dubious record. "Builders ran up to me to shake my hand because I failed so badly," he said. "I tried, but I was the dancing equivalent of a JCB."

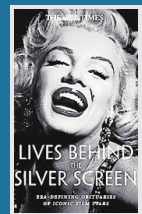
Quentin Willson, *Top Gear* presenter, was born on July 23, 1957. He died from lung cancer on November 8, 2025, aged 68

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THE TIMES

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

To place notices for these sections please call 020 7782 7553

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 11.30am three days prior to insertion



Legal Notices

CR-2025-005834
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF
ENGLAND & WALES
COMPANIES COURT (CHD)

IN THE MATTER OF THALES HOLDINGS UK PLC
AND
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Part 8 Claim Form was on 28 October 2025 issued in His Majesty's High Court of Justice for an order confirming the cancellation of the amount standing to the credit of the share premium account of Thales Holdings UK PLC (the Company) (Company Number 03945443 and registered office at 350 Longwater Avenue, Green Park, Reading, Berkshire, United Kingdom, RG2 6GF).

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the application is directed to be heard by an Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at the Rolls Building, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 3DF on Tuesday, 25 November 2025.

AND ANY CREDITOR OR SHAREHOLDER of the Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order confirming the cancellation of the amount standing to the credit of the share premium account of the Company should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by legal representative for that purpose.

A copy of the Claim Form will be provided to any person who requires it by the Company's solicitors. Dated 10 November 2025

Norton Rose Fulbright LLP
3 More London Riverside
London
SE1 2AQ
Tel: 020 7444 6000
Ref: CGRI/10/1352501
SOLICITORS FOR THE COMPANY

Court Circular



Buckingham Palace

8th November, 2025
The King, Patron, and Queen were present this evening at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

The Princess of Wales, The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were also present.

Kensington Palace

8th November, 2025
The Prince of Wales this evening arrived at Heathrow Airport, London, from Brazil.

Mr Ian Patrick was in attendance.

St James's Palace

8th November, 2025
The Princess Royal, accompanied by Vice-Admiral

Sir Tim Laurence, this morning arrived at Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport, Australia.

Her Royal Highness, accompanied by Admiral Laurence, today carried out the following engagements in Sydney, New South Wales.

The Princess Royal called upon the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia (the Hon Samantha Mostyn) and Mr Simeon Beckett at Admiralty House, 109 Kirribilli Avenue, Kirribilli.

Her Royal Highness, President, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, afterwards visited Sydney War Cemetery, Memorial Avenue, Rookwood General Cemetery, Rookwood, and laid a wreath.

The Princess Royal this afternoon called upon the Governor of New South Wales (the Hon Margaret Beazley) and Mr Dennis Wilson at Government House, Sydney.

Her Royal Highness subsequently attended a Reception given by the Governor of New South Wales

and Mr Wilson at Government House.

The Princess Royal this evening attended a Dinner given by the Governor of New South Wales and Mr Wilson at Government House.

Buckingham Palace

9th November, 2025
The King laid a wreath at the Cenotaph this morning on the occasion of Remembrance Day.

A wreath was laid on behalf of The Queen by Major Oliver Plunkett.

Wreaths were also laid by The Prince of Wales and The Duke of Edinburgh.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of The Princess Royal by Lieutenant Colonel Catherine Skinner and on behalf of The Duke of Kent by Captain Pieter Myburgh.

The Queen, The Princess of Wales, The Duchess of Edinburgh, The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, and The Duke of Kent were present during the Ceremony. The Duke of Edinburgh

afterwards took the salute at the March Past of Ex-Servicemen and Civilian Organisations on Horse Guards Parade, London SW1.

St James's Palace

9th November, 2025
The Princess Royal, accompanied by Vice-Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, today carried out the following engagements in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Her Royal Highness this morning attended a Service of Remembrance and laid a wreath at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park.

The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Australian Corps of Signals, this afternoon attended a Parade at Victoria Barracks, Paddington, to celebrate the Centenary of the Corps.

Her Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Australian Corps of Signals, and Royal Patron, Certia Cito Foundation, afterwards attended a Reception at Victoria Barracks.

Public Notices

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Invitation to the

ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS' MEETING

to be held on 27 November 2025 at 11 a.m. at the registered office of the company with the following agenda:

Agenda

1. Acceptance of the report of the Board of Directors
2. Acceptance of the auditor's report (Réviseur d'entreprises agréé)
3. Approval of the financial statements as at 30 September 2025
4. Resolution on the appropriation of profits of the financial year ending 30 September 2025
5. Changes in the Board of Directors
6. Discharge of the members of the Board of Directors
7. Appointment of the auditor (Réviseur d'entreprises agréé)

The items of the agenda are not subject to a quorum and resolutions will be adopted by a simple majority of the shareholders present or represented.

Shareholders holding their share portfolio in a custody account of a bank are to request their depository bank to provide the company with a safe custody receipt, confirming that the shares will be blocked until after the shareholders' meeting. The safe custody receipt must be presented to the company five days prior to the shareholders' meeting.

Respective powers of attorney can be obtained at the registered office of the company by telephone (00352-2640-3005).

Shareholders wishing to attend the meeting personally are requested to register at the registered office of the company under the above contact data, five days prior to the meeting.

The Board of Directors

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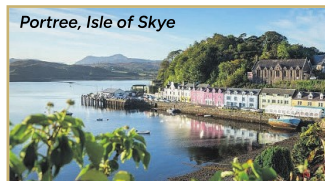
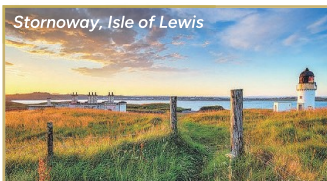
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Today A cloudy day with spells of rain and showers, heaviest across southern Britain later. Max 14C (57F), min 1C (34F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy, du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, ss=sun, t=thunder
*previous day **data not available

	Temp C	Temp F	Rain mm	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	12	C	1.2	0.0
Aberporth	12	C	4.8	5.1
Anglesey	12	R	13.0	6.0
Aviemore	11	R	3.2	0.4
Barnstaple	14	R	1.4	**
Bedford	13	PC	0.2	**
Belfast	13	S	3.2	0.1
Birmingham	12	R	0.2	**
Bournemouth	14	C	0.6	6.1
Bridlington	11	S	0.0	**
Bristol	14	C	0.2	7.5
Cambridge	14	R	5.4	3.7
Cardiff	13	D	3.8	7.2
Edinburgh	12	R	1.0	0.4
Exeter	13	R	6.0	0.0
Glasgow	12	R	4.0	0.6
Hereford	13	C	0.6	**
Hertsmere	14	B	0.4	5.1
Ipswich	13	PC	0.2	1.2
Isle of Man	14	PC	4.2	3.3
Isle of Wight	14	C	0.2	**
Jersey	13	C	0.0	5.3
Kewstwick	13	R	4.4	**
Kinross	13	R	2.4	1.2
Leeds	11	C	0.0	**
Lerwick	11	C	0.6	0.0
Leuchars	11	R	2.8	0.1
Lincoln	11	C	0.0	1.7
Liverpool	12	C	4.4	**
London	14	C	0.2	3.3
Lyneham	13	C	0.4	5.9
Manchester	12	C	1.0	3.2
Margate	14	PC	0.0	6.4
Milford Haven	13	R	9.0	**
Newcastle	9	R	0.4	**
Nottingham	11	C	0.4	0.4
Orkney	11	R	3.6	0.0
Oxford	14	C	0.2	**
Plymouth	13	R	12.8	**
Portland	14	R	1.8	**
Selly, St Mary's	14	C	6.0	**
Shoreham	14	C	0.2	2.7
Shrewsbury	13	C	1.0	4.1
Snowdonia	12	R	10.4	**
Southend	14	B	0.2	4.7
South Uist	12	PC	3.6	**
Stormovay	13	C	2.0	0.0
Tiree	12	PC	4.6	4.2
Whitehaven	10	R	4.6	2.1
Wick	11	D	6.2	**
Yeoilton	14	R	0.8	5.3

The world

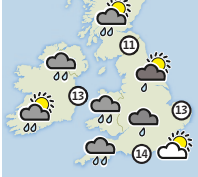
All readings local midday yesterday			
Alicante	21	S	Madrid 22 PC
Amsterdam	14	PC	Madrid 12 S
Antwerp	22	PC	Malaga 20 PC
Auckland	23	B	Malorca 20 PC
Bahrain	28	PC	Malta 22 PC
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne 14 B
Barbados	25	S	Mexico City 23 B
Barcelona	17	S	Miami 30 PC
Beijing	14	S	Milan 13 S
Beirut	26	PC	Mombasa **
Belgrade	11	B	Montreal 6 B
Berlin	7	DU	Moscow 6 DU
Bermuda	23	R	Mumbai 31 **
Bordeaux	13	PC	Munich 9 PC
Brussels	12	PC	Nairobi **
Bucharest	14	DU	Naples 19 S
Budapest	13	PC	New Orleans 26 PC
Buenos Aires	21	S	New York 18 PC
Cairo	27	B	Nice 17 PC
Calcutta	28	**	Nicosia 27 PC
Canberra	15	SH	Oslo 4 C
Cape Town	24	PC	Paris 11 M
Chicago	7	C	Perth 28 S
Copenhagen	8	DU	Prague 5 R
Corfu	21	B	Reykjavik 7 D
Delhi	25	**	Riga 6 DU
Dubai	31	S	Rio de Janeiro 25 B
Dublin	13	PC	Riyadh 28 S
Faro	19	S	Rome 21 S
Florence	17	S	San Francisco 19 PC
Frankfurt	8	SH	Santiago 22 S
Geneva	10	PC	Sao Paulo 24 B
Gibraltar	19	B	Seoul 16 PC
Helsinki	7	B	Seychelles 29 PC
Hong Kong	28	PC	Singapore 31 B
Honolulu	20	B	St Petersburg 8 C
Istanbul	20	B	Stockholm 5 DU
Jerusalem	31	PC	Sydney 19 PC
Johannesburg	22	PC	Tel Aviv 31 PC
Kuala Lumpur	31	PC	Tenerife 25 B
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo 13 SH
Lanzarote	25	B	Vancouver 11 B
Las Palmas	24	B	Venice 15 S
Lima	17	DU	Vienna 10 PC
Lisbon	15	PC	Warsaw 7 R
Los Angeles	21	**	Washington 21 PC
Luxor	32	S	Zurich 9 DU

Five days ahead

An unsettled period with bright intervals and frequent outbreaks of rain and showers

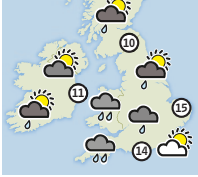
Tomorrow

Mainly dry with sunny periods in southeast England. Patchy cloud and persistent rain elsewhere, heaviest in Ireland.
Max 14C, min 5C



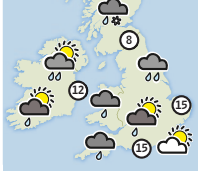
Wednesday

Bright periods and spells of rain, heaviest and most widespread across Wales and south west England through the afternoon.
Max 15C, min 3C



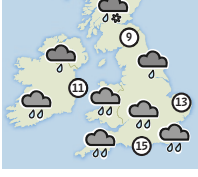
Thursday

An unsettled day for most with bright intervals and scattered showers, perhaps turning wintry in Scotland. Dry in the southeast.
Max 15C, min 1C



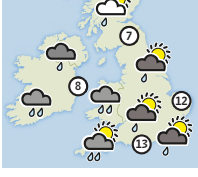
Friday

Thick cloud and heavy outbreaks of rain across England, Wales and Ireland. One or two wintry showers in Scotland.
Max 15C, min 0C



Saturday

A blustery day with outbreaks of rain and showers, heaviest in southern Ireland and southwest England by the afternoon.
Max 13C, min 0C



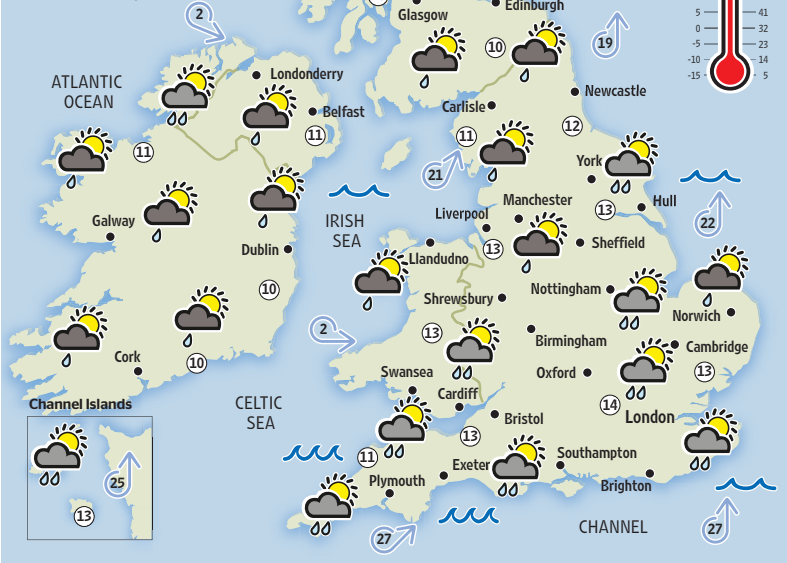
The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

Wind speed
34 (mph)
Temperature
28 (degrees C)

Sea state
Calm
Slight
Moderate
Rough

Flood alerts and warnings

At 17:00 on Sunday there were three flood alerts and no warnings in England, one flood alert and one warning in Wales and no flood alerts and one warning in Scotland. For further information and updates in England visit check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk



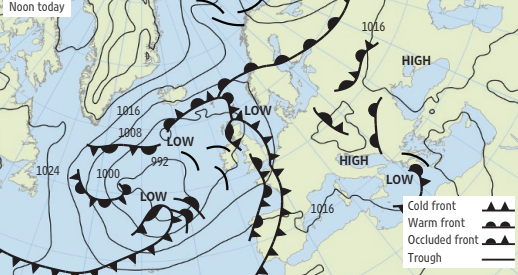
General situation: Patchy cloud and widespread rain and showers, heaviest in the south through the afternoon. Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Early mist and fog clearing to leave a day of sunny intervals and scattered showers, heaviest and most widespread in the northwest. Light to moderate west to southwesterly winds. Maximum 11C (52F), minimum 2C (36F). NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, Cen Highland, N Isles: Thick cloud and heavy spells of rain

in the morning. Bright intervals and a few showers by the afternoon. Light to moderate south to southeasterly winds, variable at times. Maximum 10C (50F), minimum 1C (34F). Edinburgh and Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, Borders, Lake District, NE Eng: A day of bright periods and showery outbreaks of rain, heaviest and most widespread through the morning. Light to moderate south to southwesterly winds. Maximum 12C (54F), minimum 3C (37F).

NW Eng, Cen N Eng, E Eng, N Wales, W Mids, E Mids, IoM: Patchy cloud and widespread rain, heaviest in the afternoon. Light to moderate west to southwesterly winds. Maximum 13C (55F), minimum 6C (43F). London, E Anglia, SE Eng, Cen S Eng, SW Eng, S Wales, Channel Is: A day of bright spells and outbreaks of rain and showers, heaviest in southwest England later. Light to moderate west to southwesterly winds. Maximum 14C (57F), minimum 6C (43F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres			
Today	HT	LT	HT
Aberdeen	04:26 4.1	16:37 4.0	
Avonmouth	10:09 12.2	22:39 11.5	
Belfast	02:08 3.4	14:25 3.6	
Cardiff	09:54 11.3	22:28 10.7	
Devonport	08:45 5.3	21:19 4.8	
Dover	01:40 6.5	14:09 6.3	
Dublin	02:24 3.9	14:46 4.0	
Falmouth	08:12 4.9	20:45 4.4	
Greenock	03:20 3.4	15:17 3.7	
Harwich	02:22 3.8	14:50 3.9	
Holyhead	01:11 5.3	13:30 5.4	
Hull	09:18 7.1	21:23 6.9	
Leith	05:38 5.4	17:58 5.1	
Liverpool	01:53 8.9	14:14 8.8	
London Bridge	04:36 6.4	17:03 6.9	
Lowestoft	00:00 2.5	12:49 2.5	
Milford Haven	09:14 6.6	21:46 6.2	
Morecambe	02:04 8.9	14:25 8.8	
Newhaven	01:56 6.4	14:12 6.2	
Newquay	08:07 6.5	20:40 6.0	
Oban	08:27 3.6	21:04 3.2	
Penzance	07:39 5.3	20:08 4.8	
Portsmouth	02:23 4.6	14:38 4.5	
Shoreham	02:00 6.0	14:17 5.8	
Southampton	01:55 4.4	13:39 4.2	
Swansea	09:19 8.8	21:54 8.2	
Tees	06:46 5.2	19:01 5.1	
Weymouth	09:30 2.0	22:22 1.7	



Synoptic situation

Cold and occluded fronts associated with a low-pressure system to the north of Scotland will bring patchy cloud and showery outbreaks of rain across much of the British Isles, heaviest and most widespread in Wales and southern England through the afternoon. A couple of troughs in the west will bring further showers into parts of Ireland at times.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday
Warmest: St James's Park, 14.7C
Coldest: Altnaharra, -0.1C
Wettest: Whitechurch, 19.4mm
Sunniest: Almondsbury, Gloucestershire, 7.5hrs

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 07:09
Sun sets: 16:17
Moon rises: 20:50
Moon sets: 13:24 Tue
Third quarter: November 12

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	16:34-07:12
Belfast	17:00-07:16
Birmingham	16:52-06:52
Cardiff	17:00-06:54
Exeter	17:04-06:53
Glasgow	16:48-07:15
Liverpool	16:53-07:00
London	16:48-06:42
Manchester	16:49-06:57
Newcastle	16:41-07:00
Norwich	16:38-06:40
Penzance	17:14-06:59
Sheffield	16:47-06:54

Weather Eye
Paul Simons



One of the greatest phenomena in the natural world is the autumn leaf colours of trees, as Albert Camus described, "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower".

The colour change is so dramatic it can be seen by satellites as a great coloured wave sweeping from north to south at about 60-70km each day in western Europe.

The most stunning sight is the flaming reds of some trees, notably over much of eastern North America and eastern Asia, but in the UK the colours tend to be the more muted yellows, golds and browns of broadleaf trees such as beech, sycamore and oak.

The signal that kickstarts the colour change in autumn is shortening days and falling temperatures. Usually leaves are coloured green with chlorophyll, but when this breaks down in autumn it reveals other coloured pigments that normally remain hidden, such as orange colours from carotenoids and yellows from xanthophyll pigments. Red or purple colours are created from scratch by anthocyanin pigments, which normally give the red colour to fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes and strawberries as well as many flowers.

But the mystery is why the leaves change colour at all. One idea is that the pigments may be acting as a sunscreen to protect the leaves from ultraviolet light, allowing the trees to salvage nutrients from the leaves before they fall. Indeed, the most intense colours occur during dry, warm, sunny days and cool nights.

This makes sense because the outer leaves of maple trees, for example, are more colourful on the sunny side of the tree canopy, while the shaded leaves inside the canopy, or on the shaded north side of a tree, are less colourful. Bright, sunny days and cold nights are also typical autumn conditions in eastern North America and eastern Asia, where the majority of tree species with red autumn leaves are found. In the UK we tend to have cloudier autumn days and warmer nights, and more restrained colours.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

WeatherQuest
weatherquest.co.uk



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Sport

'I love winning. I will take as many majors as I can get'

Rick Broadbent meets British prodigy Lottie Woad, 21, who has taken golf by storm since turning pro this year

"I want to win majors." Five words and one mantra that show Lottie Woad is not the sort for messing about. It is rare to talk to a 21-year-old with such clarity of purpose and phlegmatic belief. None of that "living the dream" fare that sometimes comes with prodigies, no faux modesty or cocksure precocity, just faith in a rare talent. It comes as no surprise that Scottie Scheffler is an inspiration.

Woad was still an amateur when she won the Women's Irish Open in July and then finished third at the Evian Championship, one of the year's majors. She missed out on £450,000 because of her amateur status, but turning pro and banking dollars were inevitabilities and she duly won her first tournament, the Women's Scottish Open, after making the move.

Breakthrough acts in any sport need to be handled with kid gloves, but the Tiger Woods analogies were made easier by a shared management company. The spoils of success also mean this interview was given to mark her new status as a brand ambassador for FM, a commercial property insurer. FM's other big partnership is with Rory McIlroy, which is an indicator of Woad's corporate clout.

Her peers have been just as impressed. Lydia Ko, who was a world No 1 at 17, said she hoped to pick her brain when they played together at the AIG Women's Open. Charley Hull, England's cigarette-puffing star, was the runner-up in that tournament and said Woad gave her "goosebumps".



The 21-year-old, right, was a talented footballer and trained at Southampton's academy but chose to focus on golf in her early teens, before being "saved during lockdown" by the putting green her parents built in their garden, above

None of this fazes Woad who, like Scheffler, is more pragmatic than romantic. She is still with her old coaches, just as Scheffler has stuck with the septuagenarian sage Randy Smith. Both were also amateur stars, with Woad triumphing at the Augusta National Women's Amateur last year. Neither gets too high or low or could be regarded as an open goal for interviewers. "I look up to what Scottie's doing and how he's dominating but also the demeanour he has as well," Woad says. "I try to keep it pretty level because that's when I play my best."

One of the most notable features of Woad's armoury is her grit under pressure. At the Irish Open she led by seven after three rounds and never looked like stumbling, finishing with a 69. Three weeks later at the Scottish Open she

was two ahead going into the final round, but Kim Hyo-joo drew level on the back nine. Here was the test of a tyro, but Kim faltered and Woad won by three. "It's a pretty good outcome, I guess," she said with flatliner calm.

Her relationship with the pressure of a Sunday afternoon is telling. "I find it more fun, to be honest," she says. "I feel it can be pretty packed coming down the stretch, but then on Sunday it separates out. That may make people think about it a little too much and it gives you an opportunity to move up and put the pressure on. I enjoy that."

One story from this close-knit family archive shows just how serious the golf project has long been. During the Covid lockdown, when Woad was 16, her parents installed a 300 square foot putting green in their garden in Farnham.



"It definitely saved me during lockdown because I would have been so bored," she says. "I had a net as well, so I was just out there hitting and putting, trying to practise as much as possible because it felt like I was losing ground because England had a lot more restrictions than the US and some places in Europe. It was during the college recruitment process too. I could not go over to the US, so they ended up recruiting me over Zoom and watching videos of me in the garden."

The after-effects of the pandemic on a generation's mental health are still playing out, but Woad's burgeoning ambition was a guiding focus. "I just missed competing and probably didn't play in a competition for two years," she says. "That was the sad aspect, but at the same time I got to spend time with

my family, and you just try to take the positives from that."

Moving to Florida State University was clearly good for her, but the key figures from home remained pivotal figures: Steven Robinson and Nigel Edwards from England Golf, Luke Bone from Farnham Golf Club, and her parents Nick and Rachel.

Georgia Hall's win at the 2018 British Open remains the only major triumph by a British woman for 16 years. Hull has come close on numerous occasions, but getting over the line is hard. "I would watch a lot of Charley and Georgia when I was younger so it's weird to be playing with them," Woad says.

"It's a big jump from the amateurs. You've seen it this year where there was a different winner every week for a while so I'm just looking to be in con-

Carlisle

Rob Wright

12.15 Mydaddypaddy 2.15 Steel Ally
12.45 Real Quartz 2.48 Jackpot D'Alnay
1.15 The Widdow Maker 3.23 Dollar Collar
1.45 Deakiehandkaty 3.58 Trinity Street

Golting: chase: good to soft, soft in places;
hurdle: soft, good to soft in places

12.15 Maiden Hurdle (Div 1, £3,812; 2m 1f) (9 runners)

1 0/06 ALBIE LITTLEWOOD 15 D Skelton 6-11-4 C J Todd
2 232- ATLANTIC LAD 293 (BF) D McCain 5-11-4 T Gillard
3 11- HARBOUR ISLAND 207 D Murphy 6-11-4 S Bowen
4 12- MISTER URSUS 125 (H) O Murphy 4-11-4 R T Dunne
5 1- MYDADDYPADDY 253 D Skelton 4-11-4 H Skelton
6 30- RIVERS OF WHISKEY 270 J Moffatt 5-11-4 Charlotte Jones

7 6 STUNG BY TARIFFS 181 H Daly 4-11-4 C Gethings
8 6 FREE PIC 27 J Parkinson & S Smith 4-10-11 P J Kavanagh
9 422-4 MY MY MY DELLAH 191 W Coltherd 5-10-11 S Quinlan
4-7 Mydaddypaddy, 7-2 Harbour Island, 8-1 Atlantic Lad, 10-1 Mister Ursus, 30-1 others.

Rob Wright's choice: Mydaddypaddy impressed in a bumper at Huntingdon
Dangers: Harbour Island, Atlantic Lad

12.45 Maiden Hurdle (Div 1, £3,812; 2m 1f) (9)

1 2-50 CARRHILL 16 C Grant 5-11-4 D McMenamin
2 5-40 GALEIC GLOW 101 S England 4-11-4 J England
3 396F- INEDIT D'AMOUR 259 D McCain 4-11-4 B Hughes

4 291-1 KENT DE THAIX 190 R Menzies 5-11-4 N Moscrop
5 6-4 KING HORSE 183 Paul Robson 5-11-4 R Ianina
6 1- REAL QUARTZ 352 (W) D Skelton 5-11-4 H Skelton
7 COOKATIE D Skelton 5-10-11 C J Todd

8 40- OH CLARE 330 (BF) J & A O'Neill 5-10-11 J O'Neill Jr
9 12- THERE RUNS MARY 254 (BF) D Murphy 5-10-11 Doubtful
1-2 Real Quartz, 6-1 Oh Clare, 8-1 Cookatie, 10-1 Kent De Thaix, 12-1 Gaelic Glow, 14-1 Inedit D'Amour, 66-1 King Horse, 150-1 Carlhill.

Wright choice: Real Quartz cost £190,000 after his Irish point-to-point win Dangers: Kent De Thaix, Inedit D'Amour

1.15 Handicap Chase (£7,922; 2m 4f) (5)

1 02-00 STONER'S CHOICE 17 (P,T,D) F O'Brien 10-11-11 Fern O'Brien (5)
2 6-146 WHISTLEINTHEHARD 120 (D) L Morgan 10-11-8 B Hughes
3 1-145 LIKEDWAYTHINKIN 77 (P) R Haslam 11-11-8 R McLennan
4 1202- DUBAI DAYS 200 (W,H,T,D) N Alexander 11-11-6 B Lynn
5 616-3 THE WIDDOW MAKER 11 (T) J Tizzard 11-11-2 F Giegell
15-8 Dubai Days, 11-4 The Widdow Maker, 7-2 Stoner's Choice, 6-1 Whistleinthead, 7-1 Likedwaythinkin.

Wright choice: The Widdow Maker was third in a more competitive race at Stratford Dangle: Likedwaythinkin

1.45 Handicap Hurdle (£3,301; 2m 4f) (11)

1 6223- CAHIER'S DEN 216 (BF) D McCain 5-12-0 T Gillard
2 063-6 ROSE'S DART 20 M & D Easterby 4-11-12 B Hughes
3 6543- BO CRUZ 280 D McCain 6-11-6 W Maggs (5)
4 43-04 DEARKEHANDKATY 19 J & A O'Neill 4-11-4 J O'Neill Jr
5 3903- LONG TIME LISTENER 235 T Easterby 5-11-2 D McMenamin
6 0465- ALWAYS A REASON 230 R Menzies 6-11-0 R Chapman
7 5276- DIXIE COWBOY 550 (BF) S England 6-10-12 J England

8 36-00 DROP KICK 30 M Walford 4-10-7 J Hamilton
9 P-495 KALO ATHENA 114 (T) J Moffatt 6-10-6 L Norcel (10)
10 45-49 ROCK N ROLL CHAMP 156 S Forster 7-10-2 E Austin (5)
11 906- ROXBY BELLE 210 M Walford 4-10-2 C Maggs (5)

11-4 Cahier's Den, 4-1 Bo Cruz, 11-2 Rose's Dart, 15-2 Always A Reason, Dearkiehandkaty, 10-1 Long Time Listener, Dixie Cowboy, 16-1 others.

Wright choice: Dearkiehandkaty improved for a step up to this trip at Worcester Dangers: Bo Cruz, Always A Reason

2.15 Graduation Chase (£26,015; 2m) (5)

1 3413- CLASSIC MAESTRO 258 (P,B,F,D) J Candlish 7-11-11 L Scott
2 /211- HOMBRE DE GUERRA 294 (T,D) N Alexander 7-11-11 K M Donoghue
3 204-P PATH D'OROUX 192 (P,T,D) G Cromwell (ire) 8-11-11 S Quinlan
4 225-5 UNEXPECTED PARTY 17 (T,D) D Skelton 10-11-11 H Skelton
5 1920- STEEL ALLY 220 (T) S Thomas 7-11-0 D Johnston
11-10 Steel Ally, 9-1 Unexpected Party, 9-2 Path D'Oroux, 8-1 Classic Maestro, 10-1 Hombre De Guerra.

Wright choice: Steel Ally was a useful hurdler last term; right type to excel over fences Dangers: Unexpected Party

2.48 Handicap Hurdle (£4,753; 2m 1f) (12)

1 505F- STARMAN 270 (H,D) J E Foster 9-12-0 A Anderson (5)
2 P54-4 KEL RAFFLES 180 (D) Samantha & Jacqueline Coward 5-12-0 S Quinlan
3 3F13- JACKPOT D'AINAY 270 (H,B,F,D) O Murphy 6-12-0 S Bowen
4 334-2 RUSSIAN VIRTUE F14 (CD) D Thompson 8-12-0 J Thompson (7)
5 32302 BOOK OF SECRETS 52 (D) J Moffatt 7-11-12 L Norcel (10)
6 1239- THROATLASH 257 (W) D McCain 6-11-10 Doubtful

7 0-40 DISCO ANNIE 141 (H,T,CD) R Menzies 7-11-10 N Moscrop
8 24-51 CHASE A FORTUNE 16 C Grant 7-11-9 D McMenamin
9 015P- GALIDAM 230 (W,T,D) M Hammond 5-11-8 C O'Farrell
10 05/30 NOTTODAYBOBO 106 M Hammond 7-11-5 J Hamilton
11 4326- RED CADILLAC 230 (BF) N Richards 6-10-12 C Bewley
12 429P6 ALBETSOFF 25 J K Hunter 9-10-7 Doubtful

2-1 Jackpot D'Alnay, 4-1 Book Of Secrets, 5-1 Chase A Fortune, 6-1 Disco Annie, 15-2 Red Cadillac, 10-1 Russian Virtue, 12-1 Kel Raffles, 25-1 Starmann.

Wright choice: Jackpot D'Alnay was too keen early on when third at Sandown Dangers: Chase A Fortune, Book Of Secrets

3.23 Handicap Chase (£5,413; 2m 4f) (8)

1 P1-63 DOLLAR COLLAR 30 (V) L Russell & M Scudamore 7-12-0 G Widdowshaw (10)
2 251P- NORTHERN AIR 233 D Skelton 6-11-13 H Skelton
3 264P- EASY TO FOLLOW 248 Dr R Newland & J Insole 7-11-12 L Scott (3)
4 322A- OSTRAVA DU BERLAIS 207 V Williams 7-11-12 C Deutsch
5 30-20 GILBERTINA 134 (T) N Kent 8-11-11 T Broughton (5)
6 0933- SIMILAR STORY 252 (T) W Coltherd 7-11-4 P J Kavanagh
7 1223- CELESTIAL FASHION 291 L Duncan 7-10-4 C Bewley
8 2831/ MAID OF HOUSTY 968 D Whillans 10-10-4 S Quinlan
11-0 Ostrova Du Berlais, 7-2 Maid Of Housty, 9-2 Northern Air, 11-2 Similar Story, 8-1 Celestial Fashion, 10-1 Dollar Collar, 12-1 Gilbertina, 14-1 Easy To Follow.

Wright choice: Dollar Collar drops in trip after failing to stay at Hexham Dangers: Northern Air, Celestial Fashion

3.58 NH Flat Race (£2,178; 2m 1f) (12)

1 4- AM I BOVERED 202 S Forster 5-11-2 P W Wadge
2 CAPRICCIOSE John Dawson 4-11-2 B Hughes
3 CHANGEIMLUCK W Coltherd 5-11-2 R Chapman
4 DREAMING OF THE DR (H) Dr R Newland & J Insole 4-11-2 L Scott (3)

5 15 FRANKIES FORTUNE 25 L Russell & M Scudamore 5-11-2 C McCann (7)

6 2- HALFTHEWORLDWAY 204 O Greenall & J Guerriero 4-11-2 C J Todd
7 KHALEESI QUEEN M Hammond 5-11-2 C O'Farrell
8 LUNE BRILLANTE D Skelton 4-11-2 H Skelton
9 MIDNIGHT BELLA J Parkinson & S Smith 4-11-2 D McMenamin

10 3- SHOULDVEBEENSHAV 205 R Bevis 4-11-2 W Maggs (5)
11 1 TRINITY STREET 190 H Daly 4-11-2 D Bass
12 WHISPERING CLOUD C Kellett 4-11-2 C Maggs (5)

15-8 Lune Brillante, 4-1 Trinity Street, Halfteworldway, 9-2 Frankies Fortune, 20-1 Dreaming Of The Dr, Midnight Bella, Shouldvebeenshav, Capricciose.

Wright choice: Trinity Street looked useful in an Irish point-to-point Dangers: Lune Brillante, Halfteworldway

Course specialists

Carlisle: Trainers S Thomas, 4 winners from 5 runners, 80%; O Murphy, 7 from 28, 25%; S England, 9 from 41, 22%; J & A J O'Neill, 7 from 33, 21.2%; D McCain, 32 from 165, 19.4%.
Jockeys D Johnston, 4 winners from 13 rides, 30.8%; J O'Neill Jr, 19 from 63, 30.2%; S Bowen, 7 from 29, 24.1%; C Deutsch, 5 from 21, 23.8%; N Moscrop, 11 from 36, 19.6%.
Kempton Park: Trainers H Morrison, 4 from 10, 40%; N Henderson, 39 from 160, 24.4%; B Pauling, 13 from 54, 24.1%; J Snowden, 3 from 17, 17.6%; P Nicholls, 25 from 156, 16%.
Jockeys B Jones, 13 from 33, 39.4%; J Quinlan, 6 from 28, 21.4%; G Sheehan, 8 from 43, 18.6%; F Gordon, 3 from 18, 16.7%; H Cobden, 21 from 136, 15.4%.



STUART FRANKLIN/GETTY IMAGES

Rai holds off Fleetwood to take Abu Dhabi title

Golf

Tom Kershaw

Aaron Rai may be among the most polite and unassuming of professional golfers but he showed nerves of steel to pip Tommy Fleetwood in a play-off at the Abu Dhabi Championship.

The 30-year-old from Wolverhampton had agonisingly missed a 10ft putt for victory on the final hole of regulation play in a drama-laden conclusion at Yas Links, but he recomposed himself on the par-five 18th and a birdie denied Fleetwood his third win in five starts. Despite a spectacular round of 62, Rory McIlroy was forced to settle for a share of third with Nicolai Hojgaard.

It was a thrilling duel befitting the penultimate event of the DP World Tour season. Rai had taken a one-shot lead into the final round but Fleetwood, who is arguably the most in-form player in the world after ending his duck in the United States at the Tour Championship in August before top-scoring at the Ryder Cup, followed an opening birdie with an eagle to take the ascendancy.

Rai responded with four consecutive birdies before the turn but a poor putt at the 14th handed the momentum back to Fleetwood. By then McIlroy, who had started six shots back, had surged into contention and posted the clubhouse lead at 24 under, but Rai rose to the pressure and birdied the 16th and 17th to set up arguably the biggest victory of his career.

That the Englishman was able to hold off two giants of European golf may serve as a consolation prize after Rai was overlooked for a spot on Europe's Ryder Cup team in New York, as will a cheque for £1.2 million. The one-time PGA Tour winner and 2020 Scottish Open champion is projected to move to No 23 in the world rankings and was magnanimous in victory. "It's hard to sum up. I think you're just so focused on playing the round and obviously just trying to stay in your zone. It's hard to put into words how this feels or how I'm going to re-

Rai's win will send him up to 23rd in the world rankings

Leading final scores

Great Britain and Ireland unless stated
Par 72

-25 A Rai 66, 64, 66, 67;
T Fleetwood 64, 66, 67, 66 (Rai won play-off at first extra hole).
-24 R McIlroy 68, 68, 66, 62;
N Hojgaard (Den) 65, 67, 65, 67.
-22 D Hillier (NZ) 66, 68, 65, 67;
R Mansell 66, 70, 67, 63.
-21 A Sullivan 65, 67, 67, 68; I Elvira (Sp) 65, 68, 65, 69.
-20 M Penge 67, 68, 70, 63;
R MacIntyre 69, 68, 66, 65; A Ayora (Sp) 69, 70, 66, 63.
-19 K Nakajima (Japan) 65, 68, 68, 68;
R Sterne (SA) 64, 68, 68, 69; S Lowry 64, 69, 68, 68.
-18 J Smith 68, 67, 66, 69; M Jordan 73, 64, 67, 66.

flect on it. But it's just amazing to be standing here," Rai said. "Tommy is a phenomenal player. He's an even better person, and that says a lot. To play with him the last two days and be out there with him was really special."

McIlroy left himself too much ground to recover but a blistering final round inched him closer to the seventh order of merit title that would leave him only one short of Colin Montgomerie's record. The Northern Irishman made the turn in 32 after a birdie-eagle start before a monstrous drive at the 386-yard 10th trickled over the back of the green, sparking a run of five birdies. A closing birdie briefly propelled McIlroy into the lead and a ten-under-par round of 62 (Rai and Fleetwood shot 67 and 66 respectively) was his lowest on the DP

World Tour. "It was a great day of golf and a great way to end the week," McIlroy said. "More importantly, it is a great way to go into next week. I just tried to make as many birdies as possible knowing that, OK, I'm trying to win this tournament but also to give myself the biggest cushion possible going into Dubai."

McIlroy will take a commanding lead over Marco Penge, who closed with a 63 to finish ninth, into the season-ending DP World Tour Championship on the Earth Course at Jumeirah Golf Estates.



tention as much as possible, because when I'm in position on Sundays, I feel I can get it going pretty well."

The morning after her win at the Scottish Open, she was at Royal Porthcawl in Wales for a practice session, and she seems perplexed by the suggestion that she might have spent the night celebrating. "It was the Open that week," she says. "The goal was to try and win it, so it moved on quickly. We had to drive to Wales, which was quite a long way, but I wanted to play as much as possible beforehand." Two weeks after turning pro she was installed as the favourite in Wales and finished eighth. Not bad, but she wants much more in 2026.

"I was playing sport when I was two or three and I always wanted to win, and that's something that continued as I got better — it made me want to win

even more." Hence, she was irked when Robinson beat her in a pre-Open match at Porthcawl. "I shot four or five under and I would have taken that in the Open, but yeah, he got the better of me."

Already the world No 10, despite playing 30 fewer ranking events than some above her, the future is now so bright that it is hard to imagine that this talented ball-striker might have been lost to football. Her grandfather's Yorkshire roots mean she is a Leeds United fan, and she was once part of Southampton's renowned academy. "I got to 13 or 14 and couldn't do both to the level I wanted so I had to pick. I can't say if I was better at golf or football, but I found golf more enjoyable."

Although she misses the team element of football and college golf, she says that pales alongside the enjoyment

she gets from exploring different elements of her chosen game. All of which can be improved, she says. "But we're working with small margins." The vital statistics are the ones inside 15 feet and 140 yards. "I can remember pretty much every shot I've hit, so I go back and love stats." If she needs a break, she has the more erratic form of Leeds to take solace in. That, too, is not a half-hearted passion. "I'm too keen," she says.

How many majors does she believe she can win in a field where there have been 14 different winners in a row? "I'll take as many as I can get," she says. Is she ahead of her own expectations? "I hoped I could win and believed I could, but you can't expect it. Now I'm looking forward to next year and having a full schedule to play." The thrill of her sporting year is that it is just the start.

Kempton Park

Rob Wright

12.30 Secret Trix 2.30 Busy Being Busy (nb)
1.00 Ice In The Veins 3.05 She Is For Me Boys
1.30 Casino Des Mottes 3.40 Final Straw (nap)
2.00 Turnlightsdown
Going: good
Racing TV
12.30 Beginners' Chase (€9,803; 3m) (2)
1 615-3 ONE BIG BANG 193 James Owen 7-11-5 A Chadwick (3)
2 36202 SECRET TRIX 11 (P,T) O Murphy 8-11-5 K Brogan
8-13 One Big Bang, 11-8 Secret Trix.

1.00 Novices' Hurdle

(€4,901; 2m) (6)
1 -1241 ICE IN THE VEINS 6 (H,D) D Skelton 5-11-7 T Durrill (3)
2 52 GOLDEN CIRCE 7 J & S Best 5-11-0 H Cobden

3 /421 JIMBO SPORT 229 (D) B Pauling 6-11-0 B R Jones
4 221-6 KOOL KID 18 (D) J Tizzard 5-11-0 B J Powell
5 36/3- RETI 129 (H) Miss S West 5-11-0 M Goldstein
6 3 SOLANNA 24 J Butler 6-11-0 J Quinlan
6-4 Ice In The Veins, 5-2 Jimbo Sport, 5-1 Golden Circe, 6-1 Kool Kid, 12-1 Reti, 16-1 Solanna.

1.30 Novices' Hurdle

(€4,901; 2m 5f) (7)
1 P-31 BREEZETHROUHLIFE 24 (T) N King 4-11-6 J Quinlan
2 3- ALAN BRESIL 253 Nick Schofield 5-11-0 H Reed
3 1/28- BACK IT UP 288 James Owen 7-11-0 A Chadwick (3)
4 P25- FRESH KICKS 200 (W,BF) N Henderson 5-11-0 J Bowen
5 41-5 KASINO DES MOTTES 16 J Tizzard 5-11-0 B J Powell
6 6005/ LOCKED ON 570 Jack Jones 6-11-0 T BeRamy
7 1/54- TALK TO THE MAN 233 P Nicholls 5-11-0 H Cobden
2-1 Talk To The Man, 5-2 Kasino Des Mottes, 100-30 Fresh Kicks, 5-1 Breezethrouhlife, 14-1 Alan Bresil, 20-1 Back It Up, 50-1 Locked On.

2.00 Handicap Hurdle

(€4,753; 2m 5f) (10)
1 F-362 BALTRAY 35 E Laville 7-11-12 C Johnstone-Baker (10)
2 339-3 BERTIE WOOSTER 21 J Tizzard 7-11-11 B J Powell
3 465-0 BLOCK ROCKIN BEATS 31 O Signy 6-11-11 G Sheehan
4 233-0 GUICHEN 31 K Bailey & M Nicholls 5-11-10 A Aswat (10)
5 33340 JEFFE TRIUNFO 7 C Gordon 6-11-7 F Gordon (3)
6 R2/26 NIGHT STALKER 6 Miss S West 5-11-7 M Goldstein
7 23413 JET OF DREAMS 22 (P,T) W Greatrex 7-11-7 W Featherstone (7)
8 4-21 TURNLIGHTSDOWN 22 (CD) M Keighley 5-11-6 B J Keighley (7)
9 0-241 SUN JOY 18 (T,D) B Pauling 6-11-6 C Pritchard (5)
10 311-4 CUBAN COURT 24 (P,T) N King 7-11-2 J Quinlan
100-30 Sun Joy, 7-2 Turnlightsdown, 5-1 Baltray, 6-1 Jet Of Dreams, 7-1 Bertie Wooster, 8-1 Cuban Court, 14-1 Jefe Triunfo, 16-1 Others.

2.30 Handicap Hurdle

(€10,926; 2m 5f) (7)
1 116-6 SAINT ANAPOLINO 17 (H,CD) P Hobbs & J White 6-12-0 C Pritchard (5)

2 41-14 IDY WOOD 30 (D) J Snowden 7-11-12 G Sheehan
3 21111 SIXTY PLUS 66 (V) James Owen 5-11-9 S Twiston-Davies
4 11-02 BUSY BEING BUSY 23 (BF,D) S Edmunds 5-11-4 C Hammond
5 122-6 EYED 198 (T) H Morrison 8-11-5 J J Burke
6 4042- BELOW THE RADAR 213 P Nicholls 7-11-3 H Cobden
7 14540 SUPREME YEARS 17 (B,T) D Skelton 9-10-9 T Durrill (1)
11-4 Sixty Plus, 9-21dy Wood, Busy Being Busy, 5-1 Saint Anapolino, 6-1 Eyed, Below The Radar, 16-1 Supreme Years.

3.05 Handicap Chase

(€10,562; 2m 4f 110yd) (6)
1 56-23 POPOVA 157 M Hawker 8-12-0 H Reed
2 224-1 SHANTWOPINTIVE 166 W Greatrex 7-11-12 J Bowen
3 353-3 GEORGI GIRL 207 (P) P Hobbs & J White 6-11-12 B R Jones
4 3540- RLOVETHENGHTLE 207 (W,P,T,CD) J Tizzard 7-11-11 B J Powell
5 12-11 SHE IS FOR ME BOYS 153 J Snowden 6-10-5 G Sheehan

6 3135- IT'S EASY 207 (D) E Williams 7-10-4 C Ring
9-4 Shantwopintive, 5-2 She Is For Me Boys, 5-1 Georgi Girl, 6-1 Illovehenghtle, Popova, 10-1 It's Easy.

3.40 Handicap Hurdle

(€3,697; 3m 1f) (9)
1 464 FINAL STRAW 64 (P) N Henderson 5-12-0 F Gordon (3)
2 014-5 AVADA KEDAVA 11 D Bridgewater 6-11-12 T Hutchby (7)
3 31224 HURST HILL 21 Seamus Mullins 6-11-5 D Sansom
4 00-50 HARKSMAN 45 (H) M Keighley 5-11-3 F Keighley (3)
5 /000- BOLLIN THOU 263 (P) Nick Schofield 7-10-10 B Bromley
6 -5361 BESSIDE BANTER 26 (P) M Conley 8-10-10 F Mitchell
7 3400- SOLID FUEL 82 Joanne Thomason-Murphy 7-10-9 Isabelle Ryder (3)
8 -4009 GLORIOUS MIST 21 (P) P Butler 8-10-3 B Pollard (7)
9 -40654 NEEDTOKNOW 18 (T) Joe Puntling 5-10-2 C Pritchard
6-5 Beside Banter, 7-2 Final Straw, 15-2 Hurst Hill, 8-1 Avada Kedava, Harksmann, 10-1 Bollin Thou, 35-1 Solid Fuel, Needtknow, Glorious Mist.

Yesterday's racing results

Ffos Las

Going: soft (good to soft in places)
12.40 (1m 7f 182yd hdl) 1. Our Boy Stan (B Jones, 4-9 fav); 2. Bobby's Nelson (7-2); 3. Livin'it Du Large (6-1). 5 ran. NR: Kocktail Bleu, Phineas Bunce. Nk, 6l, B Pauling.
1.10 (2m 7f 177yd ch) 1. Howaya Now (H Bannister, 5-1); 2. Lazy Sunday (9-1); 3. Pachacuti (8-1). 9 ran. 4½l, 2½l, R Bandy.

1.40 (2m 4f hdl) 1. They Call Me Hugo (S Bowen, 13-8 fav); 2. Inishcorker (11-1); 3. Aistitcheadup (40-1). 10 ran. NR: Sallyville Lady, 2½l, 15l, O Murphy.
2.15 (2m 7f 191yd hdl) 1. Mister Barclay (N Fox, 11-4 fav); 2. Seatolt (6-1); 3. La Higueru (9-1). 10 ran. NR: Emorelle. Nk, 3½l, T Symonds.
2.50 (2m ch) 1. Jaipaletemp (R Corcoran, 15-2); 2. Nedzor (9-3); 3. Boston Joe (5-2)-f-fav). 8 ran. 8l, ½l, D Pipe.

3.25 (2m 4f hdl) 1. El Bandido Pancho (R Dingle, 17-2); 2. Getaway With You (13-2); 3. Mae's Legacy (17-2). 11 ran. NR: Bollin Thou, Estate Planning. 7l, 2½l, B Clarke.
4.00 (1m 7f 182yd Flat) 1. Katie's Melody (P O'Brien, 1-4 fav); 2. Ledecka (25-1); 3. Roberta Bishop (28-1). 5 ran. NR: Jollie Dame. 1l, 14l, H Derham.
Placepot: £80.40.
Quadpot: £20.20.

Sandown Park

Going: good (good to firm in places)
12.30 (1m 7f 99yd ch) 1. Admiral Stewart (G Sheehan). NR: Salver. J Snowden.
1.00 (2m 4f 10yd ch) 1. Invincible Nao (C Quinn, 11-2); 2. Kado De Joie (5-6fav); 3. The Good Doctor (7-4). 3 ran. Hd, 1½l, G & J Moore.

1.30 (2m 3f 173yd hdl) 1. Glynn Brae (T McCain, Mitchell, 9-4 fav); 2. Akimos (3-1); 3. Paso Doble (11-2). 6 ran. Nk, 6l, N & W Twiston-Davies.
2.05 (1m 7f 216yd hdl) 1. Hurricane Pat (C Quinn, 8-11 fav; Rob Wright's nap); 2. Treat Carefully (6-1); 3. Laguna Beach (9-4). 7 ran. 3l, 3½l, G & J Moore.
2.40 (1m 7f 216yd hdl) 1. Nardaran (H Cobden, 11-10 fav); 2. Continuance (16-1); 3. Royal Way (2-1). 4 ran. 2½l, 11l, P F Nicholls.

3.15* (3m 37yd ch) 1. Twig (B Morgan, 9-4); 2. Courtland (6-4 fav); 3. Only The Bold (16-5). 4 ran. NR: Credo, Gustavian, Nk, nk, B Pauling.
3.50 (1m 7f 216yd Flat) 1. Le Roi Remi (J Andrews, 12-1); 2. Saint Invictus (4-1); 3. Graeme The Grey (16-1). 9 ran. 16l, ½l, T Ellis.
*result stands after a stewards inquiry; the placings remained unaltered Jackpot: £779.70.
Placepot: £225.60. Quadpot: £26.50.

Sport Autumn internationals

Morgan injury pours salt in Welsh wounds

Wales	28
Argentina	52

Steve James

Wales's new head coach Steve Tandy knew it was always going to be a rough ride, but this rough? This soon? New Zealand and South Africa are yet to come this autumn, and Japan will not exactly be quaking in their boots next weekend.

This was a chilling reality check for his lightweight and outclassed side, with the ignominy of conceding 52 points in a record defeat against these opponents compounded by an injury to their captain, Jac Morgan, who dislocated a shoulder and is out of the rest of the autumn campaign. As he has been so often over recent times, Morgan was Wales's outstanding player here, particularly in defence. "His try was unbelievable," Tandy said. "It's a blow, not just the player but the man."

There were some sparky moments too for the scrum half Tomos Williams, even if he was sent to the sin-bin, as well as some encouraging performances from the bench, but, predictably, Wales were outmuscled and inaccurate. Argentina dominated the aerial battle too and a stupid yellow card for Ben Thomas, which could easily have been upgraded to a red had he made contact with Pablo Matera's head, did not help.

"There's obviously disappointment in conceding 50 points, but the underlying feeling is that what the group did in certain parts of the game is exciting going forward," an upbeat Tandy said.

In fairness, they did show some resilience at times when the scoreboard could have turned ugly, and it was obvious that they want to play the game at a fast pace; all good indications of Tandy's intended show of identity. But the result was never in doubt and, especially after Wales had a calamitous few minutes

before half-time, Argentina, with wing Mateo Carreras, flanker Matera, fly half Gerónimo Prisciantelli and hooker Julián Montoya outstanding, were always in a position of some comfort.

The start was the harbinger for Wales, with Argentina scoring their first try after just seven minutes, and, more worryingly, it had come through pure power from close to the line, as the tight-head prop Pedro Delgado dived over after some relentless pressure from a driving lineout.

Santiago Carreras converted and a couple of minutes later Argentina scored again, this time after Mateo Carreras found space on the left for the third time in a ridiculously short period, chipping ahead for Prisciantelli to collect and score. Santiago Carreras converted again. It was 14-0.

Wales simply had to respond, and thankfully for a silenced home crowd, they did so almost immediately through scrum half Williams, who accepted the brilliant offload from Morgan after Tom Rogers had cut the line. Tandy could be seen punching the air in the stands. Dan Edwards converted.

There was more to come from Wales as the prop Rhys Carré went close, and from the resultant penalty Wales bravely decided to tap and go, and Dewi Lake crashed over. Edwards converted again and, with the first quarter barely over, it was all square at 14-14. It had been a breathless start.

Argentina again found ground down the left and Wales were indebted first to Morgan for a crucial turnover and then to Juan Martín González for a spill in contact, with Wales then trying to run the ball from behind their own line.

But it all meant nothing as there had been a transgression in the meantime, with centre Thomas shown a yellow card for kicking out after being held by Matera. Argentina fancied scoring from the subsequent lineout, but who stymied them? Morgan, of course. There was still a penalty for the visitors, though, and Santiago Carreras duly



Morgan scored Wales's third try in the 54th minute but had to come off soon afterwards after suffering a dislocated shoulder

slotted it. With Thomas still off and Wales down to 14, the scrum half Simón Benítez Cruz lunged over below the posts. Carreras converted again and, though they could so easily have gone in only three points behind, Wales might now have settled for 24-14 at half-time, but Argentina had more.

Having taken the restart, Matera beat Rogers, Carré and Lake with a stunning break in midfield and kicked out towards Mateo Carreras, who stepped inside Edwards to score. Santiago Carreras converted again and it was 31-14.

Wales had a mountain to climb, and, though they began the second half with a string of phases in attack, they went nowhere and when the ball was turned over they again sped off down the left. When the ball went right, the kick went to the wing Bautista Delguy, who scored. Santiago Carreras converted, but there was more bad news for Wales as Williams was sent to the sin-bin.

Rogers had had a horrible time of it and was replaced by Louis Rees-Zammit, and Wales rallied with a strong attack. A penalty was awarded under the Argentinian posts, and again Wales tapped it. It only needed one man. Morgan tapped and scored. Edwards converted.

It was 38-21 and the stadium was alive again, even though Morgan then departed with that shoulder injury. Edwards now made a scintillating break down the middle and only an ankle tap prevented an astonishing score. Just as astonishing might have been a comeback try for Rees-Zammit, who sped down the right and chipped ahead but could not quite gather under pressure.

But Argentina were just so clinical. A Ben Thomas pass deep inside his own half was all too easy for Prisciantelli to read and he raced away to score. Santiago Carreras kicked his sixth conversion and it was 45-21.

Blair Murray scored a fourth try for Wales and Jarrod Evans converted, but Argentina fittingly had the final word with a try for replacement Santiago Gronadona, converted again by Santiago Carreras. There were some positives, but ultimately this was a hiding.

Scorers: Wales: Tries Williams (14 min), Lake (22), Morgan (54), Murray (72) Cons Edwards 3, J Evans. Argentina: Tries Delgado (7), Prisciantelli (10, 61), Benítez Cruz (37), M Carreras (40), Delguy (41), Gronadona (80). Cons S Carreras (7). Pen S Carreras.

Wales B Murray; T Rogers (L Rees-Zammit 44), M Llewellyn, B Thomas (sin-bin 27:37), J Evans (64), J Adams; D Edwards, T Williams (sin-bin 43:53), R Carré (N Smith 44), D Lake (L Belcher 54), K Assiratti (A Griffin 44), D Jenkins, A Beard, A Mann, J Morgan (O Cracknell 54), A Wainwright (F Thomas 64). Argentina S Carreras (J-C Mallia 47); B Delguy, J Piccardo, S Chocobares, M Carreras; G Prisciantelli, S Benítez Cruz, M Vivas (T Gallo 44), J Montoya, P Delgado (T Rapetti 44), G Petti, M Kremer, P Matera, J-M Gonzalez, J Oviedo. Referee B O'Keefe (NZ). Attendance 50,185.

Scotland regret will linger after spurning golden opportunity

Mark Palmer
Scottish Rugby Correspondent

Long after the final whistle at Murrayfield, Beauden Barrett had lost his way for pretty much the only time all day. The imperious fly half and a couple of his All Blacks team-mates had taken a wrong turn somewhere in the players' tunnel and were wandering around, bemused, outside the media room.

A couple of local hacks gladly pointed them in the direction of their bus, all the while still trying to regain their own bearings after a remarkable afternoon that toyed with the emotions and sent the blood pressure readings into space.

This little stadium corridor vignette was yet another plot twist, for it had generally been New Zealand offering Scotland assistance in the preceding 80 minutes.

Three yellow cards, a big drop-off in the face of the Scots' second-half resurgence, some less than stellar defence which — combined with a spell of

sublime attack from the home team — gave rise to several big try-scoring opportunities, most glaringly for Darcy Graham, when the outcome was still in the balance. These fairly average All Blacks (if that is not an oxymoron) gave Scotland every shot at immortality.

Even in a first half that they closed 17-0 down, Gregor Townsend's men were twice held up over the line. Throughout there were stellar shifts from Jack Dempsey, Gregor Brown, Kyle Steyn and Rory Hutchinson, while Finn Russell did his best to inspire from fly half despite sporting enough strapping on his left knee and lower leg to stretch to the moon and back.

D'Arcy Rae was a world away from the sacrificial lamb many feared he might prove in his front-row contest with Ethan de Groot, while if Graham and Blair Kinghorn overall fell short of their usual excellence, both were still at the heart of a number of key moments in a positive sense as well. Scotland fought fire with fire and managed to re-

lease that stellar back line. The crowd and the momentum were with them, and New Zealand looked dazed and unsteady. It was all there for Scotland. But they left with nothing, yet again.

This inescapable bottom line is why, after a day of mixed emotions, disappointment must be the dominant one. This is nothing like the desperation and despair which used to routinely accompany the fixture, but allowing such a coveted prize to slip through your fingers is a whole lot tougher to take than never really having it in your sights.

This was the mo-

Darcy Graham, left, is consoled by Ben White



ment, this was the day, and it finished like virtually every other one against New Zealand since 1905. In his post-match press conference, Townsend was already anticipating the prospect of another couple of meetings in the new Nations Championship in 2026 and 2027, but what-

ever happens in those games, it is hard to imagine a set of circumstances more conducive to Scotland breaking their duck than the one that still had them feeling pig sick on Saturday night.

And yet, in sport, time stops for no man. The challenges keep coming, with Argentina due at Murray-

field on Sunday afternoon. The Scots will hope to maintain a strong recent record against the Pumas (seven wins in the nine most recent head-to-heads since 2014) and also to repeat the pattern of those previous near-misses against the All Blacks. The week after a 22-17 defeat in 2017, Scotland put 53 points on Australia. Six days on from an eight-point loss in 2022, they scored 52 against the Pumas.

Nonetheless, Felipe Contepomi's side are a formidable unit, blending the best of the country's traditional forward strengths with an electric back line. They are hard-nosed and ambitious; dogged and punchy. They are also fresh from a history-making win over the All Blacks, having beaten them for the first time at home in the recent Rugby Championship.

For Scotland, having little time to feel sorry for themselves will be no bad thing, but somewhere in the back of their minds, this regret will live and sting for ever.

Another twist in Erasmus evolution

Using Esterhuizen in hybrid role was perfect ballast for South Africa after De Jager red card, says **Elgan Alderman**

As if André Esterhuizen wasn't effective enough as an enormous inside centre, he is now a handy flanker too, balancing the bench like a cricket all-rounder.

Wilco Louw, a prop who knows size when he sees it, called South Africa's latest supersub "a monster". "He's such an asset to have," Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, the Springbok fly half, said. "He's 115kg, 6ft 4in. You don't even know if it's a 5-3 or 6-2 split. That's how good he is."

In the age of finishers and hybrids, Esterhuizen attained new levels on Saturday night at Stade de France. There is nothing legally binding in the order of replacements, but the numbers are so ingrained that they give the game away: Esterhuizen, an inside centre, has been carded in a back-row slot for the past two Tests, replacing Siya Kolisi against Japan and Damian de Allende against France.

Kolisi had already taken his leave in Paris. Lood de Jager's first-half red card required a tactical tweak for South Africa. Kolisi, the captain on his 100th cap, was traded for Ruan Nortjé at the interval. "When coach [Rassie Erasmus] came to ask me, he was really sad," Kolisi said. "You have to put emotions aside in this. Because I knew putting a No 5 lock on, because we lost Lood, he makes all the calls. Him and the 10 and the 9 are probably the most important people."

Esterhuizen entered the field a few minutes later to act as flanker and inside centre: No 6 in lineouts (he scored South Africa's second try from a maul) and attacking scrums, and defending at No 12. "In the changing room, obviously at half-time, we made plans around the lineouts and what we want to achieve," Esterhuizen said. "We stuck to those plans and luckily I could come up and cover 6 and 12, which made the lineouts easier."

This is far from the injury crisis that left Wales, on tour in Australia in 1978, selecting JPR Williams at flanker. Esterhuizen may never begin a game in the forwards but he represents the latest Erasmus evolution. Cobus Reinach and Grant Williams scored marvellous solo tries in Paris, showing why they are scrum halves who can cover wing. Feinberg-Mngomezulu ghosted wide for the fourth, a fly half



Esterhuizen came on in the 47th minute after De Jager had been shown a red card and scored the second try for South Africa, going over at the back of a rolling maul

who runs like a threequarter. Damian Willemse, the full back, has experience at fly half and centre. We have seen Deon Fourie at hooker and flanker, and Kwagga Smith as back-line cover when there are seven forwards on the bench.

Saturday was not quite the thunderous ding-dong of forecast. French profligacy and Springbok potency, making the scoreline definitive, saw to that. Of course there was intensity and injustice, fortitude and skill, and it will be recalled as a famous victory, among the finest of the Erasmus age, and another marker of big-game bona fides. Wins against Italy and Portugal with 14 men could be filed away as trifling; a different magnitude from this.

For France, revenge was a dish sent back to the kitchen. The previous four Tests between the sides had been decided by four points or fewer. Three

of those were won by the Springboks at Stade de France. It is 20 years since France have beaten this lot in Paris, their triumphs limited to Cape Town, Toulouse and Marseille.

No one needed reminding that this was the first meeting since the 2023 quarter-final, in the same stadium, when South Africa perforated France's World Cup destiny. The Stade de France crowd jeered the visiting team announcement to the degree that the names could hardly be heard. Erasmus elicited the loudest barracking of all.

The hangover of 2023 lingered for some time and — to use the French expression for the day after revelry — the wooden throat may never truly heal. This was a galling defeat, unable to cross the line against 14 men during the third quarter and resigned to watching South Africa pull away. Of course there was no Antoine Dupont,

François Cros, Uini Atonio, Peato Mauvaka or Cyril Baille, and an out-of-favour Grégory Alldritt sat in the stands, but there will be questions over whether Fabien Galthié realises the talent he has. Five substitutions at once before the 50th minute weakened the home team. This was a nation of three World Cup final defeats, against the nation of four World Cup final wins.

We witnessed a tantalising fly-half contest between Romain Ntamack, who missed the World Cup with injury, and Feinberg-Mngomezulu, who was a 21-year-old playing centre for Stormers during the latter stages of that tournament.

The younger man enhanced his reputation once more. "It's an environment where it's like an eagle trapped in a cage," Feinberg-Mngomezulu said. "When you get on that field as a Springbok, the coaches

and the players just allow you to spread your wings. It's the best feeling ever."

The Springboks are not omnipotent. They recently capitulated at home to Australia and failed to end New Zealand's 31-year unbeaten sequence at Eden Park. Yet they continue to redefine ahead of the game. Erasmus has become persona non grata for many, after his behaviour towards referees during the 2021 British & Irish Lions tour, and detractors view intentional off-sides at kick-offs and mid-half mauls as being too clever by half. They experiment, when their nuts and bolts are dominant. As the 2027 World Cup approaches, they will have every weapon available.

After a trip to Italy, the Springboks face Ireland in Dublin. It is the one major nation where they have not won since Erasmus took over in 2018. They will be favourites to do so.

Results

American football

NFL
Carolina 7 New Orleans 17; Chicago 24 New York Giants 20; Houston 36 Jacksonville 29; Indianapolis 31 Atlanta 25 (at Olympiad stadium, Berlin); Miami 30 Buffalo 13; Minnesota 20 Baltimore 27; New York Jets 27 Cleveland 20; Tampa Bay 23 New England 28.

Cricket

Third T20 international
New Zealand v West Indies
New Zealand won toss; New Zealand beat West Indies by nine runs
New Zealand (bat) (balls)
D P Conway run out 56 (34)
T B Robinson c and b Forde 23 (21)
R Ravindra c Forde b Shepherd 26 (15)
D J Mitchell c Springer b Holder 41 (24)
M G Bracewell run out 11 (10)
J D S Neesham b Forde 2 (4)
"M J Santner c Auguste b Springer 2 (3)
T M J Hay c Powell b Holder 4 (4)
K A Jamieson run out 1 (2)
I S Sodhi not out

J A Duffy not out 2 (1)
Extras (lb 1, w 3, nb 1) 5
Total (9 wks, 20 overs) 177
Fall of wickets 1-47, 2-97, 3-114, 4-144, 5-150, 6-159, 7-168, 8-169, 9-175.
Bowling Hosein 4-0-50-0; Forde 4-0-20-2; Shepherd 3-0-23-1; Athanaze 1-0-16-0; Holder 4-0-31-2; Springer 4-0-36-1.
West Indies (balls)
A A Jangoo b Duffy 5 (4)
A S Athanaze c Hay b Sodhi 31 (23)
"S D Hope c Robinson b Duffy 1 (3)
A W J Auguste run out 24 (16)
S E Rutherford c Sodhi b Bracewell 2 (4)
R Powell b Sodhi 2 (3)
J O Holder c Robinson b Santner 3 (6)
R Shepherd c Mitchell b Jamieson 49 (34)
M W Forde lbw b Sodhi 4 (5)
K S Springer c and b Duffy 39 (20)
A J Hosein not out 1 (1)
Extras (lb 1, w 5) 7
Total (19.5 overs) 168
Fall of wickets 1-13, 2-15, 3-53, 4-60, 5-68, 6-68, 7-83, 8-88, 9-166.
Bowling Jamieson 3.5-0-35-1; Duffy 4-0-36-3; Bracewell 2-0-7-1; Sodhi 4-0-34-3; Santner 4-0-29-1; Neesham 2-0-25-0.
© New Zealand lead the five-match series 2-1

Darts

PDC Mr Vegas Grand Slam of Darts
WV Active Aldersley, Wolverhampton (England unless stated): Group A N Aspinall bt A Spelman (US) 5-2; Group B J van der Velde (Neth) bt M Lukeman 5-4; C Doherty bt D Heta (Aus) 5-1; Group C M Schindler (Ger) bt S Bunting 5-4; Group D G Price (Wales) bt J Wade 5-0; R Evans bt S Bellmont (Switz) 5-4.
Group E K Sedlacek (Cz) bt D Gurney (N Ire) 5-3; Group F J Rock (N Ire) bt L Ashton 5-0; G van Veen (Neth) bt W Nijman (Neth) 5-3; Group G G Anderson (Sco) bt B Greaves 5-4; Group H L Wenig (Ger) bt J Clayton (Wales) 5-3; D Noppert (Neth) bt C Crabtree 5-4.

Golf

USPGA Tour World Wide Technology Championship
Los Cabos, Mexico: Leaders after three rounds (United States unless stated): 194 G Higgo (SA) 68, 65, 61, 195 C Young 67, 65, 63, 196 T Cone 67, 64, 65; B Griffin 65, 65, 66; C Ramey 64, 65, 67, 197 S Vallimaki (Fin) 61, 67, 198 M Schmid (Ger) 64, 63, 71, 199 N Dunlap 61, 67, 71; P Rodgers 67, 65, 67, 200 E Cole 69, 63, 68; B Hossler 67, 66, 67; P Kizzire

70, 65, 65; T Moore 67, 65, 68; JJ Spaun 67, 70, 63; A Svensson (Can) 68, 68, 64, 201 M Kuchar 65, 68, 68; F Molinari (It) 65, 67, 69; T Olesen (Den) 66, 68, 67; V Perez (Fr) 65, 65, 71; S Power (Ire) 68, 66, 67; T Rosenmüller (Ger) 68, 69, 64; V Whaley 64, 69, 68.
Women's European Tour Aramo China Championship
Shenzhen: Leading final scores (China unless stated): 203 Liu Ruixin 70, 65, 68, 206 C Tamburlini (Switz) 71, 69, 66; T Cheunglab (Thai) 69, 65, 72; Lin Qianhui 72, 65, 69; Zeng Lili 72, 67, 67, 207 Yin Ruoning 70, 65, 72; K Arweijaeli (Swe) 69, 68, 70, 208 Xu Ying 69, 71, 68; C Alexander (SA) 77, 63, 68; M Folke (Swe) 67, 71, 70, 209 A Lee (US) 70, 67, 72; C Williams (Wales) 69, 71, 69.
LPGA Tour TOTO Japan Classic
Shiga: Leading final scores (Japan unless stated): 201 N Hataoka 65, 68, 68; Y Araki 70, 66, 65 (Hataoka won play-off at first extra hole). 202 M Yamashita 65, 69, 68, 204 S Sakuma 69, 66, 69, 205 A Suzuki 68, 67, 70, 206 S Takahashi 68, 67, 71; Shin Ji-yai (S Kor) 66, 67, 73, 207 K Hori 71, 69, 67, 208 S Kanazawa 69, 69, 69.
© Scores for the DP World Tour Abu Dhabi Championship are on page 51

Motorcycling

MotoGP Grand Prix of Portugal
Portimão: Leading positions 1, M Bezzecchi (It, Aprilia) 41min 13.616sec; 2m A Márquez (Sp, Ducati) at 2.583sec behind; 3, P Acosta (Sp, KTM) 3:18.8; 4, F Aldeguer (Sp, Ducati) 12:86.0; 5, B Binder (SA, KTM) 16:327.
Championship 1, M Márquez (Sp, Ducati) 545pts; 2, A Márquez 445; 3, Bezzecchi 323; 4, F Bagnaia (It, Ducati) 288; 5, Acosta 285.

Rugby league

Third Test England 8 Australia 30.
© Australia won the three-match series 3-0
Rugby union
International matches England 38 Fiji 18; England A 14 New Zealand A 31; France 17 South Africa 32; Georgia 41 United States 30; Ireland 41 Japan 10; Italy 26 Australia 19; Portugal 8 Uruguay 26; Romania 31 Canada 21; Scotland 17 New Zealand 25; Spain 24 Ireland A 61; Wales 28 Argentina 52.
RFU Championship Ampthill 0 Ealing Trailfinders 71; Caldy 15 Worcester 17; Cambridge 5 Richmond 54; Hartpury 36 Coventry 31.

Women's Allianz Premiership Bristol 12 Saracens 33; Harlequins 26 Gloucester-H 33; Loughborough 33 Exeter 33; Sale 22 Ealing 64.

Snooker

International Championship
Nanjing: Final (best-of-19 frames): Wu Yize (China) beat J Higgins (Sco) 10-6 (frame scores: Wu first: 99-19 (86 break), 71-0 (62), 0-135 (101), 117-0 (110), 113-0 (113), 19-67, 137-0 (137), 40-58, 39-61, 91-6 (87), 70-59 (JH 54), 80-0 (80), 4-72, 76-12, 20-63, 108-0 (108).

Tennis

Nitto ATP Finals Turin
Singles: Jimmy Connors group C Alcaraz (Sp) bt A de Minaur (Aus) 7-6 (7-5), 6-2. Björn Borg group A Zverev (Ger) bt B Shelton (US) 6-3, 7-6 (8-6). **Doubles:** Peter Fleming group M Granollers (Sp) and H Zeballos (Arg) bt K Krawietz (Ger) and T Pütz (Ger) 6-4, 4-6, 10-6; S Bolelli (It) and A Vavassori (It) bt J Cash (GB) and L Glaspool (GB) 7-5, 6-3.
WTA Finals Riyadh
Singles: Singles E Rybakina (Kaz) bt A Sabalenka (Bel) 6-3, 7-6 (7-0). **Doubles:** E Mertens (Bel) and V Kudermetova (Russ) bt T Babos (Hun) and L Stefani (Br) 7-6 (7-4), 6-1.

This improving England should beat All Blacks

Victory would crown an impressive year for Borthwick's men – if they can keep cool when it counts, writes Will Kelleher



For the sake of starting snappily, let's call England's task this week "Project Nine".

Eight English teams have beaten the All Blacks; from Prince Obolensky's double in 1936, to 1973, 1983, 1993, 2002, 2003, 2012 and in 2019, when Eddie Jones's boys took New Zealand to pieces in the World Cup semi-final.

So, having warmed up neatly with wins over Australia and Fiji over the past fortnight, "Project Nine" it is.

How do Steve Borthwick's men define their season and the head coach's tenure, and rubber stamp a year of clear progression with the victory that eludes English teams – men and women – the most?

They enter All Blacks week with plenty of scar tissue, yet buoyed by nine consecutive victories, their best run since the world record-equaling charge Jones's side made in 2016-17, which reached 17 wins before Ireland emphatically ended it.

There is an argument to say that this is the week that England will put it all together, that they will prove that their learning experiences have been worth it, and that they should beat the All Blacks.

"It feels like we've got some genuine momentum, but momentum is only good if you carry it on." Tom Curry said after Saturday's 38-18 win against Fiji. "You can't sit still. I think it was Roy Keane who said, 'If you're still, you're going backwards.'"

England sat still for a good while under Borthwick after the 2023 World Cup, as he rebuilt the team. They certainly collected a whole heap of examples to learn from – too many.

It was their profligacy at Murrayfield in 2024 that led to a bolder attacking plan, which helped them beat Ireland 23-22 in that Six Nations. They were admirable in tight defeats by France (33-31) and the All Blacks in New Zealand twice (16-15 in Dunedin, and 24-17 at Eden Park), but by the time they resumed in November last year, these close shaves became an unacceptable pattern, demonstrating flakiness.

After losing 24-22 to New Zealand at home, with Harry Randall and George Ford bungling a dropped-goal routine at the death, then 42-37, in the last play of the game, to Australia, the England Rugby X account posted a piece of psychobabble that triggered fans.

"We don't lose, we learn," they said – the obvious response being: "No, it looks like you're not learning, just losing." They did lose, again, 29-20 to South Africa, ending the year with two

Week three fixtures

Saturday
Italy v South Africa
Turin (12.40pm)
England v New Zealand
Twickenham (3.10pm)
Wales v Japan
Cardiff (5.40pm)
France v Fiji
Bordeaux (8.10pm)
Ireland v Australia
Dublin (8.10pm)
Sunday
Scotland v Argentina
Edinburgh (3.10pm)
All shown live on TNT Sports

wins in seven Tests, both against Japan.

Now, with one defeat since, 27-22 by Ireland in the first Test of the year, this is Curry again: "In the same way you probably learn to lose, I think we're starting to learn to win."

And Ben Earl: "I distinctly remember standing here after the Eden Park game and saying, 'We will be better for this.' We've shown that those experiences make you battle-hardened, you feel like you've got the wounds, the scar tissue to learn from those losses."

"They hurt at the time, but I wonder to a man in the England changing room, would we have changed our journey, with the joy that we're sometimes enjoying now? I'd be interested to know because I think they're very, very valuable lessons."

England's year has not been outstanding, but they have clearly improved. They have beaten France and Scotland by a point, turning those tight losses into tight wins, and are more proficient at working out their advantage in a match, and hammering it home.

Clearly, Borthwick's new strategy to load the bench with British & Irish Lions and 100-cappers like Jamie George is helping.

George and the team have come up with a plan this autumn, which is helping them complete victories while avoiding the scrambled minds and panicky passages from 2024.

Designed in collaboration with the players, their psychologist David Priestly and new head of performance Phil Morrow, England now huddle up to take a break in moments of potential panic, to nip it in the bud.

Against Fiji, England were 26-18 up with 62 minutes gone when Simone Kuruwoli, the scrum half, scythed through. A converted try would have made it 26-25. Instead of watching the television match official replays, judging whether the No9 had lost control of the ball while sliding in, England's players gathered and worked out a plan for either the resulting kick-off, or the scrum.

"[In previous games] I found myself getting carried away with the big screen when there's a TMO on," George explained. "We had a breathe. We asked for a clear focus on the delivery of the message and we got exactly that. What was our focus off a scrum, whether it

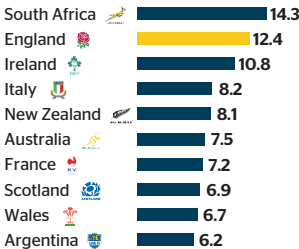
was a restart, what restart? Simple as that. Who's chasing it? What are the important things off the back of it? We were focused on hearing the message, what needs to be said, what needs to be delivered and then we went out and did it."

The score was disallowed and England scored two more tries to complete the job. "It was a bit of a masterclass in terms of composure," George said.

Most Test matches – even if they end one-sided – are nip-and-tuck around the hour mark, so England's new-found ability to score regularly in the final 20 minutes, is timely. They are the second-best team in the world at finishing teams off, behind only the dominant Springboks. This is light

When it matters most

Only the all-conquering Springboks average more points per game in the final quarter of Tests this year



**6N and TRC sides only **Stats do not include Sunday's Wal v Arg match. Source: Opta

years away from 2024.

Curry senses a deeper calm in the final 20 minutes now. "It sounds ridiculous, but sometimes people are surprised to be in front. Right now it feels like we're not surprised," he said.

George added: "The autumn last year was a big one for us in terms of playing within ourselves when games got tight. Expressing ourselves and attacking the game is something that we've done really well over the last couple of weeks. Look at the France and Scotland games in the last Six Nations; when games have been tight, I think we're better at that."

There is still much to solve for England, though. Fiji sometimes let teams off the hook with dropped balls, loose moments and fatigue – and Saturday was no different in that respect. That will not serve as good preparation for a clinical All Blacks side arriving on Saturday. However, Fiji's ability to spark something from nothing is something New Zealand pride themselves on too. England beware. They were too easily carved apart twice by neat line-out moves. These All Blacks are not unbeatable, but they still do have game-breaking moments from the likes of Ardie Savea and Damian McKenzie, as evidenced in Chicago against Ireland and at Murrayfield.

Encouragingly England have been frustrated with their recent victories.



They are right to be miffed, as they are practically the most profligate side on the planet right now. They now score ten points more per match than in 2023 (34 points to 24) and have slowly improved their attacking efficiency year on year, but it is still way off the best.

England make more entries in the 22 on average per match than any other team (12.3) yet only Argentina score fewer points with those chances. That is a remarkable level of butchery.

Against Fiji England's basic catch-pass was shoddy, with passes thrown behind runners, which checked them and stopped fluent moves. Too often Fraser Dingwall or Marcus Smith crabbed across the field to shut off space for others.

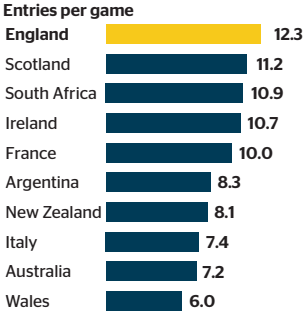
It is a positive that England have scored ten tries in two weeks while being this wasteful, but as Scotland found yet again, poor execution leaves you staring into the middle distance when the final whistle blows against New Zealand. "Take your chances," is one of rugby's most enduring clichés.

England have prepared well for New Zealand. With richer back-row resources, they have been able to ease Curry back into Test rugby after injury from the bench, and even gave captain Maro Itoje a 70-minute rest on Saturday.

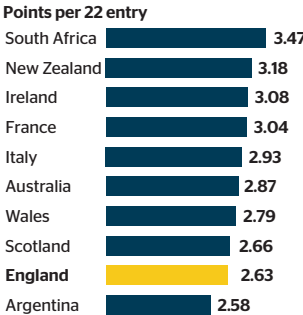
Elliott Daly returns to add more experience, and a back-line selection headache for Borthwick. The head coach has a lot of questions to address today, before he settles on his team for New Zealand. Who is the right No10? Is George Ford's experience to adapt on the run, or Fin Smith's Northampton

Opportunities made...

England get into their opponents 22 more than any other team in 2025



... but not taken



**6N and TRC sides only **Stats do not include Sunday's Wal v Arg match. Source: Opta



England scored six tries against Fiji, including Luke Cowan-Dickie's, top, but must be at their ruthless best against New Zealand. They are taking a new approach this autumn by huddling up in moments of possible panic to bring some calm, above

nous, best to start with? That leads to a wider point.

Does he begin with the best team or end with it? Therefore, who starts at prop — Ellis Genge or Fin Baxter, Will Stuart or Joe Heyes — and back row, particularly between Tom Curry, Guy Pepper and Sam Underhill? At what point do England want youthful energy, and the calm, been-there-and-done-its?

England not just could, but really should, beat the All Blacks. That is judging them by their own standards, and the journey they appear to be on.

As Curry alluded to and Keane would agree, defeat represents staying still, therefore going backwards. Frankly, they are fortunate that they are not facing the Springboks this autumn, as there seems no feasible way they could beat them right now, but the All Blacks? That's a different story. Saturday, therefore, will frame England's 2025.

Borthwick will have his fourth chance to nail "Project Nine". The question is, have his team learnt enough yet along the way to complete the mission?

CONTINUED FROM BACK Daily back for All Blacks Test

shirt against Australia, was nursing a hand injury last week but should also be fit to take on New Zealand, and Marcus Smith wore No 15 against Fiji.

Daly's 72 caps are unmatched in England's back three, so whether he plays or not, he will provide a good sounding board for the team as they prepare to become only the ninth English side to beat New Zealand in the 47th meeting between the sides.

Jamie George was part of the team who won 19-7 against the All Blacks in the 2019 World Cup semi-final, and the hooker said: "I think what a lot of teams do is they sit back in awe of the All Blacks and their incredible history and their incredible players."

"It's easy to do that. I think I've probably done that in the past."

"We've also got to be very aware that we're back here at Allianz Stadium. We're very proud of playing here. We are going to do everything that we can to win that game. They're not just another team. They are one of the best teams in the world. They've got brilliant players, world-class players. We need to be very clear on the game plan that we want to put in place to beat them and then go out and execute it perfectly."

Steve Borthwick, the head coach, confirmed that Tom Roebuck, the Sale Sharks wing, should be fit after injuring his ankle in training last week. "We'll find out early on whether he's going to be available," Borthwick said. "He's got to go through a loading process now, hopefully he's available."

Keep Curry fresh on the bench for vital final quarter

Stuart Barnes



There is life beyond Tom Willis. The Bordeaux-bound England exile is a tremendous player but Harlequins' Chandler Cunningham-South, the versatile lock/back-row forward, can fill the Saracens player's boots.

His 53 minutes against Fiji were hugely encouraging. There are faster back-row forwards but only Willis can match the brutal carrying power he brings on the front foot. Fiji are not the All Blacks but they combine the beautiful and the bestial. If a ball-carrying back-rower leaves the field having spent the game going forward, he's not short of a number of useful ingredients. The obvious one is strength, the less obvious is some pretty adept footwork. Cunningham-South has plenty of both. One early run into the heart of Fiji's defence was exactly the sort of stampeding move Bordeaux will expect from Willis next season. This came just minutes after treading all over Fiji's open-side.

And then there was Cunningham-South's effective charges coming from the front of the lineout to the tail. He takes opposition out with his blend of dexterity, dynamism and raw power. Best of all, his potential remains untapped. To opt for him as a replacement for Willis is to add an extra ingredient to the lineout. On Saturday he was England's most reliable jumper. If he doesn't bring quite the same heft as Willis around the fringes, he delivers a more athletic lineout presence. Cunningham-South is a ferocious tackler with a nose for the tryline. What he gave Steve Borthwick on Saturday was an excellent option for No 8 who can also step into the second row if required.

Flexibility is a prerequisite in the back five of the forwards. Fresh legs are essential if England are to make it ten straight wins with one of the biggest scalps of all. The last 20 minutes of the match are likely to prove crucial. Scott Robertson's team are flawed but have been formidable in the final quarter of their Tests against Ireland and Scotland.

In Chicago they turned a 13-7 deficit into a 26-13 victory. In Edinburgh, Scotland fought back from 17-0 to level the game and grasp the momentum, only for the Kiwis to turn up the heat yet again. Will England beat the All Blacks if they reach the final quarter of the game without scoring a single point? It's possible, but I very much doubt it.

The balance of selection is a delicate one when it comes to the forwards. A split of six forwards and two backs in the

Curry's role is to come off the bench with a brief to batter the All Blacks

replacements is the odds-on option. Cunningham-South allows extra flexibility. Given the excellence of Ollie Chessum and Maro Itoje in the second row, Borthwick could go heavy on the back-row bench options.

Before we consider the starting back row, it is a good idea to think about the impact substitutes. The first name on my teamsheet is Tom Curry. But not at No 6, where he played so heroically for the Lions. Borthwick has been utilising him from the bench and it is as No 20, coming on at the hour mark with a brief to batter the All Blacks, where he can do most damage. Curry's lineout work was notable against Fiji. Henry Pollock, who replaced Cunningham-South at the base of the scrum, can be introduced along with Curry.

That's two thirds of the finishing back row. Fiji faced Ben Earl — the official man of the match for the second week running — for the duration. He could be selected at No 8, where his speed was one of the points of difference between England and Australia. Against Fiji, he saved a try as he appeared from nowhere to grab the right ankle of Fiji's scrum half, Simi Kuruvo, and yank him backwards to cause a spill where the try had seemed inevitable. Yet for all the volume of Earl carries, Cunningham-South adds a physical edge with and without the ball. Both Australia and Fiji have enjoyed their share of breakdown success, which should concern Borthwick.

Earl is a glittering talent. In the space of five second-half minutes he produced a Fiji-like flip to keep a counterattack going. It ended with an Ellis Genge try. Soon after he threw a lovely long pass to open the midfield up for Marcus Smith; then there was a little stepping break. He carries with conviction, as a would-be centre should. Few expect him not to start, it's just a question of where.

It's also a question of balance. Guy Pepper is growing into one of those unseen but constantly discussed talents. OK, my eyes are not what once they were, but I'm a long way from blind and it is preposterous for Sam Underhill not to get the vote on the other flank. Underhill has played some of his greatest games against the All Blacks. If Earl, with his speed and skill, is a potential match-winner, so too is Underhill. I would like to think the injury-prone Bath flanker was given a rest on Saturday, along with George Ford, before the forthcoming game.

Rassie Erasmus predicted the French squad of 23 before the France-South Africa Test match and those

predictions came true. Clever man. I don't have a crystal ball, so here's my wish, not another prediction, for England's back row and the rest of the team for New Zealand:

England XV Steward; Freeman, Slade, Lawrence, Feyi-Waboso; Ford, Mitchell; Baxter, George, Heyes, Itoje, Chessum, Underhill, Earl, Cunningham-South. **Bench** Genge, Cowan-Dickie, Opoku-Fordjour, Coles, Curry, Pollock, Spencer, M Smith.



Title now Norris's to lose after

Molly Hudson

Motor Racing Reporter



This was once the scene of Lando Norris's most painful failure. A year on it is the staging post in his transformation from promising but error-prone talent to champion in waiting.

Twelve months ago his title hopes evaporated in a miserable effort on a tricky wet track, while Max Verstappen supremely claimed victory from 17th.

It haunted Norris for the 40 hours he stayed awake afterwards, the reality of the loss sinking in, and perhaps still in the months after when he and everyone else questioned whether he had the mettle of a champion. Here he put those ghosts to rest once and for all. Norris had the perfect weekend, winning the sprint and the main event, stretching his championship lead to 24 points over Oscar Piastri and 49 over Verstappen.

At the start of the season the idea of being a favourite or a frontrunner made Norris visibly uncomfortable. Yet here, with the trophy almost in sight, he is driving as though he is made for it.

"Just ignore everyone that talks crap about you. Just focus on yourself," was his response to how he is doing so.

This time Norris hung on despite another Verstappen charge. Even the best effort from one of the finest drivers in Formula 1 history was not enough.

Verstappen had said he could forget about any title hopes after a torrid Saturday when, for the first time in his career, he was eliminated on pure pace in Q1. But he can never be written off.

Red Bull opted to take a fresh engine and all of its components for Verstappen, meaning he started from the pitlane. Norris needed every one of those cars between him and his rival as he fought back superbly to third and the most unlikely of podiums. His race engineer, Gianpiero Lambiase, said: "[We] can only apologise for yesterday, mate, that was a race-winning drive. Sorry."

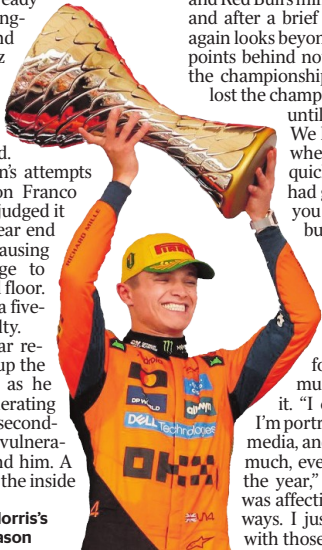
Kimi Antonelli produced a brilliant second, for the best result of his rookie season, holding off Verstappen, while Piastri could only manage fifth in another blow to his own title hopes.

Gabriel Bortoleto began the typical Interlagos chaos, squeezed into the wall by Lance Stroll, who did not see the Sauber in his mirrors on the opening lap. That crash triggered a safety car, with Lewis Hamilton's race in effect already over. In an opening-lap crush he and Carlos Sainz touched wheels, losing all of his momentum and dropping to the back of the field.

Then in Hamilton's attempts to gain a place on Franco Colapinto, he misjudged it and clipped the rear end of the Alpine, causing significant damage to his front wing and floor. He later received a five-second time penalty.

At the safety car restart Norris held up the pack for as long as he could before accelerating away, leaving second-placed Antonelli vulnerable to those behind him. A gap opened up on the inside

The victory was Norris's seventh of the season



Final three races

Las Vegas Grand Prix
Nov 20-22, Las Vegas Street Circuit

Qatar Grand Prix
Nov 28-30, Lusail International Circuit

Abu Dhabi Grand Prix
Dec 5-7, Yas Marina Circuit

for Piastri in fourth and he gambled, sending his McLaren alongside the Mercedes. He locked up on entry to the corner, hitting Antonelli and sending him into Charles Leclerc. The Ferrari driver took the worst of the hit, breaking his front suspension, and he could not continue. It was a disastrous day for Ferrari in their battle for second in the constructors' championship, as Hamilton served his penalty and then retired on lap 38 as a result of the damage he had suffered earlier in the race. Ferrari dropped to fourth, behind Mercedes and Red Bull.

The stewards decided Piastri was at fault for causing the collision, giving him a ten-second time penalty. That was perhaps slightly harsh, given replays showed Antonelli could have given Piastri more room having seen the McLaren in his mirrors.

Verstappen had a slow puncture, which forced him to pit on lap 8 but inadvertently worked in his favour, ridding himself of the hard tyres he started on and leaving him to carve through the field on the mediums.

The combination of a new power unit and set-up tweaks overnight finally gave him a car with which he could fight. There was no such comeback for Yuki Tsunoda, who had another calamitous day in the other Red Bull, a ten-second penalty for hitting Stroll served incorrectly after a team member touched his car before the time was elapsed, leading to another ten-second penalty.

Interlagos is one of the finest tracks on the calendar, with elevation and camber, and steeped in history. A mix of tyre compounds and strategies made for a fascinating afternoon.

It was held on what Ollie Bearman (who produced another mature drive in sixth) jokingly described as a "British autumn day" with light drizzle in the air, but nothing like the damp conditions from last year. He was fitted with the soft tyre for a late charge and warned of the higher levels of degradation on that compound by his race engineer. He responded: "We have nothing to lose."

In truth, that has been Verstappen and Red Bull's mindset for several weeks and after a brief resurrection the title again looks beyond his grasp. "We're 49 points behind now [but] we didn't lose the championship here," he said. "We lost the championship from race one until Zandvoort [race 15]. We had a lot of weekends where we simply were not quick enough. Then we had good moments where you get some points back, but not enough."

One title rival is almost resigned to defeat while the other, Piastri, looks a shadow of his former self. For Norris, the transformation has been as much off the track as on it. "I care a lot about how I'm portrayed and things in the media, and I probably cared too much, even at the beginning of the year," he said. "It probably was affecting me in not the best ways. I just learnt how to deal with those things better."



From pitlane to podium

Drivers to get a top-three finish starting from the pitlane:
Sebastian Vettel (PL to P3, Abu Dhabi 2012)
Lewis Hamilton (PL to P3, Hungary 2014)
Max Verstappen (PL to P3, Brazil 2025)



Inset above, Verstappen started out in the pitlane as Red Bull opted to take a fresh engine and all of its components for

How they finished

		thr 32min 01.596s
1	L Norris McLaren	
2	K Antonelli Mercedes	+10.388s
3	M Verstappen Red Bull	+10.75s
4	G Russell Mercedes	+15.267s
5	O Piastri McLaren	+15.749s
6	O Bearman Haas	+29.63s
7	L Lawson Racing Bulls	+52.642s
8	I Hadjar Racing Bulls	+52.873s
9	N Hülkenberg K Sauber	+53.324s
10	P Gasly Alpine	+53.914s
11	A Albon Williams	+54.184s
12	E Ocon Haas	+54.696s
13	C Sainz Williams	+55.420s
14	F Alonso Aston Martin	+55.766s
15	F Colapinto Alpine	+57.777s
16	L Stroll Aston Martin	+58.247s
17	Y Tsunoda Red Bull	+69.176s
18	L Hamilton Ferrari	DNF
19	C Leclerc Ferrari	DNF
20	G Bortoleto Kick Sauber	DNF

Overall standings

1	L Norris McLaren	390pts
2	O Piastri McLaren	366
3	M Verstappen Red Bull	341
4	G Russell Mercedes	276
5	C Leclerc Ferrari	214
6	L Hamilton Ferrari	148
7	K Antonelli Mercedes	122
8	A Albon Williams	73
9	N Hülkenberg K Sauber	43
10	I Hadjar Racing Bulls	43

Fastest lap A Albon 1:12.400

Constructors

1	McLaren	756pts
2	Mercedes	398
3	Red Bull	366
4	Ferrari	362
5	Williams	111
6	Racing Bulls	82
7	Aston Martin	72
8	Haas	70
9	Kick Sauber	60
10	Alpine	22

I had a clear

Molly Hudson

Oscar Piastri defended his actions in the three-car collision that brought a ten-second penalty and lost him valuable championship points.

At the safety car restart during the São Paulo Grand Prix, Kimi Antonelli was left exposed in second place by Lando Norris's acceleration. Piastri, who started fourth, made a brave move down the inside of the Mercedes rookie, but locked up and made contact with Antonelli, who then hit Charles Leclerc, ending the Ferrari driver's participation in the race.

The stewards determined that Piastri was "wholly responsible" for the collision and handed him a ten-second penalty, noting that according to the driving standard guidelines he did not establish the right to attempt the move because his front axle was not alongside the mirror of the car in front at the apex of the corner.

While that was the case, it appeared to be harsh given Antonelli had room to give Piastri more space, as Leclerc had done on the outside of the track. It meant Piastri lost second place after serving the penalty and he could only finish fifth after fighting back through

dominant display

DPP/SHUTTERSTOCK; JEAN CARMIEL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



him. From there he battled to finish third, but later said his upturn in form was "not enough" to catch title leader Norris

opportunity, insists penalised Piastri



Piastri, top, said that Antonelli did not afford him enough space, an argument that had the sympathy of Leclerc, bottom

the traffic. It was the latest in a series of errors and bad luck for the Australian, who had crashed out of the sprint race on Saturday, caught out by a puddle of water on a kerb. He is now 24 points behind Norris. "I had a very clear opportunity, I went for it," Piastri said.

"The other two [Antonelli and Leclerc] on the outside braked quite late. There was obviously a bit of a lock-up into the corner, but that's because I could see that Kimi was not going to give me any space. I can't disappear, but the decision is what it is."

While Leclerc suffered most from the crash, he said Antonelli could have done more to take evasive action. "Oscar was optimistic," he said. "But Kimi knew that Oscar was on the inside. He did the corner like Oscar was never there. The blame is not all on Oscar."

'It's off the scale' – 40,000 England fans set to travel for Ashes

Cricket
Elizabeth Ammon

More than 40,000 England supporters are expected to descend on Australia this winter — an unprecedented travelling contingent for an Ashes series — as fans make up for missing out on the Covid-hit 2021-22 tour.

The Barmy Army, which organises official fan travel and events, says demand has been "off the scale" for the 2025-26 Ashes, with three times as many packages sold as for the 2017-18 series. Thousands more are arranging their own trips, creating what could be the biggest overseas following England have ever taken to an Ashes.

"It's unprecedented," Adam Canning, the Barmy Army's commercial director, said. "People haven't been able to go for eight years. The last tour [had Covid restrictions] and even in 2019 there was no winter Ashes. So there's huge pent-up demand. Add the excitement around Bazball and Ben Stokes and the thrilling series against India in the summer, and the appetite is enormous."

Canning, who flies to Australia in ten days' time to oversee logistics, has been trying to co-ordinate a schedule for about 3,000 official travellers. "Trying to sort out a programme for that many people is not without its challenges," he admitted. "But it's a nice problem to have. Our sales are triple what we did in 2017-18, which tells its own story."

The Barmy Army estimates that alongside those booked on the official tours, tens of thousands more are travelling with other tour groups or independently. As far as possible, the England fans will sit in blocks together in the stadiums. "We anticipate a 35,000 to 40,000-strong Barmy Army at some stage across the tour," Canning said. "That's never happened before."

The traditional Christmas and new year period in

The Barmy Army will have a big presence down under

Ashes schedule

First Test Nov 21-25
Optus Stadium, Perth

Second Test Dec 4-8
The Gabba, Brisbane

Third Test Dec 17-21
Adelaide Oval

Fourth Test Dec 26-30
MCG, Melbourne

Fifth Test Jan 4-8
SCG, Sydney

Melbourne and Sydney remains the biggest draw, but Canning said every venue had sold strongly. "Melbourne and Sydney Tests are always the most popular," he said. "But the first three Tests — Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide — have all got record numbers this time. Perth's new stadium has its own selling points, Brisbane's a day-night match, and Adelaide's where the Barmy Army was founded. Each venue has a bit of magic."

A full calendar of events is planned around the matches. "We're bringing back 'The Bashes', a T20 match between England and Australia fans on the eve of each Test," Canning said. "The opening game in Perth will be played at the Waca, which is really special. That night we've got 1,000-plus people booked for our pre-Test party — ex-England and Aussie players, sing-alongs, the trumpeter, a DJ and dancing."

The group's Melbourne Christmas Day dinner — a tradition for travelling England fans — has sold out at 1,500 seats, twice the previous record. "If we could find another 500 places, they'd go instantly," Canning said. "We'll have 12 to 15 major events across the tour and most are already close to sold out."

The first contingent of fans will depart in just over a week's time before the start of the first Test in Perth on November 21.



Indian smashes 11-ball 50 with eight successive sixes

Elizabeth Ammon

The record for the number of consecutive sixes hit in a professional game has been smashed during an Indian domestic match.

Akash Kumar Choudhary hit eight sixes in a row on his way to the fastest fifty ever scored in a first-class match, meaning he surpassed the feats of two of cricket's greatest players in Sir Garfield Sobers and Ravi Shastri. They are the only other two players to hit six sixes in an over in a first-class match.

Akash, 25, came in to bat at No 8 for Meghalaya against Arunachal Pradesh on day two of a Ranji Trophy plate match in Surat. He began with a dot and two singles before hitting six straight sixes off the left-arm spinner Limar Dabi, and then took two further sixes in the next over from the off spinner TNR

Mohith to bring up his half-century. The 11 balls it took him beat the previous record of 12 by Leicestershire's Wayne White against Essex in 2012.

Meghalaya declared soon after he reached his half-century, having racked up a mammoth 629 for eight, and Akash then went on to take one for 10 with the ball as their opposition were skittled out for only 73. After they were asked to follow on, Akash took two further wickets for just seven runs.

In white-ball cricket, Yuvraj Singh hit six sixes in an over off Stuart Broad in the 2007 T20 World Cup and West Indies' Keiron Pollard also hit six in an over against Sri Lanka in 2021. In Test cricket, the record for the most consecutive sixes is four achieved by Kapil Dev against England at Lord's in 1990, Shahid Afridi against India in 2006 and AB de Villiers against Australia in 2008.

Sport

Slot: The title is last thing on my mind

Pep hails 3-0 win over Liverpool as 'perfect present'

Paul Hirst, Paul Joyce

Arne Slot admitted he was becoming concerned about the number of games his Liverpool team are losing after they were hammered 3-0 by Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium.

Pep Guardiola thanked his players for giving him "the perfect present" on his 1,000th game in management as City condemned the reigning champions to their fifth loss of the campaign courtesy of goals from Erling Haaland, Nico González and Jérémy Doku.

Slot said it was "obvious and clear" that the referee, Chris Kavanagh, had made the "wrong decision" in disallowing a Virgil van Dijk equaliser for offside after deeming that Andrew Robertson had interfered with play by ducking out of the way of the captain's goal-bound header.

The Liverpool manager admitted his team deserved to lose, however, and he is concerned that they are eighth in the standings, eight points adrift of the leaders, Arsenal, after 11 matches.

"It feels there's too many [defeats], and the last thing I should think about now is the title race," Slot, 47, said. "We should first focus on getting result after result before we can even think about that. The reality is we are eighth now, one team is quite far ahead."

"I said last season many times, even when we were leading, the best way to judge the league table is after 38 matches, and the next best way is to judge it after 19 games, because you have all faced the same opponents."

The Game
16 pages
of pure
football
inside T2



City fans marked Guardiola's milestone before kick-off by unfurling three banners paying tribute to the Catalan, who has won 18 major trophies during his 9½-year spell at the Etihad.

"I just want to thank the players, the staff, for giving me an incredible present, to win against the most important opponent that we faced in our time here by far," Guardiola, 54, said.

"We have been in a thousand million battles, and hopefully there will be more and more, because it has been so special. It has been a special night with my kids here too."

Guardiola said that man of the match Doku had enjoyed an "outstanding" performance up against Conor Bradley, the Liverpool right back who kept Vinicius Jr quiet in the midweek Champions League win over Real Madrid at Anfield. "He's demanding himself to be better, he listens, and he has a special attribute with his dribbling," Guardiola said of the Belgium winger.

"So today, Conor, I'm really, really impressed with him. My assistant Pep Lijnders [formerly of Liverpool] told me a thousand incredible good things about that guy, so he can do everything," Report, The Game, pages 2-3



Van Dijk, the Liverpool captain, had a first-half equaliser ruled out by VAR before his side slumped to a 3-0 defeat by City in Guardiola's 1,000th game as a manager

Will this Welsh woe ever end?

Captain Jac Morgan out for autumn as Argentina run riot in Cardiff

Report, page 52



Norris's perfect Brazil weekend

Molly Hudson Motor Racing Reporter

Lando Norris took total control of the Formula 1 title race with a commanding performance in Sao Paulo yesterday.

The Briton, who qualified on pole and also won the sprint race across a flawless weekend at Interlagos, stretched his lead to 24 points in the standings with only three races remaining. His nearest rival, his McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri, could only finish fifth while Max Verstappen had to settle for third and is now 49 points behind Norris, despite a stellar drive from the Red Bull man that took him from the pitlane to third.

The Mercedes rookie Kimi Antonelli clung on for an impressive second but the title is now Norris's to lose after his second win in a row and seventh of the season. "I just ignore everyone that talks about me and focus on myself," he said. Report, pages 56-57

Daly back for All Blacks Test

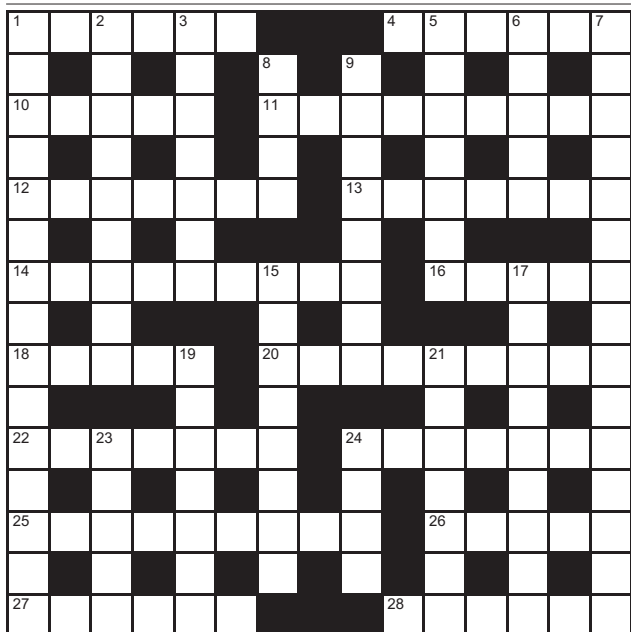
Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Elliot Daly will boost England's back-line ranks before the All Blacks Test on Saturday, with his team-mates determined not to show New Zealand too much respect.

Daly, 33, has not played since he broke his arm on the British & Irish Lions tour to Australia in June. He has been in rehabilitation with England during the Autumn Nations Series, but is now a full part of the 36-man squad, with the Northampton Saints lock Tom Lockett dropping out.

It remains to be seen whether he is fit enough to make the match-day 23 to face New Zealand, but if he is ready he would represent a fine option at full back to help link England's back play. Freddie Steward, who started in that Continued on page 55

Times Crossword 29,383



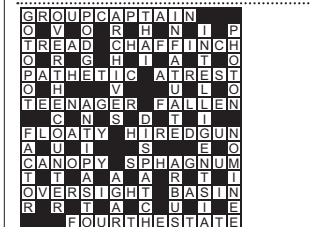
ACROSS

- 1 Awe maybe after short time for cruel god (6)
- 4 Make an error in space excursion? (4,2)
- 10 Bits of holy text in old city guarded by special force (5)
- 11 A new atomiser for perfume (9)
- 12 Language of the old man approaching John in greeting (7)
- 13 Self-important politician in middle of room probing matter (7)
- 14 Attempt again diminished performer — one holding something back in theatre? (9)
- 16 Couple pinning medic, an idiot (5)
- 18 Demonstrate quietly, wander here and there (5)
- 20 Seal fibre somehow in sculptural feature (3-6)
- 22 Permits variable amount of money to be loaned (7)
- 24 Be right, holding rugger is for the heavy physical type (7)
- 25 Cut hole in material that's affected by the sun outside? (9)
- 26 Commercial link-up that is needing external money (3-2)
- 27 Son conveniently near to provide drink (6)
- 28 Regional potato dish containing rodent (6)

DOWN

- 1 Wrongfully grabs material possessed by girl (15)
- 2 The French quarter divided by river moving slowly (9)
- 3 Idiot into sparkling wine and starchy food (7)
- 5 Back cure leaving knight ready for battle again? (7)
- 6 Greek character? Behold — half of his field is cut! (5)
- 7 How to make pear juice for media meeting? (5,10)
- 8 Queen and Country — first person to fall down (4)
- 9 Watery stretch coming from huge river in endless sweep (8)
- 15 People with foreign character boarding vessels (8)
- 17 Men hit sea — moving this? (9)
- 19 Green Triumph car without top has this writer in (7)
- 21 Circle or something similar, mostly feature of Dartmoor? (7)
- 23 Work of art that is, in part, second only to Raphael (5)
- 24 Give warning about person close to relative (4)

Prize solution 29,376



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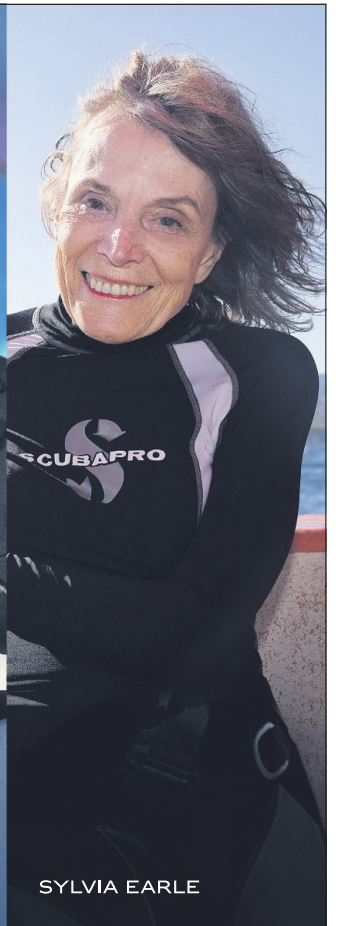
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THE EXPLORER



**When Alan
said 'traitor'
I lost control
of my legs**

**Nick Mohammed on
The Celebrity Traitors**



times2

Like Davina McCall, I was at the 'lucky' end of the breast cancer spectrum

Shane Watson



Davina McCall posted a video this weekend announcing she has had breast cancer. She found a lump, it came and went. She noticed it again in the mirror and decided to have it looked at.

We know the drill from this point. A biopsy revealed that it was cancer. Three weeks ago she had a lumpectomy. The margins were clear — “they take a little bit extra”, she explained. The cancer was in its “very, very, early” stages. She will have a short course of radiotherapy “as an insurance policy”. All pretty standard. An increasingly familiar fiftysomething health issue, as those of us who have been there like to call it. The lucky (touch wood) end of breast cancer. The one that a close girlfriend had diagnosed two

don't have to have chemo. That's a result.”

“I know,” she said, “but don't underestimate how terrifying this stuff feels.”

When I got the email after the biopsy asking me to come in and see the consultant to discuss my results, I knew. I'd received biopsy results before and they hadn't been delivered in person. He was calm and reassuring when he confirmed that, as I had “probably guessed”, they had found “a small amount” of breast cancer. He made it seem like something that could be eliminated easily — a disease he was on top of and adept at stamping out. I went home to wait for my husband to get back from work. I didn't want to ring him because by then I was aware that the words breast cancer leave you feeling disembodied and shaken, however lucky (touch wood) you are.

When he did get home there were no tears. I felt calm. My cancer had a good outcome (touch wood) and I had an

experienced surgeon, plus understanding employers who would give me the necessary time off. It could have been a lot worse, that I knew. But it's one thing being reassured yourself and another reassuring people — parents, stepchildren — that there's nothing to worry about. The shock in their faces challenges your confidence. Seeing them desperately trying to disguise their fear then bursting into tears is manageable — you're prepared — but maybe does slightly dent the foundations of your positive narrative.

I told my dad on the phone because I couldn't bear to see his worried eyes or feel him reach out a hand to grip mine tightly. Instead I had to listen to the pause, the gather, the voice on the other end of the line softer than usual and not as rock-steady. Still I wasn't scared.

My subconscious knew better. I used to sleep like a log. After the diagnosis I sleep sometimes like a person in fear of their life who has to make a choice, breathe or hold your breath, and only one has a happy ending. These days I forget I ever had cancer most of the time, but a bad cancer story is always on your radar. A twinge in my left breast connects instantly to my bowels. I recognise that there was a fork in the road after my diagnosis and I came out the other side with a thicker grown-up skin (your first duty is not to scare the people around you) and a stronger sense of the people I can trust to be there should I need them. I have old friends who barely

registered my situation, and that has stayed with me. I have friends who were going through it at the same time and we are as close now as family. And I have friends who have not had cancer who are happy to tell me what does and doesn't count as a cancer diagnosis to care about and I do think less of them for being so sure of something that is a life-changer, or at least a sharp reminder that your life will not go on for ever. The end of the time when you never thought about your own death.

When I was being escorted in the lift to the operating theatre by a nurse I remarked that my mouth was so dry it felt like sandpaper, the fault of nil by mouth. “No, that's fear,” she said with a bright smile. Breast cancer, even the good one (touch wood). It's not nothing.



“My mouth felt like sandpaper. ‘That’s fear,’ the nurse said

years before I did. The one with the good (touch wood) outcome.

There's a breast cancer spectrum, as we all know, and we all know women on it. To be in the lucky camp you want the lymph nodes sample they remove from your armpit to be clear (the indication that it hasn't spread). You want the lump to be very small, the discovery to be very early. You want it to be oestrogen receptor-positive. You want to be one of the women who doesn't need chemotherapy. Or a mastectomy. You want the lump to be in an easily accessible place. You want to be one of those who can go to a party a few days after the operation and have conversations with women who reassure you that ten years ago “they wouldn't have even found it”, so now you're talking about not just lucky but early intervention. You want to be all of these things and thank God (touch wood) you are, but still life changes for ever when you are told you have cancer.

“They've caught it so early,” I said to the friend who got there two years before I did, “and you

‘Nothing is free.

Clubs have long relied on young women to attract big spenders. But there has been a twist to what goes on behind the velvet ropes, finds Helen Rumbelow

It was the “double-stacking” that was the final straw. She knew the deal. She was in the nightclub to look pretty for the men who paid big. Her job was to bring her looks and youth to adorn a booth-style table. But when the club organisers asked her, and a row of other girls, to move so they were sitting perched on top of the booth, allowing another row of girls to sit below, she suddenly remembered her dignity. She muttered that she needed a vape and stepped outside, where she bumped into me.

Double-stacking was exactly the kind of trick a supermarket would pull to maximise the lure of a product on a shelf, she complained, her long blonde ringlets quivering in indignation.

“I'm not going to sit on a hard bit of wood this wide” — the 21-year-old held out her hand, cold because she was wearing only a little dress against the night air — “just to display myself for rich men.”

Out in London on a Friday night I felt like an anthropologist. I was embarking on field work when I would otherwise have been asleep, oblivious to all this, like most of society. I felt this way because of the stories young women my daughter's age told about so-called “Mayfair” or “promoter clubs”, which involve a few rich older men and crowds of young women there on display.

One question has troubled me since I started hearing about these clubs. Everyone I meet is here willingly, even if they are not guaranteed to enjoy themselves. I neither see nor hear anything illegal. But still, the discomfort needles at me like a sharp stiletto. Keep that in mind as you come with me past the velvet rope into these Mayfair clubs. If it's not wrong, does that make it right?

They are located in some of the most expensive streets in Europe, bordered by the Ritz hotel to the south and Hanover Square to the north. The blacked-out Land Rovers prowling the streets as if on safari. Yet the girls shivering in queues in bare legs are not rich and are not models or girlfriends either. They have to fit the criteria: pretty and aged roughly 18 to 25, asked to wear dresses and heels. They are schoolgirls and London university students, mainly middle class in my encounters, but without a lot of pockets or pocket money.

Tabu, Luxx, Tape, Maddox, Cirque le Soir, Selene, the Cuckoo Club, the London Reign and Dear Darling are among the main ones, roughly following a distinctive business model. Each looks to attract about fifty or more girls a night, so in total up to a thousand girls are mobilised each weekend. A few weeks ago I saw that Selene had posted a promotional video on TikTok, clearly proud of its line of young women in heels and

short dresses queueing up three deep for 50 metres. “Where [are] the men?” is the first comment. “Is this a lesbian club?” is another.

Midnight approaches, the beat is thumping under my feet from basement clubs. But I find the same. At only one do I see a handful of young men in the queue. The girls get in mostly free and with the offer of free drinks. So who is paying and what is the transaction? To understand the answer we have to go deep, not just down glossy stairs to the basement, but into what happens when social media speedballs gender politics with power and wealth.

Pretty women have long been assets to the club owner. Clubs in Mayfair once depended on the “models and bottles” economy. In the second half of the 20th century they would routinely call model agencies to send their “girls” down to clubs to lure in rich male punters prepared to pay over the odds for champagne. The free drinks were the bait for the girls, the girls were the bait for the businessmen, and on up the food chain. It is the expensive version of the “ladies get in free” promotion in local nightclubs across the land.

Yet, says Ellen Atlanta, the young British author of *Pixel Flesh: How Toxic Beauty Culture Harms Women*, that all changed with the advent of social media. Suddenly the tech was there to bypass model agencies, which

“We’re students, we have no money. Here we get free drinks

at least had spurious responsibility, and for girls to be recruited directly to the clubs at scale. This is done via male club promoters, the middle men in this ecosystem. The promoter is the same age as the girls, often a student too, scouting Instagram for the profiles of pretty young women. Or they pose as single men to do the same on dating sites such as Hinge and Match, where most of the girls I spoke to found their promoter. Atlanta's promoter found her on Hinge and she visited a Mayfair club twice, writing about the experience in a chapter of her book.

“I didn't think it would be one of the most shocking or revelatory parts of the book for people but it really was,” she says. “When they hear about the contract that's on the table, they say, ‘Aren't we beyond that now?’ I actually think we have gone further back than ever.”

Let's find those elusive men. I finally glimpsed them later in the night making their way from cars straight

We're the products on display'



CIRCE HAMILTON FOR THE TIMES

into the clubs, no queueing. The only reliable way for men to get into the clubs is to book tables. Very few try their chances in the door queue, where they can be charged an entry fee of about £100, if they get in at all. For the price the club guarantees a gender split in their favour: roughly, according to my various reports, 70 per cent female. After I approached clubs online to book a table I was told it came with a "minimum spend" on drinks ranging from £500 to £2,500 for two to four people.

That is just the start. The club culture promotes "bottle service", the ostentatious purchase of expensive bottles. Champagne in one club starts at £450 a pop, up to £100,000. At a big-ticket bottle purchase the DJ stops the music and the professional dancers accompany a tray filled with mini indoor fireworks. One TikTok video celebrates a "bottle battle", ie competitive purchases on rival tables, at London Reign.

"At my club the champagne was delivered to the table in a model yacht, with sparklers coming out," says one female visitor. "Everyone had to applaud."

Ashley Mears, an American sociology professor, says this ostentatious display of wealth is what anthropologists call a "potlatch". Mears spent 100 nights at similar clubs in New York and Miami to write her book-length analysis, *Very Important People*, including diagrams of the income stream of clubs and power levels by table. As Mears wrote: "Beneath the glamour is an unbalanced economy in which girls generate far greater profit for men than their free drinks are worth."

The girls have to scale even more hurdles. Their promoter uses their Instagram profile to vet their looks and followers; it helps if they can post

photos to promote the club. Their friends — female only — will be vetted in the same way. One girl said she had to text her promoter her outfit before she set off. Yet there is final screening at the door by a manager. I saw only women in their thirties perform this task. Mears says the Russian term for the job is "face control", assessing if the girl is beautiful enough. While men buying a table have to dress smartly there appears to be little face control for them.

This manager can either refuse entry or — reported to me by girls for at least two clubs — give girls an entry rating based on coloured cards, ranging from free for the most beautiful to £10 for middling and £20 for the lower range. Atlanta and her friend received a £10 rating. Mears reports that in New York the ratings are even harsher and girls are openly dismissed for not being thin enough. "Young, thin and tall" is the ideal, Mears writes. Over a UK size 10 is "worthless".

"In the queue there is a sense of anxiety as you face the woman at the top of the queue," Atlanta says. "It's a stamp on your worth for the evening. 'My friend asked me, 'Does that mean we're ugly?' Our promoter said, 'No. If you were ugly you wouldn't be allowed in at all.'"

Once inside, the girls' labours are not over. "We are the men's reward," Atlanta writes. Each promoter is responsible for a table that should be

full of eight to ten girls, and asks the girls to sit around it or on top, where there is usually vodka and a mixer for them to drink. One girl told me that in all the Mayfair clubs she had visited they "double-stacked" the girls. Atlanta says she and her friend felt like "dolls on a shelf". The promoter often won't be paid if the girl leaves early or isn't visible enough.

"Any time we left to go to the toilet or outside," Atlanta says, in a common refrain I heard, "I would get a text from the promoter saying, 'Where have you gone? You need to come back.'"

There is an unstable tension here. The young male promoters I saw greeting their girls in the queue were extremely friendly. It serves their business for girls to have a good evening and want to become repeat visitors. I met two separate girl groups celebrating an 18th birthday. Although promoters requested that the girls stay

close to the booths, their surveillance made some girls feel safer than in regular clubs.

"The good thing about Mayfair is exactly that there are so many more girls," one said. "You actually have personal space to dance, compared to constantly getting barged by guys."

Another bunch of girls I met from King's College London told me they were regulars. "We're students, we have no money. Here we get free drinks and get to hang out with our female friends and not get so bothered — it's a good deal."

The men, one girl said, "are often tourists from the Middle East. They are quite quiet but they like watching." The clubs have hundreds of good reviews on Google, praising the high glamour of neon-lit interiors and the music. There are only a small minority of negatives, such as "the free drinks aren't worth the dehumanisation" or "we were stacked up and fed vodka orange juices ... no man showed up until about 12 and they were all old and not much fun. Felt like cattle and wouldn't recommend".

So why do I feel so unsettled about girls making a choice that seems, in many ways, free? It feels retrograde, unpleasantly reminiscent of the male influencers in the manosphere angrily ranting that men are ranked only by wealth and women by aesthetics. Atlanta says that for women here "beauty is currency. It's like Instagram but in real life. It's unbalanced — the age difference, the wealth and power disparity".

Not only can women not bring male friends or relatives, they cannot bring their less attractive friends.

"You feel vulnerable from the get-go, almost having to prove to them your worth, a booth of women all ranked differently," Atlanta says. "Nothing is free. We are the products on display."

I went home, relieved that, for once, my daughter was tucked up asleep before me. Safe and single-stacked.



Young women queueing outside Mayfair clubs

Happy pills cured my dog's ball addiction

It was the new, manic barking — piercing, persistent, painful — that alerted us to the fact that something might be wrong with our dog. The change seemed to have arrived suddenly, almost overnight. We never imagined that within weeks our dog would be diagnosed with anxiety and ball addiction, and put on antidepressants.

Our five-year-old spaniel, Flo, was high-energy and excitable. She'd eat everything in sight — once even paraffin firelighters (she was fine) — and would chase her beloved tennis ball until we, not she, tired.

But then that piercing barking began. First she barked if we sat on the sofa — short, sharp shouts that would drive us to distraction. Soon she barked if we were cooking tea, when we sat at the table to eat and while we washed up. She'd face us down in the garden, letting out a barrage of yelps. We were under fire.

The only thing that offered her — and us — relief was a ball. And so we



threw one, often. If we hid the ball on the counter she'd climb up to get it; if we stashed it in a cupboard she'd scratch at the doors. She started to break out of her crate, somehow opening two sliding bolts, to search for her toy.

It was a dog behaviourist who suggested that Flo might be an addict. Dr Susannah O'Hanlon, a clinical animal behaviourist with the pet trainer Cambridge Dogs, visited our house nearly two months ago.

"We observed her in the garden with the ball present [and] I came to the conclusion that her persistent interest in the ball and the rewarding feelings that the game gave her may be connected with her inability to relax in some contexts," O'Hanlon says.

Her prescription was simple: a full vet check to rule out pain or illness and to ask about suitable anti-anxiety medication for her. She also — and this was the hardest part — told us to get rid of the ball. Cold turkey.

Six weeks later we have our dog back. Flo is now on anti-anxiety medicine, as advised by our vet, and we no longer have balls in the house. She sits on her cushion in our window seat, gazing out at the world, her body, which was once taut with tension, now soft and serene.

She still barks and jumps up and races round the house, but she's no longer fixated and no longer, it seems, unwell.

Chloé Hamilton

times2

‘The Celebrity Traitors? I have no desire to do anything like this again’

Nick Mohammed loved his role in the biggest TV moment of 2025, but he has bigger plans than reality television, he tells **Alice Jones**



Here I am with Nick Mohammed, game-changer, puzzler-in-chief, grave-digger, Judas to Joe Marler's unlikely Jesus, and arch-faithful, who choked spectacularly in the last ten minutes of *The Celebrity Traitors* to deliver victory for Alan Carr's giggling assassin — and the television moment of the year. I have so many questions. But first, “What the hell happened?” Mohammed suggests. Well, yes.

A quick recap: going into Thursday's final the faithful looked set for victory. Mohammed and Marler — as unlikely a double act as you'll ever see — had clocked that Cat Burns was a traitor, and with Carr's inability to say he was a faithful without laughing, it was game over. But in a spectacular twist Mohammed turned on his ally. Why?

“It was definitely seeded in my mind the day before the finale. There was something Joe said to me: ‘Oh, I just want it to be us two in the final. That is all I care about.’ And at that point I think there were still about seven of us there. And I remember thinking, this just smacks of Harry and Mollie [the traitor winner and faithful loser in the second series of *The Traitors*]. As soon as you get that thought in your head of, maybe I'm being played, it's just all confirmation bias. But the big one was when Joe then said ‘Sorry’ to Cat at the round table. And I thought, oh God, he's saying sorry to her because he's a traitor. I've got it.”

He had, famously, not got it. The former England rugby star Marler was banished, and Mohammed and the historian David Olusoga voted to end the game, wrongly believing Carr to be a fellow faithful. Again, why?

“I'd had thoughts about Alan, but I can't make up a reason as to why I didn't suspect him, I just didn't. I clung on to the idea that he and Paloma [Faith] were close so he would never have got rid of her. All the stuff like him forgetting that he had the shield and bursting out laughing ... Alan is Alan. He's constantly hilarious and brightened up every single moment in the castle. So maybe I just didn't, deep down, want to think it would be him.”

I meet Mohammed, a genial, twinkly 45-year-old, in the suitably gothic surroundings of a hotel in St Pancras, London. He is on his way to perform his live comedy show *Show Pony* in Leicester and is carrying his costume and props in a little duffel bag. A dark blue baseball cap and green-rimmed sunglasses are the only signs he might

be someone who's trying to keep a low profile. He watched the final (along with more than 11 million others that night) at home in west London with his wife, Becka, and their children, Finn, ten, Arthur, eight, and Annie, two. The response has been overwhelming. He thinks this must be what it's like to be an England footballer the day after the Euros. “Everyone I've met wants to talk about it. I popped into Sainsbury's this morning ...” he shudders.

When the result was revealed, Mohammed swore, brilliantly. “There was a lot more they edited out. I was effing and blinding, I was so shocked.” He realised as soon as Carr started to speak that he'd got it wrong. “And then I just lost control of my legs. I was on the floor. And then when Alan burst into tears I couldn't bear it, but I also thought, oh my God, this is going to be great television. No one wanted to see David and me win together. That would be so boring.”

He knows that the smart move would have been to get rid of Carr,

“No one wanted to see me and David win. That would be so boring

“just in case”. “But I thought, wouldn't it be nice for all of us to just win together? It would feel a bit nasty, just to get rid of another faithful at this point. I didn't want Alan to miss out.”

Mohammed had actually wanted to be a traitor himself but told the host Claudia Winkleman that he could never betray a fellow traitor. “And she said: ‘That sounds like faithful behaviour to me.’” Still, he did throw Marler under the bus, didn't he? “I don't know if I do regret Joe ... I regret that I betrayed him in that way, but I know that it created a victory like no other.” They're still friends, he assures me. But he's clearly still thinking about the gameplay. Hours after our interview he texts to say he has reread his *Traitors* diary and recalled that he had been suspicious of Marler being in cahoots with Jonathan Ross, a traitor. “I kept thinking the two of them had made a pact to accuse the other, to throw everyone else off the scent.”

Oh yes, Mohammed kept a *Traitors* diary. He shows it to me — a yellow hardback journal with the day's events recorded in meticulous grey pen and strategy in pink pen. “In final!!!!” reads

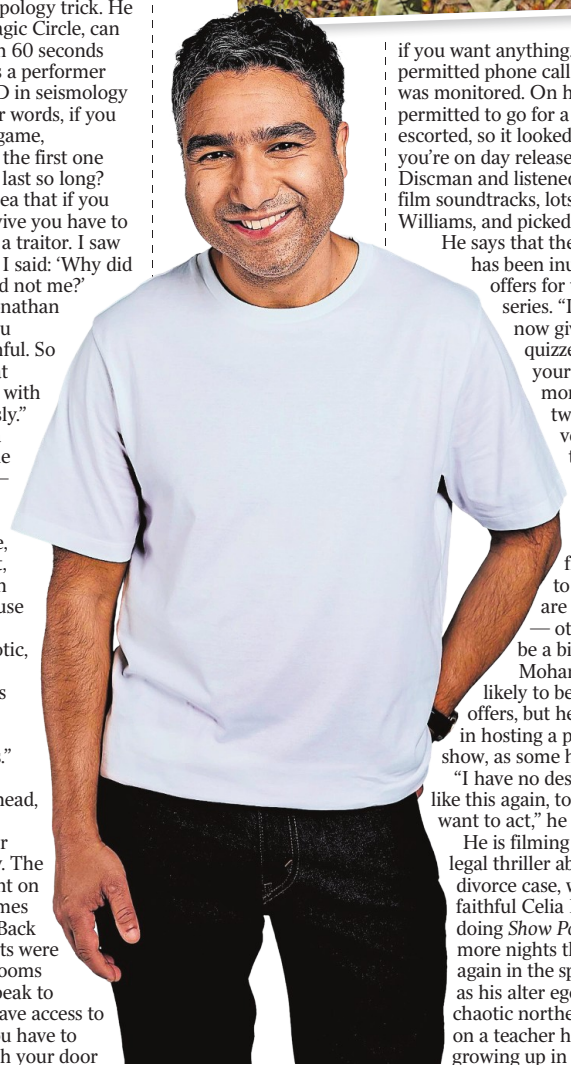
one entry; “Celia murdered”, reads another. “Potatoes, green beans, chicken chasseur.” What? “My wife wanted to know what I was eating.”

This is precisely why Mohammed was genius casting. Most viewers probably knew him as Nate, the coach gone bad from *Ted Lasso*, others from *Slow Horses* (he played the mayor of London) or from starring with Orlando Bloom in *Deep Cover*. But anyone who has seen his comedy will know that Mohammed has tricks up his sleeve, literally. His shows feature gargantuan feats of memory (he once memorised the name of everyone in his audience), magic, gymnastics, violin solos, and on one occasion a Houdini-inspired escapology trick. He is a member of the Magic Circle, can solve a Rubik's Cube in 60 seconds flat, and before he was a performer was studying for a PhD in seismology at Cambridge. In other words, if you were a student of the game, Mohammed would be the first one you'd kill. How did he last so long?

“I maintained the idea that if you were a faithful, to survive you have to also ally yourself with a traitor. I saw Cat the other day and I said: ‘Why did you get rid of Lucy and not me?’ And she said: ‘Well, Jonathan was convinced that you believed he was a faithful. So we kept you in.’ So that strategy did work. But with Joe it didn't — famously.”

For all that he had a game plan going in, the game outwitted him — and all the other big brains in the castle too. “Whoever you are, whatever your skill set, I don't know if you can really plan for it, because from a mathematical point of view it is chaotic, there are too many variables. You might as well be guessing. Especially early on, you're going off fumes.”

The producers are always several steps ahead, and immersion in the game is all part of their disorientation strategy. The round tables often went on past midnight, sometimes lasting for two hours. Back at the hotel, contestants were unable to leave their rooms without permission, speak to other contestants or have access to phones or laptops. “You have to slide a note underneath your door



if you want anything.” Even their one permitted phone call a day to family was monitored. On his days off he was permitted to go for a walk. “But escorted, so it looked pretty weird, like you're on day release. I had a little Discman and listened to loads of old film soundtracks, lots of John Williams, and picked up pine cones.”

He says that the show's booker has been inundated with offers for the next celebrity series. “I think they're now giving people quizzes to say, ‘What's your favourite moment from series two, civilian version?’ Because they want people who love it. Without the stakes of individual finances it needs to be people who are fans of the game — otherwise it'd just be a bit damp.”

Mohammed, too, is likely to be inundated with offers, but he is not interested in hosting a puzzle or game show, as some have suggested. “I have no desire to do anything like this again, to do reality TV. I want to act,” he says.

He is filming *War*, a new HBO legal thriller about a high-profile divorce case, with his fellow faithful Celia Imrie. And he is doing *Show Pony* for a couple more nights this month and again in the spring. He performs as his alter ego Mr Swallow, a chaotic northern fudspot based on a teacher he had at school, growing up in Leeds. I have



Nick Mohammed, left, and, top, with Cat Burns, Claudia Winkleman, Alan Carr, David Olusoga and Joe Marler. Above left: with Jonathan Ross. Above right: Kate Garraway, Celia Imrie and Carr

loved Mr Swallow since I first saw him, almost 20 years ago, on stage in a pub in a big jumper, repeatedly asking the crowd: "Is it hot in here?" Show Pony is the first time Mohammed has let the mask slip a little as he talks about the inspiration for the character, his disastrous appearance at the Baftas in 2024, *Ted Lasso* and *The Traitors* (he describes the castle as being "as if Dracula had got all his stuff from Dunelm") among daft flights of fancy and magic tricks. His higher TV profile has brought him bigger audiences. "But it's like when I first started out in Edinburgh, because I'm walking out in big rooms and a good 50 or 60 per cent of people have never seen me live, certainly never seen Mr Swallow. And they're like, what the hell is this?"

In *Show Pony* he jokes that he is proud to represent the south Asian community, though as he points out, he isn't south Asian — "Mum's from Cyprus, Dad's from the Caribbean. But that's what the industry has decided." In the show he recreates a meeting with a commissioner who tells him he should write about race. "That whole idea that if you're from an under-represented group, that must be your talking point, your USP. That's so predictable. It's really potent when there's that authentic storytelling, and that's really good for representation. But it feels like that's now the end of the conversation. Don't even think about writing about anything else. White male writers could write about literally anything."

He's certain that his experiences on *The Traitors* will feed into his comedy at some point. "I like the idea of Mr Swallow hosting it, tapping everyone on the shoulder, blindfolding himself and banging into the table," he says, smiling. "It would be chaos."

Nick Mohammed's *Show Pony* is touring, nickmohammedlive.com

If pampering my children ruins my marriage, so be it

Parenting guru Gina Ford is wrong about the risk of indulging your kids. I'll bet my husband on it, writes **Esther Walker**

I piled the hot, buttery pancakes — made from scratch, by me — onto the warmed plate then placed two rashers of organic smoked streaky bacon on the side. I turned to see my husband, Giles, reaching out his hands to take this bounty. "Amazing, thanks," he said. "Ha ha!" I laughed. "This isn't for you, bozo. This is for Sam! There isn't any more bacon, I'm afraid. Well, there's a bit, but that's for Kitty."

According to the parenting guru Gina Ford, this sort of behaviour — openly prioritising my 12-year-old son and 14-year-old daughter over my loyal and hard-working husband — is going to kill my marriage.

In a rare interview Ford, 71, said last week that child-centred behaviour is putting marriages at risk. "I think that so many parents, because they're trying so hard to bend over backwards to make everything perfect for their children, they forget about themselves." What she's saying is that if I'm not careful, my husband of 14 years may leave me for a woman who puts him top of the pancake list.

What happened to me? I am usually a little Gina Ford acolyte. I Gina Forded the hell out of my children when they were babies, after all. I liked the Ford attitude because it was a reaction against my hippyish upbringing. I slept in my parents' bed until I was eight, meaning they couldn't so much as go out for dinner (although they are, notably, still married). It left me with all sorts of complex sleep associations and falling asleep on my own was a problem for years.

So when it came to having children of my own, I was clear: they were going to sleep in their own beds, for their sake and for mine. They would have their independence and I was going to go out for dinner with my husband, thanks. My children went to bed in their own rooms at a conservative time; they sat at the table for all meals, screenless; they said please and thank you; they weren't allowed to constantly interrupt (well, in theory — they did anyway). I wasn't as strict in those early days as other parents, who expected their children to tidy up their toys and eat every scrap of dinner and so on, but it's all relative. I was far more strict than my mother was, and so it felt huge.

And now? It has all gone completely out of the window, of course. I'm so

Esther Walker with her children, Sam and Kitty, when they were four and six



grateful and relieved that my children behave at school and put their shoes away and don't take drugs or throw things at my head that, yes, I'm guilty of doting on them to an absurd degree. I labour under the delusion that we, my husband and I, do whatever we want, but we're kidding ourselves. My children rule this place.

I wait by the front door for them to return home from school, tip-toe round their bedrooms on weekend mornings, organise delightful holidays according to their whims and preferences and ignore my husband's repeated hints about us going away together, you know, just us.

My husband tells me that I'm spoiling my children but he's just as

“**My husband talks about going away just us. I ignore it**

bad! He is the soppiest twit on the planet, slaving around after Sam like a second assistant coach during the cricket season and losing his mind with anguish whenever Kitty looks even 5 per cent sad.

Are we ruining our marriage though? I don't know, I suppose only time will tell. Giles sometimes reads aloud bits of those newspaper articles that tell you if your marriage is doomed, and according to those we seem all right. I'm perfectly happy anyway. Giles constantly complains that we're not romantic enough — causing me to fall about laughing — but he complains so much about literally everything that you do have to tune most of it out.

I agree that revolving the home around children chips away at adult

relationships. The problem is that your own children are just totally brilliant and you want to spend a lot of time with them to enjoy the results of hard work that you put into making this kid funny, kind and good company.

At half-term I took Sam to Lyme Regis to go fossil-hunting and we had an amazing time. We cooed at the big waves crashing against the sea wall, ate cream teas and marvelled at all the old bits of rock we found on the beach. It was bliss! If that is going to kill my marriage, so be it.

But I think some parents are quite aware of what they're doing when they place children front and centre to an obsessive degree. I definitely know parents — men and women — who have quietly but very consciously used their children to obliterate their marriage, deploying offspring as a barrier to physical or emotional intimacy with a spouse. Ford believes she has issued a warning, but in fact she is telling a lot of people what they already know. Because the thing is, having a baby with the wrong person is incredibly easy. It's also the quickest way to highlight then exacerbate everyone's flaws. That's a tricky thing to reverse, even when your youngest child is at school and the pressure is off a bit.

Rather than confront these issues, parents can conveniently wedge the children between them — like an acorn planted in a gap in floorboards — then stand back and watch as a chasm opens then inexorably widens year after year until there are three gigantic oak trees living in your house that now have tree preservation orders on them.

And frankly, that's their business. Getting out of a marriage you don't want to be in is grim whichever way you look at it and ... oh sorry, hang on. That's Kitty's key in the door, she's back! Yay! Gotta go.

life

Ask Professor Tanya Byron

My extreme grief had me hospitalised — what's wrong with me?

Q I have been widowed for two years since my husband of almost 50 years died quickly from cancer. I spent several weeks in a psychiatric hospital wing and was diagnosed with “acute grief” and a personality disorder of dependence and narcissism. I take antidepressants and sleeping medications daily.

My father abandoned my mother and me when I was a baby. My mother was not a nurturing mother. I am in my seventies and have three grown-up children. The older two live in different countries with their families. My youngest son has now moved back in with me and works from home. Due to the distance, I rarely see my grandchildren. I feel that my life could be better but don't know what to do about it.

I own my house outright and have a car which I only drive locally. I have no other family members alive (my sister took her own life 20 years ago) and I don't live near my old friends either but we do communicate by email.

I think I could probably benefit from seeing a therapist but can't afford to pay for one. I'm desperately looking forward to hearing from you. Victoria

A Your letter evokes a sense of aloneness, a feeling that is not about the absence of people (ie loneliness) but the absence of emotional support. Research highlights that long-term aloneness places significant strain on our psychological and neurobiological systems (the brain and body's stress-regulation mechanisms) and can lead to mental health difficulties.

Your life can be better but before we explore how, I want to question the labels you were given in hospital. A

diagnosis of “acute grief” would be valid, as you were hospitalised after losing your husband, and grief can reach the level of psychiatric crisis, especially if loss is sudden, profound or layered on top of older unprocessed pain. The mind and body can shut down as a protective coping response, not because something is wrong with us but because our emotional and psychological regulatory systems are overwhelmed.

I am, however, curious about the diagnosis of “personality disorder” you were given, in terms of its accuracy and whether or not it is helpful. This is a contentious, complex diagnosis. It may be that the clinicians considered your personal history and felt that some of the diagnostic criteria, such as dependence and narcissism, were met — but to what end? While the acute grief diagnosis is valid and useful, signposting the support you need, how is a personality disorder diagnosis helpful?

Diagnoses can dehumanise an experience and reduce it to a checklist of criteria. Many people with lifelong histories of abandonment, trauma or emotional neglect are misdiagnosed with personality disorders when their presentation more accurately aligns with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD). This trauma-based pattern is rooted in chronic emotional threat or lack of safety (emotional, psychological or physical) over time.

The overlap can be confusing, even for clinicians: CPTSD can involve intense emotional responses, difficulty regulating fear, a deep fear of abandonment and strong dependency on the few people who feel safe. It can also include self-focused or self-protective behaviours that can be mistaken for narcissism when they are survival strategies. In crisis CPTSD can look very similar to the criteria used to diagnose a personality disorder, which is why the two are often confused.

I'm focusing on this because

If you would like Professor Tanya Byron's help, email proftanyabyron@thetimes.co.uk



a personality disorder diagnosis at a time of significant loss implies that your pain was a flaw, rather than the logical consequence of losing the one constant you had in a world that has often not felt emotionally safe. You had a father who vanished before you had memory, a mother present but emotionally unavailable and a sister who died by suicide. Love has never felt secure because people could vanish without warning. These are all life experiences that would have led to a shattering of trust in the safety and permanence of relationships. It is no wonder that when your husband died, your entire being flooded with panic and an inability to cope.

Your husband's death, therefore, was not just a bereavement, it was the tipping point in a lifetime of carrying too much alone. You are not only grieving his loss, you are grieving the loss of the key relationship that buffered you from feeling utterly alone. This is why you feel so overwhelmed: his death does not trigger one loss but all of them, with you then having to experience the tsunami of grief without him. I can imagine that this would have been so unbearable that, for a time, you ceased to function and needed hospitalisation. This makes you normal in the context of your life history and grief.

You say you feel your life could be better but that you don't know how to begin. Let me reassure you that grief is not blocking your path, isolation is. In another era you would not be living in relative isolation with friend updates via email and grandchildren known mostly via photos. You would have been carried through grief by community — not therapy alone, not medication, but relationships. We have medicalised loss because we have dismantled the structures that used to hold it. You do not need diagnosis, you need understanding, compassion and support from a community of others who can bear your pain with you. This

approach to managing our emotions is called co-regulation and is essential to our psychological health and wellbeing because we are not designed to self-soothe in a vacuum.

Grief is not an illness to recover from, it is a state that needs to be metabolised with others who understand it not as medical symptoms but as part of life — people who will treat you not as a case but as a person living with loss. The charities Cruse Bereavement (cruse.org.uk), the Good Grief Trust (thegoodgrieftrust.org) and the Loss Foundation (thelossfoundation.org) offer free advice and individual and group support options. Mind (mind.org.uk) and Age UK (ageuk.org.uk) run local community spaces where experience is shared. Libraries and places of worship host grief circles (not always faith-based unless you want them to be) that are shared spaces where people listen, not diagnose. You can also talk to your GP about a referral to NHS talking therapies not for “disorder” but for bereavement support. This differentiation is crucial because the framing matters and changes the kind of therapist you are offered.

There is also, I believe, the need to still matter. You are not just a grieving widow but also someone with courage, experience and intelligence. You hold wisdom younger generations would benefit from but you are now living as if no one is able to receive it. That absence of purpose is as painful as absence of closeness. I urge you to step into intergenerational community, where older adults aren't recipients of care but sources of contribution. There are schools, libraries, mentoring schemes, reading programmes, intergenerational projects (see intergenerationalengland.org). There is also the University of the Third Age (u3a.org.uk).

What saves us from aloneness is not company but connection and the sense we are seen and matter. You matter and I wish you well.

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TIMES+



Oh no! I wanted to share with girls but ended up in a lad pad

When the letting agent said the flat was mixed gender, he didn't make it clear that the only woman was me, says *Sasha Nugara*

I had thought my time living with a group of men was over. My student flatshares were always mixed gender and male-dominated but after I graduated, moved to London and shared with a group of girls, I vowed to never go back. Living with girls was simply too fun: getting ready together, popping in and out of each other's rooms, having drinks and wandering around in pyjamas.

Unfortunately, though, life in London as a woman in her twenties is never straightforward, and after starting 2025 in a swish Zone 2 flat with my best friend from secondary school, I never expected to end it in a five-bedroom flat with four men I had never met.

In August a messy break-up and a change in circumstances put me into a spin. I suddenly had only one month to find somewhere new to live, and the way the rental market was looking, anywhere would do.

My requirements were simple: I was willing to pay £1,000 pcm but I needed an en suite bathroom and it had to be bills included. I planned to throw myself into the living-with-strangers thing, be completely anonymous, do the viewings with the letting agent (and not any of my potential flatmates) and save any reservations I had about the others living there until I moved in. I didn't want to have high expectations and get disappointed and I also didn't want anyone to have any high expectations of me.

I shortlisted some rooms on SpareRoom, the flatshare search website. I sent 20 messages and got one response: a spacious double en suite room in southeast London described as a mixed household with a shared kitchen, a roof terrace and an Overground station only five minutes away. It sounded promising. I was happy to live in a mixed-gender household — if I was going to have an en suite bathroom, about 80 per cent of my hang-ups about living with men were already gone.

Time was of the essence so I settled for a quick viewing via FaceTime. It was — as most flatshares are — fine. So I said yes.

A few weeks later, as I was picking up the keys from the letting agent, I asked for a synopsis on the tenants: whether they were friends, sociable



and what the gender split was. He was vague, describing the tenants as "nice guys" and saying he thought "they get on". Guys ... "But it's mixed gender, isn't it?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. "There's ... one girl." Well, too late anyway — I'd signed the contract and was moving in the following day.

As it turns out, I was the one girl — the only person pushing the gender make-up of the household into "mixed" territory.

Just like Zoëy Deschanel's character Jess in the 2011 series *New Girl* I had just moved into an all-male flat after a messy break-up. I even have Deschanel's brown hair — though that's where the likeness ends. And although my situation echoed the plot, my group of men hadn't been friends before moving in together. Like me, they had found the place on SpareRoom and were yet to build a solid friendship group. We also didn't live in a swanky downtown LA loft but on the top two floors of a dilapidated Victorian pub conversion.

I met two of my flatmates on my first day living there. They were in their thirties, tall and imposing, with chiselled jaws and trustworthy faces. Neither of them had lived in England for long — one was from India and the other from eastern Europe — and both had moved for work. They were a mature, calming presence — nothing like the laddish British boys I had lived with before — so I felt more at peace with the concept of moving into a lad pad.

One of them added me to their group chat, though they said there wasn't much socialising. I couldn't help



Zoëy Deschanel in *New Girl*. Top: Sasha Nugara with three of her flatmates

“The damsel in distress act brought them all out of the woodwork

but notice the name of it: Hedge Banter HQ. It sent a shiver down my spine and I looked up at them with a side eye. There must have been banter before so where had it gone? Although I had originally decided I didn't care whether I was friends with my flatmates, I was inspired by the group chat name and these guys' laid-back vibes. I needed to find the banter.

Two days in and I hadn't seen or heard anyone else. It's an unnerving feeling not knowing who you're living with, especially as a woman. Any creaking floorboards or slamming doors made me question my decision-making and survival instincts. I didn't want to feel like I was trying to force anything and ruin the household vibe that the boys had got used to. I introduced myself on the group chat and received a few hellos back but after that it was radio silence.

A few days later I went in lightly arriving with a note about a package was around to answer the door. Two of

them replied instantly. I decided to test my luck even further and typed out a new message: "Feel free to ignore me but it would be nice to get a drink at some point if anyone's around!"

One response: "Sure." Woohoo! "How about tomorrow?" I asked. I received one yes, one maybe and two nos — but all responded. It was a start.

The next day I asked — again in the group chat — if anyone still fancied that drink. I was ghosted. A minor setback.

Having already been rejected once, I was a bit nervous to try again, and the nerves were keeping me locked up in my room. I had everything I needed in there. It was spacious and I had my bathroom. I wasn't cooking — the kitchen needed TLC — but the number of takeaways I was ordering was getting out of hand.

A week and a half later, riled by my mum's pleas to get into a healthy rhythm, I decided to dip a toe in and use the oven to cook a ready meal. I popped out to Tesco and treated myself to a Charlie Bigham's cottage pie for £6.50 before reaching my next hurdle: the oven. I could not wrap my head around how to turn it on.

I sent a quick message on the group chat asking how to use it. Fast-forward two hours and we were all at the pub having a drink. One of the guys I hadn't met had rushed down to help me and introduce himself. He was Italian and worked at a restaurant in the evenings and filmed videos during the day, which is why we hadn't yet crossed paths. He showed me how to use the oven and up we went to the roof terrace for a beer as we gazed across southeast London.

His vibe was similarly laid-back and friendly, and I enjoyed putting a face to the feet I had heard thumping above my head when he got in from work. Like the others, he hadn't lived in London for long and was keen to party more as a house. Then I met the last mystery man: a bubbly 25-year-old who had grown up in London.

The damsel in distress act had brought them all out of the woodwork and I realised where I had been going wrong. Having previously slated Jess from *New Girl*, I realised we had more similarities than I thought.

Her breakthrough with the boys at the end of the first episode comes when they rush to her rescue after they find out she's been stood up on a date. They miss the best party of the year to hunker down with her and watch *Dirty Dancing* in their living room, inducting her as a proper member of the house. Wholesome.

Our breakthrough ended with a few pints at Wetherspoons — an odd mixed group who somehow worked perfectly as housemates.

So for Deschanel it was a bad date and a film, for me it was a dodgy oven and a pint at Spoons — but the sentiment is the same. Now we regularly pop to the pub or share a drink on the roof terrace, and I'm loving my life with a flat full of men.

first night

classical

Alexander Goehr Tribute

West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

★★★★☆

Profoundly intellectual and never greatly worried if his music didn't appeal much outside his own circle, Alexander Goehr was nevertheless an influential figure in late 20th-century British composition. A professor of music at the University of Cambridge for 23 years, he led a faculty that nurtured a stream of brilliant composers, George Benjamin, Thomas Adès, Julian Anderson among them. Goehr didn't force them down the ultra-cerebral path of atonal music and serialism; he recognised that different horses need different courses. And as the years went by, his music became much more richly infused with influences from earlier centuries, particularly Monteverdi.

Just over a year after his death the Cambridge music faculty did Goehr proud with this celebration, which even included a "new" piece: a chamber work, *Double Chaconne with Gaps*, that he wrote in 1919 but hadn't been heard in the UK. As played by a mixture of the Britten Sinfonia and students of the Cambridge University New Music Group under George Benjamin's direction, it made a quixotic impression — sometimes melancholic and gently polyphonic, a trio of low wind instruments alternating with strings but with a metallic rat-tat-tat from the percussionist instilling unease.

Slightly expanded, the same ensemble supplied the instrumental fireworks for Goehr in much more flamboyant mood: a declamatory rant against corrupt humanity called *Behold the Sun*, in which the soprano Juliet Wallace, though ailing, attacked the florid runs and stratospheric high notes with the ferocity that this "concert aria" needs.

We heard the Fidelio Trio playing Goehr's fascinating 1960s Piano Trio No 1 — a work that enters like a tiger and then departs like a ghost. Very different but no less striking were four of Goehr's Laments for solo clarinet beautifully played by Ib Hausmann.

They were linked, aptly, with Monteverdi's impassioned madrigal version of his *Lamento d'Arianna*, cleanly delivered by the St Catharine's College Consort. It reminded us that Goehr did a fascinating completion of Monteverdi's largely lost opera *L'Arianna*. It should be revived.

Richard Morrison

Lightning strobes flashed, static rose like a sea squall and Dev Hynes stepped onto the stage of this crumbling mock-Grecian theatre as if about to launch into a hypermodern one-man *Tempest*. You would put nothing past him. Over two decades the Ilford-born singer-songwriter has evolved from a formative role in the Noughties new rave trio Test Icicles through his alt-rock solo endeavour Lightspeed Champion to his standing as Blood Orange, the in-demand conjurer of modernist R&B with five albums and collaborations with FKA Twigs, Kylie, Solange and more under his (once shocking pink) belt.

This four-date residency was intended to showcase his latest album *Essex Honey*, a grief-laden major label



Guitarist Carlos Alomar, left, conceived the new tour to honour David Bowie and the D.A.M. Trio

Reliving Bowie's genius

His former band members reunite to pay tribute to the chameleon of rock, says Stephen Dalton

pop

Carlos Alomar Presents: The D.A.M. Trilogy

Metropol, Berlin

★★★★☆

Making a rare return to the stage, David Bowie's long-time guitarist and musical director

Carlos Alomar beamed beatifically as he launched this memorial tour to his friend. "David was the architect of wonders," the boyish 74-year-old told the audience at Metropol in Berlin. "He made the strange feel beautiful and the beautiful feel brand new." There were certainly plenty of wondrous moments during this two-hour show, which featured a seven-piece band playing Bowie anthems such as *Golden Years*, *Sound and Vision* and *Ashes to Ashes* alongside pleasingly obscure deep cuts.

This tour is subtitled *Back to Berlin*, with a set list largely drawn from Bowie's "Berlin trilogy" of late-1970s art-rock albums — *Low*, *Heroes* and *Lodger*. A mile from the concert venue, his former apartment in Schöneberg is now a pilgrimage site.

Besides paying posthumous homage to Bowie, Alomar conceived this tour to honour the D.A.M. Trio, who dominated the superstar rock chameleon's classic late-1970s albums. The acronym stands for the drummer Dennis Davis, Alomar and the bass player George Murray. Davis died of cancer in 2016, soon after Bowie, but dapper Murray was a very welcome sight in Berlin.

The band line-up also featured the Broadway musical veteran Michael Cunio on lead vocals, plus the British guitarist Kevin Armstrong, who played alongside Bowie at Live Aid. Alomar's daughter, the Grammy-nominated R&B singer Lea-Lorien, handled backing vocals and percussion. Cunio gave an energetic performance but he inevitably fell short of Bowie's extraterrestrial beauty, mercurial charisma and operatic vocal range. Songs that once thundered along on a wave of high-camp hysteria — notably *Heroes* and *Boys Keep Swinging* — felt sluggish and underpowered.

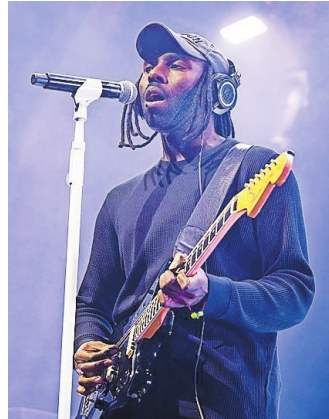
That said, there were delightful surprises, including tunes that Bowie rarely or never played live. Making their belated stage debuts after almost half a century, the gloriously ramshackle cod-Turkish reggae ballad *Yassassin* and the dystopian sci-fi melodrama *Scream Like a Baby* were delicious treats for hardcore fans. Likewise the sumptuous disco number *The Secret Life of Arabia*, co-written by Alomar, finally achieved its full show-stopping potential, with an extended funk mid-section and clobbering drum solo. Even if too much of this set turned experimental art-rock into nostalgic cabaret, the avant-pop genius of Bowie's most creative period burns brightly. **Touring the UK, Nov 23-29**

pop

Blood Orange

Alexandra Palace Theatre, London

★★★★☆



The tour showcases his new album

debut six years in the making, featuring Lorde, Caroline Polachek, Brendan Yates of Turnstile and the author Zadie Smith. It also laid bare the untethered, exploratory range with which Hynes has shifted easily between indie rock, pop, R&B, soundtrack and classical work.

No sooner had he set the evening's underlying tone of minimalist tech-soul with *Look At You* — solo and spotlight in cap and headphones — than he was joined by a full band and two show-stealing backing singers, gilding the sweet soul melodies of *Thinking Clean*. Then he grabbed a see-through cello for an intense solo take on the Smiths' *How Soon Is Now?*: a glimmer of the alt-rock leanings that drenched similarly introspective tracks such as *Jesus Freak Lighter*, *Life* and *Dagenham*

Dream — about limiting himself in his youth to conform to a cultural identity — in the ice and murk of classic Cure.

This intimate hour held many such entrancing moments. *Wish* imagined Brian Eno producing Kraftwerk. *The Last of England* grew from a crazed flurry of birdsong cello into a gorgeous chamber pop piece battered with big beats. *Charcoal Baby*, warped and askew, suggested a new, post-soul sonic offshoot. Smith popped up to add vocals to a jazzy *Vivid Light*. But as *Saint*, *Best to You* and *Champagne Coast* grew Prince-like melodies, there was sweetness in the pip of Blood Orange. Hynes blended the evocative and evolutionary, the magical and the ultramodern into an intoxicating brew.

Mark Beaumont

Touring the UK to Nov 15

classical

BBC SO/Oramo

Barbican, London

★★★★☆

Lifted out of the shadows, we are taken up to the white-light heavens. As the sound passes upwards through the strings it morphs from sombre to raw to shimmering. Over this otherworldly backdrop glides a cor anglais melody, singing from the beyond. This is *The Swan of Tuonela*, the most well-known tone poem in Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen Suite*, inspired by the ancient myths of the Finnish *Kalevala*. It's often heard alone, but in this BBC Symphony Orchestra concert it was placed in context, part of the demigod Lemminkäinen's journey from life to death to resurrection.

It was a deeply rewarding performance in which the conductor Sakari Oramo knew exactly how to make every moment come to life, and the orchestra delivered with vivid, focused playing. In *Lemminkäinen and the Maidens of the Island* we were right there among the rustic merriment, while the shivering strings of *Lemminkäinen in Tuonela* were genuinely chilling, its later lyricism stirring. The final return of our hero was met with cheers.

Undoubtedly this was the best part of a programme that didn't quite hang together. It opened with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, presumably chosen because he was composing during the same era as Sibelius. Yet there's not a huge amount to connect the two stylistically, nor was the contrast particularly illuminating. Still, Coleridge-Taylor's well-crafted *Symphonic Variations on an African Air* offered a welcome blast of warmth in a cool programme, giving us blossoming brass and big tunes.

Thomas Adès does, however, have a strong affinity with Sibelius. His *Violin Concerto Concentric Paths* has been in the violinist Christian Tetzlaff's repertoire for at least two years and his authority was evident right from the opening solo violin oscillations in "Rings", ricocheting into stratospheric orbit, colliding with the orchestra's circling trajectories. The effort needed to tame the music's internal forces was palpable. Opening with stark grandeur, "Paths" was the gravitational centre of the piece, and Tetzlaff found its unease and intensity, while the ritualistic finale, "Rounds", worked its intoxicating magic.

Rebecca Franks

Radio 3, Jan 22

It is one of the most famous stories in rock'n'roll: in February 1977 Glen Matlock was thrown out of the Sex Pistols for liking the Beatles. It is also not true. "Malcolm McLaren was covering his back," the bassist says of his former manager's telegram to the NME, in which Matlock's love of the Fab Four was proclaimed. We're in his basement flat in Maida Vale, where a skull painting by Damien Hirst hangs on a wall, a present from the artist in exchange for Matlock signing his copy of the Pistols' only album, *Never Mind the Bollocks*. On another wall is a poster for the first Pistols concert in Moscow, in 2008. "I left [in 1977] because I was on a hiding to nothing, especially with John [Lydon], who wanted his mate Sid Vicious in. I'd just turned 20, I was annoyed with Steve [Jones, guitar] and Paul [Cook, drums] for not standing up for me, and I thought: f*** 'em."

A month after that infamous telegram, McLaren asked Matlock to rejoin the band. "We met in the Blue Posts in Soho and he said, 'It's not working out with Sid, would you come back in?' I replied, 'You sent that horrible telegram, which was a lie, so it's not happening.'"

Now Matlock has a chance to tell his side of the story in *I Was a Teenage Sex Pistol*, a documentary based on his 1990 memoir. It all began when a 16-year-old Matlock — fresh from causing anarchy in a Bayswater department store after improperly loading money into a canister destined for the cashier's office — walked into Let It Rock, McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's Fifties-themed clothes shop on the Kings Road, in 1973.

"It was the antithesis of everything going on in the UK at the time," says Matlock of Let It Rock, soon to change its name to Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die, then Sex, where it became ground zero for punk and the Pistols' birthplace. "I went in for some brothel creepers. I couldn't afford them so I asked for a job instead."

This was in the era of mass strikes, mass inflation and IRA bombings, all of which fed into the Pistols. "One day at St Martin's College I was doing a photography project with these two Irish blokes on Charing Cross Road and they just disappeared. Turns out they'd been collared by the police and spent two nights in the cells. They were art students! This kind of thing was going on all the time."

The jukebox at Sex featured singles by mid-Sixties bands labelled "garage punk", including *You're Gonna Miss Me* by the Thirteenth Floor Elevators and *Psychotic Reaction* by the Count Five, nuggets of primeval brilliance amid the bloated excess of progressive rock. "Then John [Lydon] came along, a second-generation Irish bloke with a chip on his shoulder," Matlock says of the key event in the Pistols' origin story. "He was a Roman Catholic. You can only imagine what it was like for him to sing, 'I am an Antichrist.'"

Once the Pistols coalesced into a proper band, with Lydon on vocals, Jones on guitar and Cook on drums (the bespectacled guitarist Wally Nightingale having been dispensed with), Matlock abandoned his degree in fine art painting to be the band's bassist. Before he left the college he convinced the social secretary at St Martin's to book his band as support for a concert by the pub rockers Bazooka Joe, on November 6, 1975. A blue plaque now marks the spot on



'I hastened Sid's demise'

The former Sex Pistol Glen Matlock on falling out with John Lydon and whether he was really sacked for liking the Beatles. By **Will Hodgkinson**

Charing Cross Road where their first concert took place.

Life in the Pistols was fantastic in the early days, Matlock says. Tasked by McLaren with providing a manifesto, the band wrote *Anarchy in the UK*. "But when I came up with the chords I had the theme tune to *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* in my head." *God Save the Queen*, originally titled *No Future*, came from the idea that there was no future unless you made one for yourself: punk's DIY ethic in a nutshell. The problems only started after the famous Bill Grundy incident of December 1, 1976, when the Pistols and their cohorts — booked as a last-minute replacement for Queen — appeared on Thames Television's *Today* programme, swore profusely after being goaded by an intoxicated Grundy and all hell broke loose.

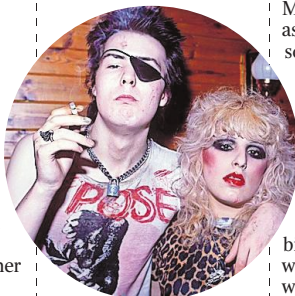
"It affected what size hat John wore," Matlock says of the episode. "Before that, we had done gigs to nobody. We played a chicken-in-a-basket working men's club in the north with a host who looked like Bernard Manning. We played a gig at a teacher training college in Dundee where they bottled us off."

In October 1977 the Pistols released *Never Mind the Bollocks*, on which 10 of the 12 songs were co-written by Matlock. As Noel Gallagher says in the documentary, "Imagine getting it so right, once." It all collapsed with a disastrous US tour in January 1978. Then on August 22 Matlock and Vicious played together at the Electric Ballroom.

"One night at [punk venue] the Roxy, John and Sid turned up," Matlock says. "I went for a pee and Sid came into the toilet, egged on by John, going, 'I'm going to get you because I'm the bass player in the Pistols and



Glen Matlock with Debbie Harry in 2023 and, top, in the Sex Pistols in 1976, from left: Steve Jones, Johnny Rotten, Matlock and Paul Cook. Below: Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, his girlfriend



I Was a Teenage Sex Pistol is on Amazon and Apple TV

you're not.' But then I offered to give him bass lessons because I'd heard he wasn't doing too well and he went, 'Would you really do that?' Sid was quite sweet, really. We came out smiling, and John was furious because it didn't go how he planned it. We did the gig to show we weren't enemies."

Two days later Vicious left for New York. Six months after that he died of a heroin overdose. "I let him have the cash for the gig not realising that Malcolm was keeping him short of money so he didn't put it up his arm," Matlock says. "He turned up in New York with all this money so in a way I hastened his demise."

The original line-up of the Pistols did get back together in 1996 for the suitably named *Filthy Lucre* tour. "We did a press conference at the Chateau Marmont in Hollywood and someone asked, 'Are you going to write new songs?' John replied, 'What's wrong with the old ones?'"

How did the reunion happen? "None of us had seen each other in years but I was in LA for a solo album so I gave Steve a call. I drove up to his place and he said, 'Let's go and see John.' I was going, 'Errr ... We went out for lunch. The bill was sitting on the table, nobody was picking it up. Eventually I did, which is when John went, 'Ooh, I was going to get that!' From that moment we had a tour."

In true Pistols style the good times were not to last. Matlock says the tensions on the reunion tour arose not from Lydon but from his ever-present minder, the late John "Rambo" Stevens. "I don't wish ill of most people but Jesus ... his job was to stop trouble but if there wasn't trouble he didn't have a job so he created it. John

insisted on him coming, even though he knew we didn't want him there, so it put a wedge between John and the rest of us." Could that wedge be removed? "There's too much water under the bridge. The Thames Barrier is stuck in the lock position."

In 2024 the Pistols re-formed with Frank Carter of the Noughties punks Gallows as the frontman. Lydon dismissed it as "no different to karaoke" but Matlock sees it differently. "Me, Steve and Paul have something in common that nobody else has, and when we get in a room and plug in, we're the Sex Pistols. Then Frank does his take on John's lyrics and it's great. How long he

"We got bottled at a gig at a teacher training college"

wants to do someone else's songs when he's quite capable of doing them in his own right is another matter."

We do a quick run-through of the rest of his life: forming the new wave pioneers the Rich Kids with Midge Ure and Rusty Egan in 1977, making solo albums, playing bass for Iggy Pop, Blondie and many others. But his teenage band cast a long shadow.

"John Lydon has never been allowed to not be Johnny Rotten and I think he blames us for it. I ended up with a drink problem because of being the bloke who was sacked for liking the Beatles — which wasn't true."

But he concludes: "It's not such a terrible thing ... the problem is that when we play live, all we can do is rearrange the order of the 12 songs on the album. And maybe wear a different shirt." Such is the cost of making one perfect album, changing the course of history and leaving it at that.

Your weekday brain boost

**More
puzzles**
Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai easy

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

[illegible]

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

A 3x3 grid with a 2x2 subgrid of circles containing numbers. The grid has three shades of orange. The circles contain the numbers 19, 12, 23, and 19. Below the grid are three circles containing the numbers 19, 11, and 15.

Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

				4	
			2		1
			4		6
	3	4			
2					4
	5	6		1	

**Solutions in
tomorrow's Times2**

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.

4	18	7	8	19	20	18	7	8		22		4
	16		2		25		5		21	18	15	18
24	18	6	13	9	6	18	24			19		3
	20		2		26		16	9	7	23	25	9
23	25	26	23		15		25			26		9
	5		20	17	2	2		18	4	18	23	1
19			2		8		6		9			18
16	18	8	8	5		24	2	7	14		2	
18		18			15		24		20	2	12	20
23	25	26	21	21	26		7		26		23	
26		7			20	6	18	7	11	14	26	21
7	9	20	2		18		7		14		20	
10		5		23	21	14	20	20	2	6	2	8

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Sudoku super fiendish

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

Killer deadly

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

	1	2	3	3	7	2	5	5	
A									6
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									3
									1
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Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger ($>$) or smaller ($<$) than the number next to it.

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Thursday's solutions

SAMURAI

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

SUDOKU

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8	4	1	7	3	5	6	2	9

KILLER

4	5	2	6	1	8	3	7	9
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SUKO

TRAIN TRACKS

FUTOSHIKI

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CODEWORD

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

Romeo and Juliet in Troubles-era Belfast

Carol Midgley TV review



Trespasses

Channel 4
★★★★☆

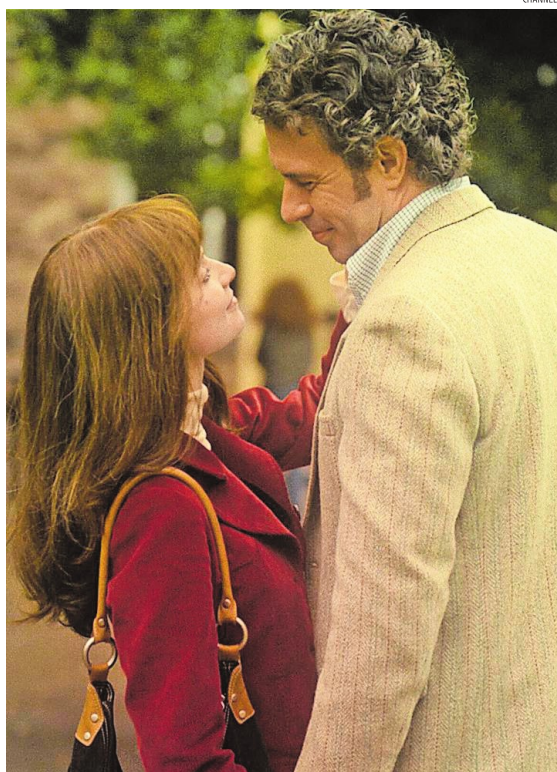
When I read Louise Kennedy's novel *Trespasses* I had a vivid mental image of Michael Agnew, the older Protestant barrister who is having a lusty affair with a young Catholic teacher. He was dark-eyed, tousle-haired, handsome — thinking about it, he was basically Tom Cullen. And now there is a Channel 4 adaptation of the book and look who is playing Michael! Yes, Tom Cullen (John "Goldfinger" Palmer in *The Gold*). First-rate casting, at least from my point of view. Though I didn't envisage for a second Cushla's slack-

jawed drunk of a mother looking like ... Gillian Anderson. A bit leftfield. But fair play to Anderson — she does "absolutely bladdered" very well.

This passionate love story set amid the Troubles in 1975 Belfast, with its bombs, bullets, army checkpoints and punishment beatings, was beautifully told in the novel and happily the TV series does not let it down. In many ways it enhances it, the 1970s evoked piquantly in the overflowing ashtrays, yellow street lighting, Austin Allegros, *The Generation Game* playing on a small TV set.

In the pub in which Cushla (Lola Petticrew) works with her brother, Eamonn (Martin McCann, ie Stevie from *Blue Lights* but wearing a Seventies moustache), and where the British soldiers feel entitled to grope her, you can almost smell the damp beer towels. To quote *Withnail and I*, I imagine it is like walking into a lung.

Petticrew and Cullen's chemistry is strong as a Romeo and Juliet-style couple forced to meet in secret, she being a Catholic and he a Protestant, albeit one who fights for justice for Catholic victims of police brutality. They cram in an awful lot of sex for a clandestine couple. "He's charmed the knickers off you," slurs Cushla's mother, Gina, and by crikey she is not wrong. I do wonder, though, if their relationship is secret why they don't close the damn curtains before getting



Lola Petticrew and Tom Cullen star as Cushla and Michael

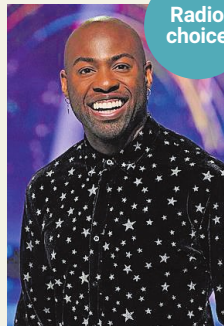
down to it. Anyway, Petticrew convinces as a woman addicted to the man she has been warned is a "womaniser", as does Cullen as the older, educated sophisticate.

What is so affecting about this story is that while it is about a love affair (Michael is married, though his wife, unseen so far, also "likes the drink") and vicious sectarian violence, the two are not separate but intertwined. The romance story arc isn't an antidote to the Troubles, it is bound up in Cushla and Michael's dangerous "mixed" relationship.

We see just how dangerous via the almost fatal beating suffered by the father of Davy, one of Cushla's pupils, for the crime of being in a "mixed marriage". Not only did his attackers kick the poor man to a pulp, they drove nails through his hands. His children had to light his cigarettes for him, a deeply depressing scene.

Some might think the senior male teachers at the school putting the fear of God into small children by warning, "Your daddies could be next," were OTT and almost caricatures. But sadly they are probably not.

It is a grim but compelling story that continues tonight when we see, during the school disco, Cushla and her friend Gerry dancing to *Billy Don't Be a Hero* by Paper Lace, which is nigh on impossible. The poor actors. No one should have to suffer like that.



Radio choice

Darren Harriott: Father Figuring Radio 4, 1.45pm

Darren Harriott's father took his own life in prison when he was 35 and Darren was 11. Now Harriott, above, has outlived his father by two years and is considering becoming a father but is still questioning what fatherhood means. This week, in a mixture of stand-up and interviews, he wonders what makes a good father and ponders if he can break the "bad dad cycle". He talks to his mother, Paulette, about his father and you come to understand why Harriott has so many questions, because she doesn't want to bring up the past. The psychologist Laverne Antrobus explains why. *Clair Woodward*

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Rosie Wright **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** Stephen Sackur **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar **7.00** Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am Scott Mills **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Trevor Nelson **4.00** Emma Willis **7.00** Jo Whitley **10.00** The Good Groove **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Pick of the Pops (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live Linton Stephens introduces highlights from this summer's Glenarm Festival of Voice in Northern Ireland. Plus, concerto recordings from the BBC Symphony Orchestra. There is also a live concert from Wigmore Hall, as the baritone James Newby and the pianist Joseph Middleton perform a programme inspired by the sea, including Schubert (*Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, D. 583; *Des Fischers Liebesglück*; and *Der Schiffer*, D. 536); Rachmaninov (*The Isle*, Op. 14 No. 2); Elgar (*Where Corals Lie* — *Sea Pictures*, Op. 37); Finzi (*Channel firing* — *Before and after Summer*, Op. 16); Coates (*Sleepy Lagoon*); Stanford (*Drake's Drum* — *Songs of the Sea*, Op. 91); Weill (*My Ship* — *Lady in the Dark*); and Haydn (Keyboard Trio No. 45 in E flat, Hob. XV:29)

4.00 Composer of the Week: Elfrida Andrée (1841-1929) Donald Macleod explores the life and career of the Swedish organist, composer and conductor **5.00** In Tune **7.00** Classical Mixtape (r) **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert The Danish National Symphony Orchestra join forces with the Danish National Concert Choir, BBC Singers and the Copenhagen Boy's Choir, under the conductor Fabio Luisi, to perform Mahler's Symphony No 8. Recorded at the Danish National Concert Hall **9.45** The Essay: A Different Way to Listen (r) **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30am** Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz LW: 198kHz MW: 720 kHz

5.00am News Briefing **5.04** Last Word (r) **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **6.00** Today **9.00** Start the Week Conservation and storytelling in a time of ecological crisis **9.45** Cafe Hope (10/12) **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** Air Ambulance With the crew of the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance (r) **11.45** The Everest Obsession With Rebecca Stephens (1/5) (r) **12.04pm** You and Yours **1.00** The World at One **1.45** **Choice** Father Figuring The comedian Darren Harriott examines fatherhood (1/5) **2.00** The Archers (r) **2.15** Drama: Disordered By Magnus Mackintosh (3/4) (r)

2.45 Scenes from a Childhood By Jon Fosse (3/5) (r) **3.00** A Good Read With psychologist Julia Shaw and engineer Hayaatun Sillem (5/9) **3.30** Curious Cases (6/13) (r) **4.00** Immigration: The Danish Way An insight into Denmark's radical approach to immigration (r) **4.30** Legend: The Bruce Springsteen Story (5/5) (r) **5.00** PM **6.00** Six O'Clock News **6.30** I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue From Southampton (1/6) **7.00** The Archers Will offers George a ray of hope **7.15** Front Row Interviews with the Booker Prize shortlisted authors **8.00** The Briefing Room The military build-up off the coast of Venezuela (5/11) (r) **8.30** BBC Inside Science New evidence that the expansion of the universe is slowing (r) **9.00** The Little Box Which Contains the World Emily Berry presents a poetic exploration of agoraphobia (r) **9.30** Front Row The winner of the 2025 Booker Prize is announced in London **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Accident Report Book By Joe Dunthorne (1/5) **11.00** Start the Week (r) **11.45** Today in Parliament **12.00** News and Weather **12.30am** The Everest Obsession With Rebecca Stephens (1/5) (r) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am Welcome to Our Village, Please Invade Carefully

8.30 And June Whitfield **8.45** The Observations **9.00** Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz **9.30** Owl Prowl **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Inner Voices: The Burton Diaries **11.00** Miss Marple — The Murder at the Vicarage **11.30** Down Payment on Death **12.00** In the Balance **12.30pm** Dad's Army **1.00** Welcome to Our Village, Please Invade Carefully **1.30** And June Whitfield **1.45** The Observations **2.00** Just a Minute **2.30** Rudy's Rare Records **3.00** The Silence of Memory **3.45** The Gardener **4.00** Inner Voices: The Burton Diaries **5.00** Miss Marple — The Murder at the Vicarage **5.30** Down Payment on Death **6.00** In the Balance **6.30** Dad's Army **7.00** Welcome to Our Village, Please Invade Carefully **7.30** And June Whitfield **7.45** The Observations **8.00** Just a Minute **8.30** Rudy's Rare Records **9.00** The Silence of Memory **9.45** The Gardener **10.00** Comedy Club: Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz **10.30** Alexei Sayle's Imaginary Sandwich Bar **11.00** The Naked Week **11.30** Old Harry's Game

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Emma Vardy **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** The Monday Night Club **9.00** 5 Live Sport: Cricket **10.00** Tony Livesey **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast with Jeff Stelling **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** Drive

7.00 Kick Off **10.00** Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Morning Glory **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Jeremy Kyle **7.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **10.00** Harry Cole Saves The West **11.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.00** Nick Grimshaw **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Steve Lamacq's Teatime Session **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence: Amyl and the Sniffers **12.00** In Their Own Words: Arctic Monkeys **1.00am** Arctic Monkeys at the BBC **2.00** Arctic Monkeys Live **3.00** Jarvis Cocker's Musical Map of Sheffield **4.00** The Arctic Monkeys Playlist

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** The Ryan Tubridy Show **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00** Ben Jones **7.00** Graeme Smith **10.00** Olivia Jones **1.00am** Sean Goldsmith **4.00** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Alexander Armstrong **1.00pm** Tim Lihoreau **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

A Ship Through Time
Sky History/Now, 9pm

In 2002 builders in Newport stumbled on parts of a shipwrecked vessel. Tests on the timber revealed that it dated from the mid-15th century, making it much older than the Mary Rose (which sank in 1545). Archaeologists and historians were especially excited, one expert says, because finding fragments of a medieval ship is rare enough, but

discovering the treasure trove of a whole one is “unique”. Sean Fletcher begins his series by posing basic questions about the galleon, and heads to Portugal, France’s Basque country, archives in London and a castle in Monmouthshire to get answers. It was evidently a cargo ship so what did it carry, and from where to where? And which country built it, and who owned it? Later episodes will look at life on board and what it tells us about medieval Wales and England.
John Dugdale



Sean Fletcher, A Ship Through Time, Sky History, 9pm

Once Upon a Time in Space
BBC2, 9pm

If the movies are anything to go by, astronauts are usually thwarted by a stray asteroid or a hostile alien from a neighbouring planet. But in real life the brilliant 26-year-old physicist Ginger Kerrick was stopped in her tracks in 1996 by something far more mundane — kidney stones. Nasa told Kerrick she was disqualified for life after a routine medical, meaning her dream of travelling into space

was over, but they offered her another job, training astronauts to build the International Space Station. So began an incredible adventure as she moved to Russia to take part in a mission bringing together former sworn rivals for the sake of progress.
Emma Bullimore

Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel’s War
ITV1, 10.45pm

The discourse around the war in

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Morning Live
10.45 Rip Off Britain. New series. The team explores the costly surprise of knotweed affecting a couple’s dream home
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Scam Interceptors. A man is trapped into believing he is going to be arrested
2.30 Make It at Market. Featuring a chocolatier and a metal artist (r)
3.00 Escape to the Country. Nicki Chapman helps a couple from London relocate to Kent
3.45 Garden Rescue. Charlie Dimmock revisits a garden in Northampton
4.30 Antiques Road Trip. New series. Antiques hunting in Northern Ireland
5.15 Pointless. Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

BBC2

6.00am Bargain Hunt (r)
6.45 Sign Zone: Antiques Roadshow (r) (SL)
7.45 Match of the Day (r)
9.00 BBC News
12.15pm Politics Live
1.00 Impossible. Quiz with Rick Edwards (r)
1.45 The Finish Line. Quiz show hosted by Roman Kemp and Sarah Greene (r)
2.30 Unbeatable. General knowledge quiz (r)
3.15 The Super Squirrels. The abilities of the squirrel family are examined (r)
3.20 **FILM: Odette (PG, 1950)** The French widow of an English soldier becomes a British spy during the Nazi occupation of her country. Fact-based Second World War drama starring Anna Neagle (b/w)
5.15 Flog It! The team are at St Albans Cathedral and Abbey, Hertfordshire (r)
6.00 Richard Osman’s House of Games. With Vittorio Angelone, Aimee Fuller, Ria Hebden and Paddy McGuinness
6.30 Strictly: It Takes Two. Fleur East chats to the latest couple to be eliminated

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
9.00 Lorraine
10.00 This Morning
12.30pm Loose Women
1.30 ITV News; Weather
1.30 Dickinson’s Real Deal. David Dickinson and Tim Hogarth, Jan Keyne, James Layte and Fay Rutter assess items brought in by members of the public in Liverpool (r) (AD)
3.00 Lingo. Taking part are soon-to-be-parents, a competitive mother and son, and a Glaswegian couple. Adil Ray hosts (r)
4.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as another contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh hosts as contestants from Northampton, Doncaster, Manchester and Luton pit their wits against one of the ruthless experts
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Channel 4

6.35am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.50 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 American Pickers. A surprise find in a man-cave full of cars (r) (AD)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Come Dine with Me: The Professionals. Restaurateurs compete in and around Newcastle (r)
1.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. A mother and son hoping to restore a windmill (r) (AD)
2.10 Countdown. With Katharine Merry
3.00 A Place in the Sun. Laura Hamilton is in the Peloponnese region in Greece to help a couple find a holiday home (r)
4.00 Help! We Bought a Village. A man begins single-handedly restoring an old quarry village in northern France (r)
5.00 Jasmine Harman’s Renovation in the Sun. Jasmine and Jon need an architect to advise them on what they can and cannot do
6.00 A Place in the Sun. Ben Hillman helps a couple find a home on the Costa Blanca

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm Huntley
12.55pm 5 News at Lunchtime
1.00 Home and Away. Eden’s caught red handed, and David follows a lead (r) (AD)
1.30 **FILM: Saying Yes to Christmas (PG, TVM, 2021)** A magical Christmas wish makes a career-obsessed woman say yes to every invitation while she is home for the holidays. Romantic drama starring Erika Prevost, Romaine Waite and Zoe Doyle
3.15 **FILM: Christmas for Keeps (PG, TVM, 2021)** Five old schoolfriends return to their home town for Christmas to mark the death of their inspirational teacher. Drama starring Christa B Allen and Ryan Rottman
5.00 5 News at 5
6.00 Secrets of the Royal Palaces. Kate Williams reveals behind-the-scenes tales of the British monarchy’s residences, here focusing on Buckingham Palace (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 **The One Show** Alex Jones presents topical stories and celebrity chat
7.30 **EastEnders** Ravi returns to the Square but gets a cold reception from Jack. Meanwhile, Junior and George try to support Kojo (AD)

7.00 **Global Eye** An investigation into a disturbing trend of wildlife deaths along the River Magdalena, Colombia
7.30 **Mastermind** The specialist subjects include the works of Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin, and band Maroon 5

7.30 **Emmerdale** A special standalone episode that delves into Bear’s life since leaving the village (AD)

7.00 **Channel 4 News**

7.00 **Motorway Cops: Catching Britain’s Speeders** A PC goes in pursuit of a suspect refusing to stop and who goes off-road, speeding through residential areas, before crashing into a parked car (1/10) (r)
7.55 **5 News Update**

8.00 **FILM: Mr Burton (12, 2025)** The true story of the friendship between a Welsh schoolmaster and a teenage tearaway who would go on to become global stage and screen star Richard Burton. Young Rich Jenkins is being raised by an alcoholic father in Port Talbot, where it seems his dreams of becoming an actor will never be realised. But then school teacher Philip Burton recognises the boy’s raw potential and goes on to tutor him. Drama starring Toby Jones, Lesley Manville and Harry Lawtey. *See film choice* (AD)

8.00 **Only Connect** The first match of the knockout stage with the 5ks taking on the Showstoppers
8.30 **University Challenge** The second round of the student quiz continues
9.00 **Once Upon a Time in Space** In 1996, Nasa unveiled its largest-ever team of astronauts tasked with the colossal undertaking of building the International Space Station. *See picks of the day* (3/4) (AD)

8.00 **Coronation Street** Kit obstructs David’s second attempt to attend Shona’s scan, Carla implores Lisa to see through Becky’s lies, while Eva’s efforts backfire when Will shows no interest in a personal training session with James (AD)
9.00 **Trigger Point** After the last attack, and with breakthrough evidence, the counter-terrorism police are close to finding the bomber. Lana faces a reckoning when she uncovers the truth behind the campaign, as the confession she fought for so desperately finally comes (6/6) (AD)

8.00 **Secrets of Supercheap Shopping** Mark King’s bulk-buy discount empire is booming as he aims to tackle food waste, and Discount Dragon managing director Wayne unveils their latest promotion to tempt online customer (3/4) (AD)
9.00 **Trespasses** Cushla’s relationship with Michael deepens, despite growing tensions at home and school — but she soon learns some unsettling truths about his past. *See picks of the day* (2/4) (AD)

8.00 **Police Interceptors** There is an alarming report of thieves wielding machetes in order to steal the keys to a BMW in London, and when the chase spills onto Northamptonshire’s patch, all units head to the M1
9.00 **The Forsytes** Jolyon assures Frances and June he has cut ties with Louisa and as Soames and Irene honeymoon in Paris, Frances resumes her efforts to secure Horatio for June. In Paris, Soames begins to realise that he does not fit in with Irene’s friends (4/6) (AD)

10.00 **BBC News at Ten**
10.30 **BBC Regional News and Weather**
10.40 **Have I Got News for You** Katherine Ryan hosts with panellists Maisie Adam and Lewis Goodall (6/10) (r)
11.10 **Tell Me Lies** Stephen baits Lucy as she attempts to rid herself of him once and for all, while Wrigley and Pippa finally talk (3/8) (AD)
11.55 **Tell Me Lies** Stephen’s anxiety begins to boil over (4/8) (AD)

10.00 **Leonard and Hungry Paul** Leonard is upset to hear Shelley has plans to go to the cinema (4/6) (AD)
10.30 **Newsnight** Insights and global interviews on the news stories of the day, presented by Victoria Derbyshire
11.00 **Empire with David Olusoga** The historian tells the story of the British Empire, from its origins under Elizabeth I to the establishment of colonies in America, the Caribbean and India (1/3) (r) (AD)

10.00 **ITV News at Ten; Weather;** followed by Regional News
10.45 **Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel’s War** Israeli soldiers speak about what they witnessed in Gaza, raising questions about accountability, command decisions, and the realities of a war largely shielded from public view. *See picks of the day* (AD)
11.50 **Heathrow: Britain’s Busiest Airport** At Heathrow’s in-house Covid-19 testing centre (12/12) (r) (AD)

10.00 **24 Hours in A&E** Surgeons at Queen’s Medical Centre in Nottingham work to save the leg of a 37-year-old patient after he slices through his ankle with an angle grinder (1/10) (r) (AD)
11.05 **24 Hours in A&E** A professional superbike rider is rushed in after a motorcycle crash, a 75-year-old patient has fallen down the stairs and a man has sliced off two fingers chopping up firewood (r) (AD)

10.10 **Police: Night Shift 999** Officers hunt for a car linked to an Albanian organised crime gang, which leads to large quantities of drugs found concealed inside the body of the vehicle (7/8) (r)
11.15 **Police Interceptors** Following Northamptonshire police’s high-speed police interception unit with an officer dealing with a masked man on an electric bike who turns out to be wanted (r)

12.50am **The Celebrity Inner Circle** Richie Anderson, Tasha Ghouri, JB Gill, Una Healy, Tamzin Outhwaite and Nina Wadia are paired with six contestants hoping to outwit each other to win big in the celebrity version of the quiz show, hosted by Amanda Holden. Last in the series (r) **1.40-6.00** BBC News

12.05am **Sign Zone: Countryfile** Charlotte Smith and John Craven explore Wiltshire’s woodlands (r) (SL) **1.00** The Celebrity Traitors Finale. The faithful are desperate to banish the traitors in the finale. Last in the series (r) (AD, SL) **2.10-2.55** The Celebrity Traitors: Uncloaked Finale (r) (AD, SL)

12.15am **Shop on TV 3.00** Regan and Boyd continue their investigation into the murder of a hurling star and how it is linked to a gambling and prostitution ring. Last in the series (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Deal or No Deal. Game show hosted by Stephen Mulhern (r) (SL)

12.05am **999: On the Front Line** (r) **1.00** Taskmaster (r) (AD, SL) **1.55** The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice (r) (AD, SL) **2.50** Ramsay’s Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **3.40** Love It or List It (r) (AD) **4.35** Sunday Brunch **4.45** Hollyoaks Omnibus (r) (AD, SL) **5.55-6.35** Countdown (r)

12.15am **Traffic Cops** (r) **1.10** PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.10** Paris to Rome with Bettany Hughes (r) (AD) **4.00** Friends (r) (AD) **4.25** Paul Martin’s Antiques Showdown (r) (SL) **5.15** Entertainment News on 5 **5.25** Ben and Holly’s Little Kingdom (r) (SL) **5.35-6.00** Fireman Sam (r) (SL)

Gaza has been loud, but first-hand accounts have been hard to find. As the world wonders what will happen next, this documentary breaks new ground, interviewing soldiers from the Israel Defence Forces (including conscripts), many of whom have never spoken publicly before. Sitting down to share experiences of front-line operations, some allege that their campaign violated international law, from the use of human shields to killing civilians. Israel denies breaching international law. The

details are distressing but the discussion raises vital questions. **EB**

Trespasses Channel 4, 9pm

The Troubles rage on but the Catholic teacher Cushla (Lola Petticrew) has her head in the clouds. She's lost in a steamy affair with the enigmatic Protestant barrister Michael (Tom Cullen). It's sexy in a Romeo and Juliet sort of way until Cushla's mum (Gillian Anderson) throws a bucket of icy

water over everything by revealing that Michael has a wife and countless other notches on his bedpost. The illicit relationship ends with the slam of a car door ... or does it? Continues tomorrow. **EB**

STREAMING CHOICE

The Old Man ITVX

The latest tempting delight from ITV's Taste of Disney+ collection is one of its stranger offerings — a

brutal crime thriller that also happens to be a melancholy rumination on depression and old age. That this curious mix works so well is down to its star, Jeff Bridges, who plays Dan Chase, a former CIA operative forced to go on the run when his cover is blown. John Lithgow is also terrific as the ageing FBI agent on his trail but this is Bridges's show and he invests it with a complexity and humanity that the often shaky cat-and-mouse narrative doesn't always deserve. **Andrew Male**

FILM CHOICE

Mr Burton (12A, 2025) BBC1, 8pm

This biopic drops Richard Burton into a robust *Billy Elliot* template. Richard Jenkins (Harry Lawtey) is a working-class boy with an affinity for the creative arts who hopes to escape his mining community by harnessing the wisdom of the Port Talbot teacher Philip Burton (Toby Jones), from whom he will take his surname. (124min) **Kevin Maher**

BBC4

7.00pm Summer: Earth's Seasonal Secrets. The challenges posed by the season to various animals (AD) **8.00** Dan Cruickshank's Monuments of Remembrance. The stories behind First World War cemeteries and memorials (AD) **9.00** Call My Bluff. With André Previn and Tina Brown **9.30** Face the Music. With Valerie Pitts, Robin Ray and Patrick Moore **10.00** The Sky at Night. With Hannah Fry and Dara Ó Briain **10.30** Sister Wendy and the Art of the Gospel: Arena. The nun talks about life, faith and art **11.30** The Private Life of the Ford Cortina: Arena. A 1982 edition exploring the popularity of the car **12.15am** The Great Philosophers **1.45** Face the Music **2.15-3.15** Dan Cruickshank's Monuments of Remembrance (AD, SL)

Sky Arts

6.00am Arts Uncovered **6.20** LSO: Pappano Conducts Ravel, Say & Rachmaninoff **8.00** The Joy of Painting (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents (b/w) **11.00** The Directors (AD) **12.00** André Rieu: Maastricht by Moonlight **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra **3.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2025 (AD) **4.00** The Directors (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Ed Harris (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents. Double bill of the series (b/w) **8.00** André Rieu: New York Memories. The violinist performs **10.30** Cats: The Musical **12.30am** Peter and the Wolf **2.00** Classic Quadrophonia **3.40** The Art of Australia **5.00** Auction

More4

8.55am Château DIY (AD) **11.00** The Great House Giveaway **1.05pm** A Place in the Sun **2.40** Come Dine with Me **5.15** Four in a Bed **7.25** Four in a Bed. The B&B owners meet up for a final showdown **7.55** Grand Designs. Transforming a derelict 17th-century flour mill in Cornwall (5/6) (AD) **9.00** Sailing The Shipping Forecast With the Rev Richard Coles. The rebels and risk takers of the shipping forecast area of the Thames. Last in the series (AD) **10.00** 999: What's Your Emergency? Two PCs attend a call from a distraught homeless man (AD) **11.05** 999: On the Front Line (3/10) **12.10am** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **1.15** Sailing The Shipping Forecast With the Rev Richard Coles (AD) **2.15** 999: On the Front Line **3.20-3.50** Food Unwrapped (AD)



Jordan Love, Sky Sports Main Event, 1am

Live Tennis
Sky Sports Tennis, 10.30am-12.30pm
Coverage from the doubles tournament on day two of the ATP Finals, in Turin, Italy

Live Grand Slam of Darts
Sky Sports Main Event, 7-11pm
Day three from WV Active Aldersley in Wolverhampton

Live EFL: Cheltenham Town v Notts County
Sky Sports Football, 7.30-10.30pm
(Kick-off 8.00). Coverage of the League Two match at EV Charger Points Stadium

Live NBA Basketball: Detroit Pistons v Washington Wizards
Sky Sports +, 11.30pm-3am
(Tip-off 12.00). Coverage of the Eastern Conference match at Little Caesars Arena

Live NFL: Green Bay Packers v Philadelphia Eagles
Sky Sports Main Event, 1-4.30am
(Kick-off 1.15). The week 10 match at Lambeau Field

Talking Pictures

6.45am FILM: Passport to Treason (15, 1956) (b/w) **8.20** What's On TPTV with Noel **8.30** Out of Town **9.00** **FILM: Operation Diplomat (U, 1953)** (b/w) **10.20** Eldorado Ice Cream Production Line **10.25** Churchill's Secret Army **11.00** Rumpole of the Bailey **12.05pm** **Z Cars 1.05** **FILM: Three Crooked Men (U, 1959)** (b/w) **2.25** Cinebox Memories **2.30** The Star That Couldn't Shine **2.40** **FILM: The Silent Enemy (PG, 1958)** (b/w) **4.55** Scotland Yard **5.30** Bonanza **6.30** The Vise (b/w) **7.00** The Footage Detectives **8.00** The Doll **9.05** Gideon's Way **10.05** **FILM: Murder by Decree (15, 1978)** Sherlock Holmes mystery **12.40am** **FILM: Mon Oncle (U, 1958)** **2.55-5.05** **FILM: We Were Strangers (PG, 1949)** (b/w)

Film4

11.00am The Winslow Boy (U, 1948) Historical courtroom drama starring Robert Donat (b/w) **1.20pm** The Nevadan (U, 1950) Western starring Randolph Scott **3.00** The Smallest Show on Earth (U, 1957) Comedy with Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna (b/w) **4.40** Lawrence of Arabia (PG, 1962) Historical drama starring Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif (AD) **9.00** The Transporter (15, 2002) An underworld courier ends up in a battle of wits with his powerful employers. Action adventure starring Jason Statham (AD) **10.50** Public Enemies (15, 2009) The story of the bank robber John Dillinger, who became America's most wanted man. Fact-based crime drama starring Johnny Depp **1.35am-4.00** Capernaum (15, 2018) Drama starring Zain Al Rafeea

BBC3

7.00pm Horrible Histories. Meet history's biggest Influencers (AD) **7.30** Horrible Histories. An insight into the history of foul feasting (AD) **8.00** Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson and James May learn about China's expanding car industry **9.00** Stacey Dooley: Inside the Undertakers. Stacey spends time at one of the UK's busiest family-run funeral businesses (AD) **10.00** **FILM: La La Land (12, 2016)** An actress and a struggling jazz musician fall in love and attempt to realise their respective dreams in Los Angeles. Musical starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling (AD) **12.00** Joe Swash: Forgotten Young Dads (AD) **1.00am** Top Gear **2.00** Missing in Paradise: Searching for Sarm (AD) **3.30-4.00** BBC New Comedy Awards 2025

ITV2

6.00am CITV **7.55** Buying the View (SL) **8.25** Ferne McCann: First Time Mum **9.25** The Only Way Is Essex **10.05** The Real Housewives of Dubai **11.00** The Real Housewives of Atlanta **12.00** Supermarket Sweep **1.00pm** Wheel of Fortune (AD) **2.00** The Only Way Is Essex **3.00** The Real Housewives of Jersey **4.00** The Real Housewives of Dubai **5.00** The Real Housewives of Atlanta **5.55** Celebrity Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts (AD) **7.00** Deal or No Deal **8.00** Wheel of Fortune (AD) **9.00** Big Brother. Contestants live under 24 hour surveillance **10.00** Big Brother: Late & Live **11.05** Family Guy (AD) **12.05am** Big Brother. Reality series **1.05** American Dad! (AD) **1.55-2.25** Plebs (AD, SL)

ITV3

6.00am The Royal (AD) **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Doc Martin (AD) **10.15** The Royal (AD) **11.15** Heartbeat (AD) **1.25pm** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **2.35** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **3.35** Downton Abbey (AD) **4.45** Doc Martin (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat (AD) **8.00** Midsomer Murders. Members of a chess club are targeted by a killer. Guest starring Fay Ripley (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. A computer laboratory head dies from mercury poisoning (3/6) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester. Will and Georgie investigate a woman's death following a fall (4/6) (AD) **11.55** Cracker. Part three of three. Fitz vows to nail the Trant family come what may (6/9) (AD) **1.00am-2.00** Cracker (AD)

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland 7.00pm Hope Street 7.45-8.00 If Walls Could Talk 10.40 The Disappearance of Captain Nairac 12.10am Tell Me Lies 1.00 Tell Me Lies 1.55-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Scotland 12.50am Scotcast (r) 1.20 The Celebrity Inner Circle (r) 2.10-6.00 BBC News

BBC2 Wales 11.00pm It's My Shout. New series. Drama 11.20 It's My Shout 11.30 Empire with David Olusoga (r) 12.35am-1.00 The North York Moors: A Wild Year

ITV1 Wales 10.45pm Face to Face 11.15 Made in Mumbles (r) 11.40-11.50 Coast & Country (r)

STV 11.05pm Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel's War 12.10am-3.00 Shop on TV 3.50-5.05 Night Vision

UTV 10.45pm View from Stormont. Political developments 11.45-11.50 Hidden Northern Ireland (r)

BBC Scotland 2.00pm-4.00 Sign Zone (r) 7.00 Reporting Scotland: News at Seven 7.30 On the Front Line: The War Detectives. Tracking down living relatives of two soldiers 8.00 The Mountain (r) 8.30 Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs (r) 9.00 The Troops 10.00 River City 10.30 Dinosaur (r) 11.00 Scotcast 11.30-12.00 Limmy's Show (r)

S4C 6.00pm Caeau Cymru (r) 6.30 Rownd a Rownd (r) 6.57 News 7.00 Heno 7.30 News; Weather 8.00 Y Byd ar Bedwar 8.25 Dim Cwsg I Quinnell 8.55 News; Weather 9.00 Cefn Gwlad 9.33 Y Tywydd (r) 9.35 Radio: Pencampwriaeth Rali'r Byd 2025 — Japan 10.05 Sporio 10.35-11.40 Prosiect Pwll Mil (r)

PBS America

8.00am Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands **8.40** Treasures Decoded **9.40** Mafia's Greatest Hits **10.45** Verdun, the Battle of the Great War **11.50** Forts of Verdun **1.00pm** Treasures Decoded **2.00** Mafia's Greatest Hits **3.10** Verdun, the Battle of the Great War **4.20** Forts of Verdun **5.35** Treasures Decoded **6.35** Mafia's Greatest Hits **7.50** Verdun, the Battle of the Great War. An in-depth look at the battle **9.00** Forts of Verdun. Taking a journey inside the walls of the coveted 38 forts that were at stake during the battle of Verdun **10.15** Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton experiences island life on Harris and Lewis **10.55** Mafia's Greatest Hits **12.00** Verdun, the Battle of the Great War **1.10am** Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets (r) (AD) **7.00** Urban Secrets (r) **8.00** Band of Brothers (r) **10.20** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **12.20pm** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **1.25** My Brilliant Friend (r) **2.30** Band of Brothers (r) **4.45** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **6.50** Game of Thrones. Jaime strikes a deal (r) (AD) **7.55** Game of Thrones. Varys meets his match when he talks to Lady Olenna (r) (AD) **9.00** It: Welcome to Derry. General Shaw pushes ahead with his top-secret mission (AD) **10.10** The Outsider. Ralph contacts PI Holly Gibney to get a fresh perspective on the case (r) (AD) **11.20** The Sopranos (r) (AD) **12.25am** Banshee (r) (AD) **1.30** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **5.00** The Guest Wing (r) (AD)

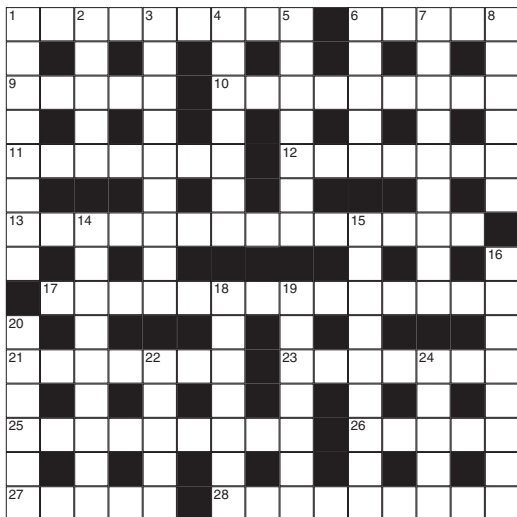
Sky Docs

6.00am McMillion\$ (r) (AD) **7.00** Discovering: Barbara Stanwyck (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) **9.00** The Movies (r) **9.50** Branson (r) (AD) **11.00** Urban Secrets. A journey between two famous London markets (r) **12.00** Albert Brooks: Defending My Life (r) (AD) **1.45pm** My Icon (r) (AD) **2.00** Germanwings: What Happened on Flight 9525? (r) **4.00** Discovering: Barbara Stanwyck (r) (AD) **5.00** The Directors (r) **6.00** The Movies (r) **6.50** Branson (r) (AD) **8.00** David Frost Vs 1/6 (r) (AD) **9.00** Mommy Dead and Dearest: The Story of Dee Dee (r) **10.45** The Wimbledon Kidnapping. A disappearance in 1969 (r) (AD) **12.45am** **FILM: Crazy, Not Insane (15, 2019)** **3.00** MoviePass, MovieCrash (r) (AD) **4.45** My Icon (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Great American Railroad Journeys **8.00** Bangers & Cash **10.00** Adolf Hitler's War **11.00** The World at War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Adolf Hitler's War **5.00** The World at War. A 1941 attack **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** Indian Ocean with Simon Reeve. From Indonesia to Australia **8.00** Robson Green: World's Most Amazing Walks. Robson Green walks along the north coast of Normandy, tracing the footsteps of soldiers of the D-Day Landings (AD) **9.00** Ireland with Simon Reeve. Climbing Croagh Patrick **10.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (1/8) **12.00** Bangers & Cash **1.00am** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **2.00** Indian Ocean with Simon Reeve **3.00** Teleshopping

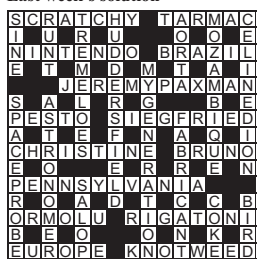
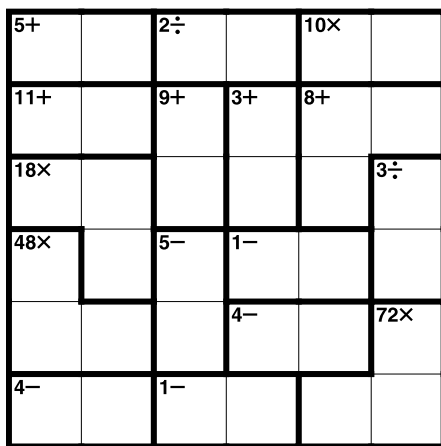
General Knowledge Crossword No 311



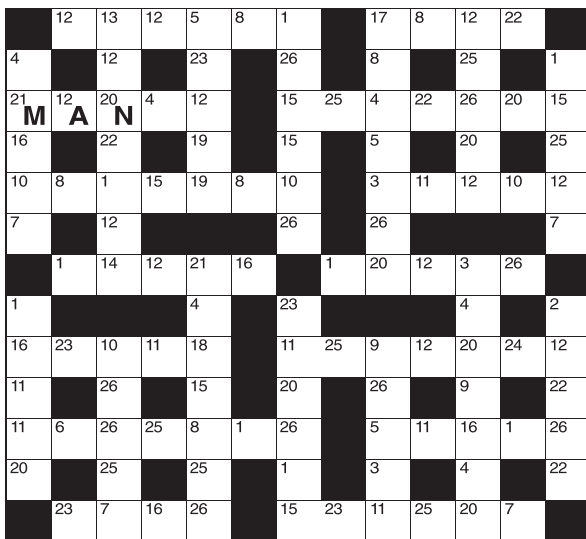
Across

- | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|
| 1 | Carter and Clinton but not Nixon and Ford, eg (9) | equalising goal in the final of Uefa Women's Euro 2025 (5) | |
| 6 | Fine red bordeaux wine (5) | 28 | Kent town whose spelling with a "U" was officially changed to an "O" in 1893 (9) |
| 9 | Racecourse with a "royal" meeting in June each year (5) | | |
| 10 | Final Stuart monarch (5,4) | | |
| 11 | Chinese breed of dog with loose wrinkled skin (4,3) | Down | |
| 12 | Any of the 12 disciples of Christ (7) | 1 | Powerful car for racing on a short straight track (8) |
| 13 | Connection between the middle ear and pharynx (10,4) | 2 | Birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (5) |
| 17 | Culture Club No 1, the top-selling UK hit of 1983 (5,9) | 3 | Matter in a cell excluding the nucleus (9) |
| 21 | British triathlete who won Olympic gold last year after a remarkable late comeback (4,3) | 4 | British prime minister at the start of the First World War (7) |
| | | 5 | Czech composer (1824-84) (7) |
| 23 | Alternative name for a plimsoll (3,4) | 6 | Fruit used to make a chutney served with poppadoms (5) |
| 25 | German thinker who wrote <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> (9) | 7 | Bedfordshire town separated from Luton by the M1 (9) |
| 26 | Evil being such as an afrit or ghoul in Arabian legend (5) | 8 | Dick ---, US vice-president under George W Bush (6) |
| | | 14 | Channel 4 comedy-drama |

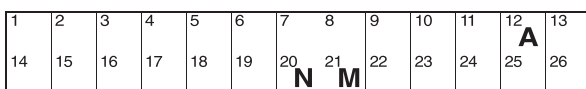
Last week's solution

**KenKen** Easy No 6673

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Codeword No 5681

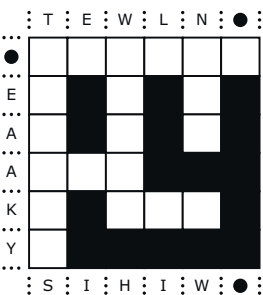
~~A~~ B C D E F G H I J K L ~~M~~ ~~N~~ O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



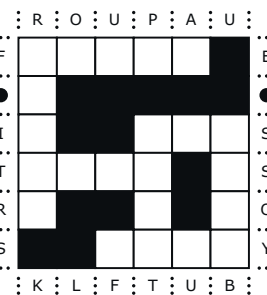
Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Saturday's solution, right*

Cluelines Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 8499

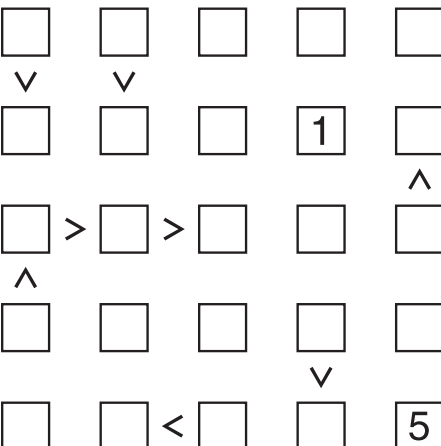


Hard No 8500

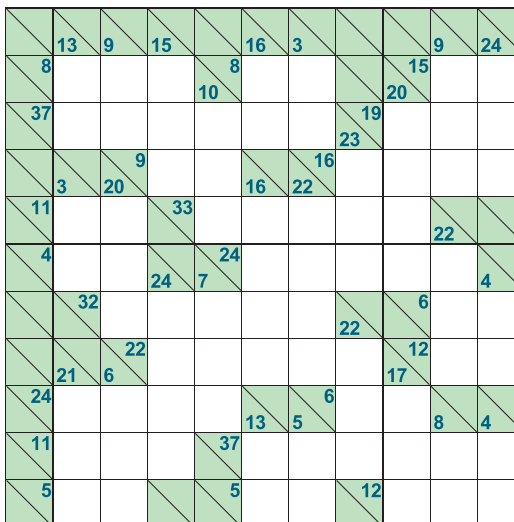


Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

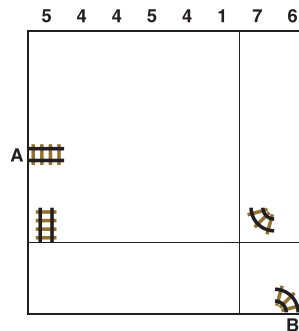
Futoshiki No 5221



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4180

Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

Train Tracks No 2706

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

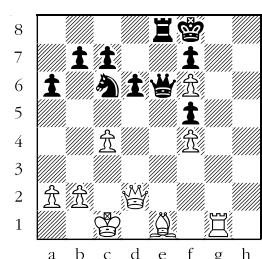
Quintagram®

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

- 1 Check rolls being returned (4)
— — — —
- 2 Inexpensive old car attached to front of caravan (5)
— — — — —
- 3 Confuse black birds with energy (6)
— — — — —
- 4 Be conspicuous in street and unpopular (5,3)
— — — — —
- 5 Puts choir off pursuit (9)
— — — — —

A	A	B	B	C	C	D	E
E	E	H	H	I	M	N	N
O	O	P	P	R	S	S	S
S	T	T	T	U	U	U	U

Winning Move



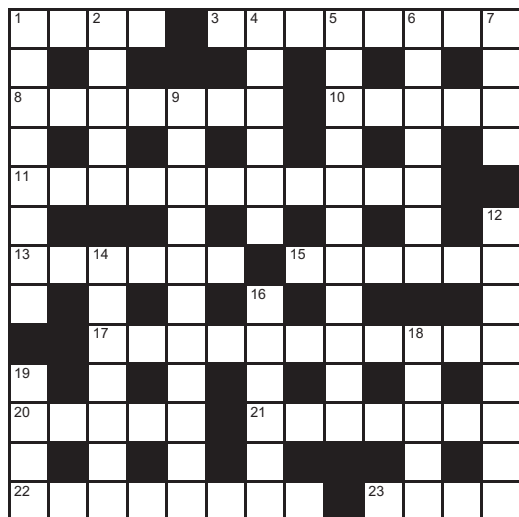
White to play.
This position is from
Jumabayev-Jasinski,
Titled Tuesday,
chess.com 2025.

An open file leading directly to a vulnerable king often proves fatal. Here the shelter for the black king has been ripped away and the gl-rook is menacing. How did White finish off?

**Challenge
your mind
with these
fiendish
word and
number
puzzles**

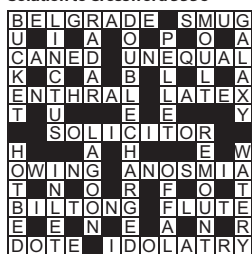
timesbookshop.co.uk

times2 Crossword No 9997



- Across
- 1 Practise boxing (4)
 - 3 Very smallest; *nut mites* (anagram) (8)
 - 8 Pertaining to a type of single-celled organism (7)
 - 10 Classical music drama (5)
 - 11 Made justifiable (11)
 - 13 Recorded in archived documentation (2,4)
 - 15 Merchant (6)
 - 17 Realm of bureaucracy (11)
 - 20 Picture (5)
 - 21 Agent of genetic change (7)
 - 22 Fearing greatly (8)
 - 23 Side of a building (4)
- Down
- 1 Spring onion (8)
 - 2 Surrounded by (5)
 - 4 Takings, revenue (6)
 - 5 Inattentive, heedless (11)
 - 6 Corrected and revised (a text) (7)
 - 7 Tropical wood used in furniture making (4)
 - 9 Site of armed conflict (11)
 - 12 Lawbreaker (8)
 - 14 Filmed material (7)
 - 16 Business sense (6)
 - 18 Doctrine presented as being indisputably true (5)
 - 19 Psyche (4)

Solution to Crossword 9996



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Wouldn't it be nice if there were brilliantly organised bridge tournaments in carefully selected, interesting locations, where only the best standards of behaviour were tolerated?

There are. Enter the World Bridge Tour (WBT), the brainchild of Norwegians Thomas Charlsen and Boye Brogeland. Brogeland, in particular, was responsible for cleaning up the game in 2015 and rooting out the collaborative cheating that was, sadly, taking place between one or two highly successful (funny that) partnerships.

I much enjoyed my week in Copenhagen at the WBT event last month. Here's an interesting 5♠ from Match Three.

West led out two top hearts, precisely to stop declarer finessing against East's queen of spades. Ruffing low in dummy, declarer cashed the king of spades, played ace-of-diamonds-ruff-a-diamond, and cashed the ace of spades, West discarding.

It may appear that East has to score his ♠Q and his ♠10 but declarer carefully discarded a club from dummy (keeping the fifth diamond). He crossed to the ace of clubs and ruffed a third diamond. He then crossed to the ace of clubs and, in the ending across, played winning diamonds.

If East ruffed, declarer could overruff and cash clubs. If East discarded, declarer could discard his clubs and score a trick with ♠J9 over East's ♠Q10. Eleven tricks and game made — there had been no defence.

Dealer: East, Vulnerability: Neither

Teams

- ♠K5
♥9
♦AKJ107
♣AK974
- ♠7
♥AKQ874
♦9653
♣106
- ♠Q1086
♥J653
♦Q84
♣82
- ♠AJ9432
♥102
♦2
♣QJ53

S	W	N	E
2♠(1)	4♥(2)	4NT(3)	Pass
5♦(4)	Pass	5♥(5)	Pass
5♠(5)	End		

- (1) Weak Two, barely worth an annotation as no top players play Strong Twos these days.
- (2) Fruity but, facing a passed partner, West is pretty sure he's "playing with the opponents' money", ie N-S have at least a game contract.
- (3) Roman Key Card Blackwood. North can envisage that 6♠ will be playable facing ♠AQxxx "and out".
- (4) Showing one or four "aces" (♠K would have counted).
- (5) Asking for ♠Q. Answer: not at home.

Contract: 5♠, Opening Lead: ♥A

- ♠-
♥-
♦KJ (led)
♣97
- ♠-
♥Q87
♦9
♣-
- ♠Q10
♥J6
♦-
♣-
- ♠J9
♥-
♦-
♣QJ

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	58	+ 12	70% OF IT	x 2	- 12	1/2 OF IT	x 3	- 13	1/2 OF IT	+ 15	ANSWER
MEDIUM	76	x 7	+ 59	2/3 OF IT	x 3	- 88	1/2 OF IT	- 79	3/4 OF IT	x 2	ANSWER
HARDER	254	+ 521	x 4	+ 228	75% OF IT	- 878	+ 1/2 OF IT	x 2	+ 474	7/9 OF IT	ANSWER

Polygon

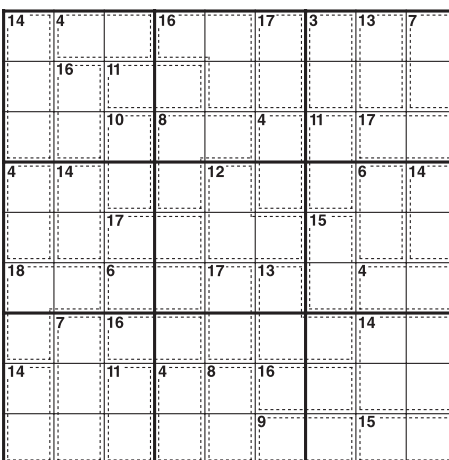


From these letters, make words of **three** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 13 words, average; 18, good; 23, very good; 29, excellent

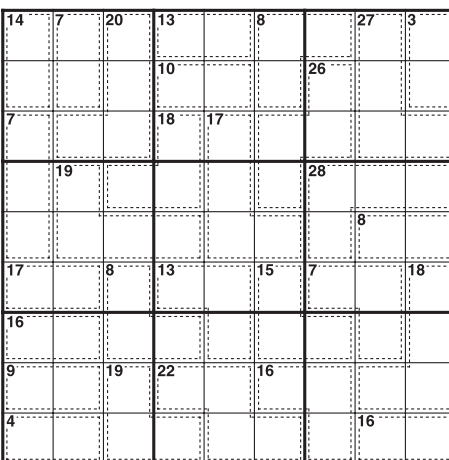
Saturday's answers

deke, desk, dike, dirk, disk, dork, drek, esker, keister, ketosis, kiss, kisser, kist, kite, kris, reek, risk, seek, **sidestroke**, sked, skeet, skid, skier, skirt, skit, skite, soke, stirk, stoke, stoked, stoker, stokes, stork, strike, stroke, tike, toke, toker, torsk, trek, trike

Killer Gentle No 10,400



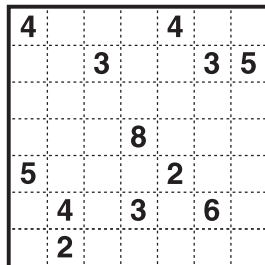
Killer Tricky No 10,401



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5564



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 4183

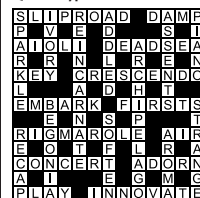
x	x	= 24
x	÷	x
x	x	x 8 = 48
+	x	x
x	5	+ = 44
= 25	= 10	= 72

Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

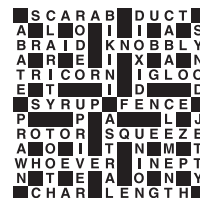
Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

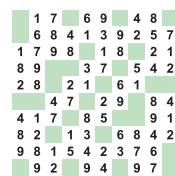
Quick Cryptic 3140



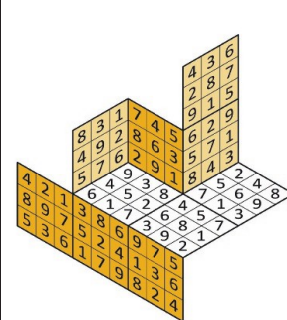
Codeword 5680



Kakuro 4178



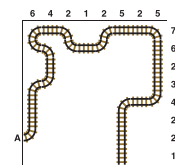
Tredoku 1915



Square Routes 349



Train Tracks 2705



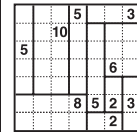
Set Square 4181

8	+	2	-	7
8	+	9	-	3
1	+	4	+	5

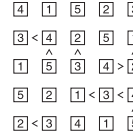
Lexica 8493



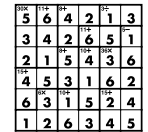
Cell Blocks 5563



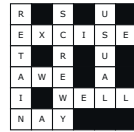
Futoshiki 5219



KenKen 6672



Lexica 8494



Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram

- 1 Cliff
- 2 Clock
- 3 Poker
- 4 Straight
- 5 Face value

Cryptic Quintagram

- 1 Snub
- 2 Cheap
- 3 Bemuse
- 4 Stand out
- 5 Courtship

Suko 4582



Brain Trainer

Easy 733
Medium 702
Harder 4,144

Word watch

- Minivet (a) A brightly coloured Asian bird (Collins)
Tablier (b) An apron-like dress (Chambers)
Bracteat (b) A coin of thinly beaten metal (OED)
- Chess - Winning Move**
- 1 Rg8+! Kxg8 2 Qg2+ Kf8
3 Qg7 is mate

Quiz

- 1 Boxing Day 2 Wind
- 3 Coronation Street
- 4 Newspaper 5 Harvard
- University 6 Rum 7 Aston
- Martin 8 Stonehenge
- 9 Foxtrot 10 Sheldonian
- 11 Sterling Archer, in the animated series Archer
- 12 Harrison Ford 13 Max
- Boyce 14 Royal Albert Hall
- 15 PD James

MindGames

For extra
puzzles
See page 10

Word watch

David Parfitt

Minivet

a A brightly coloured Asian bird
b A small-scale animal treatment facility
c White fur

Tablier

a A handheld drum
b An apron-like dress
c A furniture maker

Bracteate

a To swing from branch to branch
b A coin of thinly beaten metal
c To group or class together

Answers on page 15

Sudoku Easy No 16,311

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

Difficult No 16,312

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

Fiendish No 16,313

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

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz Olav Bjortomt

1 In the UK, what is the next bank holiday after Christmas Day?

2 According to a Bob Dylan song, "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the ..." what?

3 The Kabin is a newsagent's in which long-running TV soap?

4 Zeitung is the German word for which type of publication?

5 Kennedy Scholarships fund British postgraduate students to study at MIT or which other Massachusetts university?

6 The three-letter name of which alcoholic spirit is also an adjective meaning strange or odd?



7 Which British sports carmaker built a new model, the DB10, for the Bond film *Spectre*?

8 In 1915, what was sold at auction for £6,600 to local Wiltshire man Cecil Chubb?

9 The quickstep has been called "a faster version" of which ballroom dance?

10 In 1733, Handel conducted the first performance of his oratorio *Athalia* at which Oxford theatre?

11 Woodhouse (voiced by George Coo) was the valet of which fictional spy?

12 Which US actor named his own character "Lucas" in the film *Apocalypse Now*?

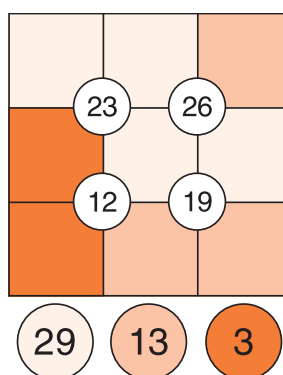
13 In the 1970s, which Welsh comedian and singer popularised the "Oggy Oggy" chant?

14 Which London music venue hosted a five-day Grand Sumo Tournament in October 2025?

15 Made a life peer in 1991, which crime writer is pictured?

Answers on page 15

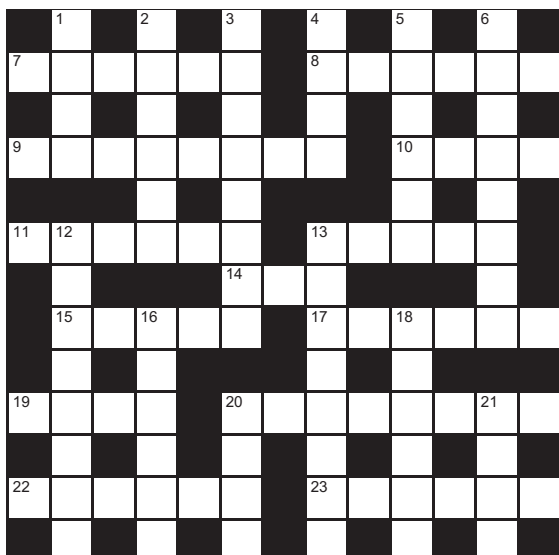
Suko No 4582



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic No 3142 by Pipsqueak



Across

- 7 Lawyer's pants (6)
- 8 Trainspotter perhaps — and what keeps him warm and dry? (6)
- 9 Liberal urges one to change (8)
- 10 Two bowlers maybe, each wasting time? That's a laugh (2-2)
- 11 What might be very hot, but quite cold when picked up (6)
- 13 Number of you once crossing river (5)
- 14 Appearance of individual who will succeed, you say? (3)
- 15 Everyone at home exhausted (3,2)
- 17 Got rid of Times editor (6)
- 19 Steer clear of hotel featuring in tabloid (4)
- 20 Stupidly strikes a star (8)
- 22 Might one be shot with this? (6)
- 23 Brief description of small boat (6)

Down

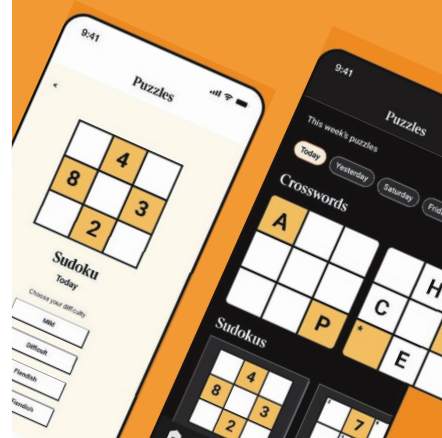
- 1 American Indian's unending belief (4)
- 2 Vicar regularly recalls show (6)
- 3 Public schoolboy welcoming second person from Tallinn? (8)
- 4 Creatures of the night go back (4)
- 5 British held up by more trouble (6)
- 6 Expensive material a schemer manipulated (8)
- 12 Try and try again? I agree! (4,4)
- 13 Somehow I restate thesis (8)
- 16 Singer hired to entertain pub (6)
- 18 A craving? Yes (6)
- 20 American girl not reaching the end, unfortunately (4)
- 21 Charlie infiltrating inflexible cult (4)

Friday's solution on page 15

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THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

TheGame

THE  TIMES

MONDAY NOVEMBER 10 2025

Aiming high

Haaland and City close gap on Arsenal to four points

PAGES 2-4



Doku and Haaland keep the spring in Pep's step

MANCHESTER CITY	3
Haaland 29, González 45+3, Doku 63	
LIVERPOOL	0

Paul Hirst

At Etihad Stadium



"Volem que et quedis," read the words on a banner beneath a Catalan flag in the South Stand at the Etihad Stadium.

It means, "We want you to stay" in Catalan, and when you consider what unfolded here over the course of 90 breathtaking minutes, you can see why Manchester City fans feel that way about Pep Guardiola.

This hammering of Liverpool, in Guardiola's 1,000th match in management, underlined two things. First, it showed that in his 18th season in this job, Guardiola still has as much energy and drive as when he began his coaching career in 2007.

If you have any doubts, just ask Rayan Cherki and Bernardo Silva, who both got it in the ear for making minor mistakes a couple of minutes after Erling Haaland had put City ahead with his 99th Premier League goal.

Also take a look at how Guardiola celebrated City's second, scored by Nico González. The 54-year-old bounced around the technical area like a kid who had just received the best Christmas present.

This momentous victory, which puts City within four points of Premier League leaders Arsenal, also underlined Guardiola's greatest assets – his innovation and his ability to develop players.

Remember when Jérémy Doku used to spend his afternoons here running into blind allies or getting past his man on the left flank and delivering zilch? Over the last couple of matches, the Belgian's game has taken off as a result of Guardiola giving him a new role. Doku, who scored the pick of the goals here, spent as much time in the centre of the pitch as he did on the left wing.

Guardiola has improved, beyond doubt, the game of all three goalscorers. Such was González's presence in midfield that City did not miss the injured Rodri.

It was a less memorable experience for Arne Slot, who was on the receiving end of a "you're getting sacked in the morning" jibe from the home fans shortly after Doku had ended a brief Liverpool fightback at the start of the second half with a superb curled finish.

Slot's team would have gone behind early on had Giorgi Mamardashvili not saved Haaland's penalty after the goalkeeper had tripped Doku.

Chris Kavanagh's decision to disallow a Virgil van Dijk goal for an apparent offside against Andy Robertson, who had ducked in front of Gianluigi Donnarumma as the defender's goal headed towards the far corner, irked Slot, but the Liverpool manager knows in his heart of hearts that his team were well beaten and that they were guilty of the most basic errors.



The dazzling Doku celebrates scoring the pick of the City goals in the second half with Nico O'Reilly after González, left, had made it 2-0 just before the interval at the Etihad. Top left, Foden watches Haaland give City the lead after the Norway striker had his penalty saved by Mamardashvili in the Liverpool goal

MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAGES; TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER BRADLEY ORMESHER; PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS



The home fans acknowledged Guardiola's 1,000-match milestone just before kick-off, with the unfurling of three banners that stretched across the packed stands.

His team started off in typically quick fashion and Doku led the charge.

Last season, Doku gave Trent Alexander-Arnold the runaround here down the left flank, but ended up delivering little.

This time, as was the case in the mid-week win over Borussia Dortmund, Doku was allowed to roam and his end product was much better.

First, he popped up on the left, slaloming in between Conor Bradley and Dominik Szoboszlai before running into Ibrahima Konaté. Then he drifted on to the other side of the pitch, driving at the box from the right wing.

Doku cut open the Liverpool defence with a drilled pass but Phil Foden

Pep by the numbers

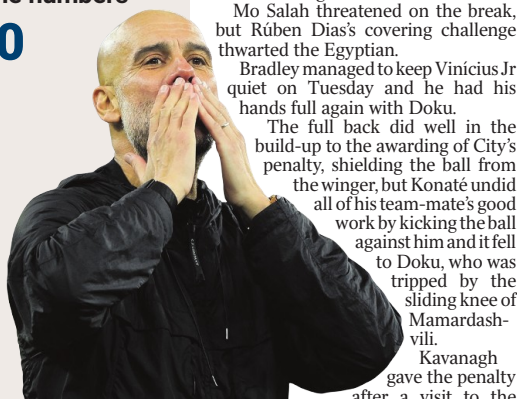
1,000
games

716
wins

156
draws

128
defeats

71.6
win percentage



miscontrolled and the away side breathed a sigh of relief.

Mo Salah threatened on the break, but Rúben Dias's covering challenge thwarted the Egyptian.

Bradley managed to keep Vinicius Jr quiet on Tuesday and he had his hands full again with Doku.

The full back did well in the build-up to the awarding of City's penalty, shielding the ball from the winger, but Konaté undid all of his team-mate's good work by kicking the ball against him and it fell to Doku, who was tripped by the sliding knee of Mamardashvili.

Kavanagh gave the penalty after a visit to the

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Arsenal	11	8	2	1	20	5	15	26
Man City	11	7	1	3	23	8	15	22
Chelsea	11	6	2	3	21	11	10	20
Sunderland	11	5	4	2	14	10	4	19
Tottenham	11	5	3	3	19	10	9	18
Aston Villa	11	5	3	3	13	10	3	18
Man United	11	5	3	3	19	18	1	18
Liverpool	11	6	0	5	18	17	1	18
Bournemouth	11	5	3	3	17	18	-1	18
Crystal Palace	11	4	5	2	14	9	5	17
Brighton	11	4	4	3	17	15	2	16
Brentford	11	5	1	5	17	17	0	16
Everton	11	4	3	4	12	13	-1	15
Newcastle	11	3	3	5	11	14	-3	12
Fulham	11	3	2	6	12	16	-4	11
Leeds	11	3	2	6	10	20	-10	11
Burnley	11	3	1	7	14	22	-8	10
West Ham	11	3	1	7	13	23	-10	10
Nott'm Forest	11	2	3	6	10	20	-10	9
Wolves	11	0	2	9	7	25	-18	2

pitchside monitor, sparking anger and acrimony. Dias barked at Van Dijk for not handing over the ball for the penalty whilst Silva had a slanging match with Konaté as he tried to protect the spot.

Once all the theatrics had ended, the Georgian goalkeeper redeemed himself, leaping to his left and pushing away Haaland's spot kick.

The miss buoyed Mamardashvili, but his team were still up against it. City packed the midfield. Silva, equally good at playing the role of workhorse as he is wizard, pressed relentlessly. Mamardashvili's kicking left a lot to be desired.

His glove work kept City at bay though, tipping Doku's latest effort into the side-netting after the winger had left Bradley on his backside.

When Liverpool finally buckled, the blame lay not at their goalkeeper's door, but at that of his defence. Matheus Nunes was given so much space by Florian Wirtz and Andy Robertson that he had enough time to measure up a whipped cross to the back post that sailed over a flapping Konaté and on to the head of Haaland, who planted the ball into the far corner with a beautiful floating header.

Liverpool thought they had equalised when Van Dijk leapt above Nunes and headed into the far corner from six yards, but Kavanagh ruled that Robertson had interfered with play when he ducked in front of the goalkeeper. Slot was furious.

The Dutchman's mood took a turn for the worse when his team went 2-0 down in first-half stoppage time.

Once again, Liverpool's defending was shoddy. From a short corner, Cherki and Silva were allowed to shuffle the ball to González, whose low shot skidded off the turf and into the back of the net after flicking Van Dijk's right boot.

Liverpool came back into the game at the start of the second half. Bradley delivered a teasing cross that Cody Gakpo put over the bar from six yards.

City were panicking but Doku eased the pressure, cutting in from the left flank, shimmying his way past Konaté before curling a peach of a shot into the far corner.

Salah spooned over an effort from close range, giving the home fans behind the goal another reason to cheer.

TEAMS

Manchester City (4-2-3-1) G Donnarumma – M Nunes, R Dias, J Gvardiol, N O'Reilly – N González, B Silva – R Cherki (Savinho 53), P Foden, J Doku (O Marmoush 74) – E Haaland. **Booked** González, Silva.

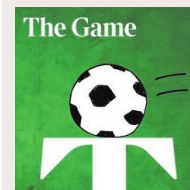
Liverpool (4-2-3-1): G Mamardashvili – C Bradley (J Gomez 83), I Konaté, V van Dijk, A Robertson (M Kerkez 56) – R Gravenberch, A Mac Allister (C Jones 74) – M Salah, D Szoboszlai, F Wirtz (F Chiesa 83) – H Ekitike. **Booked** Mac Allister, Szoboszlai, Jones, Bradley. **Referee** Chris Kavanagh

Online today



Martin Samuel's 7am column

"That's why Pep Guardiola is 1,000 not out, and why the majority of those games have taken place as a manager in English football. Time and again, English football delivers. Just four points separate first and second now, so this may not be a procession after all." Read the full column online



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Tom Clarke, Alyson Rudd, Gregor Robertson and Hamzah Khaliq-Loonat discuss the latest news and action at 5pm today



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thetimes.com/sport

DARREN STAPLES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAGES



The decision to rule out Van Dijk's header for an offside against Robertson (number 26), above and below, was controversial, but the greatest bugbear for Slot, inset, should be his side's continued frailties

Liverpool go missing when contest Slot craved arrives

Display was so poor that it is hard to argue disallowing Van Dijk's header was a turning point, writes **Paul Joyce**

There are many things that are starting to annoy Arne Slot about the state of football. Time-wasting, the increasing use of long throw-ins and long balls in the Premier League, and the standard of refereeing.

At his press conference on Friday, the Liverpool head coach had ended with what, by his standards, amounted to a mini-rant, wondering why no one brings up the numerous decisions he believes have conspired against his team in recent weeks.

To his list of complaints, there is now one more entry. The decision to scrub Virgil van Dijk's header, with Andrew Robertson judged to be in an offside position and distracting Gianluigi Donnarumma, looked controversial in real time let alone after replays. The Manchester City goalkeeper saw the attempt all right

and, at full stretch, was never getting there.

That the match referee, Chris Kavanagh, was also the official who overturned the decision to disallow a John Stones header for City against Wolverhampton Wanderers in October 2024 added further intrigue. On that occasion Bernardo Silva was standing offside and nudged José Sá a split-second before the ball went in.

And yet, even allowing for all that, Slot's greatest bugbear should be his own side's continued frailties at both ends of the pitch, issues he acknowledged at the end of yesterday's 3-0 defeat.

Given his distaste for the present tactical trends, he has been craving what he would regard as pure football matches this season. When one arrived, Liverpool went missing, struggling with every aspect of their game in the first half especially.

Their pressing was off. They were unable to summon the bravery to pick a route through a congested midfield that City packed with five players, given how narrow Jérémy Doku and Rayan Cherki were stationed. They could not keep the ball or create attacking momentum from open play.

After taking forward steps with the victories over Aston Villa and Real

Madrid, Liverpool took a significant one backwards. One that meant it was hard to formulate a convincing argument that stifling Van Dijk's celebrations was akin to a turning point even if it would have cancelled out Erling Haaland's 99th league goal.

Haaland had already had a penalty saved by then and Pep Guardiola's players were clearly in the mood to ensure a landmark day for their manager produced the sort of success that will have Arsenal peering over their shoulders. Instead, Slot and Liverpool were left only with headaches.

Their away record in 2025 in all competitions is, frankly, alarming. Played 22, won eight, drawn three, lost 11 and that does not include two losses at Wembley when silverware was at stake.

While there is some mitigation as to why those statistics scream mediocrity at best (for example, the defeats by Chelsea and Brighton & Hove Albion last term came after the title was won and the team had checked out), it also speaks to an underlying flimsiness. All of which was evident here.

This fixture has often come down to small details, most memorably when Stones prevented a Sadio Mané shot from crossing the line by 11.2 millimetres in 2019. That intervention meant City ended the campaign as champions at Liverpool's expense.

But is Florian Wirtz not pushing himself to close down Matheus Nunes's crossing opportunity which led to the breakthrough a minor point or a bigger issue? If he had been at Anfield, would the German have dug a little deeper? Slot hailed Haaland's header as a moment of genius but not looking to stop the cross was indicative of how Liverpool were second best.

It was the same in first-half added time with no one showing the intensity to get out to Nico González before his shot nicked off Van Dijk's right heel and wrong-footed Giorgi Mamardashvili.

By the time Doku's



curling strike from outside the area twisted the knife, a spellbinding moment that illustrated how much he has improved his end product since Liverpool last clapped eyes on him back in February, Slot's side trailed by three goals in a league match for the first time since the Dutchman took charge.

Nothing stays the same, it seems.

Prior to his first meeting with City and Guardiola at Anfield a year ago, Slot and his staff put on a slide show for his players, having identified four areas of weakness in the visitors' back line. Low, hard crosses fizzed across the face of goal had been earmarked as one.

When Cody Gakpo opened the scoring at the far post from Mohamed Salah's

sumptuous pass, the moment served as validation of that homework and a nod to the acumen of a head coach on his way to winning the title.

Fast forward to the present and Conor Bradley was providing the ammunition but Gakpo blazed over when it was easier to score. That came at 2-0 and a final lifeline was spurned.

Liverpool's finishing would be as profligate as their defending had been sieve-like. They have leaked 17 goals, their joint-worst total at this stage of a league season for 32 years, while 18 goals scored is their lowest at this stage in a decade.

Gakpo's presence instead pointed to the many questions that Slot must answer all over again to arrest a feeble run of seven defeats in ten in all competitions. He stepped off the bench to patrol the left with Wirtz, briefly, pushed inside as a false nine before making way altogether for Federico Chiesa.

The wait for Wirtz to enjoy a breakthrough moment that befits his £116million fee goes on and on, and more thought has to be ploughed into solving that conundrum.

Similarly, the notion that the panacea for all Liverpool's ills was simply restoring the midfield that was the bedrock of last season's championship success was blown apart at the Etihad, too.

And then there is the £125million Alexander Isak, who was sitting on the sidelines throughout having only just returned from injury, to integrate.

As Guardiola racked up 1,000 games, it felt like Slot departed with 1,000 problems.



Ruthless Thiago cashes in on Newcastle's ineptitude on road

BRENTFORD

Schade 56, Thiago 78 (pen), 90+5

3

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Barnes 27

1

Alyson Rudd

Senior Sports Writer, at G-Tech Stadium

And so it continues. Just as we are baffled as to how the Pyramids were constructed, we continue to squint at Newcastle United and wonder how it is that their league form is being severely hampered by their ineptitude away from home. They have now played nine, won none, drawn four and lost five since they last prevailed on their travels in April.

Just as against West Ham United last weekend, Eddie Howe's team took the lead but failed to capitalise as Brentford admirably refused to buckle, scoring first through Kevin Schade and then twice more through Igor Thiago.

Howe had tried being despairing of what he had seen at the London Stadium, calling his players unrecognisable, but as that clearly did not stir them to defy their slump he resorted, after this latest disappointment, to a more avuncular approach.

"I think it's really important today that I support the players," the Newcastle head coach said. "We know we're good players, we've got a really good team, but we just need to stay grouped together in this difficult period."

"We know it's not good enough and I take full responsibility for that."

Howe really could not have said more to try to ease the pressure on his players but their away form is looking like a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is one thing to succumb to an away atmosphere, but quite another to be unable to capitalise on taking the lead. Instead, Brentford rallied and Newcastle became hesitant and uncertain. This is not really how football is supposed to work for a team in the Champions League.

Newcastle are level on points with Paris Saint-Germain, Liverpool and Real Madrid in this season's Champions League but cannot cope with life domestically away from Tyneside and sit two points above the relegation zone.

In the warm-up the Newcastle players were given some much needed practice for an aerial bombardment. A Mikkel Damsgaard free kick caused havoc in the Newcastle area but somehow the ball was scrambled to safety and then Howe's defence dealt competently with the first long throw of the encounter.

The visiting team seemed content to absorb the pressure — indeed they almost seemed to relish it — but then suddenly sprang into action. After a slick build-up, with Jacob Murphy crossing into the area, Sepp van den Berg could clear only to the feet of Harvey Barnes, who dipped to his left then his right then back again to dizzy the Brentford back line, who failed to block his low shot that gave Newcastle the lead amid a sense of incredulity. It was to prove their only shot on target.

The second half began with a statement of intent from the home team and Nick Pope did well to block a fierce strike from the excellent Yehor Yarmoliuk. A surging run from Dango Ouattara almost found Thiago but from the subsequent clearance came the equaliser. Another Michael Kayode long throw was punched by Pope on to the head of Sven Botman, who inadvertently set up Schade for a reaction headed finish.



Thiago, left, and Schade exploited Newcastle's generosity away from home, which was helped by Burn, left, being sent off in the 73rd minute before the injured Pope, right, had to be replaced by Ramsdale



tara almost found Thiago but from the subsequent clearance came the equaliser. Another Michael Kayode long throw was punched by Pope on to the head of Sven Botman, who inadvertently set up Schade for a reaction headed finish.

A crisp pass to the sprinting Ouattara led to Stuart Attwell, the referee, booking the former Bournemouth winger for diving under the challenge of Dan Burn. Replays showed there had in fact been contact made by the Newcastle defender but the decision was not overturned and Brentford were denied a penalty.

Brentford's now legendary pre-match big screen entertainment took its theme as *The Traitors*. The villain of the afternoon as far as the home fans were concerned was Joelinton, who fell to the ground twice, demanding attention for a shin issue after fouling Dango Ouattara. The Brazilian was eventually taken off midway through the first half and the supporters began to direct their ire towards the officials.

A dipping first-time strike from Thiago brought an excellent stretched save from Pope, who had begun to look beleaguered.

A second incident in the Newcastle

box went the way of the home team. Burn was booked for a second time for bringing down Ouattara, who was through on goal, and he walked away looking philosophical and therefore rather guilty. Burn had been the hero midweek with a gorgeous header against Athletic Bilbao but life is very different on the road these days.

Howe took off Pope before he could face the penalty, bringing on Aaron Ramsdale. Pope had received treatment after a bad fall earlier in the half but the change delayed the spot kick, not that Thiago was the least perturbed and, with a slight stutter in his run-up,

he gave Brentford the lead. Pope's departure is bad news for England as the goalkeeper had suffered a concussion and as soon as the Newcastle bench was made aware of that, they took him off.

Howe had, in fact, made a quadruple substitution before the penalty was taken as he sought in vain to arrest his team's decline on their travels. Instead, Thiago made it 3-1 with a relaxed finish in added time after a hapless attempted clearance from Malick Thiaw directed the ball into his path. It neatly summed up Newcastle's plight and left Howe perplexed yet again.

"It's not satisfactory," Howe admitted. "The fact that we haven't done our jobs and we feel we've let everybody down. I think when you do that, when you make mistakes, it's not intentional from anyone."

"All you can do is hold your hands up and go, 'Right, let's try and fix it,' and that's what we're going to try and do."

TEAMS

Brentford (4-2-3-1): C Kelleher — M Kayode, N Collins, S Van Den Berg, A Hickey (R Henry, 70) — Y Yarmoliuk (V Janelt, 84), J Henderson — D Ouattara (R Nelson, 90), M Damsgaard (M Jensen, 84), K Schade — I Thiago. **Booked** Ouattara.

Newcastle United (4-3-3): N Pope (A Ramsdale, 77) — K Trippier, M Thiaw, S Botman, D Burn — B Guimarães, S Tonali (J Willock, 77), Joelinton (J Ramsey, 23) — J Murphy (A Elanga, 77), N Woltemade, H Barnes (L Hall, 77). **Booked** Burn. **Sent off** Burn.

Referee S Attwell.

TheGame

Premier League

Gibbs-White starts Dyche rescue act

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Sangaré 15, Gibbs-White 68, Anderson 90+1 (pen)

3

LEEDS UNITED

Nmecha 13

1

Neil Squires

City Ground

Sean Dyche is up and running with Nottingham Forest after his first Premier League win since taking over at the City Ground, and he had his captain, Morgan Gibbs-White, to thank for it.

Gibbs-White, left out of Thomas Tuchel's latest England squad, was the game's most creative figure and it was fitting that his 68th-minute header should prove pivotal.

He departed to a standing ovation when he was replaced two minutes from time. Had he still been on the pitch Gibbs-White may also have been the man to convert the spot kick in added time that put the full stop on the victory — although that might have been up for debate after he missed a penalty against Sturm Graz in midweek — but Elliot Anderson was given the responsibility, and he made no mistake.

Forest had to come from behind having surrendered a soft opening goal to Lukas Nmecha but Dyche, three weeks into his salvage operation, finally has something to hang his hat on.

Forest remain in the relegation zone but their second win of a stuttering campaign is a much-needed morale boost before the international break.

What is abundantly clear is how important Gibbs-White will be to the mission. He was like a torch in a dark room in what was largely a scrappy, low-quality affair.

"He's a good player, I want him to get in the area, I want him to score goals," Dyche said. "He's had a few question marks — fairly or unfairly is irrelevant. I've said to him, 'Just keep working hard and enjoy what we are doing.'"

"And enjoyment at this level often is reinforced quite obviously when you win games. It's hard to win games in the Premier League. Now we're hungry for more. 'Oh that's all right now', well it's not all right. All-rightness is going to get you nothing. We'll push for more than all-rightness."

For these sides, this season is about survival. For Forest this has come as a shock after qualifying for Europe last season but for Leeds most would have expected that to be the case as one of the promoted clubs.

They sit just a point above the relegation zone with their next four matches against Aston Villa, Manchester City, Chelsea and Liverpool.

"I didn't expect before the

season started and also how the transfer window turned out that we would cruise through the season," the Leeds manager, Daniel Farke, said. "We're not panicking. It's crucial to return to our defensive stability because conceding three goals in [each of] our last two away games is not good enough."

Certainly not when they are so lightweight up front. Dominic Calvert-Lewin's relegation to the bench was explained away with a reference to a minor adductor injury, but with fewer goals this season from the former Everton striker than Forest have had head coaches, Leeds's quiet front line was ripe for a shake-up in any case.

Farke's decision to start Nmecha — their summer arrival from Wolfsburg — instead paid immediate dividends when he gave the visiting side a 13th-minute lead.

Nicolò Savona was caught dawdling by Noah Okafor, the ball was fed to Nmecha by Brenden Aaronson and the Germany forward drilled his shot from the edge of the area through Neco Williams's legs and beyond Matz Sels in the Forest goal.

Leeds led for all of two minutes. Dan Ndoye sent a cross in from the right, which the Leeds goalkeeper Lucas Perri could only parry into the path of Ibrahim Sangaré, and the Ivory Coast international stabbed home for his first goal since signing from PSV Eindhoven two years ago.

The game fell into drift mode from there until Dyche made a triple-change just before the hour.

Omari Hutchinson — introduced wide on the right — unlocked the Leeds defence, turning back inside to clip in the cross which Gibbs-White glanced expertly into the net.

Hutchinson, 22, has been a peripheral figure since joining from Ipswich Town for £37.5 million in the summer but he will hope a crucial assist in what was a bright cameo will prove a turning point in his Forest story.

Farke made his own triple change to try to rescue the game and the substitute Dan James was close with a long-range shot that was clawed away by Sels. Calvert-Lewin, another of the cavalry, also went close with a header with five minutes remaining.

But when Hutchinson was pulled down by Jack Harrison in the area, Anderson put away the penalty to make sure of the three points for Forest.

TEAMS

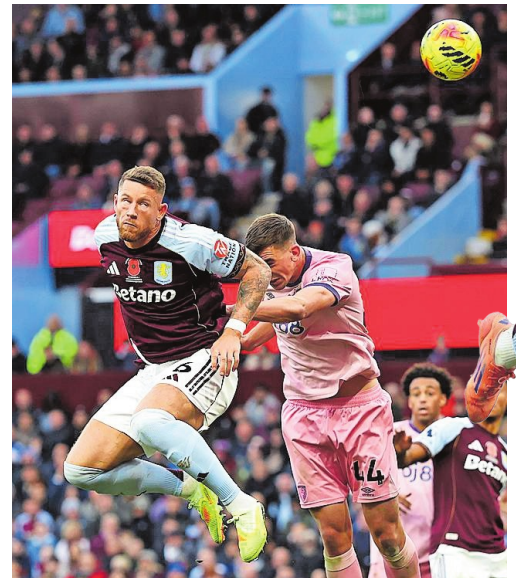
Nottingham Forest (4-2-3-1)

M Sels — N Savona, N Milenkovic, Murillo, N Williams — I Sangaré (R Yates 59), E Anderson — D Ndoye, M Gibbs-White (Morato 88), M Dominguez (O Hutchinson 59) — I Jesus (T Awoniyi 59). **Booked** Sangaré, Murillo.

Leeds United (4-2-3-1)

L Perri — J Bogle, J Rodon, J Bijol (P Struijk 82), G Gudmundsson (J Harrison 82) — E Ampadu, B Aaronson (J Piroe 74) — S Longstaff (D James 74), A Stach, N Okafor — L Nmecha (D Calvert-Lewin 74). **Booked** Longstaff.

Referee J Gilllett.



Goal shy? Rampant Villa

ASTON VILLA

Buendia 28, Onana 40, Barkley 77, Malen 82

4

BOURNEMOUTH

0

Alan Smith

At Villa Park

So much for a goal drought. Aston Villa entered the weekend as statistically one of the Premier League's least fearsome attacks; they head into the international break wondering what the fuss was about.

Only Nottingham Forest and Wolverhampton Wanderers had scored fewer goals, just Burnley and Brentford had attempted fewer shots, and no one had a lower expected goals ranking. Yet, against a Bournemouth team that performed well below their high standards, Villa's attacking was clinical.

No wonder Unai Emery, the head coach, pronounced himself "very, very happy" with a win that moved Villa to within a point of fourth position. Having started the season in a "bad moment", they have taken 15 points from the past available 18. Now the goals are flowing too.

The only negative was that Ollie Watkins, omitted from the England squad on Friday, could not join in despite a couple of decent chances. Watkins, stuck on one goal for the season, badly needs a confidence boost.

Emi Buendia's free kick started the rout, followed by Amadou Onana's first strike since April. While Bournemouth began to make inroads early in the second half and had an Antoine Semenyo penalty saved, substitutes Ross Barkley and Donyell Malen finished off late corners to ensure a miserable afternoon for the visiting side.

Their upward trajectory has been checked considerably by consecutive

defeats, following on from a 3-1 loss away to Manchester City eight days ago, prompting Andoni Iraola, the head coach, to declare himself "concerned".

He did not bite on a post-match question over whether his players were beginning to believe their hype but admitted: "These two games are a warning to be careful, to do the basics well."

"If we don't, the competition will punish you. We've been not as aggressive, a little bit scared and not as good at winning our duels."

Their cause was not aided by Adam Smith and Tyler Adams banging heads after three minutes. Both required substantial attention before the former, blood still pouring from his left temple, was unhappily directed down the tunnel by two members of Bournemouth's medical staff.

Adams was given the green light to continue but Smith's replacement, Alex Jiménez, endured an uneasy afternoon before being replaced at the interval.

Gibbs-White scores in Forest's victory





Buendía opened the floodgates with a spectacular free kick, top, before Onana doubled Villa's lead, far left, and late strikes from substitutes Barkley, second from left, and Malen, left, secured the win and capped a miserable day for Bournemouth, who saw Semenyo's second-half penalty saved, above

flex attacking muscles

Jiménez could have done without Buendía being in the mood. He earned the free kick from which he scored having peeled away in anticipation of a quick set piece by Matty Cash. That long ball over the top forced Jiménez into a professional foul, earning a yellow card. More severe punishment followed. Spotting Djordje Petrovic stationed a little too far left on his line, Buendía lifted a glorious shot over the wall and left the Bournemouth goalkeeper rooted to his spot.

Villa, handling the visiting side's much lauded press with surprising ease, went in search of a quick second and Watkins was denied when Veljko Milosavljevic made a fine block. Petrovic then somehow got in the way of another decent Watkins attempt.

Villa's perseverance would pay fresh dividends five minutes before the break courtesy of Onana. It emanated from Morgan Rogers skipping past a dazed Jiménez with uncommon ease. His

subsequent cross was diverted to the edge of the box by Justin Kluivert, allowing Onana to take a touch before picking out the bottom left corner.

Bournemouth finally threatened through punts from Kluivert and Jiménez but they found a higher level of intent once the second half began and Emiliano Martínez produced a stunning save to stop Alex Scott's deflected shot from looping in.

Having had little to do in the first half, the Villa goalkeeper was suddenly hectic. His save to deny Semenyo from the spot was a measure of his ability to psyche out opponents. The penalty was awarded after Rogers's raised left hand got in the way of Evanilson's header.

Martínez did all he could to look imposing and the Holte End played a role too by ramping up a ferocious noise as Semenyo lined up his shot. They celebrated the diving stop, described as "amazing" by Iraola, more passionately than any goal.

That slowed all of Bournemouth's momentum and Barkley, six minutes after being introduced as part of a triple change, headed in Villa's third by meeting Lucas Digne's quick corner at the near post.

Two of Emery's other substitutes combined for the fourth as Malen flicked in Youri Tielemans's shot from the D after another Digne delivery. "We are getting better," Emery concluded.

TEAMS

Aston Villa (4-2-4-2): E Martínez — M Cash, E Kone, Pau Torres, L Digne — J McGinn (Y Tielemans 71min), B Kamara, A Onana (J Sanchez 71), E Buendía (R Barkley 73) — M Rogers (E Guessand 86), O Watkins (L Bogarde 81). **Booked** Kamara, Rogers.

Bournemouth (4-2-3-1): D Petrovic, A Smith (Á Jiménez 10, L Cook 46), V Milosavljevic, M Senesi, A Truffert (A Adli 63) — A Scott (R Christie 63), T Adams — A Semenyo, J Kluivert (J Kroupi 63), M Tavernier — Evanilson (D Brooks 71). **Booked** Truffert, Jiménez.

Referee J Brooks.

Injured Guéhi set to miss both England games

CRYSTAL PALACE

0

BRIGHTON

0

Joe Harston
At Selhurst Park

Marc Guéhi could miss England's final two World Cup qualifiers, against Serbia and Albania, after picking up a knock in their Conference League win against AZ Alkmaar in midweek.

The Crystal Palace centre back was absent yesterday, with Oliver Glasner, saying that he did not know whether Guéhi had pulled out of the national squad, although he did explain the severity of his injury. "Marc has a heavy bone bruise," Glasner said. "It didn't look so bad, but during the night he couldn't sleep, the whole night he had huge pain."

"I don't know if the England national team wants to see him. I think he will arrive with crutches and they will send him home. He can't step on his foot. That means he's in so much pain and now we have to deal with his swelling."

Even without their star defender, Glasner's side clinched another clean sheet in a high-pressure game against Brighton. With the 19-year-old Jaydee Canvot on the left side of the back three and Dean Henderson wearing the captain's armband, this display was perhaps a clue as to what life may be like at Selhurst Park when Guéhi eventually moves on.

Canvot started in the Premier League for the first time and dealt with the pressure well when he was outnumbered by several members of the Brighton attack, who targeted that side for large portions of the game.

"He has pace, he's tall, we have to work with his heading, especially in attack. He's comfortable in the build-up. I think if he gets more confidence, he's even better in the build-up than what he showed today," Glasner said of his young defender.

When a penalty was awarded for Canvot's alleged trip on Georginio Rutter in the second half, it appeared unfortunate until VAR judged that the Brighton attacker had initiated the contact himself and it was overruled.

The home fans had been rehearsing for this one since May. Because after all, how can their FA Cup-winning

celebrations stop before they have had a chance to taunt their rivals about it in person? "Have you ever seen Brighton lift a cup?" echoed around Selhurst Park before kick-off.

Brighton's response on the pitch was scrappy and aggressive but brave and they were deserving of a point at a ground where they have not won since 2019.

Yet the opening stages were not dominated by the side from the south coast, as the two teams matched each other's high energy out of the gates. The football was gripping and end-to-end, with Palace having two chances of their own.

The first was too difficult to keep down for Jean-Philippe Mateta after he was freed on the right by Ismaila Sarr, who leapt over several tackles to get his pass off. Sarr came much closer with his own chance soon after as the roles reversed and his striker set him up, forcing an excellent full-stretch save from Bart Verbruggen.

Brighton could be forgiven for trying to take the sting out of the game at the beginning of the second period, but the home side were not interested.

While the visiting team looked settled in passing it around their back line, Adam Wharton was on hand to pickpocket Carlos Baleba in the centre circle to lead the attack.

Sarr and Mateta were in support but the poor first touch of the former caused the fluid move to stutter. He did excellently to get to the byline past three defenders but when he pulled the ball back to Daichi Kamada it was tough to control and the eventual shot sailed wide of the goal.

Then came the penalty incident. Rutter held off Tyrick Mitchell as he cut in from the wing and took little time to fall to ground when he found himself in the box.

Myriad Palace shirts surrounded him, and Canvot appeared to be the culprit when the penalty was given, but VAR rightly came to his aid.

TEAMS

Crystal Palace (3-4-2-1): D Henderson — J Canvot, M Lacroix, C Richards — D Muñoz, J Lerma, A Wharton (Y Pino 66min), T Mitchell — D Kamada (W Hughes 83), I Sarr — J Mateta. **Booked** Lerma.

Brighton & Hove Albion (4-2-3-1): B Verbruggen — M Wieffer, J van Hecke, L Dunk, F Kadioglu — C Baleba (J Veltman 75), Y Ayari — Y Minteh, G Rutter (C Kostoulas 75), D Gómez (S Tzimas 85) — D Welbeck (M De Cuyper 85). **Booked** Baleba, Rutter, Van Hecke, Veltman.

Referee T Robinson.

BEN STANSALL/AP/GETTY IMAGES



Verbruggen, the Brighton goalkeeper, gets down smartly to deny Yérémy Pino

Cool Le Bris identifies Arsenal weaknesses

SUNDERLAND

Ballard 36, Brobbey 90+2

2

ARSENAL

Saka 54, Trossard 74

2

Martin Hardy

At The Stadium of Light

Just over a year ago, Sunderland had won their first four league games at the start of a season for the first time in more than a hundred years and Davey, a mad-keen Sunderland fan, rang a phone-in on Radio Newcastle with former player Gary Bennett in the studio, and now famously shouted: "Hello lads, hello Gary, let's get carried away man!"

That was in September 2024, and in September 2025, Davey Atkinson, the fan from the radio, sadly passed away, but the catchphrase, "Let's get carried away man!" has definitely not.

Once more, on Saturday night, it filled social media posts. Sunderland, promoted by the skin of their teeth through the Championship play-offs, have 19 points from 11 games.

No one, anywhere, predicted anything like this, even after an unexpected £160 million foray into the transfer market to sign 16 players in the summer.

It meant that fans in the Roker End of the Stadium of Light changed the lyrics from a song first aired last season, when their side were leading Arsenal 1-0 in the 53rd minute on Saturday evening. "We're having a laugh," they sang, "We're taking the p***, the Champions League, with Régis Le Bris."

Of course within a minute Arsenal had equalised and then led, only for another dramatic, injury-time goal to rescue a point.

That inspired another Sunderland

fan to call another radio show late on Saturday to mention the fact his club are just three points behind where Leicester City were at this stage in the 2015-16 season, when the Premier League got its — thus far at least — biggest surprise winners.

Do not expect talk like that from Le Bris himself. Kyril Louis-Dreyfus, the Sunderland owner admitted last week one reason they chose Le Bris was because he is "calm, which I think is very important in this football club where there's a lot of highs and lows".

Le Bris, now with two defeats from 11 Premier League games, would only talk about the "strong character" of the team, of which there is now no doubt, but there is much more to this team than just character; solid goalkeeping, aggressive defending, excellent organisation, the ability to create chances throughout matches and the foresight even to potentially nudge in the pitchside advertising to dilute Arsenal's long throws.

That was actually a key element. Once Declan Rice realised in the third minute that he could not launch a missile, Arsenal went for short throw-ins and it took them a while to acclimatise.

What Mikel Arteta

Granit Khaka enjoys an impressive point against his old club



will have found out about his team then, is that there is a great desire to solve problems to win games and keep pushing for that elusive title. It felt refreshing that the initiative was taken by Leandro Trossard and Bukayo Saka to try to win a game (both scored excellent goals) without such mighty long throws. Trossard in particular excelled, although this was perhaps once more a vision of Arsenal without a natural centre forward, and it was a tough old afternoon for Mikel Merino, even if he did very nearly bag a winner, in the 97th minute, after Brian Brobbey had equalised three minutes earlier.

The worry for Arteta, Arsenal and Gabriel, is how poor the centre back was in key moments. Being robbed of his set-piece prowess in one box seemed to have an almost Kryptonite effect. He was culpable, along with

Rice, for Sunderland's first, when Nordi Mukiele was too strong and clever for him and Dan Ballard was the same for Rice before his excellent, opening goal.

And then in the 94th minute, when Arsenal needed something akin to Tony Adams in his prime, he failed again in a duel, losing out to Brobbey at a crucial moment in the game — and who knows if in the title race — when overpowered by the

Sunderland substitute. His fury was such that he pulled his shirt up and bit the bottom of it, but by then, the damage was done.



Strand Larsen top of Edwards' must-fix list

CHELSEA

Gusto 51, João Pedro 65, Neto 73

3

WOLVES

0

Pete Rutzler

At Stamford Bridge

How does Rob Edwards ignite the Wolves attack?

Wolves managed to hold Chelsea by the skin of their teeth but offered next to nothing going forward. This was the first game in which they failed to have a shot on target since May 2023. This will be a key area for the incoming head coach Rob Edwards. Jorgen Strand Larsen was so important last season, scoring 14 goals, but after a summer of off-field distraction amid bids from Newcastle he has not looked the same and has just one goal this term. Wolves overall have failed to score in six of 11 games.

There's more to work on besides; not least finding a coherent style of play, as well as improving the mood. Edwards will need to use his links to the club to his advantage.

Should Chelsea still be content despite inconsistencies?

Chelsea have struggled against teams who sit in a low block and this remains a concern. It was evident again against Wolves in the first half, but they got the job done. The 3-0 win means that, even if not always convincing this term, they are still only six points behind Arsenal. That's an encouraging place to be, not least with several key players carrying knocks.

Enzo Fernández has withdrawn from international duty this week and asked to be substituted against Wolves owing to a knee issue, as did Pedro Neto, who is managing a groin problem. Moisés Caicedo has also not been training properly due to a knock and neither has João Pedro, who has started three matches in a week, including at Qarabag on Wednesday.

Chelsea have a deep squad to cope — you would hope so given their expenditure — but those knocks have made rotation essential and inevitably contribute to their wobbles. Throw in five other absentees, including Cole Palmer, of course, and their position in the table looks more positive.

Finding consistency will be key to

staying anywhere close to the Premier League summit.

Is Alejandro Garnacho finding his feet?

Substitute Estêvão Willian caught the eye, mainly because he gave everyone a lift at Stamford Bridge simply by stepping on to the field.

But the winger who had the biggest impact on the game was Alejandro Garnacho. He picked up two assists against Wolves, the first time he has done that in a Premier League match before — after 99 appearances.

The former Manchester United player has had a slow start at Chelsea but is now kicking on. He scored an important equaliser against Qarabag from the bench, while he was a threat against Spurs and scored against Sunderland the week before.

"He arrived here after not training 100 per cent," Enzo Maresca said. "So his physical condition was not good. Slowly, slowly, now it's better. He's doing well on the ball, but he's doing very, very well off the ball.

"He knows that to play with us, he has to be good on and off the ball. Otherwise, he's not going to play. We are very happy with him."

Frank still searching for the blend to win over doubters

TOTTENHAM

Tel 84, Richarlison 90+1

2

MANCHESTER UTD

Mbeumo 32, De Ligt 90+6

2

Tom Allnutt

At Tottenham Hotspur Stadium

Why are Spurs struggling in attack?

Despite late goals, Spurs struggled again for chances against Manchester United. After trying 14 different attacking combinations in 17 games this seasons — and that's just in the starting XI, it would be more including changes during games — Thomas Frank is still searching for a winning blend up front.

Against United, he started with Randal Kolo Muani as the main striker but took him off at half-time with a reported fractured jaw that prompted his withdrawal from the France squad. He tried Richarlison on the left but ended up moving the Brazilian more centrally. He put Xavi

Simons at No 10 but replaced him with 11 minutes to go. Wilson Odobert came on at half-time and was Tottenham's most dangerous attacker. Mathys Tel came on and scored the equaliser.

Odobert is only 20. Perhaps he will be the next young talent to flourish under Frank. Xavi and Kolo Muani are getting sharper while Dominic Solanke should be back from injury soon. But while Frank has a settled back six — goalkeeper, defence and João Palhinha in defensive midfield — the constant churn in attack suggests he doesn't yet know who he can rely on. "We are searching to find the right balance up front," he said. "We constantly work on the relationship and try to improve it with the players and to find what is exactly the right blend."

Why did the fans boo Frank's substitution?

There had been some discontent at half-time and the groans were already there in the second half but when Frank replaced Simons with Tel in



the 79th minute, the boos resonated around the stadium. Simons had played well, so taking off Tottenham's No10, when they were chasing an equaliser, was certainly a brave move. But ultimately, it paid off. Tel equalised five minutes later while Odobert and Destiny Udogie, who Frank also brought on, changed the game for Spurs. Frank resisted the temptation to cup an ear at the fans, like Ange Postecoglou did at Stamford Bridge in April.

Why is the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium such a difficult place for Frank's side to play at the moment? They have been far from thrilling so far under Frank, it's true, but Spurs are unbeaten in the Champions League, the defence is much improved and Frank is missing three key attackers in James Maddison, Dejan Kulusevski and Solanke.

Is there a hangover from the Europa League win? Bitterness because of the success of Arsenal? Or just a lack of faith in Frank?

Certainly he has to find a way to get the fans behind this team or opponents will keep coming to N17, knowing they can wait for the mood to turn. "We were comfortable in the game," United head coach Ruben Amorim said. "But I think we should feel the environment in the stadium. The three points were there."

Cunha is only latest Brazilian struggling to make step up

Tony Cascarino



Mateus Cunha is failing to deliver at Manchester United. Fans and former players hailed the Brazilian's arrival at Old Trafford alongside Bryan Mbeumo but I don't think you can compare the two. Mbeumo has proved to be a great signing and kept the consistency he showed at Brentford but Cunha is yet to make the step up and justify his £62.5million transfer fee.

Both players are 26 and experienced in the Premier League but Mbeumo has six goals and one assist in 12 games while Cunha's stats read: one goal, no assists. On



Cunha, left, is capable of brilliance but has not shown any consistent form this season — much like Richarlison, above, at Tottenham

Saturday at Tottenham, Mbeumo scored but Cunha struggled and was taken off after 72 minutes.

There is no doubt that Cunha is a talented player, one who is capable of brilliant moments and spectacular goals. But it's one thing being the star man at Wolves and dragging your team through matches, and quite another at a completely different level wearing the No 10 shirt at Manchester United.

Cunha is a fantastic dribbler off the ball and has great close control but we're not seeing enough of that yet, and his place in the team has also meant Bruno Fernandes sacrificing himself further forward for a position in a two-man central midfield.

On Saturday, we saw another Brazilian who has made the step up to a big-six club and failed to prove himself. Richarlison might have scored for Tottenham against United but he struggled and I was surprised he wasn't taken off before his goal.

He's 28 and, like Cunha, showed his talent lower down the league at Everton but has failed to deliver consistently since joining Tottenham in 2022 for £60million. Indeed, he has regularly been linked with a move away from the club.

Watching both players made me think of how we perceive Brazilian players and their national side now. They haven't won the World Cup since 2002 and when you think of players such as Romario, Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Ronaldinho and Neymar, the present crop are miles off that level.

Vinicius Jr is a world-class talent who has had some terrific recent seasons for Real Madrid but I watched him barely get a kick against Liverpool's Conor Bradley in the Champions League last Tuesday.

In Brazil's recent 3-2 defeat against Japan, their front three was Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli, Vinicius and Zenit St Petersburg's Luiz Henrique.

Richarlison and Cunha came off the bench as Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered a shock defeat.

The Brazil national side are a long way off the great teams of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s — maybe the changes in the game make their technical brilliance less effective. But I can't see them being one of the contenders for next summer's World Cup.

Until then, United need to see a lot more from Cunha if he is to prove he can shine at the top. If not he might soon be considered another Richarlison.

Fernandes revives midfield but Nuno needs strikers

WEST HAM

Wilson 44, Soucek 77, Walker-Peters 87

3

BURNLEY

Fleming 35, Cullen 90+7

2

Gary Jacob

At The London Stadium

Has Nuno Espírito Santo found the right midfield blend?

Freddie Potts and Mateus Fernandes injected the energy, tenacity and tackling missing in West Ham United's midfield for the past year. The 22-year-old Potts set the tone with a couple of strong challenges, including on Loum Tchouaou, before going off with a dead leg — all in front of his father Steve, who played 399 times for the club and was promoted to first-team coach under Nuno.

Fernandes enjoyed his best performance since joining from Southampton in the summer, driving from midfield, playing one-tuos and linking with Cryscenio Summerville. The 21-year-old was ranked best for creating three chances, playing passes in the final third, tackles and touches. He had struggled at his new club and was taken off at half-time in the 2-0 defeat by Brentford three weeks ago.

Does Nuno need more options off the bench?

While Thomas Soucek and Kyle Walker-Peters came on to score for West Ham whose bench looked threadbare of attacking players, only Luis Guilherme was a recognised forward and he has played a total of 54 minutes across three appearances this season — after just 144 minutes in the last campaign. Nuno has identified strengthening the spine in

January, with a midfielder and forward, especially if Germany forward Niclas Füllkrug gets his wish to leave. Soucek, who scored for a second straight match, admitted he would have preferred to start but could reflect on his impact for two goals after he received a framed shirt for his 250th appearance. He joined the club when they were also fighting relegation in 2020.

Are Burnley their own worst enemy?

Having controlled a good part of the first half, they let the match become open and frantic before going on to concede three soft goals through mistakes. As one example, the left back Quilindschy Hartman needlessly delivered a cross that let West Ham break into the space that he had vacated.

Scott Parker said a fifth away defeat was a missed opportunity against a relegation rival. His side lacked a cutting edge and, in particular, Jaidon Anthony has been short of confidence since helping the team earn promotion last season and making a strong start this term. The forward was involved in five goals in the opening six league matches but none in the five since. The worry for Parker is that he could lose Axel Tuanzebe, Hannibal Mejbri and Lyle Foster to the African Cup of Nations, which starts before Christmas.

"You walk off with a feeling in your belly that you should beat them, it is not a nice feeling" Zian Flemming, the forward who scored the opening goal said. "Their first goal was a killer but it did not define the game. Our game management last season was outstanding and we lacked that in the last five minutes of each half. Playing a good game for most parts and then a terrible game in some tiny moments makes me feel worse now."

Moyes: Premier League is as tight as I've ever seen it

EVERTON

Gueye 45+4, Keane 81

2

FULHAM

0

Ian Whittell

At Hill Dickinson Stadium

How are Everton four points off the Champions League and five off relegation?

This is David Moyes's 21st season — complete or partial — managing in the Premier League and, as the above statistic might imply, he is struggling to think of a more balanced league table, with over a quarter of the campaign gone.

"The Premier League's so tight," he said. "So, for example, the other night [in a 1-1 draw at Sunderland], we had about 30 minutes, Sunderland did 60 minutes. Probably today, we had the best part of 60 minutes and Fulham 20 minutes or so. I just think that might be the way the Premier League's going to be. And, when you're not the dominant team at the time in the game, you're going to have to find a way of not conceding, defending well enough. And if you're the team who's in the dominant period then you have to try and get a

goal from it. It's as tight as I've ever seen it at this stage in the season."

Are Fulham in a relegation fight?

With Sunderland, Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City to come for Marco Silva's team, and a one-point cushion above 17th place, the answer has to be "yes."

At least the international break will grant the chance to work on centre forwards Raul Jimenez and Rodrigo Muniz, who have had injuries, the latter lasting 17 minutes as a substitute before suffering a recurrence of a hamstring problem.

"It's been difficult for us in that position," Silva said. "Even Raul, it's clear that he is not at his best. I don't remember one full session from him in the last 15 days."

Is Garner worth an England call-up?

James Garner, a midfielder by trade, was used at right back, to offer more quality on the ball from that position, although Moyes has no doubt in which position his value lies — with Thomas Tuchel invited to take note.

"He's a really good player and he must be in a group of English midfield players who are doing well," Moyes said. "I see Alex Scott has been called up. So I would have thought Jimmy Garner's form wouldn't have been a million miles off that either."

TheGame

Europe

European royalty drops to bottom of the pile

IAN HAWKEY
ON EUROPE



Benfica and Ajax are in a mess. Now one's hired Mourinho, the other is on the trail of Ten Hag, writes Ian Hawkey

Benfica claimed a world record at the weekend. No club — not Barcelona, not Real Madrid — had ever drawn so many member-supporters to a poll to elect their president. Rui Costa duly retained the top job at Portugal's most popular sporting institution and, after a wearying, snarky electoral campaign, learnt that even among his 70 per cent of loyalists in the 63,500 voters, there are many gallows humourists.

"At last, Benfica have won an international competition in the era of colour television!" read one post on the A Bola website. "Next record to break — number of successive defeats in the Champions League!"

It's a possibility. Come the resumption of club football in a fortnight, Benfica — the club with Costa, the iconic former player, as president and José Mourinho, the manager who has done more than anybody this century to maintain Portuguese club football's prestige, as head coach — are tasked with putting the brakes on a run of four successive losses in the European Cup, the competition that, albeit in black and white, once defined them.

The good news for Mourinho is that the next Champions League assignment is away to Ajax, whose plunge down the hierarchy is even steeper than Benfica's and looks all the more spectacular while Uefa's big beast of a competition features a skyscraper league table. Down in the basement, at 35th and 36th, are clubs with half a dozen European Cups between them and no points at all at the halfway stage.

Much is at stake, then, in the wooden-spoon battle on November 25 and even more if it were to feature the extra tease of two former Manchester United managers duking it out to see who's learnt most about rescuing a fallen giant.

Ajax, who sacked Johnny Heitinga as head coach after losing 3-0 at home to Galatasaray last week, have sounded out Erik ten Hag about solving their crisis and returning for a second spell. Whoever takes the job, it will be challenging. It's now one win

in eight for Ajax after defeat away to Utrecht in the Eredivisie yesterday under the caretaker watch of Fred Grim.

Ten Hag, headhunted from Ajax by United in 2022, is the last head coach to have honoured the club's noble tradition in Europe. He was the architect of their stirring run to within a 96th-minute goal from Tottenham Hotspur's Lucas Moura of reaching the 2019 Champions League final.

It was that achievement which most recommended Ten Hag to wider audiences, a coach capable of coaxing unusual maturity from young players such as Frenkie de Jong, Matthijs de Ligt and Donny van de Beek. And evidently, a coach who developed a deep enough trust in De Ligt, André Onana and Noussair Mazraoui that he was ready to make them part of his plan for a better Manchester United.

Ten Hag was also the last coach to bring an Eredivisie title to Amsterdam, just before he left three years ago. Since then seven changes of manager, alongside a series of disruptions at executive level, reflect the panic at how easily the club's model for maintaining Champions League status, and the lucrative income it carries, has slipped off course.

The Ten Hag era may have peaked with a Champions League semi-final but, crucially, he ensured they kept qualifying for the competition afterwards; that the inevitable annual sales of some of the club's best young players were sufficiently offset by bringing through, or recruiting, adequate successors.

That is, or has been, the Ajax way — the only way to stay on the fringes of the elite in a wider football economy where size matters more than ever and where, if the league in which you play is so much smaller than England's, Spain's, Germany's or Italy's, you can rely on domestic television income to cover only about 10 per cent of your spending needs.

Failure to make it into the Champions League proper in 2023-24 and 2024-25 set Ajax back financially and while they have brought in some hefty transfer fees — the sales of Antony, Lisandro Martínez, Mohammed Kudus, Jurrien Timber and Jorrel Hato to various Premier League buyers yielded close to €280million (about £245million) — the club also spent relatively heavily.

With standards falling on the pitch, they found it harder to persuade young starlets to stick around, increase their market value and be part of settled, competitive sides. Take Chelsea's Hato, who left in the



Ajax and Benfica are pointless in the Champions League and occupy the bottom two spots in the table

summer. He is still only 19 and has some raw aspects to his game. But he certainly knew his career had advanced when, on his European debut for his new employers last month, his former club were wheezing to a 5-1 defeat at Stamford Bridge amid chants of "Heitinga out!" from visiting fans.

That victorious Chelsea XI registered the youngest average age of any line-up in this season's Champions League. Insult had been added to injury; richer clubs than Ajax are doing what Ajax used to do best — jump-starting young careers but backing the policy with far greater spending power.

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Bayern Munich	4	4	0	0	14	3	11	12
Arsenal	4	4	0	0	11	0	11	12
Inter Milan	4	4	0	0	11	1	10	12
Man City	4	3	1	0	10	3	7	10
PSG	4	3	0	1	14	5	9	9
Newcastle	4	3	0	1	10	2	8	9
Real Madrid	4	3	0	1	8	2	6	9
Liverpool	4	3	0	1	9	4	5	9
Galatasaray	4	3	0	1	8	6	2	9
Tottenham	4	2	2	0	7	2	5	8
Barcelona	4	2	1	1	12	7	5	7
Chelsea	4	2	1	1	9	6	3	7
Sporting	4	2	1	1	8	5	3	7
B Dortmund	4	2	1	1	13	11	2	7
Qarabag	4	2	1	1	8	7	1	7
Atalanta	4	2	1	1	3	5	-2	7
Atletico Madrid	4	2	0	2	10	9	1	6
PSV	4	1	2	1	9	7	2	5
Monaco	4	1	2	1	4	6	-2	5
Pafos	4	1	2	1	2	5	-3	5
B Leverkusen	4	1	2	1	6	10	-4	5
Club Bruges	4	1	1	2	8	10	-2	4
E Frankfurt	4	1	1	2	7	11	-4	4
Napoli	4	1	1	2	4	9	-5	4
Marseille	4	1	0	3	6	5	1	3
Juventus	4	0	3	1	7	8	-1	3
Athletic Bilbao	4	1	0	3	4	9	-5	3
Union SG	4	1	0	3	4	12	-8	3
Bodo/Glimt	4	0	2	2	5	8	-3	2
Slavia Prague	4	0	2	2	2	8	-6	2
Olympicos	4	0	2	2	2	9	-7	2
Villarreal	4	0	1	3	2	6	-4	1
Copenhagen	4	0	1	3	4	12	-8	1
Kairat	4	0	1	3	2	11	-9	1
Benfica	4	0	0	4	1	14	-13	0
Ajax	4	0	0	4	1	14	-13	0

sell on once their better young footballers have spent a healthy length of time in the senior team.

Nobody understood that better than the younger Mourinho, who made Porto the only club of the past 30 years from outside the "big five" leagues to win the European Cup. Like Ten Hag did almost a generation later, he took players with him when he was headhunted by a Premier League suit, Chelsea. But those players, the likes of Ricardo Carvalho and Paulo Ferreira, were in their mid-twenties and had given a tranche of their peak years to Porto.

Benfica still have an envied academy, among the most profitable in terms of how much its graduates have yielded in transfer fees over the past decade. They won the Uefa Youth League three years ago.

And the modern Benfica is still enough of a draw to offer promising South Americans an attractive stepping stone.

But neither the best locals nor the longer-haul travellers hang about for long. João Félix was 19 when he left for Atletico Madrid, as was João Neves, a Champions League winner with Paris Saint-Germain last season. Enzo Fernández was in Lisbon barely five months between joining from River Plate, at 21, for about £40million and moving on to Chelsea for more than £107million.

On Saturday, while the last

Benfiquistas were casting their votes, a majority deciding that Costa's scant trophy haul — one Portuguese league title in four years — counted against him less than they liked his lifelong association with the club, Mourinho went to watch Benfica B, the club's feeder team. It was a good look for him. In his short tenure, there has been a hint of criticism that he is not reaching into the club's fabled well of youth as much as he might.

Mourinho has heard this before in his long career. There's an easy riposte. When you're looking up the Champions League table from its penultimate position, when your predecessor, Bruno Lage, was fired after a defeat against Qarabag, and clubs including Pafos and Kairat Almaty are perched above you, it's probably not the time to gamble it all on the kids.

“Chelsea are doing what Ajax used to do best — jump-starting young careers but with far greater spending power

That's a problem across European football's so-called middle class, comprising the grandees of countries such as the Netherlands — sixth in the Uefa co-efficient list — and Portugal — seventh — whose *modus operandi* has been to attract the best teenage talent from their own territory, to cultivate sophisticated global scouting networks and then

Meet first player to score in top ten English leagues, and still going at 50

Jamie Cureton explains to Alyson Rudd how he started as a boozier in top flight but turned life around to make history

It has been quite the fortnight for Jamie Cureton whose remarkable feat of becoming the first footballer to get a goal in the top ten divisions in England has sparked international media acclaim. Between interviews for French and Brazilian outlets, the 50-year-old striker has been posing for a double-page spread in *IlFreunde*, the glossy German football magazine.

"I expected a bit of publicity," he says, "maybe do an interview or two but it's been chaos. I've done something every day for two weeks."

It is relatively unusual for a goal in the Eastern Counties League Division One North to garner such attention, even one as spectacular as Cureton's for Kings Park Rangers, but his story is quite magnificent.

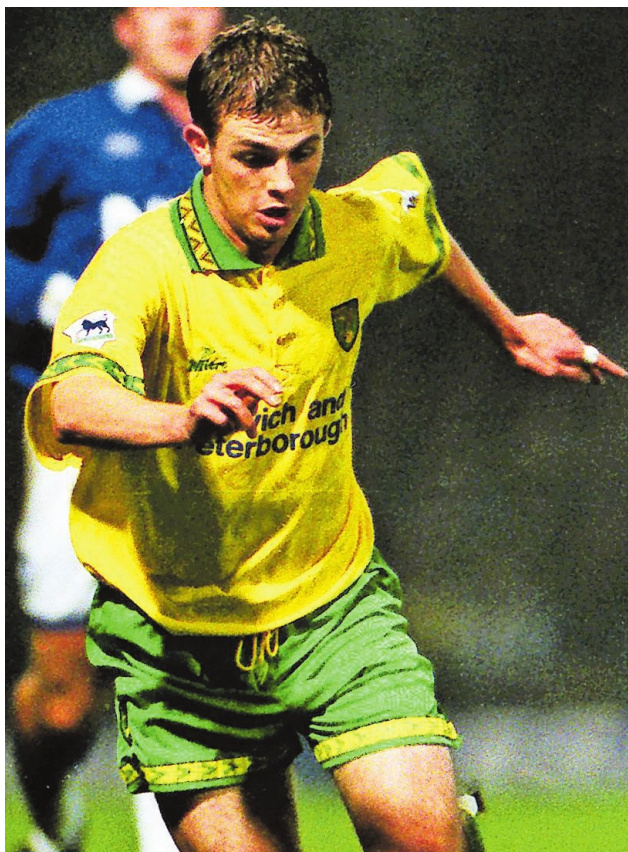
He began at the top, scoring for Norwich City in the Premier League and, well, just kept on going, sliding down the pyramid with no end in sight. The first time a manager mentioned the r-word, it was as though the notion of retirement held as much intrigue as being made to iron the team's football shirts. Unsurprisingly, he has started an autobiography, which he hopes will be published next year.

As we queue for coffee in Sudbury, Suffolk, where Kings Park are based, I ask Cureton if he would like a cake and he looks quizzical, as if I have asked him if he fancies a cigar. You do not keep scoring into your sixth decade by eating junk food and he has a reasonably strict diet regimen that forgoes carbs and booze. But this is a relatively new approach to life. He was so precociously talented in his youth that he neither ate nor trained properly. He saw no reason not to play at the elite level on a Saturday afternoon and spend the Saturday night with his mates, boozing for fun.

"I had the world at my feet. I was very talented and abused that. I was young, playing for every level in my county and district, had all clubs chasing me. I relied on my talent and thought that would take me where I needed to be. So I went out and partied a lot as a young kid."

"I'm more professional at 50 than I was at 18. I would go out clubbing, drink, turn up to training, still be good, still score goals. I didn't work hard in training. I lived like a normal person being a Premier League player. You have to be different and as a kid I never wanted to be. I wanted to still be one of the boys but play football. And you can't do that."

What also marked out his youth was being dyslexic but, instead of a diagnosis, he was labelled stupid. This lay behind the first important decision of his career. He rejected a move to Manchester United, where he would have been among the famous Class of 92, because it would have meant a move to a new school and a struggle with education. The



contract offered by Norwich City was more lenient and familiar.

He would like to know what would have happened to him in a parallel United universe.

"Maybe I'd be a millionaire," he says. "Maybe I got knighted like David Beckham."

By the time he was 21, Norwich had had enough of their innately talented striker who did not take his job seriously enough and was a stone overweight.

"Bryan Gunn, an older goalie, beat me at running in training. That was the tipping point because they'd seen my attitude hadn't changed. They looked at it like, whatever my ability was, I was wasting it and they didn't have the time to keep pursuing it."

He was sent out on loan to Bristol Rovers and instead of learning his lesson he scored four goals in six games and was fêted once more and signed permanently.

"I still pushed the boundaries," he says, "wasn't as professional as I should have been. I look back at pictures then and I'm a lot bigger. I was carrying more weight than I should have. But without realising because it wasn't affecting me."

"Ex-players that I've played with, when they see me now they say I look completely different but I live different. So it's sort of been a mad journey in my early career where I was playing well but wasn't living how a true professional should live."

He was forced to take stock after making the mistake of moving to South Korea aged 28 after breaking up with his partner with whom he

Cureton is playing for non-League Kings Park Rangers, in Suffolk, and leads a disciplined lifestyle that is far removed from his Norwich days, left

had two young children. Busan IPark initially said they would not release him but he got lucky and Queens Park Rangers bought him on deadline day in January 2004. But the scars of missing his kids and not enjoying his foreign adventure meant he entered what he calls the "worst spell" of his career. He wasted 18 months but then moved on loan from Swindon Town to Colchester United where, under his friend Phil Parkinson, he rediscovered the art of scoring.

Then came a stroke of good luck. He was under contract at Swindon, who had just been relegated, but wanted to stay with promoted Colchester. Fortunately his agent had included a release clause in case of demotion and Cureton was free.

This quirk of fate sparked an improved attitude to training and lifestyle choices.

"I started to live a lot better," he says, "look after myself more. Suddenly I've won the Golden Boot in the Championship aged 31. I heard a rumour that someone at Norwich had said 'don't touch him' because of how I used to be at 19, so it was always in my head that if I ever had the opportunity to go back I would. I loved the place. I grew up there."

He rejoined the club in 2007 but "it wasn't the fairytale ending that I wanted it to be". This was in part because he cared too much.

"I took things personally when I

didn't play well," he says, "because I wanted to do so well for them."

He enjoyed a spurt of excellent form, as a substitute, under Paul Lambert and so, when Norwich faced Paulton Rovers in the FA Cup, he hoovered up as many tickets as he could because the tie was near Bristol, where most of his family lived. Norwich breezed through the game but Lambert did not bring Cureton off the bench. A furious Cureton sent a message to Ian Crook, the first-team coach, calling the snub a joke but Lambert read the text and called the striker into his office.

By now Cureton was 34 and it was the first time a manager had brought up the question of retirement. Still, he thought the chat went well enough, even if he was baffled by Lambert asking if he fancied a media career, as the implication was he would still be part of the team. In fact, he never played for the first team again and was sent to train with the youth squad. This was when he became a model professional, doing extra workouts after training and being strict with his diet.

"The drive, in a silly way, was to prove him wrong. I'm not ready to retire. I'll be the one who decides. Someone had mentioned retirement and it was a spark."

Exeter City saved him by offering him a trial, the first in his professional career, which he breezed through and he went on to score 20 goals and be named player of the season.

"From aged 35 everything was eat, how I sleep, drink, my fitness. I've gone into crazy mode where I would

take my own meals to training if I didn't feel the food was right."

A move to Leyton Orient was marred by poor form and injury and the start of a life of one-year contracts. Shimmering in the distance was the life of a non-League footballer, but he wanted to avoid it at all costs and extended his league career with Dagenham & Redbridge.

"I was really proud that at 40 and 41 I was still playing in the Football League. I was the oldest outfield player and that was quite a big thing."

The club's relegation to the Conference meant his stubbornness kicked in and he told them he needed to stay in the Football League. He came close to signing for Yeovil aged 42 until a director stepped in, aghast that the manager was considering a deal for someone so old.

Nine years ago Terrell Forbes, a former QPR team-mate, posted a photo of a lovely looking stadium which piqued Cureton's interest, and so began his non-League life with Farnborough.

"It wasn't until you started to go to the away grounds where it became non-League. But I've got no airs and graces. You put me on a park, here's the goal to score in."

He more or less goes pay as you play now and looks sceptical when I suggest he could still be going aged 55, but 51 is realistic. And so when he's 51, 52 will look possible. He leaves our chat to pick up Roma, his ten-year-old son, from football practice. Roma is also a striker and if he follows in his dad's footsteps, there will be a Cureton scoring goals in 2085.



CHRIS RADBURN FOR THE TIMES; MATTHEW IMPEY/COLORSPORT

TheGame

EFL

Manning out as Norwich's pain goes on

CHAMPIONSHIP

Dominic Akiboye

Norwich City are on the hunt for a new manager after they sacked Liam Manning on Saturday. A 2-1 home defeat by Leicester City extended their winless run to 11 matches and meant they became the first team in England's second tier to lose their first seven home league games of a season. They are second-bottom of the Championship.

Manning, 40, was appointed in June after guiding Bristol City into the play-offs last season, but he could not bring the same form to Norwich, winning only two of his 15 league matches.

The pressure on Manning piled up after his side's 3-1 loss to Ipswich last month — Norwich's first defeat in the East Anglian derby for 16 years. First-team coach Ryan Garry has replaced Manning on an interim basis, supported by goalkeeper coach Tony Roberts and set-piece coach Nick Stanley.

Former Wolves manager Gary O'Neil has been linked with the job. The 42-year-old played 59 times for Norwich between 2014 and 2016. The club's former captain Russell Martin — who guided Southampton up from the Championship in 2023-24 — is also thought to be in contention.

In the aftermath of Saturday's defeat at Carrow Road, hundreds of frustrated Norwich supporters gathered around the directors' entrance to the City Stand as green flares were lit and fans called for Manning and Ben Knapper, the club's sporting director, to leave. "We have tried absolutely everything possible to

work through this incredibly challenging period but, unfortunately, given the recent run of results and performances, we have been left with no choice other than to make a change at this stage," Knapper said in a club statement on Saturday night.

"Liam and his staff worked tirelessly to move our football club forward. They are all fundamentally good people, and we wish them the very best in whatever comes next."

This is not the first time this season that Norwich fans have expressed discontent with the board. Last week, in the first half of a 2-0 defeat by Hull City, tennis balls were thrown on to the pitch in protest against a proposed revamp of Carrow Road that would force 3,000 season-ticket holders to move seats.

Only an exciting managerial appointment and some good results can surely now repair the relationship between Norwich's fans and the board.

Middlesbrough win without Edwards Middlesbrough got the job done without departing manager Rob Edwards as they beat Birmingham 2-1 at the Riverside Stadium.

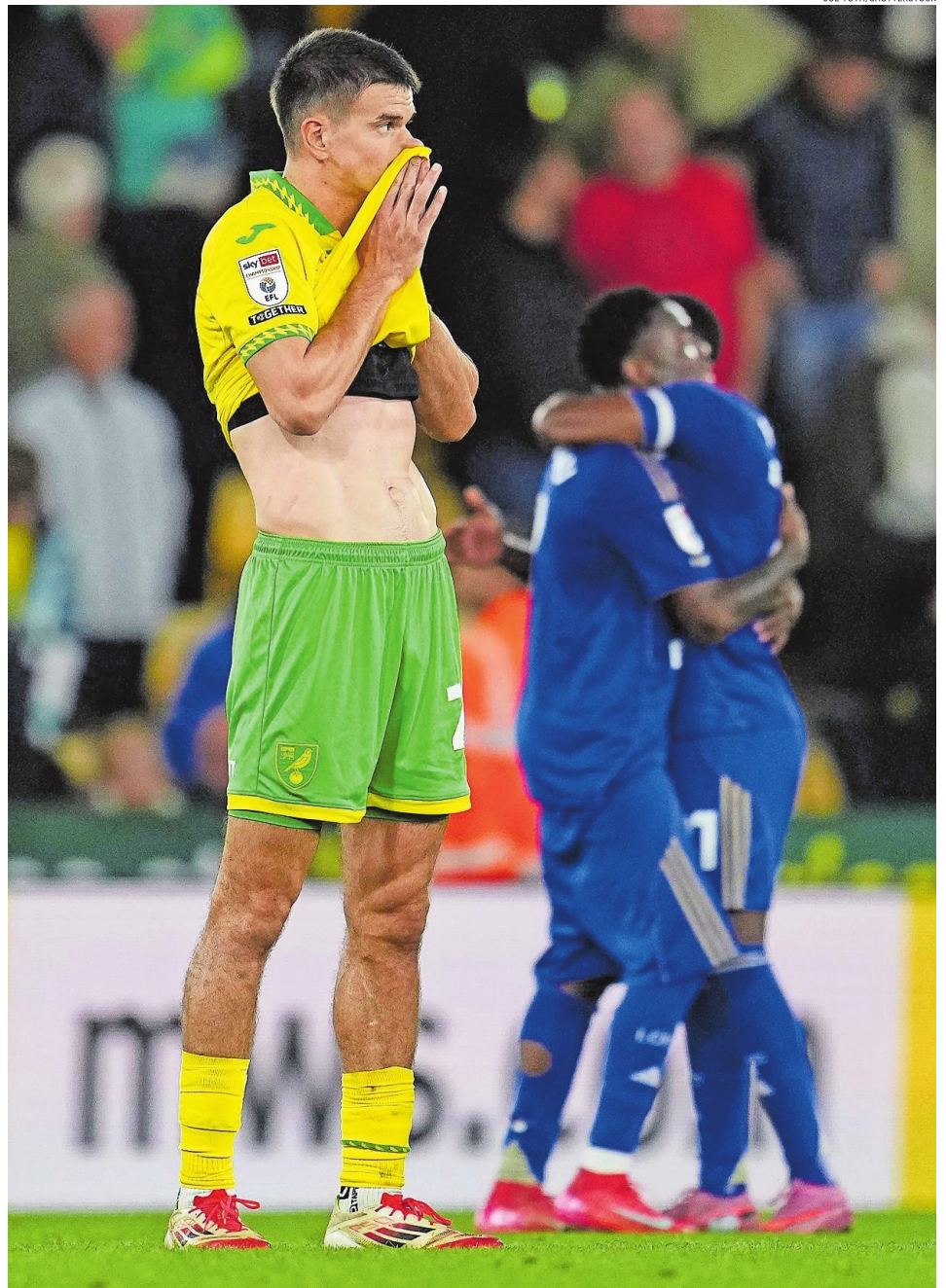
The club put out a statement, two hours before Saturday's 3pm kick-off, expressing their disappointment that Edwards had chosen to accept Wolverhampton Wanderers' offer to become their head coach less than six months after taking over.

Interim manager Ali Viveash led the team to victory courtesy of goals from Dael Fry and Hayden Hackney.

"Today was about the players and the fans, and they dovetailed together, they suffered together, and we've come out on the right side of a really important victory."



Manning oversaw seven home league losses in row



Mirko Topic, the Norwich midfielder, looks dejected after the defeat by Leicester which sealed manager Manning's fate

'New Wilshere' Richards fires up Luton

LEAGUE ONE

Dominic Akiboye

Luton Town continued their upturn in form under Jack Wilshere, beating league leaders Stockport County 3-0 at Edgeley Park. The result moves Luton up to ninth in the table and just six points behind Stockport, while having played a game fewer than most teams in the division.

Starring in the performance was 18-year-old Jake

Richards scored one and made one to help beat the league leaders



Richards, who Wilshere has highlighted as someone who resembles him as a young player. "The one that, and I've had this conversation with him, reminds me (of myself), I think Jake does a lot of good stuff and a lot of things that I used to do," Wilshere said last weekend.

The highly rated teenager scored the first and set up the third — either side of Cohen Bramhall's first-half free kick — as Luton ran out winners on Saturday. The opener was Richards's first for Luton after moving from his boyhood club, Exeter City, on a free transfer in the summer, where he had been since under-12 level. The left-footed attacking midfielder with strong ball control and an eye for goal has

impressed at Luton this season with his quality on the ball, but also his instinct to work hard off it.

Richards made his debut for Exeter against Leyton Orient at just 16 years old, becoming their third-youngest ever player while notching an assist for Demetri Mitchell in September 2023. A year later, he scored his first goal, a stunning free kick that flew in off the bar against Tottenham Under-21.

Richards racked up 32 senior appearances at Exeter before his 18th birthday, with 20 of them coming last season as he received the League One apprentice of the year award. He has already reached half of his match tally for the 2024-25 season this term and is reaping the rewards of working with a manager who believes in him. Barring the opening defeat to Mansfield Town, Richards has featured in all of Wilshere's matches in charge at Luton thus far, starting in three of them, while growing in confidence on the pitch every week.

Ainsworth's return gives Gillingham lift they need

LEAGUE TWO

Dominic Akiboye

Gillingham ended their seven-match winless streak with a 1-0 victory over Bristol Rovers at the Memorial Stadium. Max Clark's second-half goal atoned for his missed penalty in the first and gave Richard Dobson his first win since stepping in for Gareth Ainsworth. Ainsworth recently underwent a corrective heart procedure after a murmur was picked up during a routine check by the League Managers' Association.

The 52-year-old told the BBC last weekend: "I have to still take it easy. I'm not going to be able to be in the dugout for a few games, but I'm pleased to be back. I won't be able to be as animated as usual while I fully repair, but I'll be in

the stadium and doing the team talks." Finley Munroe's stoppage-time curler rescued the three points for Swindon Town as they beat Tranmere Rovers 2-1 at the Nigel Eady County Ground on Saturday. The 20-year-old, who is on loan from Aston Villa, got the ball back after his left-footed cross had been blocked, then cut in onto his right foot and bent his effort into the top corner from 30 yards out, negating Tranmere's 88th-minute equaliser.

The win means Swindon keep pace with league leaders Walsall, who only better them on goal difference and beat bottom-of-the-table Newport County 4-2 over the weekend. Swindon would have found themselves above Walsall had their results in October been better, but they failed to win three of their four league games, to match Walsall with an identical record in the league.

City seize top spot as rivals falter

Dominic Akiboye

Manchester City's 2-1 win over Everton at Goodison Park enabled Andree Jeglertz's side to capitalise on Arsenal and Chelsea's draw and move to the top of the WSL yesterday.

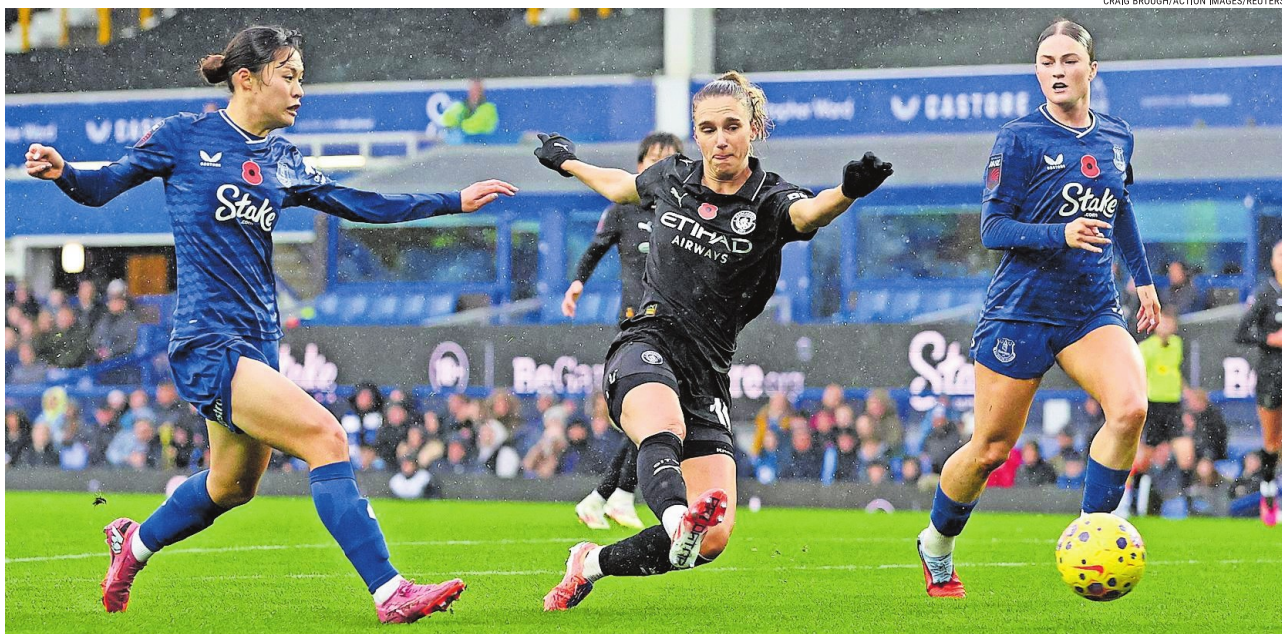
Vivianne Miedema opened the scoring for City, latching onto Iman Beney's through-ball before finishing past Emily Ramsey. Kelly Gago's 40th-minute goal levelled things for Everton before Khadija Shaw rose highest to head home Leila Ouahabi's cross and move City a point above Chelsea.

Jeglertz, who was appointed in the summer, has transformed City into a free-scoring team, topping the league's scoring charts with 20 goals from their first eight matches. Those games have brought just one defeat, in his second match in charge away to Chelsea, the champions, and since then City have won seven straight games.

"Yeah, it's nice, but at the same time, there are no medals in November," Jeglertz said. "We have a huge game next weekend [at home to Manchester United], so when we go back on the bus, we start preparing for that."

Shaw's five goals this season, allied to three by Aoba Fujino, rendered City sailable so far. But their defence remains fragile at times and will be put to the test with Alex Greenwood likely to miss the Manchester derby with an unspecified injury that has kept her out for two games.

As for Everton, their winless run now stands at seven matches. Everton are yet to win in the WSL since their opening day 4-1 vic-



Miedema, the Netherlands striker, opens the scoring for City at Goodison Park where victory lifted them to the top of the WSL. Below, Shaw and Ouahabi celebrate

tory over Liverpool at Anfield, and now they find themselves 10th in the division, four points above West Ham and Liverpool, the bottom teams.

Godfrey soars
London City Lionesses bounced back from last weekend's defeat against Chelsea by beating Tottenham Hotspur 4-2. The

performance was inspired by 20-year-old Freya Godfrey, who scored her first two WSL goals and added an assist.

Godfrey came through Arsenal's academy but failed to make a league appearance before joining London City in the summer after a successful loan spell with them.

The England Under-23 international had struggled in previous matches this season, but took her opportunity against Spurs on her third start, opening the scoring after eight minutes, when Wassa Sangare picked her out for a cool, volleyed finish.

Cathinka Tandberg levelled from the penalty spot before half-time, after Drew Spence had been brought down by Saki Kumagai.

Godfrey turned provider in the second half when she broke into space down the right and delivered a low

cross for a sliding Nikita Parris to finish at the back post.

Spurs again hit back, this time through a curled free kick from Evelina Summanen into the top-right corner in the 69th minute. Amanda Nilden was unlucky for her own goal, running into the path of Sangare's flick-on and knocking the ball past Lize Kop, the Dutch goalkeeper, to give London City the lead again.

Godfrey's second goal of the game was the pick of the bunch for London City. She once again received the ball on the right wing, but this time beat her defender with a stepover before cutting in and sending a low, curling effort with her left foot into the bottom corner of the goal.

Late heartache for strugglers
Liverpool and West Ham United regis-

tered their first points of the WSL season despite both sides being on the receiving end of stoppage-time equalisers.

Liverpool took the lead in the first half against Brighton, courtesy of Beata Olsson's stretched finish from Lily Woodham's cross. Brighton may feel that they deserved more from the match, as they were repelled by Faye Kirby, who made five saves for Liverpool, but she couldn't stop Rosa Kafaji's 93rd-minute finish, after she came off the bench to equalise.

West Ham had also taken the lead against Leicester with Shekiera Martinez netting her first goal of the season in the 51st minute.

A 97th-minute equaliser crushed the spirits of West Ham supporters as Shannon O'Brien got on the end of Sari Kees's low cross.

THE WEEKEND IN NUMBERS

OUR STATS GURU BILL EDGAR ON THE QUIRKY FACTS AND FIGURES



Frank threat to Ramsey record for away points

Awesome away but hopeless at home in 2025, Thomas Frank is on course to produce the most away-dominated points haul in the top flight over one calendar year of any manager since the league's formation in 1888. Sir Alf Ramsey holds that distinction having gained 1.25 points per game more away than at home when in charge of Ipswich Town in 1963 (three points for a win is assumed throughout history) but Frank has built a difference of 1.52 points per match between away and home fixtures.

Starting the year at Brentford, the Dane earned nine points in ten home games but 23 points in ten away. That trend has continued since his summer move to Tottenham Hotspur, who have won five points in six at home but 13 from five away.

To ensure a reasonable sample size, only managers who oversaw at least five home and five away games were considered.

Changing times

The attendance at a women's league match was greater than the combined crowd figures of the men's league games at Brentford, Wrexham, Bristol Rovers, Exeter City, Colchester United, Barnet and Barrow. A crowd of 56,537 watched the WSL match between Arsenal and Chelsea at the Emirates Stadium.

United's waiting game

Manchester United's next match,

against Everton on November 24, will be the latest they have played their 13th game of a season since 1904-05 (aside from when only the FA Cup was played in 1945-46). The causes are their absence from European competition, an early Carabao Cup exit and international breaks (introduced in recent decades).

Dickens of a feat

Sunderland are the first team this season to score twice against Arsenal's Scrooge-like defence – their second goal came from Brian Ebenezer Adjei Brobbey. Crystal Palace yesterday drew 0-0 for the 19th time at home in the league since Tottenham last did so.

Second city fortress

The two league clubs in Birmingham – Aston Villa and Birmingham City – have lost only twice in a combined 53 home league games since late August last year.

Luton in wonderland

The League One game at Edgeley Park produced a Mad Hatters result, a 3-0 home defeat for the leaders (Stockport County – the Hatters) against mid-table visitors (Luton Town – the Hatters). The division's

biggest victory of the season, 5-0, was achieved by the bottom club, Peterborough United, against a team that would have gone top with a two-goal win – AFC Wimbledon. Peterborough, Port Vale and Plymouth Argyle are League One's bottom three – no trio with the same initial has ever finished as the bottom three in the final table in any division.

Manning goes away

The nine matches at Carrow Road in the past two seasons to have involved Liam Manning as a manager have produced nine away wins: he won once with Bristol City in the away dugout and lost eight out of eight with Norwich City at home. He was sacked on Saturday night.

Liverpool out of favour

Liverpool were Premier League title favourites six games ago but now are closer to the relegation zone than the top of the table (on goal difference). Since clinching the league title last April, they have conceded more league goals (26 in 15 games) than every other Premier League team aside from West Ham and Wolves. Their 3-0 defeat by Manchester City yesterday was the first time in their past 46 league games outside their own city that they had not scored. They have lost seven games out of ten in all competitions for the first time since November-December 1998.

English ruling Europe

English clubs' haul of 55 points from 24 Champions League games this season is the equivalent to acquiring 87 points over a 38-game league season, which would match or better the tally of eight of the past 18 Premier League champions.

O, Chelsea

Chelsea's three assist-scorer combinations in their 3-0 win over Wolves were all "O" to "O": Alejandro Garnacho to Malo Gusto, Estêvão to Joao Pedro, and Garnacho to Pedro Neto.

18

Premier League goals on Saturday – the most in a one day without a single left-foot goal since November 1998

TheGame

PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa	(2) 4	Bournemouth	(0) 0
Buendia 28			40,792
Onana 40			
Barkley 77			
Malen 82			
Brentford	(0) 3	Newcastle	(1) 1
Schade 56		Barnes 27	
Thiago 78 (pen), 90+5		17,207	
Sent off: Burn (Newcastle) 73			
Chelsea	(0) 3	Wolves	(0) 0
Gusto 51			39,467
João Pedro 65			
Pedro Neto 73			
Crystal Palace	(0) 0	Brighton	(0) 0
Everton	(1) 2	Fulham	(0) 0
Gueye 45+4			52,491
Keane 81			
Man City	(2) 3	Liverpool	(0) 0
Haaland 29			
González 45+3			
Doku 63			
Nott'm Forest	(1) 3	Leeds	(1) 1
Sangaré 15		Nmecha 13	
Gibbs-White 68		30,708	
Anderson 90+1 (pen)			
Sunderland	(1) 2	Arsenal	(0) 2
Ballard 36		Saka 54	
Brobbey 90+4		Trossard 74	
46,799			
Tottenham	(0) 2	Man United	(1) 2
Tel 84		Mbeumo 32	
Richarlison 90+1		De Ligt 90+6	
61,210			
West Ham	(1) 3	Burnley	(1) 2
Wilson 44		Flemming 35	
Soucek 77		Cullen 90+7	
Walker-Peters 87		62,443	

		HOME					AWAY					GD	Pts
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
► 1 Arsenal	11	4	1	0	12	1	4	1	1	8	4	15	26
► 2 Manchester City	11	5	0	1	16	4	2	1	2	7	4	15	22
▲ 3 Chelsea	11	3	1	2	9	6	3	1	1	12	5	10	20
► 4 Sunderland	11	3	3	0	11	5	2	1	2	3	5	4	19
▲ 5 Tottenham	11	1	2	3	7	7	4	1	0	12	3	9	18
▲ 6 Aston Villa	11	4	1	1	10	5	1	2	2	3	5	3	18
▲ 7 Manchester United	11	4	0	1	11	6	1	3	2	8	12	1	18
► 8 Liverpool	11	4	0	1	10	5	2	0	4	8	12	1	18
▼ 9 Bournemouth	11	4	1	0	8	2	1	2	3	9	16	-1	18
▼ 10 Crystal Palace	11	2	4	0	8	5	2	1	2	6	4	5	17
▼ 11 Brighton	11	3	2	0	10	5	1	2	3	7	10	2	16
► 12 Brentford	11	4	1	1	12	7	1	0	4	5	10	0	16
▲ 13 Everton	11	3	2	1	7	5	1	1	3	5	8	-1	15
▼ 14 Newcastle	11	3	0	2	8	6	0	3	3	3	8	-3	12
► 15 Fulham	11	3	1	1	8	3	0	1	5	4	13	-4	11
► 16 Leeds	11	2	2	1	6	5	1	0	5	4	15	-10	11
► 17 Burnley	11	2	1	2	5	4	1	0	5	9	18	-8	10
► 18 West Ham	11	2	0	4	8	15	1	1	3	5	8	-10	10
► 19 Nottingham Forest	11	2	1	3	8	11	0	2	3	2	9	-10	9
► 20 Wolves	11	0	1	4	6	14	0	1	5	1	11	-18	2

TOP SCORERS

- 14 Haaland (Manchester City)
 - 8 Thiago (Brentford)
 - 6 Mateta (Crystal Palace), pictured
 - 6 Semenyo (Bournemouth)
 - 6 Welbeck (Brighton)
 - 5 Mbeumo (Manchester Utd)
 - 4 Anthony (Burnley)
 - 4 Gyokeres (Arsenal)
 - 4 Isidor (Sunderland)
 - 4 João Pedro (Chelsea)
 - 4 Kroupi (Bournemouth)
- * four other players have scored 4 goals



SKY BET CHAMPIONSHIP

Blackburn	(0) 1	Derby	(2) 2
Ohashi 66 (pen)		Morris 19	
20,147		Ayemang 45	
Hull	(2) 3	Portsmouth	(2) 2
Destan 27			15, 45+2
Joseph 42			23,205
Gelhardt 79			
Middlesbrough	(2) 2	Birmingham	(1) 1
Fry 17		Gray 29	
Hackney 45+5		26,378	
Millwall	(1) 1	Preston	(1) 1
Ivanovic 36		Smith 15	
15,788			
Norwich	(0) 1	Leicester	(0) 2
Kvistgaard 62		De Cordova-Reid 75	
26,213		James 90+2	
Sheffield Utd	(0) 0	QPR	(0) 0
26,529			
Southampton	(2) 3	Sheffield Wed	(1) 1
Jander 9		Amass 25	
Azaz 17		27,607	
Armstrong 47			
Stoke	(0) 0	Coventry	(0) 1
27,421		Mason-Clark 86	
Swansea	(0) 1	Ipswich	(1) 4
Baptista Franco 50		Clarke 36	
16,783		Azon 76	
		Burgess	
		55 (og), 81 (og)	
West Brom	(0) 2	Oxford Utd	(0) 1
Leigh 56 (og)		Lankshear 54	
Heggebo 70			
Wrexham	(0) 1	Charlton	(0) 0
Windass 77 (pen)		11,873	

		HOME					AWAY					GD	Pts
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
► 1 Coventry	15	5	2	0	19	4	5	2	1	21	9	27	34
▲ 2 Middlesbrough	15	5	2	0	9	4	3	3	2	10	9	6	29
▼ 3 Stoke	15	4	1	2	11	5	4	2	2	10	5	11	27
► 4 Preston	15	5	2	1	12	7	2	3	2	8	7	6	26
▲ 5 Hull	15	5	2	1	15	12	2	2	3	11	12	2	25
▼ 6 Millwall	15	4	1	3	8	10	3	3	1	9	10	-3	25
▲ 7 Ipswich	14	4	3	1	15	9	2	2	2	11	7	10	23
▼ 8 Bristol City	15	3	2	3	11	10	3	3	1	11	8	4	23
▼ 9 Charlton	15	4	2	1	9	4	2	3	3	7	8	4	23
▲ 10 Derby	15	3	3	2	10	10	3	2	2	10	9	1	23
▼ 11 Birmingham	15	4	2	1	15	6	2	1	5	5	11	3	21
▲ 12 Leicester	15	2	4	1	7	6	3	2	3	11	10	2	21
▲ 13 Wrexham	15	3	3	2	12	12	2	3	2	8	7	1	21
▲ 14 West Bromwich	15	3	3	1	7	5	3	0	5	7	11	-2	21
▼ 15 Watford	15	5	2	1	14	8	0	3	4	5	10	1	20
► 16 QPR	15	2	2	3	8	10	3	2	3	9	13	-6	19
▲ 17 Southampton	15	2	3	2	7	7	2	3	3	11	14	-3	18
▼ 18 Swansea	15	2	3	3	9	13	2	2	3	6	6	-4	17
▼ 19 Blackburn	14	1	1	5	7	13	4	0	3	7	6	-5	16
► 20 Portsmouth	15	2	2	4	6	9	1	3	3	6	11	-8	16
► 21 Oxford Utd	15	1	3	3	7	11	2	1	5	9	11	-6	13
▲ 22 Sheffield Utd	15	1	1	5	4	11	2	0	6	7	15	-15	10
▼ 23 Norwich	15	0	0	7	5	13	2	3	3	9	10	-9	9
► 24 Sheffield Wed*	15	0	2	6	3	18	1	3	3	9	11	-17	-4

*deducted 12pts for going into administration

TOP SCORERS

- 10 Morris (Derby), pictured
- 10 Thomas-Asante (Coventry)
- 8 Wright (Coventry)
- 7 Gelhardt (Hull)
- 7 Moore (Wrexham)
- 6 Clarke (Ipswich)
- 6 Louza (Watford)
- 6 McBurnie (Hull)
- 6 Philogene (Ipswich)
- 6 Stansfield (Birmingham)
- 6 Tapp (Coventry)
- 6 Twine (Bristol City)
- 6 Vipotnik (Swansea)



SKY BET LEAGUE ONE

Blackpool	(0) 3	Cardiff	(0) 1
Fletcher 47, 69		Salech 90+8	
Bloxham 81		10,792	
Bolton	(2) 4	Port Vale	(0) 0
Cozier-Duberry 31, 68			21,658
Simons 36			
Dempsey 72			
Bradford City	(0) 1	Burton Albion	(2) 2
Pointon 76 (pen)		Beesley 41	
20,508		Webster 45+1	
Doncaster	(0) 1	Barnsley	(1) 2
Molyneux 38		Yoganathan 33	
11,415		Keillor-Dunn 68	
Exeter	(0) 1	Wigan	(1) 1
Wareham 53		Wright 24	
6,585			
Huddersfield	(1) 3	Plymouth	(0) 1
Radulovic 45		Tolaj 88	
Charles 70, Ashia 85			
Northampton	(0) 2	Mansfield	(1) 1
Perkins 53		Oates 18	
Eaves 74 (pen)		6,849	
Peterborough	(3) 5	AFC Wimbledon	(0) 0
Leonard 11, 16 (pen)			9,287
Lisbie 36			
Lindgren 77, 90+3			
Rotherham	(2) 3	Lincoln City	(0) 0
James 10			8,912
Martha 31, Hall 59			
Stockport	(0) 0	Luton	(2) 3
10,090		Richards 34	
		Bramall 38	
		Jones 69	
Sent off: Dodgson (Stockport) 81			
Wycombe	(3) 4	Leyton Orient	(1) 1
Onyedimma 4, 16		Connolly 11 (pen)	
Casey 30, Bell 75			

		HOME					AWAY					GD	Pts
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
► 1 Stockport County	15	4	2	2	9	8	4	2	1	13	9	5	28
▲ 2 Bradford City	15	5	2	1	14	9	2	4	1	10	9	6	27
▲ 3 Bolton	15	6	2	0	18	4	1	3	3	5	11	8	26
▼ 4 Cardiff	14	5	0	2	16	9	3	2	2	6	5	8	26
▼ 5 Stevenage	13	5	1	0	9	2	3	1	3	9	9	7	26
► 6 Lincoln City	15	4	2	1	12	7	3	2	3	6	7	4	25
▼ 7 AFC Wimbledon	15	4	1	2	9	5	4	0	4	10	15	-1	25
► 8 Mansfield	15	4	2	1	13	6	2	2	4	9	11	5	22
► 9 Luton	14	3	0	3	5	6	4	1	3	13	9	-3	22
▼ 10 Huddersfield	14	5	1	2	14	7	2	0	4	7	12	2	22
► 11 Barnsley	13	3	1	2	10	9	3	2	2	10	9	2	21
▲ 12 Rotherham	15	4	3	1	13	8	2	0	5	5	10	0	21
▲ 13 Northampton	15	4	1	3	8	5	2	1	4	4	9	-2	20
▲ 14 Wycombe	15	4	2	2	16	8	1	2	4	6	9	5	19
▲ 15 Burton Albion	15	2	1	4	5	10	3	3	2	10	9	-4	19
▼ 16 Wigan	15	4	1	2	10	5	0	5	3	8	14	-1	18
▼ 17 Reading	15	4	2	2	8	7	0	4	4	3	12	-3	18
▼ 18 Doncaster	15	3	2	3	10	9	2	1	4	4	12	-7	18
▼ 19 Exeter City	15	3	2	3	12	8	2	0	5	3	7	0	17
▼ 20 Leyton Orient	15	3	2	2	12	7	2	0	6	10	20	-5	17
▲ 21 Blackpool	15	3	3	2	13	12	1	0	6	3	11	-7	15
▲ 22 Peterborough	14	2	1	4	9	10	2	0	5	6	12	-7	13
▼ 23 Port Vale	15	1	2	4	5	10	2	2	4	6	9	-8	13
▼ 24 Plymouth	15	2	1	4	8	10	2	0	6	10	18	-10	13

TOP SCORERS

- 7 Burstow (Bolton), pictured
 - 7 Keillor-Dunn (Barnsley)
 - 7 Tolaj (Plymouth)
 - 6 Ballard (Leyton Orient)
 - 6 Connolly (Leyton Orient)
 - 6 Cozier-Duberry (Bolton)
 - 6 Pointon (Bradford City)
 - 6 Salech (Cardiff)
 - 6 Wootton (Stockport County)
 - 5 Bailey (Doncaster)
 - 5 Marriott (Reading)
- * four other players have scored 5 goals



Results and fixtures



Malo Gusto, left, and João Pedro were both on the scoresheet as Chelsea comfortably beat Wolves

SKY BET LEAGUE TWO

Barnet	(2) 2	MK Dons	(1) 2
Senior 13		Sanders 39	
Shelton 28 (pen)		Méndez-Laing 65	
Barrow	(1) 2	Grimsby	(2) 2
Harper 44		Rose 7, Green 13	
McCann 74		3,159	
Bristol Rovers	(0) 0	Gillingham	(0) 1
8,056		Clark 54	
Chesterfield	(1) 3	Accrington	(2) 3
Bonis 47		Watson 17, 26	
Naylor 45+4		Calton 75	
Berry 62		7,823	
Colchester	(0) 0	Bromley	(0) 2
5,169		Sowunmi 74	
		Cheek 78	
Crawley	(1) 2	Fleetwood	(0) 1
Flower 38		Bolton 78	
Forster 65			
Sent off: Medley (Fleetwood)	10		
Lewes	(1) 3	Shrewsbury	(1) 1
Cunt 21, O'Reilly 56		Ruffels 29	
Bogle 90+3		6,614	
Harrogate	(0) 0	Oldham	(1) 1
		Monthé 23	
Sent off: Woods (Oldham)	79		
Newport Co	(2) 2	Walsal	(3) 4
Whitmore 16		Kanu 17	
Garner 44		Finnigan 19, 37	
		Browne 52	
Salford	(0) 0	Cambridge U	(0) 0
Swindon	(0) 2	Tranmere	(0) 1
Palmer 74		Dennis 88	
Munroe 90+3		8,149	

DARREN WALSH/CHELSEA FC/GETTY IMAGES



3-0 on Saturday. The latter is the club's top scorer in the Premier League this season with four goals

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Carlisle	18	12	3	3	34	19	15	39
Boreham Wood	18	11	5	2	34	18	16	38
Rochdale	15	12	1	1	30	8	22	37
Scunthorpe	17	10	6	1	29	14	15	36
Forest Green	17	10	5	2	28	15	13	35
Yeovil	17	9	6	2	29	17	12	33
Southern Utd.	17	8	5	4	27	14	13	29
Wealdstone	18	8	4	6	27	24	3	28
Hartlepool	16	8	6	4	20	14	6	26
Halifax	18	7	4	7	24	27	-3	25
Tamworth	17	7	4	6	20	23	-3	25
Solihull Moors	18	6	5	7	23	28	-5	23
Eastleigh	18	6	4	8	21	25	-4	22
Woking	18	5	6	7	22	21	1	21
Altrincham	18	6	2	10	20	25	-5	20
Brackley	17	5	5	7	12	18	-6	20
Boston Utd	18	5	5	8	19	27	-8	20
AFC Telford	18	6	2	10	18	27	-9	20
Gateshead	18	5	4	9	24	40	-16	19
Aldershot	18	3	4	11	31	39	-8	13
Sutton Utd	18	2	7	9	24	35	-11	13
Braintree	18	3	4	11	13	26	-13	13
Morecambe	17	3	4	10	24	44	-20	13
Truro	18	3	3	12	17	32	-15	12

Aldershot 2 Forest Green 3; Boston Utd 1 Rochdale 3; Brackley 1 Boreham Wood 3; Eastleigh 2 York 4; Gateshead 0 Solihull Moors 2; Halifax 0 Hartlepool 1; Morecambe 2 Sutton Utd 2; Scunthorpe 1 Yeovil 0; Southern Utd 1 Carlisle 2; Tamworth 0 Woking 1; Truro 0 Altrincham 1; Wealdstone 1 Braintree 0.

TOP SCORERS

- 13 Pearce (York)
- 12 Linney (Carlisle)
- 11 Deseruevne (Rochdale)
- 11 Rush (Boreham Wood)
- 9 Adom (Gateshead)
- 8 Whitehall (Scunthorpe)
- 7 Dallas (Southern Utd)
- 7 Simper (Sutton Utd)
- 7 Wakeling (Solihull Moors)

NATIONAL LEAGUE NORTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Fylde	17	12	2	3	39	21	18	38
Southern Utd	15	11	3	1	31	9	22	36
Radcliffe	15	9	2	4	35	18	17	29
Scarbrough	16	9	2	5	25	22	3	29
Merrithy Town	16	9	1	6	34	31	3	28
Spennymoor	15	8	3	4	25	24	1	27
Kidderminster	17	7	6	4	21	21	0	27
Macclesfield	15	7	4	4	22	18	4	25
Curzon Ashton	17	6	6	5	29	24	5	24
Buxton	15	7	2	6	28	22	6	23
Marine	16	7	2	7	17	24	-7	23
Darlington	16	6	4	6	28	23	5	22
Chorley	17	6	4	7	31	27	4	22
King's Lynn	17	4	7	6	24	23	1	19
Bedford	16	5	4	7	23	26	-3	19
Chester	15	4	7	4	20	24	-4	19
Workop	17	5	3	9	21	31	-10	18
AFC Telford	15	4	5	6	23	25	-2	17
Hereford	16	4	4	8	19	28	-9	16
Oxford City	17	4	3	10	26	28	-2	15
Southport	16	4	3	9	16	25	-9	15
Peterboro Sports	16	4	2	10	16	30	-14	14
Alfreton	16	3	5	8	11	30	-19	14
Leamington	16	3	4	9	11	21	-10	13

Alfreton 0 Fylde 1; Bedford 3 Merrithy Town 4; Buxton 1 Chester 2; Curzon Ashton 1 Scarborough 2; Hereford 1 Southport 2; Kidderminster 1 Darlington 2; Leamington 0 Marine 1; Macclesfield 1 AFC Telford 1; Oxford City 2 Workop 0; Radcliffe 1 Chorley 2; South Shields 1 King's Lynn 1; Spennymoor 1 Peterborough Sports 0.

TOP SCORERS

- 13 Marsh (Bedford)
- 10 Blackett (South Shields)
- 10 Walker (Scarbrough)
- 8 Brennan (Buxton)
- 8 Walker (AFC Telford)
- 6 Scott (South Shields)
- 5 Martin (Workop)
- 5 Maynard (Kidderminster/Radcliffe)
- 5 Mayor (AFC Fylde)
- 5 Williams (King's Lynn)

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Hornchurch	16	11	5	0	32	16	16	38
Weston-s-Mare	15	10	2	3	25	13	12	32
Horsham	17	8	5	4	23	16	7	29
AFC Totton	15	9	1	5	23	18	5	28
H Hempstead	15	8	4	3	18	13	5	28
Dorking	17	8	4	5	24	20	4	28
Worthing	15	8	3	4	29	16	13	27
Torquay	17	8	3	6	29	22	7	27
Maldstone	17	7	5	5	23	17	6	26
Maldenhead	15	7	4	4	18	14	4	25
Chesham	17	6	6	5	19	16	3	24
Chelmsford	15	7	3	5	18	17	1	24
Dover	18	5	7	6	28	27	1	22
Dagenham & R	17	4	7	6	17	24	-7	19
Tonbridge	16	4	6	6	19	25	-6	18
Bath City	16	4	5	7	16	21	-5	17
Hampton & R	15	4	4	7	20	24	-4	16
Farnborough	16	4	4	8	21	26	-5	16
Salisbury	16	3	6	7	11	20	-9	15
Enfield Town	16	3	3	10	14	25	-11	12
Slough	15	3	3	9	19	33	-14	12
Eastbourne	16	2	5	9	12	23	-11	11
Chippenhams	16	1	4	11	22	28	-6	7

AFC Totton 0 Ebbsfleet 2; Bath 0 Dagenham & Redbridge 0; Chelmsford 1 Hampton & Richmond 0; Chesham 0 Salisbury 1; Dover 4 Enfield Town 1; Eastbourne 1 Weston-s-Mare 2; Farnborough 2 Dorking 0; Horsham 1 Slough 0; Maidenhead 2; Torquay 1; Maldstone 3 Chippenhams 0; Tonbridge 0 Hornchurch 1; Worthing 4 Hemel Hempstead 0.

TOP SCORERS

- 7 Balanta (Hornchurch)
- 7 Hearn (Hornchurch)
- 6 Adorojo (Eastbourne)
- 6 Dolaghan (Worthing)
- 6 Poleon (Farnborough)
- 5 Bingham (Farnborough)
- 5 Colbran (Worthing)
- 5 Fasannade (Hampton & Richmond)
- 5 Young (Torquay)

WILLIAM HILL SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Hearts	12	9	3	0	29	10	19	30
Celtic	11	7	2	2	20	8	12	23
Hibernian	12	4	6	2	21	14	7	18
Rangers	11	4	6	1	15	10	5	18
Ajax	12	4	4	4	16	21	-5	16
Falkirk	11	3	6	2	17	14	3	15
Motherwell	11	3	5	3	18	17	1	14
Aberdeen	11	3	2	6	8	12	-4	11
St Mirren	11	2	4	5	8	15	-7	10
Kilmarnock	12	2	4	6	13	22	-9	10
Dundee	12	2	2	7	9	22	-13	9
Livingston	12	1	5	6	14	23	-9	8

Aberdeen (0) 1 Motherwell (0) 1
Karlsson 61 Just 64
17,843
Celtic (1) 4 Kilmarnock (0) 0
Kennedy 10, Tierney 51
Madda 85
Engels 90+3 (pen)
Dundee (0) 0 Rangers (2) 3
Raskin 9, Moore 14
Gassama 90
Falkirk (1) 1 Livingston (0) 1
Graham 16 (pen) Wilson 89
7,176
Kucherenko 25 (og) Stephenson 45
18,755
St Mirren (0) 0 Hibernian (1) 3
7,116
Mulligan 24
Cadden 53, Chaiwa 80

WILLIAM HILL SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
St Johnstone	14	9	4	1	28	10	18	31
Partick Thistle	14	8	4	2	24	16	8	28
Arbroath	14	6	3	5	19	20	-1	21
Dunfermline	14	5	4	5	21	14	7	19
Ayr	14	4	7	3	18	15	3	19
Raith	14	5	3	6	14	15	-1	18
Morton	14	2	9	3	12	16	-4	15
Queen's Park	14	2	7	5	10	20	-10	13
Ross County	14	2	6	6	17	23	-6	12
Airdrieonians	14	1	5	8	10	24	-14	8
Dunfermline (1) 2 St Johnstone (1) 2								
Stewart 8, Tod 90+1								
6,594								

Greenock (1) 1 Arbroath (0) 0
Moore 31 1,672
Queen's Park (1) 2 Raith (1) 1
Fowler 13, 78 O'Connor 22
867
Ross County (2) 3 Ayr (1) 3
Hale 30, White 32, 51 Walker 23
2,603 McMann 66, Main 71

LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Inverness CT	13	10	1	2	22	8	14	26
Alloa	13	7	2	4	17	8	9	23
Stenhousemuir	13	6	5	2	16	11	5	23
Queen of South	13	6	2	5	18	16	2	20
Peterhead	13	6	1	6	20	22	-2	19
East Fife	13	5	4	4	17	19	-2	19
Hamilton	13	7	3	3	27	10	17	18
Montrose	13	3	2	8	11	27	-16	11
Kelty Hearts	13	2	2	9	11	27	-16	8
Cove Rangers	13	1	2	10	9	20	-11	5

Hamilton 3 Peterhead 0; Inverness Caledonian Thistle 1 Cove Rangers 0; Montrose 0 Alloa 4; Queen of the South 3 East Fife 0; Stenhousemuir 2 Kelty Hearts 2.

LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
The Spartans	12	8	1	3	20	13	7	25
East Kilbride	12	6	3	3	25	16	9	21
Clyde	12	4	6	2	20	12	8	18
Elgin	12	4	3	5	18	18	0	15
Dumbarton	12	5	3	4	21	21	0	13
Forfar	12	3	4	5	12	18	-6	13
Stranraer	12	3	3	6	12	15	-3	12
Stirling Albion	12	3	3	6	15	22	-7	12
Annan	12	3	3	6	14	22	-8	12
Edinburgh City	12	5	3	4	19	19	0	3

Clyde 0 Stranraer 0; Dumbarton 2 Annan 1; East Kilbride 2 Stirling Albion 0; Edinburgh City 1 Elgin 3; Forfar 1 The Spartans 1.

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Man City	8	7	0	1	20	9	11	21
Chelsea	8	6	2	0	15	4	11	20
Man Utd	8	5	2	1	19	6	13	17
Arsenal	8	4	3	1	18	8	10	15
Tottenham	8	3	3	2	11	12	-1	15
London City	8	4	0	4	11	18	-7	12
Aston Villa	7	2	4	1	8	7	1	10
Brighton	8	2	2	4	9	9	0	8
Leicester	8	1	3	4	5	13	-8	6
Everton	8	1	2	5	11	16	-5	5
Liverpool	7	0	1	6	4	13	-9	1
West Ham	8	0	1	7	3	19	-16	1

Arsenal 1 Chelsea 1; Everton 1 Manchester City 2; Liverpool 1 Brighton 1; London City 4 Tottenham 2; Manchester Utd 0 Aston Villa 1; West Ham 1 Leicester 1.

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Charlton	8	6	2	0	10	3	7	20
Bristol City	8	5	1	2	20	12	8	16
Birmingham	7	4	1	2	17	8	9	13
North Forest	7	4	0	3	12	11	1	12
Southampton	8	3	2	3	19	14	5	11
Sheffield Utd	8	3	2	3	10	13	-3	11
Newcastle	8	2	4	2	14	13	1	10
Sunderland	8	2	3	3	13	13	0	9
Doncaster	8	0	5	11	11	18	-7	5
Durham	8	2	2	4	11	10	1	8
Crystal Palace	8	1	4	3	12	14	-2	7
Ipswich	8	1	1	6	6	25	-19	4

Bristol City 7 Ipswich 0; Charlton 2 Southampton 1; Crystal Palace 1 Sheffield Utd 2; Durham 1 Newcastle 1; Sunderland 2 Portsmouth 3.

DUTCH EREDIVISIE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
PSV Eindhoven	12	10	1	1	40	17	23	31
Feyenoord	12	9	1	2	31	12	19	28
AZ Alkmaar	12	7	3	2	23	18	7	24
Ajax	12	6	5	1	22	12	10	21
Utrecht	12	6	1	5	22	16	6	19
Groningen	12	6	1	5	17	17	0	19
NEC Nijmegen	12	5	3	4	29	20	9	18
Ten Toone	12	4	4	4	20	18	2	16
Goed. Eagles	12	4	4	4	19	18	1	16
Rotterdam	12	4	3	5	22	22	0	15
Sparta Rotterdam	12	5	1	6	14	24	-10	16
Heerenveen	12	3	5	4	19	21	-2	14
Volendam	12	3	4	5	16	20	-4	13
NAC Breda	12	3	3	6	15	21	-6	12
Zwolle	12	3	3	6	14	27	-13	12
Excelsior	12	3	3	6	15	28	-13	12
De Graafschap	12	2	3	7	14	21	-7	9
Telstar	12	2	3	7	14	21	-7	9
Heracles Almelo	12	3	0	9	17	33	-16	6

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