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The Guardian

Government accused of secrecy over virus spread

Matthew Weaver
Haroon Siddique

The government was accused last night of withholding information about the spread of coronavirus after a 70% increase in confirmed cases prompted health officials to stop providing daily updates on the location of new infections.

As Downing Street confirmed that discussions were taking place on contingency plans to close the Houses of Parliament if the outbreak became widespread, 36 new UK cases were announced yesterday.

Three of the cases are believed to

have been contracted within the UK, confirming fears that community transmission is already occurring and that attempts to contain the virus have at least partly failed. In total, 87 people have tested positive in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The news came as:

- Italy announced the closure of all schools and universities, with sports events to be played behind closed doors, as the death toll surpassed 100.
- The prime minister, Boris Johnson, said statutory sick pay would be made from the first day off, not the fourth, to encourage people to self isolate.
- Public Health England (PHE) said people may be asked not to shake hands should the outbreak worsen.

PHE faced a backlash over its decision not to release information about new cases until a weekly roundup announced each Friday. It said the move was a response to the number of new cases.

But Prof Paul Ashford, a former director at the agency, criticised the decision not to disclose the locations of new cases.

"They should be sharing the data as much as possible, to make the public equal partners" **6** →

"They should be sharing the data as much as possible, to make the public equal partners"

Prof Paul Ashford
Former director at PHE



\$500m and out Big-spending Bloomberg out of Democrats' primary race

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▲ Mike Bloomberg dropped out of the US presidential race and endorsed Biden PHOTOGRAPH: MATIAS J OCNER/MIAMI HERALD/TNS

Give us £5bn a year more, schools warn chancellor

Exclusive
Richard Adams
Education editor

An unprecedented alliance of head-teachers, school governors, councils and unions are to lobby the chancellor ahead of next week's budget, saying

that schools in England need a further £5bn a year to avoid financial difficulties and cuts, the Guardian can reveal.

The coalition - involving almost every significant organisation involved in state schools, including the National Governors Association and a bipartisan group representing both Conservative and Labour-led councils

- is writing to Rishi Sunak for an additional £5.5bn a year, with a focus on "woefully underfunded" provision for pupils with special education needs and disabilities (Send).

"Nurseries, schools and colleges are all struggling to meet growing costs and demands, with many having to reduce what they offer in order to meet their budgets," the group is to say in a letter to Sunak and Robert Halfon, the Conservative MP who chairs Parliament's education select committee.

The warning comes as a string of local authorities in England have been

told by the government to drain their schools budgets to help pay for their special needs obligations.

Sabrina Hobbs, principal of Severndale Specialist Academy in Shrewsbury, one of the largest special schools in England with children aged two to 19, warned that any further budget cuts could imperil staff and students.

"The squeeze on special schools will soon begin to impact on the most vulnerable children within our communities as it will become impossible to accommodate their needs as resources and staffing **4** →

Alert over 'thirdhand' smoke risk

Scientists raise concern about the level of toxic exposure from cigarette smoke on clothes

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News

Johnson under pressure to say when he first heard of Patel bullying claims

Kate Proctor
Rowena Mason
Rajeev Syal

Boris Johnson is under pressure to disclose when he first heard claims of bullying by Priti Patel as new details emerged of her alleged behaviour in three government departments.

The prime minister brushed over Jeremy Corbyn's repeated questions yesterday asking how much he knew about the allegations when he appointed Patel as home secretary last summer. Several sources claim the cabinet office was told about her alleged intimidation of staff in 2017.

Patel faces a cabinet office inquiry, overseen by Johnson, and an employment tribunal brought by Sir Philip Rutnam, her former permanent secretary. She denies any allegation of wrongdoing.

Westminster sources claim the Tories were warned about a bullying allegation in the Department for Work and Pensions but failed to take any action. A source said a former DWP staff member made the party aware of Patel's alleged behaviour before she was promoted to home secretary. The complainant was given a £25,000 payout after taking an overdose of prescription medicine following alleged bullying, the BBC reported.

At prime minister's questions,



▲ Boris Johnson backed his home secretary in the Commons yesterday

Corbyn asked if Johnson knew about the bullying claims and why public money was used to pay off civil servants who complained about Patel.

"On each occasion, tens of thousands of pounds of hard-earned taxpayers' money has been spaffed up the wall to buy their silence. Was the prime minister aware of these allegations about the home secretary? If he was, why did he appoint her?" he said.

Johnson did not address the question and gave a public show of support for Patel who sat on the Commons frontbench alongside him.

"The home secretary is doing an outstanding job - delivering change, putting police on the streets, cutting crime and delivering a new immigration system - and I'm sticking by her," he said.

Allegations emerged on Tuesday night that the home secretary had bullied her private secretary, who

Sketch

John Crace



Leadsom rewrites her career to raise it into realm of mediocrity

It's yet to register with Andrea Leadsom that she was sacked in the February reshuffle. In her mind she stepped down of her own accord despite repeated phone calls begging her to stay on. Which is how she came to make one of the least self-aware and most self-indulgent resignation speeches in the Commons.

If every third-rate minister who has been fired is now going to be awarded the primetime gig after PMQs to witter on about their non-existent achievements, the next few months could get very busy. Priti Patel should book her slot now. It looks as if she's going to need it.

After a swift jab at the former Speaker - she and John Bercow are united in their mutual loathing of one another - Leadsom settled down to a 15-minute dirge of denial. There were no telling points to be made or scores to be settled. Just a total rewrite of her career to raise it into

the realms of mediocrity. It was as if someone who didn't know her had been asked to give the eulogy at her funeral and was struggling to come up with anything memorable.

Still, the statement did serve one purpose in reminding the Tories of the bullet they had dodged. A part-time Boris was still a lot better than a full-time Andrea. Not that some Conservatives aren't beginning to have a few second thoughts about their choice of leader. Johnson's 80-seat majority is more fragile than it may seem and if he fails to deliver on his promises, he - and they - are goners.

Jeremy Corbyn had opened PMQs with three straight questions about the coronavirus that yet again exposed how slow the government had been to react to the threat of a pandemic. Even with the experts - much to Michael Gove's annoyance - now onboard, Boris still doesn't have a credible response plan if things get worse. The jibes

had to sign off from work with stress. It allegedly occurred when she was international development secretary between 2016 and 2017.

A former Department for International Development staff member said Patel's attitude towards staff was common knowledge: "There was an internal inquiry about the culture. I'd heard of people being called useless, that she punched a desk."

Penny Mordaunt, Patel's DfID successor, conducted an internal investigation into the department's culture, the staff member said. Mordaunt, who is now the paymaster general, made a speech to staff saying she had wanted to get people's "mojo" back.

Patel was sacked by Theresa May over unauthorised contacts with the Israeli government.

Following Patel's dismissal, a senior figure in DfID was said to have approached staff in her private offices about allegations that they had heard of bullying.

The senior figure was said to have been told of multiple claims of staff being humiliated and coming under heavy pressure in emails.

They then went to see another senior figure in DfID and urged them to contact the then cabinet secretary, the late Sir Jeremy Heywood, so that her conduct was recorded "in the system" if she ever returned to government.

Rutnam dramatically resigned as Home Office permanent secretary on Saturday, claiming he had been subjected to a briefing campaign against him that had been condoned by Patel. He has begun legal action against the government for constructive dismissal.

The Conservative party did not respond to a request for a comment.

about him being a part-time prime minister are beginning to wound. Principally because they are true.

There were no answers to how overstretched hospitals were going to cope with an extra 2 million patients. Nor were his reassurances that "we haven't yet" reached a point where the police will stop investigating murders that reassuring. Give it a few days and you can top anyone you want. That bastard who lets his dog shit on the pavement? He's on borrowed time. As for the workings of statutory sick pay and universal credit, Boris was totally clueless. But then those are just for the skiving little people.

Boris appeared out of his depth when Corbyn switched to the ever-increasing number of bullying allegations against Patel. He didn't seem at all bothered about the need for an independent inquiry and just said over and over again that as far as he was concerned the home secretary could do whatever she liked as she was doing an outstanding job terrorising both her staff and immigrants. The people had voted for a bully and he had given them a bully. He wasn't bothered how abusive or incompetent Priti was, he was going to stick by her regardless. Up until the point when he wasn't and chose to throw her under a bus. "We've got Brexit done," Boris said randomly. No one on the front bench had the heart to tell him that they really hadn't. Brexit had barely started.

Barclay warns brother of lawsuit if Ritz sells for £750m

Mark Sweney

The row between the 85-year-old billionaire Barclay brothers took an extraordinary turn yesterday when Sir Frederick threatened to launch legal action against the family of his twin, Sir David, if they try to sell the Ritz in London for less than £1bn.

The 114-year old property has a storied history, including hosting meetings between Winston Churchill, Dwight Eisenhower and Charles de Gaulle during the second world war. But it has become the focal point of a 21st-century power struggle.

The Ritz became the centre of the row last week when a high court judge was told that an “elaborate system of covert recording” had been used to record conversations between Barclay and his daughter, Amanda, since last September. Frederick used the hotel’s conservatory for business meetings and to smoke his cigars. In January, Barclay’s nephew Alistair had been filmed “handling the bug placed in the conservatory at the Ritz”, the court heard.

The court case thrust the family’s once famously secretive affairs into the spotlight.

The Barclay business empire, built over 60 years, is ailing. Some of their main assets – the Telegraph Media Group, owner of the Daily Telegraph, the online retailer the Very Group (previously Littlewoods) and the delivery firm Yodel – are under pressure and



David, left, and Frederick Barclay after receiving their knighthoods at Buckingham Palace in 2000

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEPHENS/PA

A family affair

Frederick Barclay

The elder of the twins by 10 minutes, Frederick is divorcing Hiroko, his Japanese-born wife.

Amanda Barclay

The only child, aged 41, of Frederick and Hiroko.

Ko Asada Barclay

The 52-year-old son of Hiroko and stepson of Frederick was one of the biggest donors to Ukip in the runup to the 2016 Brexit referendum.

David Barclay

Reportedly distinguishable from his elder brother only by the way that he parts his hair (left, Frederick right), it is David’s family that has control of the twins’ empire.

Aidan Barclay

The eldest of David Barclay’s four sons, the 64-year-old is the most well known, through roles such as chairman of the Telegraph Media Group.

Howard Barclay

The 60-year-old runs the family business alongside brother Aidan.

Duncan Barclay

At 59, Duncan is the youngest son of David’s first wife, Zoe.

Alistair Barclay

The 30-year old is the youngest son of David by Reyna Oropeza, his Mexican-born current wife. A former race car driver, he was allegedly filmed handling the Ritz bug. He is involved with the loss-making online estate agent Yopa.



▲ Howard and Aidan Barclay

the brothers have been considering selling them.

The Ritz, seen as a crown jewel asset, is said to be closest to a sale. Reports have centred on the possibility it could be bought by a Saudi Arabian private investment firm for about £750m. However, Frederick claims to have received at least two offers valuing the hotel at over £1bn. In a rare public statement, he threatened legal action if a suitable price for the property they bought for £75m in 1995 was not received.

“I can disclose that there have been a number of competing offers for this first class hotel in excess of £1bn. I have no doubt that such offers will be considered, so that the Ritz is sold at the right time and for a proper price. There is no place for any sale at less than full value. A sale below the proper value would give rise to further litigation. This would be regrettable,” he said.

Four years ago, a new headstone was placed on the grave of the once inseparable twins’ father, in Mortlake cemetery, west London. Only two of the six children put their names on the stone, David and his brother Andrew. Frederick’s name is absent.



85

The Barclay twins’ age. Frederick and David have spent 60 years building up their business empire

1995

The year the twins bought the Ritz for £75m. There are reports a Saudi firm has offered 10 times that figure

On 24 January, Amanda left the company’s board. On the same day, two of David’s other sons, Aidan and Howard – who in effect now run the businesses – were appointed as directors at the Ritz.

Only a month earlier, David had strengthened his family’s grip on the empire, appointing Aidan and Howard as “persons with significant control” of Ellerman Holdings, the holding company for the Barclays’ UK assets. Each was given “more than 25% but not more than 50% of the share ownership and voting rights”.

The Barclay brothers are no longer beneficiaries of the family trust, and Amanda has been left with a 25% share, and no power to block David’s side of the family in any big decisions.

Frederick has hinted at the desire for some form of agreement. “I am deeply shocked and saddened about recent events involving unethical conduct and intrusion into my privacy,” he said. “I hope we can get these family matters resolved so that we can all move on.”

But there is little sign that David’s family is quite so keen to move on. Their Ellerman company responded with its own statement: “Neither Sir Frederick nor Amanda Barclay have any relevant legal interest which would allow them to disrupt the sale process of The Ritz Hotel, London,” it said, adding: “We remain focused on achieving the best value for all shareholders.”

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Gene-editing tool used inside human body for the first time

Associated Press

Scientists say they have used the gene editing tool Crispr-Cas9 inside a person's body for the first time, in a new development towards operating on DNA to treat diseases.

A patient recently had the procedure at the Casey Eye Institute, at Oregon Health & Science University, in Portland, US, for an inherited form of blindness, according to the companies which devised the treatment.

Charles Albright, the chief scientific officer at Editas Medicine, a Massachusetts-based firm developing the treatment with the Dublin-based Allergan pharmaceutical company, said: "We literally have the potential to take people who are essentially blind and make them see. We think it could open up a whole new set of medicines to go in and change your DNA."

It may take up to a month to see if the procedure at the Casey Eye Institute did restore vision. If the first attempts seem safe the plan is to test the method on 18 children and adults.

Jason Comander, an eye surgeon at Massachusetts Eye and Ear hospital in Boston, another site that plans to enrol patients in the study, said this was "a new era in medicine". The study has won government regulator approval.

Doctors first tried in-body gene editing in 2017 for a different inherited disease using a tool known as zinc fingers. Many scientists believe Crispr is a much better tool for locating and cutting DNA at a specific spot, and interest in the new research is very high.

The people in the latest study have got Leber congenital amaurosis,

caused by a gene mutation that keeps the body from making a protein needed to convert light into signals to the brain. Patients are often born with little vision, and scientists cannot treat it with standard gene therapy.

For the new treatment fluid containing the gene editing machinery is dripped through a tube the width of a hair to just beneath the eye's retina. "Once the cell is edited it's permanent and that cell will persist hopefully for the life of the patient," said Eric Pierce at Massachusetts Eye and Ear, who was not involved in the first case.

Headteachers' coalition asks chancellor for £5bn a year more for schools

Continued from page 1

are stripped right back," Hobbs said. "Leadership has been cut, management has been cut and curriculum opportunities have been cut. There is nothing else without risking health and safety, and quality of life."

Headteachers who back the lobbying say they are still being forced to reduce staff numbers and make cuts to essential provision, despite the government's promises of an additional £7.1bn in funding by 2022-23. "Much of that extra funding will be swallowed up on rising costs, including increased and unfunded pay rises that have been introduced. This jeopardises the promised real-terms increased budgets for the schools and pupils themselves," the letter will state.

The coalition says that once inflation and increases to teacher pay are taken into account, more than four out of five schools will still be worse off this year than five years ago, while sixth forms and colleges will continue to be hardest hit.

more money but it's not only about money ... it's about how [the government's special education needs reforms] have been working."

In response, the Department for Education said: "This government wants to build an education system that boosts productivity, improves social mobility and equips children and adults with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the bright future that lies ahead."

"That is why we are levelling up funding to ensure all schools have the right investment to deliver an outstanding education."

"On top of this, we are increasing high-needs funding for local authorities by £780m next year, as well as £400m cash boost for 16-19 funding."

The letter to the chancellor will also be backed by the major teaching and leadership organisations, including the National Association of Head Teachers, the Association of School and College Leaders and the National Education Union.

The coalition includes Worth Less?, the group of headteachers who have been agitating for additional funding.

"At the moment, our attention should rightly focus on events affecting the whole country," said Jules White, founder of Worth Less? and headteacher at Tanbridge House School in West Sussex. "But even after the welcome government investment set for April 2020, cash-starved schools still require a major long-term funding plan to meet the needs of children and their families over the next 10 years," said Jules White, founder of Worth Less? and headteacher at Tanbridge House School in West Sussex.

"The will from every school and teacher to deliver a world-class system is there, but the resources are not."

James McInnes, a Conservative councillor who heads the F40 group representing the local authorities with the lowest school funding in England, said: "Although we very much welcome the government's investment, our analysis is that £12.6bn was needed across the country, so that falls short by £5.5bn. So we need to work together as a coalition of unions, local authorities, teachers and parents, and say that while we welcome the extra funding we also need to keep the pressure on central government so they understand that's not the end of the story, that additional funding is still required."

McInnes, Devon county council's cabinet member for children's services and schools, said special needs funding requirements were causing budget deficits in councils around the country. "In Devon, in the current financial year, we're £21.5m overspent in the high-needs block of the dedicated schools grant, that's mainly special education needs and disabilities. Next year, if there aren't any changes, we're projected to overspend about £45m."

"We're just one authority. Nearly every local education authority across the country is overspending in high needs, to various extents. So we need

"There is nothing else [left to cut] without risking health and safety, and quality of life"

Sabrina Hobbs
Headteacher

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Hotel guests often pay less if they book by phone rather than online

Alex Hern
Technology editor

Travellers may pay up to 12% more for their hotel rooms if they book through travel websites, according to research from Which? The consumer group blames the rise of online travel agents for the price increases.

Sites such as Booking.com or Expedia offer the ability to pick between thousands of hotels around the world. But they do not always have the cheapest price available – and may, in fact, push up prices across the web.

Which? phoned 10 UK hotels, all listed on Booking.com, and found eight were able to offer a better deal over the phone – with one offering a discount of £20, 12% of the overall cost, as well as a free upgrade.

According to the consumer advocacy group, the distinction is due in part to the commissions charged by online agents, which can be up to 25% of the overall cost. If businesses are unable to absorb those fees, they may end up raising prices on the sites.

The problem is compounded by the fact that the largest online travel agents also enforce rate-parity clauses, which ban hotels from offering cheaper rates anywhere else online. But those clauses do not cover other avenues of inquiry, including email, phone calls or in-person visits.

“Customers shouldn’t be duped into thinking they’re getting the best price from a hotel booking site when more often than not they can get a better deal by avoiding its commission and booking directly with the hotel,” said Rory Boland, Which? Travel editor.

“Booking sites might be a good place to start your search, but you should always call or email the hotel for the best chance of getting the cheapest deal – even in cases where they can’t offer a better price, there’s a good chance they’ll throw in a freebie.”

Booking.com said its site “is a much more cost-effective platform for properties to advertise, allowing them to pay only when they generate actual business”.

Expedia said: “Our focus is on ensuring that the best rates and availability are presented to consumers in order to attract travellers to our sites to book with our partners ... Hotels pay no upfront cost for using an [online travel agent].”

25%

Commission that some hotels may be charged by online agents, pushing up the overall cost to travellers



PHOTOGRAPH:
STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA

First in line The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall took an electric bus from a specially erected stop near their Clarence House home in London yesterday. They took seats on the top deck to be driven to the London Transport Museum to join celebrations marking 20 years of Transport for London. The prince’s usual official transport is an electric Jaguar car.

Scientists raise alarm about risks from ‘thirdhand’ cigarette smoke

Nicola Davis

Scientists have measured levels of “thirdhand” cigarette smoke and found it could be a prominent and lingering source of hazardous chemicals.

Researchers reported how they tracked traces of cigarette smoke in a German cinema – where smoking was not permitted, meaning the only source of tobacco smoke was from the bodies and clothes of movie-goers – and found that some viewers were exposed to the equivalent of second-hand smoke from up to 10 cigarettes.

“This represents a significant but poorly understood health risk to non-smokers and a source of reactive chemicals indoors,” said Dr Drew Gentner, co-author of the research from Yale University.

The cinema was supplied with fresh, filtered air from outside. The

team sampled the exhaust air duct of the cinema for four days and detected 35 volatile substances found in tobacco smoke, including formaldehyde and the cancer-causing chemical benzene.

Concentrations of such substances showed a spike around the time that movie-goers entered the cinema. Less pronounced spikes were seen for earlier showtimes, while levels of the substances were lower for family films than for R-rated action films, despite the latter having smaller audiences.

“In the R-rated films, especially the ones that are occurring later in the evening, it appears there’s a greater propensity of people attending those movies to have smoked, or perhaps to have smoked more frequently or more cigarettes, and so they are off-gassing more,” said Gentner, noting that previous studies had suggested thirdhand smoke might account for between 5% and 60% of the burden from cigarette smoke in non-smokers.

Analysis of particular substances revealed that, in the case of the action films, the thirdhand smoke was relatively “fresh”, while its presence in family films was older – possibly down to substances lingering from other screenings.

The team found a number of signs that substances from thirdhand smoke build up over time.

“That’s because the chemicals don’t remain entirely in the air, but are also absorbed on to various surfaces and furnishings, from which they re-enter the air,” Gentner said.

‘Audiences appeared to be off-gassing more during R-rated films’

Dr Drew Gentner
Research co-author

The team said the study offered a real-life example of exposure, adding that smaller spaces with poorer ventilation, such as bars, offices, and underground trains, could have much higher levels of thirdhand smoke.

Prof John Britton, director of the UK centre for tobacco and alcohol studies and a consultant in respiratory medicine at the University of Nottingham, said the results were not surprising. “This study confirms what anyone with a sense of smell has already worked out: that smokers carry and emit tobacco smoke components into the atmosphere even when not smoking,” he said.

“In reality, the exposure sustained by others in such circumstances is low and any health risk likely to be likewise,” he added, although he called for more research into the potential impact.

Others said it was not clear whether the levels of thirdhand smoke detected were high enough to cause health problems.

“It is a long road from what they show here to showing that there is anything that non-smokers should be concerned about,” said Martin Jarvis, emeritus professor of health psychology at University College London, who was not involved in the research.

Doctors Retired NHS staff reluctant to return

Matthew Weaver

Scores of retired NHS doctors and nurses say they are against returning to work to help tackle the coronavirus, with many saying it would threaten their physical and mental health.

The government confirmed contingency plans to call on NHS “leavers and retirees” to help relieve pressure on the workforce. But a majority of 120 former NHS employees who responded to a Guardian callout were resistant, and in some cases hostile. Many said they did not want to return to a working environment where they suffered stress, bullying, burnout and breakdowns.

Seventy-one said they would not be happy to return to work.

Anthony O'Neill, 58, from Glasgow, said: “No, nein, non, nej! Was a hospital physician for 32 years: never ever going back.”

And a 60-year-old London GP said: “I left general practice due to burnout. I would not go back under any circumstances.”

A 58-year-old former GP from Northamptonshire said he “jumped ship early” after “being repeatedly shafted by successive administrations”. He asked: “Why would I go back?”

Many were concerned they would be at risk of contracting the disease and that their lack of recent practice could put patients at risk. Rick Allen, 60, a retired GP from Kent, said: “Getting doctors back from retirement is just a government PR exercise to look as if they’re taking serious action. I’d sooner stay at home, batten down the hatches and look after my own family.”

Some felt guilty for expressing reluctance to return. A 56-year-old former GP from Devon said: “I was seriously burnt out when I retired and am only just getting to the point where I feel human again... Saying no would feel difficult and selfish, especially if people in my community were suffering and my former colleagues were overwhelmed by demand but it is not something I want to do.”

A minority were keen to return, with 16 of the 120 saying they would do so without reservations. They included a 79-year-old doctor from Solihull who said: “To help out the country in need would be a unique privilege as a humanitarian and humble service.” But most of those willing to go back had reservations. Asked if they were willing to return, 33 of those who responded provided “yes, but” answers.

‘I was a physician for 32 years: never ever going back’

Anthony O'Neill
Retired hospital doctor



▼ Passengers wear protective masks as they leave Piccadilly station in Manchester yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: RICKY CHAMPAGNE/CAVENDISH

Government warned refusal to reveal locations of new virus cases could backfire

Continued from page 1

in tackling this and help them make decisions about their own lives. The public needs to know if it’s in their area on a daily basis,” he said. “The planning documents talk a lot about openness, transparency and public involvement. But that hasn’t applied to what’s been going on.”

Dr Jennifer Cole, biological anthropologist at Royal Holloway, University of London, who carried out research into information exchange during the Ebola crisis, said the silence risked the spread of fake news.

She said: “I think it’s an incredibly ill-advised decision. If it’s not released officially, it creates an information vacuum and it will be filled by unreliable sources... Containment is going to be down to public behaviour and the public response. To not take into account what the public want leaves

the government and NHS open to accusations of not being transparent.”

Other countries have been more open about the spread. Singapore identifies the street where cases are confirmed. And in South Korea, phone alerts signify when users come within 100 metres of a confirmed case, based on government data.

In the UK, some local authorities confirmed the location of the latest new cases. The chief medical officer for England, Chris Whitty, said it was unclear whether the three new person-to-person infections were direct or indirect from someone who has recently travelled from abroad.

It is known that many had travelled from Italy. Two were diagnosed in Greater Manchester, two in South Ribble, Lancashire, one in Liverpool, and two in Carlisle – including a member of healthcare staff at the Cumberland Infirmary.

King’s College London confirmed to the Guardian that an immunobiology student working in an asthma and allergy research department at Guy’s Hospital in London had tested positive. Several other staff have been advised by NHS England to self-isolate.

A university spokesperson said the risk of other staff and students having been exposed to the infection had been deemed low, but did not confirm whether the department – within the Southwark hospital – dealt directly with patients. In southern England,



▲ A nurse in protective clothing takes part in a demonstration of a coronavirus assessment pod at Antrim Area Hospital PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN PORTER/PRESSEYE



Goldsmiths, which is part of the University of London, said a guest visiting one of its halls of residences had tested positive. It said the visitor was self-isolating as a precaution.

And Lyndhurst primary school in south London said it may have to close today after one of the pupils' parents tested positive.

The Scottish government confirmed two new cases, one in the Grampian area, the other in Ayrshire. Two new cases were also announced in Northern Ireland.

Whitty said the UK had probably passed the phase of trying to contain the virus and was now trying to delay it until the summer. "We think it is likely, not definite, that we will move into onward transmission and an epidemic here in the UK," he said.

The NASUWT, one of the largest teaching unions in the UK, urged the government to address a surge in incidents of racism and xenophobia in schools linked to coronavirus. The union says it has received increased reports of black and minority ethnic teachers and pupils being subjected to "racist name-calling and intimidation" connected to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Meanwhile, the London Book Fair, one of the world's largest literary festivals, was called off and the organisers of the Cheltenham Festival, which is due to begin next week, said numbers are expected to be down due to coronavirus fears.

Analysis Track and tell

South Koreans worried about new coronavirus cases can trace the commute and daily movements of infected people before their diagnosis by logging on to an app. In China too you can track new cases as they are confirmed in real time and find out whether you have been on a flight or in a train with somebody who was later diagnosed.

In the UK, however, as confirmed that Covid-19 cases had jumped by 36 yesterday – the biggest surge so far – the Department of Health and Social Care announced on Twitter that it would no longer be tweeting the general locations of the affected, "due to the number of new cases".

Instead, it said it planned to put out a regional breakdown once a week, it said.

It went down badly. Twitter users accused the government of a lack of transparency. Some said they would now be pulling their children out of school because they did not know where the virus was lurking (even though children are rarely infected).

With anxiety at fever pitch in the UK, it probably was not a smart thing to do. It's clear officials are worried about the workload. The fact that the number of UK cases has risen by 70% in a day is not surprising, given that we are fairly sure, from China's experience, that each person with the virus will infect on average 2.5 others.

The numbers will carry on rising, just as they are doing so elsewhere in Europe, and many people will want to know where the hotspots are – on a daily basis.

In fact, most infections are likely to be indoors in families. You will not contract the virus from somebody who walks past you in a shopping mall and probably not from shop assistants either. It takes exposure to somebody's coughs or speech within a range of about two metres for 15 minutes to get infected. Most people who become ill with the virus will be infected by friends or relations.

In South Korea the apps and websites built by developers to track people with the virus – using very detailed, if anonymised, information from the government about people's movements – may not have the effect of reassuring the public. One of them, Coronamap, live, has a button labelled "See whether I am safe".

But most countries now are giving out locations, and maps are being drawn – even in the US, where Donald Trump at first denied that there had been any cases at all.

It remains to be seen whether such a weekly round-up will help satisfy an increasingly unnerved British public.

Sarah Boseley

2.5

Number of people someone suffering from the new coronavirus is likely to unwittingly infect

Care providers Emergency plan could result in relaxed background checks

Robert Booth

Social Affairs Correspondent

Care workers could be redeployed to look after elderly people in coronavirus hotspots across Britain as officials investigate whether criminal records checks need to be loosened to fill vacancies left by sick carers.

Whitehall officials yesterday talked to nursing homes and home care operators about how to pool workers in preparation for large numbers of care visitors and care home workers being ill or self isolating.

The Department of Health and Social Care asked providers whether the system of obligatory background checks for workers who had close physical contact with vulnerable people would be a barrier to implementing the emergency plan, care industry sources said.

Altering the requirement could also facilitate drafting in people who have recently left care work, and retired individuals whose background checks have expired, without the usual weeks-long wait for approval, said a Whitehall source.

Care firms have said that projected levels of infection in the UK could force homes to close without emergency measures, and mean switching residents to NHS facilities, causing considerable distress and increasing the burden on clinical services.

The sick rate among care workers is usually under 3% but if government predictions of a fifth of the population possibly being off work become

a reality then the care sector could be depleted by about 220,000 workers.

Nadra Ahmed, chair of the National Care Association, representing more than 600 care homes, said: "The regulations say you must have enough staff to deliver the service based on assessed need. If you have 20 residents and 18 staff and six go down, you don't want to be doing that."

Care employers have to carry out "enhanced disclosure" checks on staff, which can take weeks to process. A more limited check of whether a potential carer is barred from working with vulnerable people allows working immediately but under supervision.

Operators are braced for fatalities and fear stretched social care teams might be unable to meet their duties. A study in China last month found that the fatality rate among people aged 80 and over was almost 15% compared to less than 1% among the under-50s.

Ahmed said care homes were well practised in controlling infection, but added: "We have to anticipate there

'Our places are home from home – that means visitors and if not, that can be emotionally difficult'

Nadra Ahmed

National Care Association chair

Search for a cure Gates sends antiviral drugs to research lab for rapid testing

Daniel Boffey

Brussels

Bill and Melinda Gates have paid for 15,000 medicinal molecules to be shipped to a leading laboratory in Belgium to be tested as a potential cure to coronavirus.

The therapeutic samples, all active ingredients in current antiviral treatments, will be screened at high speed for their inhibiting effect on particles developed from a swab from the first Belgian patient to be diagnosed.

The molecules, from the Scripps research institute in California, will be shipped to the Rega Institute for Medical Research, in Leuven, 20 miles east of Brussels, which has an extensive collection of the active ingredients of existing or in-development drugs.

Prof Johan Neyts, who will carry out the analysis, said he expected results within a fortnight of the shipment arriving. He said the foundation hopes that there are one or more molecules among the 15,000 substances can also inhibit the new coronavirus. We'll figure that out for them. We will

know the results a week or two after the shipment is delivered."

The biosafety laboratory in Leuven is one of the few facilities in the world able to test thousands of molecules at high speed. The cost will be "a few tens of thousands of euros", Neyts said. "That's nothing compared with what it costs to design and market a medicine from scratch," he told De Standaard newspaper.

Neyts said he any sign of inhibition of the Covid-19 disease would be considered a significant breakthrough. "A bit is also good. Or even better: a few substances that inhibit a little, and which we can then combine to



▲ Bill and Melinda Gates believe drug trials could start within three months

will be some fatalities, but it won't be for want of trying."

One care worker in the east Midlands said that plans to parachute staff into affected areas were not realistic. "Most people aren't going to want to deploy. You are going to be putting people into a hot zone where people are infected. It creates a vicious circle."

She added that carers were not easily transplanted because the people they looked after would have highly complex needs. The sector's low pay meant that "people aren't going to tell the truth about whether they feel ill – they fear they won't be paid".

The prime minister, Boris Johnson, announced yesterday that workers who isolated themselves would be eligible for statutory sick pay from their first day off rather than their fourth.

Dave Prentis, Unison's general secretary, welcomed the move but said: "It won't help care staff whose employers are telling them they won't get paid at all if they go into isolation. Nor will it provide comfort to workers on zero-hours contracts, or those with multiple jobs bringing in less than the £118 weekly threshold at which sick pay kicks in."

Home-care providers have reported that some clients have turned care workers away out of fear they could carry the infection.

Ahmed said: "It is difficult for our services because in hospitals you can close down wards but we are trying to keep these places as a home from home. We are doing our best to meet our residents' social needs and that means visiting. If you have a level of dementia you need routine. If someone doesn't come in the impact could be quite emotionally difficult."

A spokesperson for the health department said it was working with care providers, directors of adult social services and local government to make "the best possible preparations".

hopefully cure seriously-ill patients." The foundation has said it will provide up to \$100m to improve detection, isolation and treatment efforts in response to the global epidemic.

Writing on the website's foundation, Gates, a co-founder of Microsoft and one of the world's wealthiest private individuals, said he believed there were promising efforts being made to find vaccines "ready for larger-scale trials as early as June".

He added: "Drug discovery can also be accelerated by drawing on libraries of compounds that have already been tested for safety and by applying new screening techniques, including machine learning, to identify antivirals that could be ready for large-scale clinical trials within weeks."

There are no proven treatments for coronavirus but a few drugs are already being tested on humans in China. One, Kaletra, has previously been used to treat people with HIV. It has been tested on 200 people so far and results are expected in about a week.

A second, remdesivir, was tested during the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2018 but it was found to be insufficiently effective.

Both trials were expedited by the World Health Organization. As they have been approved for other conditions there will not need to be the usual safety tests on animals and humans.

Italy closes its schools and warns of threat to health after 28 deaths in 24 hours

Angela Giuffrida Rome
Peter Beaumont

The Italian government has ordered the closure of all schools and universities nationwide from today until 15 March as it grapples to contain Europe's worst outbreak of coronavirus, which has claimed 107 lives in the country, an increase of 28 in 24 hours.

"We are focused on taking all measures for direct containment or delaying the spread of the virus," said the prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, as he announced the most stringent containment measures outside Asia. "The health system risks going into overload, and we will have a problem with intensive care if an exponential crisis continues."

Last night the government also confirmed that the all major sporting events including Serie A football would be played behind closed doors due to the outbreak until 3 April.

Schools have already been closed in the northern regions worst affected by the outbreak, including Lombardy, Veneto, Piedmont and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, as well as in parts of Liguria and Marche.

The virus has now spread to all but one of Italy's 20 regions, with the majority - 1,497 - in Lombardy,

followed by Emilia-Romagna (516) and Veneto (345). The country has recorded a total of 3,090 cases since the outbreak began, including 276 people who have recovered.

The education minister, Lucia Azzolina, told a press conference last night that closing school and universities "wasn't a simple decision ... we waited for the opinion of the scientific-technical committee".

The government is reportedly considering further measures, including the closure of cinemas and theatres and the suspension of public events. In the regions worst hit, such as Lombardy, theatres and cinemas are already closed and will remain so.

Italians have already been told to refrain from the traditional greeting of kissing on the cheek and hugging, to avoid crowded places, and to keep a distance from others. People with respiratory problems have been advised to stay at home, as have those over 65.

"We have to work for the country by staying within the rules and adopting lifestyles that halt the classic paths of transmission," said Silvio Brusaferrero, the president of the higher health

Sanitising work goes on in the San Paolo stadium in Naples to try to prevent the virus spreading

PHOTOGRAPH: CIRO FUSCO/EPA



Coronavirus - the situation in Europe

Covid-19 has now spread to 34 countries and territories across Europe

4,200+
cases confirmed

France

A Covid-19 emergency care facility is being established in each department and all indoor gatherings of more than 5,000 people have been banned. There have been four deaths

Netherlands

A department of Amsterdam's OLVG hospital has been closed for deep cleaning. Has issued the same travel advice as Sweden

Spain

Health authorities are monitoring clusters in Torrejón de Ardoz, on the outskirts of Madrid, and in the Basque city of Vitoria-Gasteiz. The virus has killed one person

5 Portugal

1 Gibraltar

222 Spain

1 Andorra

1 Monaco

1 Liechtenstein

1 Switzerland

1 Luxembourg

1 Belgium

1 Ireland

1 Denmark

1 Norway

1 Sweden

1 Germany

1 Italy

1 France

1 UK

1 Iceland

1 Faroe Islands

Guardian graphic. Not on the map: 16 cases in Iceland, one in Faroe Islands. Source: Johns Hopkins CSSE. Data at 6.13pm yesterday

Drugs India limits medicine exports amid shortage fears

Hannah Ellis-Petersen
Delhi

The coronavirus outbreak has led India to restrict the export of dozens of drugs, leading to fears of a global shortage of essential medicines.

Concerns over supply chain shortages led the Indian government to place limits on the export of 26 pharmaceutical ingredients and the medicines made from them.

The restricted drugs include paracetamol, antibiotics such as tinidazole and erythromycin, the hormone progesterone, and vitamins B12, B1 and B6. The drugs account for 10% of all India's drug exports.

India is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of drugs, with the US and Europe major customers. India's pharmaceutical companies source about 70% of their ingredients from Chinese factories, many of which have been shut for weeks due

to the coronavirus. Airport closures have also impeded supplies.

Sahil Munjal, the vice-chair of the pharmaceutical export promotion council of India, said: "In India we have maximum dependency on China, so if things do not improve in March and China's factories do not reopen then it is going to be a big, big disruption in global logistics."

He said impending shortages were pushing up prices. "If coronavirus goes on much longer, there will definitely be an impact on Indian plants and then 100% there will be a shortage of these medicines across the world."

The warning came amid growing restrictions to prevent the panic-buying of protective health

equipment, as the World Health Organization called for a 40% increase in production to help counter the spread of coronavirus.

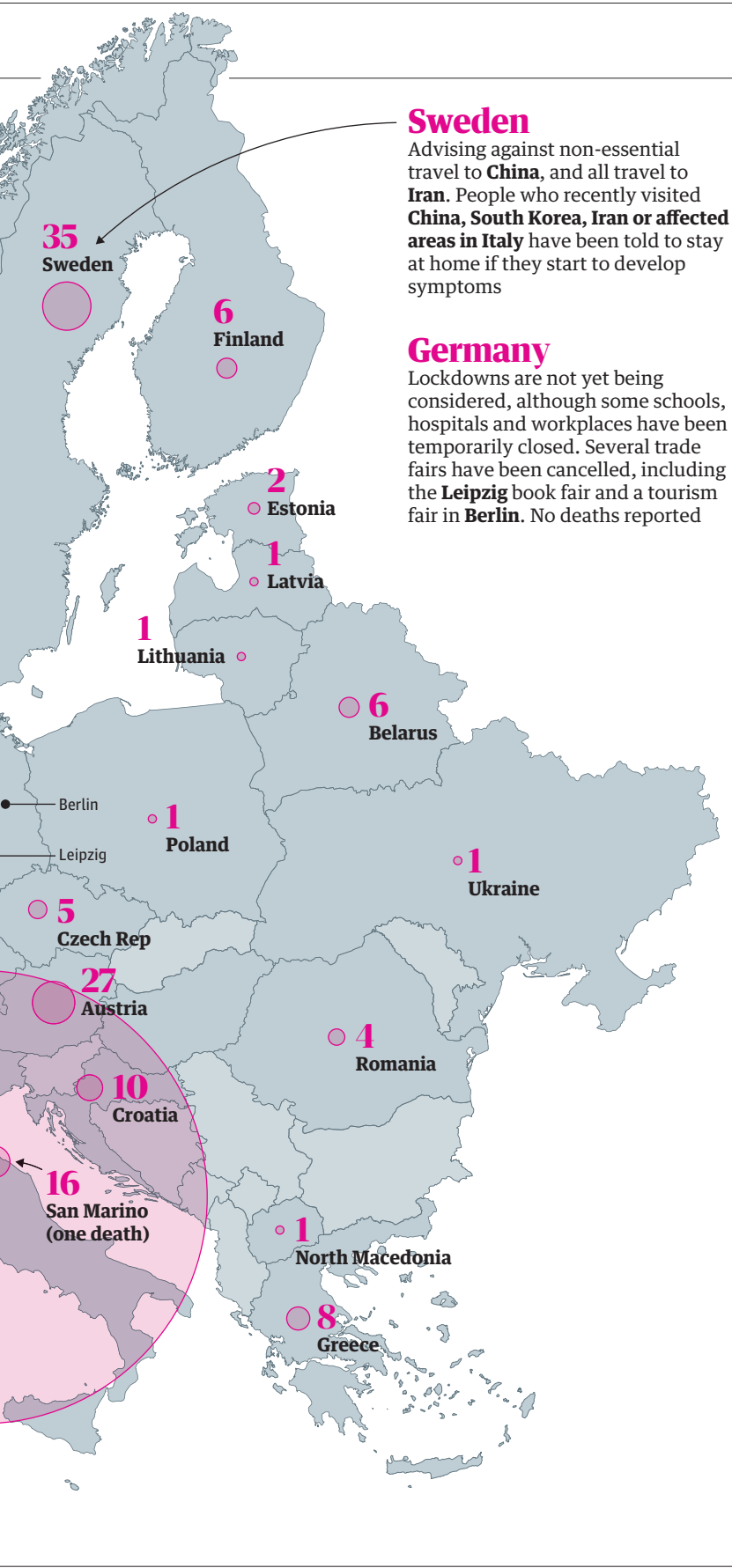
France has issued a decree to requisition masks for key health workers and those suffering from the disease.

'If China's factories do not reopen it is going to be big, big disruption globally'

Sahil Munjal
Indian drugs exporters

Other countries warned that stocks of masks and other equipment are running low in some of the worst-affected locations, with suppliers unable to meet demand. French health officials say 8,300 masks and 1,200 bottles of sanitiser have been stolen from Paris hospitals, while 2,000 surgery masks have gone from a hospital in Marseille. China, which has been worst-affected by coronavirus, is the world's biggest supplier of protective masks for medical use, producing half of the masks used around the globe.

Based on WHO estimates, about 89m medical masks will be required for the coronavirus response each month as well as 76m sterile examination gloves and 1.6m pairs of goggles.



Sweden
Advising against non-essential travel to **China**, and all travel to **Iran**. People who recently visited **China, South Korea, Iran or affected areas in Italy** have been told to stay at home if they start to develop symptoms

Germany
Lockdowns are not yet being considered, although some schools, hospitals and workplaces have been temporarily closed. Several trade fairs have been cancelled, including the **Leipzig** book fair and a tourism fair in **Berlin**. No deaths reported

▼ The Louvre museum in Paris reopened yesterday after closing for two days over virus concerns
PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIPPE LOPEZ/AFP/GETTY



Around Europe

Countries take precautions to contain virus spread

Italy
By far the worst European outbreak with more than 3,000 confirmed cases and 107 deaths. The virus has spread to 19 of Italy's 20 regions. Having already placed 11 towns in lockdown and closed schools in the worst-hit regions, the government will put more towns in quarantine and close all schools and universities until mid-March. It is considering closing cinemas and theatres, and banning public events that "entail the concentration of people and do not allow for a safety distance of at least one metre". People have been told to refrain from greeting each other by kissing and hugging, and to avoid crowded places. Those over 75, over 65 with health problems, and people with respiratory problems have been advised to stay home. The Venice carnival was cut short this weekend and smaller carnivals have been cancelled. Performances at La Scala opera house in Milan have been halted. All sporting fixtures of any description have been cancelled in the "red zone" (the northern areas most affected).

France
Airport screening is in place for arrivals from affected countries. The government has banned all indoor gatherings of more than 5,000 people and is considering outdoor

events on a case-by-case basis; in affected areas, public meetings have been banned and 100 schools closed. "Every French woman and man" has been asked to help by washing their hands thoroughly every hour if possible and avoiding cheek-kissing. All available and future FFP2 masks from private and public stocks have been requisitioned by decree. Apart from the cancelled Paris half-marathon and the Paris-Nice bike race, most sporting fixtures are

Woolworths limits loo rolls Australia

The Australian supermarket Woolworths is to ration toilet paper after panic buying emptied shelves. The firm said yesterday it had "moved to apply a quantity limit on toilet paper packs," limiting customers to four per purchaser to "ensure access to the products". "It will help shore up stock levels as suppliers ramp up local production and deliveries in response to higher demand," the firm said in a statement. Also yesterday the Australian recycled toilet paper company Who Gives a Crap announced it had sold out of stock in a statement headlined "holy crap".

going ahead at present, although a Paris Saint Germain-Dortmund Champions League match on 11 March may take place behind closed doors. The Louvre museum, which closed over staff coronavirus concerns, has reopened.

Germany
German households have had standing advice for years to keep enough food for 10 days, but that has not stopped "hamstering": shelves have been cleared of tinned foods, pasta, rice and toilet roll. The government disease control and prevention agency, RKI, advised people in high-risk groups to shop only once a week to avoid unnecessary exposure to the virus. Whole-town lockdowns are not yet being considered, though some schools, hospitals and workplaces have been temporarily closed. The export of medical protection gear has been banned. The Hanover Messe, an industry trade fair, has been postponed until 13-17 July. Football matches in the Bundesliga are set to go ahead.

Spain
Government advice remains the standard. It says the general population need not use face masks and warns against all but essential travel to affected countries. People who have done so are asked to watch out for any symptoms for 14 days after returning to Spain. The health ministry has ordered football and basketball matches involving teams from affected countries to be played to empty stadiums and advised that large events should be cancelled. It also wants anyone thinking of attending Spain's huge annual rallies to mark International Women's Day this Sunday to use their common sense and stay home if they suspect they might have the virus.

The Netherlands/Sweden
Advice in both countries is to adopt standard hygiene practices. Both countries are advising against travel to China's Hubei province and to avoid non-essential travel to elsewhere in China, and all travel to Iran. People who travelled to China, South Korea, Iran or affected areas in Italy have been told to stay at home if they develop symptoms. A department of Amsterdam's OLVG hospital has been closed for deep cleaning after an employee tested positive.

Jon Henley

No time to release a movie

Bond film to open in autumn

Benjamin Lee

The release of the next James Bond film, No Time to Die, has been delayed by seven months amid fears the coronavirus could impact the global box office by as much as \$5bn. The 25th 007 outing, set to be Daniel Craig's last, was scheduled for global release in April, but MGM, Eon and Universal have now decided to hold

it back for a 12 November release in the UK. The companies claim the decision was made "after careful consideration and thorough evaluation of the global theatrical marketplace". It will be released in the US on 25 November. The date falls in line with the more recent 007 entries, which have all been released in November. No Time to Die will now face competition from Godzilla v Kong and King Richard, a drama starring Will Smith as the father of Venus and Serena Williams.



Daniel Craig will star as 007 for the final time

There have been cinema closures in Italy, South Korea, China and Japan. The Bond franchise is traditionally buoyed by international markets with the last four films all making more than 70% of their gross outside the US. This week saw a joint open letter from two major 007 fansites urging a release date change. Major releases such as The Invisible Man have been postponed in Italy. Last weekend, the country saw a 75% drop in box office compared with the year before. Italy's Venice architecture biennale, a showcase for the most cutting-edge building around the world, has also been postponed due to coronavirus. The event, which had been due to open on 23 May, will now open on 29

August and still close as scheduled on 29 November, cutting short its six-month run to three. Italy drew up a draft decree yesterday to close theatres and cinemas and ban all public events, as it struggles to contain the outbreak. Several nations including the US, Turkey and Australia have banned anyone who has been in China within the past month from entering their territory. The postponements call into question whether other large-scale public events may be affected, including the Euro 2020 football championships, the Tokyo Olympics and the Venice film festival, which is due to take place in September.

IMF to give £39bn to developing countries hit by disease outbreak

Phillip Inman
Graeme Wearden
Julia Kollewe

The International Monetary Fund is to offer \$50bn (£39bn) in emergency funding for countries hit by the coronavirus, as it warned that the spread of the disease had already pushed global growth in 2020 below last year's levels.

The fund's managing director, Kristalina Georgieva said an expected increase in global growth this year would now be more than wiped out by the epidemic that had reached 70 of the IMF's 189 member countries.

Some \$40bn of the \$50bn on offer, which is aimed at developing countries, is short-term crisis funding to cover shortfalls, while \$10bn will be available at zero interest rates to boost health spending.

Georgieva said developments in the last week showed that Covid-19 was hitting business supply chains and likely to harm developing countries, many of which were ill-equipped to deal with an epidemic.

In the UK, Andrew Bailey, the incoming governor of the Bank of England, called on the government to offer emergency financial support to help British companies through the worst of the coronavirus outbreak.

Warning that the central bank had limited room to support the economy by cutting interest rates, he told MPs on the Treasury committee: "We are collectively now going to have to provide some form of supply chain finance in the not-too-distant future."

Bailey said Threadneedle Street and the Treasury were in talks about how to protect small and medium-sized firms. He added: "We're going to have to do that very quickly."

Increasing numbers of businesses across Europe and the US are putting in place measures to tackle the spread of the virus, in the latest sign that they

are bracing themselves for the coronavirus outbreak to worsen.

Tesco told more than 5,000 office-based employees to prepare to work from home.

Staff at its Welwyn Garden City headquarters and other offices were told yesterday to take everything they needed to work from home with them, such as laptops and work mobile phones, sources said.

Lloyd's of London, the world's biggest insurance market, said "emergency trading protocols" would allow 1,000 staff, along with thousands of brokers and underwriters at other firms, to work from home.

Bloomberg reported that EU finance ministers had been warned to expect recessions in Italy and France if the outbreak worsened, and that the ripples from that could incite a "vicious" spiral of declining markets.

The Italian government, which on Monday announced €3.6bn (£3.1bn) of tax cash and extra spending to tackle the economic fallout of its outbreak, is now understood to be considering further measures in a bid to stave off a recession.

Georgieva said Beijing was struggling to recover after a slow return to work. Factories there are only operating at 60% capacity, she said, though they aim to reach 90% within the next fortnight.

A collapse in spending by Chinese consumers has also hit car sales, which new data showed yesterday were down 80% in February.

In January the IMF estimated that global growth this year would rise to 3.3% from 2.9% in 2019 after China and the US agreed a truce in their two-year trade war.

In February, the organisation said the outbreak, which it expected to be contained by the Chinese authorities, could shave 0.1 percentage point from 2020 growth.

"It is the duration of the outbreak that at this time is difficult to predict," she said, adding that the effectiveness of mitigation measures would play a key role in determining the economic impact. In relation to the world economy, we have seen a shift to a more adverse scenario."

The IMF is concerned that companies - many of them heavily indebted - will suffer from a drop in consumer spending that will cut their income and ability to maintain debt interest payments. "The amount of frozen capital has increased substantially and we are working to unfreeze these assets so they can be put to work," Georgieva said.

Earlier this week the World Bank committed \$12bn in aid for developing countries in the form of low-cost loans, grants and technical assistance.



▲ International travel has helped take the coronavirus to 70 countries



Flybe Airline on brink of collapse as health fears deepen crisis

Gwyn Topham
Transport correspondent

Flybe was fighting for survival last night after the coronavirus hit demand for air travel and the government stalled on providing a crucial £100m loan for the regional carrier.

The company is understood to have told ministers it could collapse imminently without government help.

Exeter-based Flybe operates almost two in five of the UK's domestic flights, employing more than 2,000 people, and is a leading carrier at airports including Belfast, Southampton, Manchester and Birmingham.

In January, Flybe was rescued after government efforts led by the then chancellor, Sajid Javid, and the then business secretary, Andrea Leadsom. The measures included some deferral of tax, talks over a loan and promised reviews into regional air connectivity and air passenger duty (APD).

However, both ministers have since left and there has been no evidence that the new chancellor, Rishi Sunak, plans to cut APD in next week's budget, as Flybe had hoped. The impact of the coronavirus, which has battered the airline industry, now threatens Flybe's survival.

Flybe's shareholders first indicated in January that without government assistance it would be unable to continue. But other airlines, led by

the British Airways owner IAG and Ryanair, objected about the prospect of state aid for Flybe, making any bail-out increasingly difficult. The airline told the government that it required a decision on the loan within days or it would not survive the month.

Virgin Atlantic - one of the co-owners of Flybe along with the transport firm Stobart Air and the hedge fund Cyrus Capital - has also been hit by the coronavirus, and yesterday loosened rules on altering flight bookings in an effort to restore passenger confidence.

In the past week, bookings at Virgin are understood to have fallen by almost 50% because of Covid-19 fears, with the carrier expecting a significant hit to revenues. Virgin is putting in place other crisis measures, including cutting executive pay, freezing hiring and pay increases, and offering unpaid leave to ground-based staff.

Flybe and the Department for Transport declined to comment.

Unions said reports of government backsliding were worrying. The Prospect union warned that critical links to the regions would be lost.

Brian Strutton, the general secretary of the British Airline Pilots Association, said: "The government made unequivocal promises to keep Flybe flying and loyal staff and

£100m

The loan that Flybe had been expecting from the government after its close call in January

2,000

Number of people employed by Flybe. The Exeter-based carrier covers many regional routes

▼ People at Ezeiza airport in Buenos Aires wear masks as Argentina reported its first case of coronavirus
PHOTOGRAPH: JUAN IGNACIO RONCORONI/EPA



London City airport Business travel in trouble

Global business travel and airline profits are in deep trouble from coronavirus if the evidence offered at London City airport on a weekday morning is indicative of the travails.

Yesterday the business travel-dominated airport in the shadow of Canary Wharf had as many check-in staff as there were passengers, with customers reporting a decline in demand from European hubs such as Amsterdam and Frankfurt.

“The plane was half-empty,” said Andrew Ross, who works in construction in the Netherlands and flies from Amsterdam to London a few times each year. “I wouldn’t have expected it – it’s usually busier. But it was nice and quiet.”

Barbara Bullmann, a teacher from Dortmund, was leading a group of schoolchildren to their partner school in Scotland and was connecting through City airport. She said the school had discussed postponing the trip but had not wanted it to get in the way of celebrations to mark 30 years of exchanges between the Scottish and German schools.

Airlines including British Airways’ parent company IAG and easyJet have cut routes, frozen staff pay and switched to smaller aircraft in response to plummeting passenger numbers, as they face multibillion-dollar revenue losses.

Airlines have experienced a drop in business travel as companies have imposed travel restrictions and big industry events have been cancelled.

London City airport, owned by a Canadian investment consortium, carries 4.5 million passengers a year, with most of them flying to traditional business destinations.

John Strickland, an aviation consultant, said: “Once [business travel] is lost, it’s lost. I think some companies will have taken the chance to economise on budgets if they can,” he said. “Events that can be substituted by a phone call won’t be repeated.”

Strickland points to lost travel due to the cancellation of large trade shows including the ITB travel fair, which was due to take place in Berlin from 4-8 March, and Barcelona’s Mobile World Congress.

Business passengers generate the majority of revenue for airlines, even though 80% of travellers tended to take a flight for leisure purposes, said Chris Tarry, an aviation analyst. “The business market is less sensitive to fares. The impact is more immediate as they book much nearer to the date. If there are travel restrictions, that will break through to the airlines very quickly,” he said. **Joanna Partridge**

Chris Whitty

The return of the expert: clever, trustworthy, calm

Ian Sample and Lisa O’Carroll

To the broader public, Professor Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer for England, has emerged as the calm voice of authority, the clear-headed expert at the helm of the nation’s strategy to fend off coronavirus. Those who work with him speak in glowing terms: amazing, extraordinary, brilliant.

Such plaudits were not always on the cards. In a lecture at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, soon after he was made a professor there, Whitty put up a copy of his school report. “Don’t think about sending this boy to university, he can barely read,” one audience member recalls it saying.

David Mabey, professor of communicable diseases at the LSHTM, has held a clinic with Whitty for more than a decade, seeing travellers who have returned from abroad with unpleasant exotic diseases. They met when Mabey interviewed a 29-year-old Whitty for a medical registrar position. Whitty was down to the final two, the other a medic in their 40s who had done everything the interviewers could ask for. “Chris hadn’t done as much, but there was something about him that said we’ve got to recruit him, and we did,” Mabey said.

Before long, that something led to Westminster, where Whitty’s role is now as crucial as it is transformative. Whitty’s calm and measured approach seems to have come as a shock to some. “He is properly impressive,” one journalist told the website Politico.

In an era in which the currency of experts has become so devalued, it looked like Downing Street had realised they have some use. On Tuesday, Boris Johnson was flanked by scientists as he explained the government’s coronavirus “battle plan”. Downing Street’s research suggests the public trusts them most with health messages.

The Huffington Post’s political editor Paul Waugh praised the fact Whitty’s “26-page ‘action plan’ was caveated and cautious throughout ... and provided a welcome contrast

‘There was something about Chris that said we had to recruit him’

David Mabey
Clinical colleague

to the overheated rhetoric that often passes for much political debate in parliament”.

Whitty spent much of his childhood in northern Nigeria. His father worked for the British Council but was shot dead in Athens when Whitty was a teenager in an apparent case of mistaken identity. Whitty still speaks warmly of Nigeria, colleagues say, and those childhood days may have shaped his passion for global health. In 2008, he was awarded \$40m by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for malaria research in Africa. A year later, Whitty, a doctor and epidemiologist, was appointed chief scientific adviser to the Department for International Development.

Beyond his medical, research and teaching commitments – students are said to regard him as an excellent lecturer – he gained a law degree and an MBA in his spare time.

If the coronavirus outbreak puts Whitty in the spotlight, that is unlikely to faze him, colleagues say. After the DfID role, Whitty became the chief scientific adviser to the Department of Health, but he doubled up as acting chief scientific adviser to government when the military nerve agent, novichok, was used on the streets of Salisbury. “He’s fine with the pressure,” Mabey said.

Whitty is known for his sense of humour. In 2017, he gave the Harveian Oration at the Royal College of Physicians. At the time, his boss was Dame Sally Davies, then England’s chief medical officer, who had warned against drinking any amount of alcohol. The lecture was meant to end at 6.30pm, and at 6.29pm, Whitty said he was wrapping up on the advice of Dame Sally so as not to encroach on drinking time. “Thank God he’s where he is to maintain some sense of sanity about all this coronavirus business,” Mabey said.



◀ Chris Whitty, left, and Patrick Vallance, the government’s chief scientific officer, in Whitehall yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: JUSTIN NG/UPPA/AVALON

passengers rightly expect this government to keep its word.”

Elsewhere, the German carrier Lufthansa announced it would be grounding more than 150 planes from its 770-strong fleet in response to declining demand.

The International Air Transport Association renewed calls for airports and regulators to relax fees and rules governing slots during the

global crisis. Iata’s director general, Alexandre de Juniac, said: “Airlines are experiencing double-digit declines in demand, and on many routes traffic has collapsed.

“Aircraft are being parked and employees are being asked to take unpaid leave. In this emergency, governments need to consider the maintenance of air transport links in their response.”



▲ Exeter-based Flybe operates almost two in five of the domestic flights in Britain and employs more than 2,000 people PHOTOGRAPH: OLI SCARFF/AFP/GETTY

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Women at risk from delay in ectopic pregnancy diagnosis

Denis Campbell
Health policy editor

Women are at risk of serious harm and death because hospitals do not always diagnose ectopic pregnancies quickly enough, an investigation reveals.

About 12,000 women a year in the

UK have an ectopic pregnancy, when a fertilised egg grows outside the womb, putting them at risk if the fallopian tube containing the foetus ruptures and causes heavy bleeding.

A report released today by the NHS's Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) highlights late diagnosis and the consequent delay

in treatment as a major concern, especially as a result of the condition being mistaken for a urinary tract infection.

NHS patient safety data shows that 30 ectopic pregnancies were missed and led to "serious harm" between April 2017 and August 2018.

HSIB's inquiry was triggered by the case of a 26-year-old woman it called Abby. She attended an NHS minor injuries unit on a Saturday morning complaining of abdominal pain and was sent to A&E, where a doctor thought she was having a miscarriage and referred her to the early pregnancy

'Even if not fatal the effects are distressing and far-reaching'

Dr Lesley Kay
NHS safety investigation

unit. Despite ongoing pain it took until the Tuesday for her to have a trans vaginal ultrasound scan, the most reliable way to diagnose an ectopic pregnancy. By that time a fallopian tube

had already ruptured and she had lost a large amount of blood. She had emergency surgery to remove the tube.

"Ectopic pregnancy is a common cause of death in early pregnancy and, as Abby's case highlighted, even if not fatal the effects are distressing and far-reaching. Women can suffer long-term psychological trauma and it can impact on their future fertility," said Dr Lesley Kay, the HSIB's deputy medical director. "If an ectopic pregnancy is diagnosed early it is likely it can be treated effectively and perhaps avoiding the need for invasive surgery."

Charity boss stays on despite critical report

Karen McVeigh

The head of one of Britain's biggest charities resisted calls to resign yesterday over the damning results of an inquiry into the organisation's handling of allegations of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour against senior managers.

A Charity Commission investigation into Save the Children's handling of claims against Justin Forsyth and Brendan Cox, respectively the charity's former chief executive and policy director, will be published today.

Leaked details of the inquiry, published in the Times, in which the commission accused Save the Children of "serious failures and mismanagement" of the way it dealt with the allegations in 2015, have led to calls for the resignation of Kevin Watkins, chief executive of Save the Children UK.

However, in a statement, Watkins made it clear he would continue in the organisation. He said: "Our leadership team and board have apologised unreservedly to the women affected by the behaviour of these two senior executives. We have made progress on our workplace culture, but still have work to do to strengthen our organisation. We are determined that all our staff should live by the values of respect, compassion and integrity on which Save the Children was founded."

The inquiry found "serious weaknesses" in Save the Children's workplace culture and said that when the claims became public in February 2018 the organisation issued statements that were "not wholly correct"

and had been "unduly defensive" in its response, the reports said.

Save the Children has been mired in allegations that it failed to investigate claims of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour by Forsyth and Cox. Although three complaints were made about Forsyth's "inappropriate behaviour" at Save the Children, his next employer, Unicef, was not told.

Watkins, who was a trustee at the time of the 2015 allegations, said the organisation had since reformed its process for providing staff references. He also said he regretted talking to headhunters involved in Forsyth's recruitment to Unicef.

The Conservative MP Pauline Latham, a member of the international development committee, who questioned Watkins in parliament in 2018, accusing him of being part of a "cosy boys' club", and said he should resign.

Watkins has been criticised by MPs for spending £114,000 on lawyers to try to stop reports of inappropriate behaviour coming out in the media.

Cox, the husband of the murdered MP Jo Cox, was suspended following sexual harassment allegations in 2015; he resigned before an independent inquiry by the law firm Lewis Silkin was completed. In 2018, when the scandal became public, Cox resigned from the two charities he set up after being publicly accused of sexual assault. He denied the claims of assault but admitting making "mistakes" at Save the Children.

Forsyth resigned from Unicef in 2018 after it emerged that three female staff at Save the Children had accused him of inappropriate behaviour from 2011-15. He said he was not resigning because of his "mistakes" at the charity but because of attempts to damage the humanitarian sector.

The commission launched its inquiry into Save the Children's handling of the allegations in April 2018. The charity agreed to stop seeking British aid funding.

Latham said: "Save the Children never took these claims seriously. Now's the time to realise you can't do that. Kevin Watkins was a trustee. He was wrong to spend money that should have gone to children on lawyers to stop reports of this coming out."

Alexia Pepper de Caires, who worked at Save the Children from 2011-15, said: "Kevin Watkins wanted to keep everything under wraps and spent money on expensive lawyers to do this. This caused further harm."



▲ Kevin Watkins was a trustee at Save the Children who later became CEO

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Spitting Image returns with new generation of targets for puppet satire

Mark Sweney

Spitting Image is returning to screens after a 24-year absence this autumn, with prime minister Boris Johnson and his aide Dominic Cummings among the targets. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex and Donald Trump will also feature when the revamp arrives on the streaming service BritBox.

The show, one of the signature programmes of the Thatcher era, is the first original commission to arrive on BritBox, as partners ITV and the BBC look to boost its content amid competition from rivals such as Disney+.

The first of two new series will be available on the service this autumn, with a second to follow next year. In September, the Guardian revealed Spitting Image would be returning.

The new show will lampoon famous figures including Vladimir Putin, Prince Andrew, Adele, Beyoncé, the Tesla founder, Elon Musk, Kim

Kardashian, James Corden and the US presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders. The climate crisis activist Greta Thunberg will be satirised as a “roving reporter giving regular weather updates”.

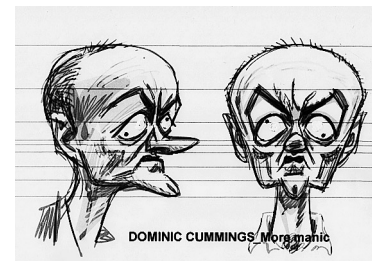
Reemah Sakaan, who runs BritBox, said the broadcaster was aware a number of the figures who will be targeted may not take kindly to their depiction but that the show “would not back away” from satirising them.

“In terms of the humour of the show it runs wild,” she said. “It has always sat squarely in the area of politics and less so popular culture. Where we have political leaders empty chairing interviews and not answering questions put forward to them, the public has a right of response on that. We will be very careful of the caricatures we make. But it doesn’t feel to be the right time to back away.”

She added that the update of the old favourite is not just designed to appeal to fans of the original, but also to a whole new generation of viewers.

▼ Spitting Image’s new Duke and Duchess of Sussex puppets and sketches for Dominic Cummings

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HARRISON/ITV



“Audiences can fall in love with shows they may have never experienced,” she said. “You could see that with Friends [on Netflix].”

The original show ran on ITV for 18 series between 1984 and 1996. It was watched by as many as 15 million viewers at its peak, ridiculing public figures from Margaret Thatcher and Paul Gascoigne to Ronald Reagan and Mick Jagger.

Roger Law, the co-creator of Spitting Image who is executive producing its revival, said: “The new Spitting Image will be global through a uniquely British eye. It will be more outrageous, audacious and salacious than the previous incarnation.

“The timing is right. The puppets are ready, the people have spoken. This autumn we will get BritBox done.”

ITV, which will report its full-year 2019 results today, invested £25m in BritBox last year and has committed £40m this year. Sakaan would not reveal the cost of Spitting Image, but hailed it as a flagship for the service.

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Shropshire bronze age pendant bought for £250,000

Mark Brown

Arts correspondent

A shimmering 3,000 year-old gold sun pendant heralded as one of the most important bronze age finds of the past century of archeology has been acquired by the British Museum.

The astonishingly well-preserved pendant, or bulla, was discovered by a metal detector enthusiast in Shropshire in 2018.

Neil Wilkin, bronze age curator at the British Museum, recalled dropping everything when he first saw it. "I was absolutely flabbergasted, I couldn't believe my eyes," he said. To me it is the most important object from this period, the first age of metal, that has come up in about 100 years."

The pendant has been purchased for



▲ The 'bulla' was purchased by the British Museum PHOTOGRAPH: BRITISH MUSEUM

£250,000 thanks to money from the Art Fund and the American Friends of the British Museum.

Wilkin said it could easily pass as a glorious example of art deco jewellery from the 1930s. In reality it was made

"The most important object of this period to be found in 100 years"

Neil Wilkin

British Museum

by someone who was clearly skilled in their craft around 1,000BC-800BC.

The pendant is decorated with semi-circles and geometric motifs while on one side is a stylised solar design, reflecting the importance of the sun to bronze age farmers.

It was found in a landscape that would have been boggy and wet during the bronze age. Curators think it would have been intentionally cast in to the water as an offering.

It will go on display from November at Shrewsbury museum and art gallery and next year will come to London, to the British Museum.

Throwing away the BBC would be crazy, says new culture secretary

Jim Waterson

Media editor

The BBC is "an institution to be cherished", according to the newly appointed culture secretary, in a partial climbdown from government briefing against the broadcaster in recent weeks.

Oliver Dowden, who is overseeing the consultation on whether to decriminalise non-payment of the licence fee, will warn that the UK would be "crazy to throw [the BBC] away", but will suggest the corporation has failed to reflect recent social movements such as Brexit.

He will say that the BBC needs better to reflect the views of people outside London, suggesting it should do more to report on the country with "genuine impartiality" and have "genuine diversity of thought and experience".

Dowden will nod to recent research suggesting trust in commercial TV news providers such as Sky News and CNN is marginally higher than

in the BBC: "Ultimately, if people don't perceive impartiality, then they won't believe what they see and read and they'll feel it is not relevant to them. In an age of fake news and self-reinforcing algorithms, the need for genuine impartiality is greater than ever," he will say.

While many Labour politicians and supporters have claimed the BBC was biased against their party during the last general election campaign, Conservative backers and Brexit supporters have been more likely to complain to the BBC about what they say is left-wing bias.

After a number of rows during the election campaign, Dominic Cummings, the prime minister's lead aide, has made no secret of his desire to cut the BBC down to size. Others, however, are less convinced the government should be attacking a leading British institution, whose television and radio stations are particularly popular with older members of the public, many of whom vote Conservative.

Dowden will make his first public comments on the BBC at a media conference hosted by Deloitte and Enders Analysis. He will say: "Some of our biggest institutions missed, or were slow to pick up, key political and social trends in recent years. The BBC needs to be closer to, and understand the perspectives of, the whole of the United Kingdom and avoid providing a narrow urban outlook."

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Long-Bailey would rewrite Clause IV to include Labour's green revolution

Heather Stewart

Rebecca Long-Bailey said yesterday she would make protecting the environment a core Labour principle by writing it into the party's constitution.

The shadow business secretary has argued that Labour's green industrial revolution, which she wrote, was not prominent enough in the party's election campaign last year. She said she would seek to redraw Clause IV of the party's constitution, which sets out its political aims, to include environmentalism.

"I'll centre Labour's plans to tackle the climate crisis in everything our party does, and make sure it defines the next election. I know that we can build a winning electoral coalition around our green industrial revolution, uniting working people everywhere with a just, aspirational response to the climate crisis," she said.

Any changes to Labour's constitution would have to be agreed by party members at its annual conference, but Long-Bailey set out a series of principles that she said should guide the process of drawing up what she called a "Clause IV for our time".

The first is "a green economy and a sustainable planet, recognising that socialism and environmentalism must go hand in hand". Other principles included universal provision of high-quality public services; a prosperous economy with a more equal distribution of wealth, ownership and economic power; and an independent foreign policy based on peace, internationalism, human rights, justice and international law.

The long Labour party leadership campaign has featured increasingly detailed policy promises, with Keir Starmer, the frontrunner, publishing "10 pledges", which included nationalisation of "rail, mail, energy and



water", and supporting the abolition of tuition fees.

Lisa Nandy has sought to shake up the race by warning that Labour faces extinction unless it changes radically. Long-Bailey has made clear she is committed to retaining Jeremy Corbyn's leftwing policy stance - but believes it could have been explained and promoted better during last year's election campaign, saying her colleagues need to become "salespeople for socialism".

Last night Starmer and Long-Bailey appeared in separate interviews with the BBC's Andrew Neil, and Starmer was challenged over the source of his funding.

Starmer said the largest donation to

▲ Long-Bailey says Labour can 'build a coalition' around green policies

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER THOMOND/
THE GUARDIAN

'I'll put plans to tackle the climate crisis centre in everything our party does, ensuring it defines the next election'

Rebecca Long-Bailey
Leadership candidate

his Labour leadership campaign had been the £100,000 from a like-minded lawyer he had already declared. He said he was complying with Labour's rules for declaring donations, and said the £100,000 contribution, details of which were published on Tuesday, was the largest he had received.

Long-Bailey was challenged repeatedly by Neil over her role in helping to create contracts for the NHS under the provisions of the private finance initiative (PFI) when she worked as a lawyer in Manchester.

She said PFI was "the only game in town" at the time; and that she had become an MP to try and change what she called "the intricacies and the insidious nature of PFI".

PM warned over denials about Irish Sea checks

Lisa O'Carroll

Brexit correspondent

The UK will have a "catastrophe" on its hands unless Boris Johnson and his cabinet stop claiming there will be no checks in the Irish Sea as part of the Brexit arrangements, manufacturing leaders and politicians have warned.

"If they don't, there is going to be a horrible crash at the end of this year, and if not then in four years," said Stephen Kelly, the chief executive of the group Manufacturing Northern Ireland. Speaking at a debate at the Institute for Government thinktank in London yesterday, he added: "We are potentially facing pretty catastrophic outcomes if we don't get this right."

Special trading arrangements will apply in Northern Ireland from 1 January 2021 whether or not Johnson strikes a trade deal with the EU, in order to prevent a hard border in the island of Ireland.

Stephen Farry, the new elected MP for North Down and deputy leader of the Alliance party, said it was a fiction to think a free-trade agreement with the EU would wash the checks away. "Even the most far-reaching deal isn't going to fully address that," he said. If Johnson reneged on the deal he would have a "cowboy economy" and a "no-man's land" with neither British nor EU rules being enforced, warned Farry.

The conference heard the software needed to manage the new arrangements could not be built within 10 months and that Johnson's apparent "tearing up" of the arrangements, one month after signing them, would fuel mistrust of Britain. Johnson and his ministers have said the Northern Ireland protocol can be applied without physical checks or extra paperwork.

Kelly warned that the EU faced a "recurring nightmare" if they did not get this right as Stormont had a vote on the arrangements every four years.

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BEYOND LIMITS

Engineers 'massaged Grenfell fire safety checks'

Robert Booth

Social affairs correspondent

Engineers working on Grenfell Tower set out to "massage" the fire safety strategy to get it past official checks, and privately admitted plans to refurbish the building were making "a crap condition worse", the inquiry into the disaster that killed 72 people has heard.

A senior fire engineer working on the refurbishment for the consultant Exova Warrington Fire said in an internal email that the proposal to add additional flats around a single staircase in the 1970s block was "not great".

The email revealed that after having spoken to the architect, Bruce Soune, about the plans in August 2012, Cate Cooney, a senior consultant at Exova, told a colleague: "Basically I have told him we can massage the proposal to something acceptable, with separation, lobbies etc, but that there are approval risks in the project on the shaft/MOE front." FF normally means firefighting shaft, while MOE is used to abbreviate means of escape.

The email was sent four years before



▲ Messages of condolence at the base of Grenfell tower, where 72 residents died in a catastrophic fire in June 2017 PHOTOGRAPH: HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

the refurbishment was signed off by the building control department at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, which also owned the block.

The inquiry chairman, Sir Martin Moore-Bick, has already ruled that the building was refurbished in breach of safety regulations. Several of the people who died perished on the single staircase that served the building and became smoke-logged. Others realised they could not survive an attempt to escape the tower and died in their flats.

Cooney continued: "They are making an existing crap condition worse so it's a matter of working the worse [sic] bits out and making the new stuff work. No sprinklers wanted."

She asked if Exova had any contacts at the building control department at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, which would be responsible for approving the works' compliance with building regulations.

The email to her colleague, Andrew Martyn, emerged on the third day on which the architect, Soune, was cross-examined about his role as the project architect for Studio E Architects.

He was taken ill after two hours of questioning yesterday, the third consecutive day he had given evidence, after appearing close to tears. The inquiry chairman later told the hearing: "I'm very sorry to tell you ... it's not going to be possible for him to continue giving evidence today or even tomorrow."

Before he fell ill, Soune had told the inquiry that the Exova email "raises a level of concern I was not aware of".

Asked whether Studio E had considered installing sprinklers in the block, he said: "It wouldn't be something we would hold a view on. We would have expected the fire consultant to recommend or building control to advise any requirement." The inquiry continues.

Supreme court head: judges do not want to take MPs' power

Owen Bowcott

Judges are not staging a power grab to take over parliament's role and do not make up law "as we go along", the new president of the supreme court has told a parliamentary committee.

In a robust defence of judicial independence in the face of government plans to change the UK's constitution, Lord Reed of Allermuir warned that US-style confirmation hearings to select judges on the basis of political views would be "really intolerable".

It was the first appearance by Lord Reed and the deputy supreme court president, Lord Hodge, before the House of Lords constitution committee since their appointment at the beginning of the year. They have taken up their roles at a sensitive political time, with Boris Johnson's government promising two commissions on legal affairs, one aimed at reviewing criminal justice and a more wide ranging constitution, democracy and rights commission.

Few details of either commission's scope, personnel, timing or aims have emerged. Some fear they will enable the government to extract revenge for two Brexit-related landmark defeats in the supreme court involving article 50 and the prime minister's attempt to prorogue parliament.

Shortly before being made attorney general, Suella Braverman, a Conservative MP and passionate Brexiter, wrote an article on the Conservative Home website urging the government to "take back control" from an interfering judiciary.

Asked at the constitution committee yesterday about alleged interference, Lord Reed said: "It's not a power grab by us."

Judges, he said, were merely giving effect to legislation, including the Human Rights Act, previously passed by parliament.

"We don't make it up as we go along," he told the committee. Judges were already "repelling" cases where they considered that judicial review claims were brought on "political rather than legal grounds".

He acknowledged that the Brexit crisis, and recent cases brought by Gina Miller, the constitutional campaigner, had subjected the UK's constitutional arrangements to a degree of "stress testing".



▲ Lord Reed said selecting judges on political terms would be intolerable

Amazon region losing 'carbon sink' capacity as climate crisis takes hold

Fiona Harvey

Environment correspondent

Tropical forests are absorbing less carbon dioxide from the air, a factor that reduces their ability to be "carbon sinks" and which brings closer the prospect of an accelerating climate breakdown.

The Amazon region could instead turn into a source of carbon in the atmosphere, instead of being one of the biggest absorbers of the gas.

The change could happen as soon as the next decade because of the damage caused by loggers and farming interests and the impacts of the climate crisis, research finds.

The study, published in the journal *Nature*, tracked 300,000 trees over 30 years, providing the first large-scale evidence of the decline in carbon uptake by tropical forests.

With that decline it is likely that climate breakdown will be much more severe in its impact, and that the world

will have to cut down much faster on carbon-producing activities.

"One of the most worrying impacts of climate change has already begun," said Simon Lewis, professor at the school of geography, Leeds University, and an author of the research. "This is decades ahead of even the most pessimistic climate models."

Forests lose their ability to absorb carbon as trees die and dry out from drought and higher temperatures, but the loss of forest area from logging, burning and other forms of exploitation is also a leading factor in the loss of carbon sinks.

For the past 30 years the amount of carbon absorbed by intact tropical forests has fallen, finds the study involving nearly 100 scientific institutions. The forests now take up a third less carbon than they did in the 1990s.

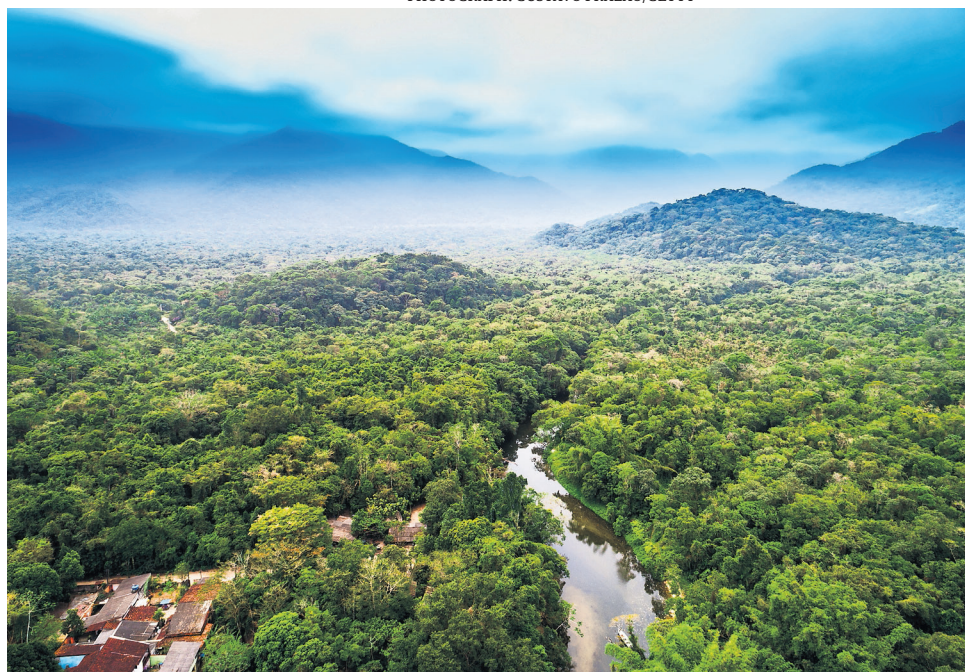
That trend is likely to continue as forests come under increasing threat from climate change and human exploitation. The typical tropical forest could become a carbon source by

the 2060s, Lewis said. "Humans have been lucky so far, as tropical forests are mopping up lots of our pollution, but they can't keep doing that indefinitely. We need to curb fossil fuel emissions before the global carbon cycle starts working against us."

At Cop26, the UN climate talks to be held in Glasgow in November, many countries are expected to present plans for reaching net zero emissions by mid-century. But some

▼ *The Brazilian Amazon. A study of 300,000 trees has found reduced carbon uptake in tropical forests*

PHOTOGRAPH: GUSTAVO FRAZAO/GETTY



46

Billions of tonnes of CO₂ gas from human activities removed by tropical forests in the 1990s

25

Billions of tonnes of CO₂ removed in last 10 years - down to just 6% of global human emissions

rich countries and many firms plan to lower their emissions via offsetting, by replanting or creating new woodlands.

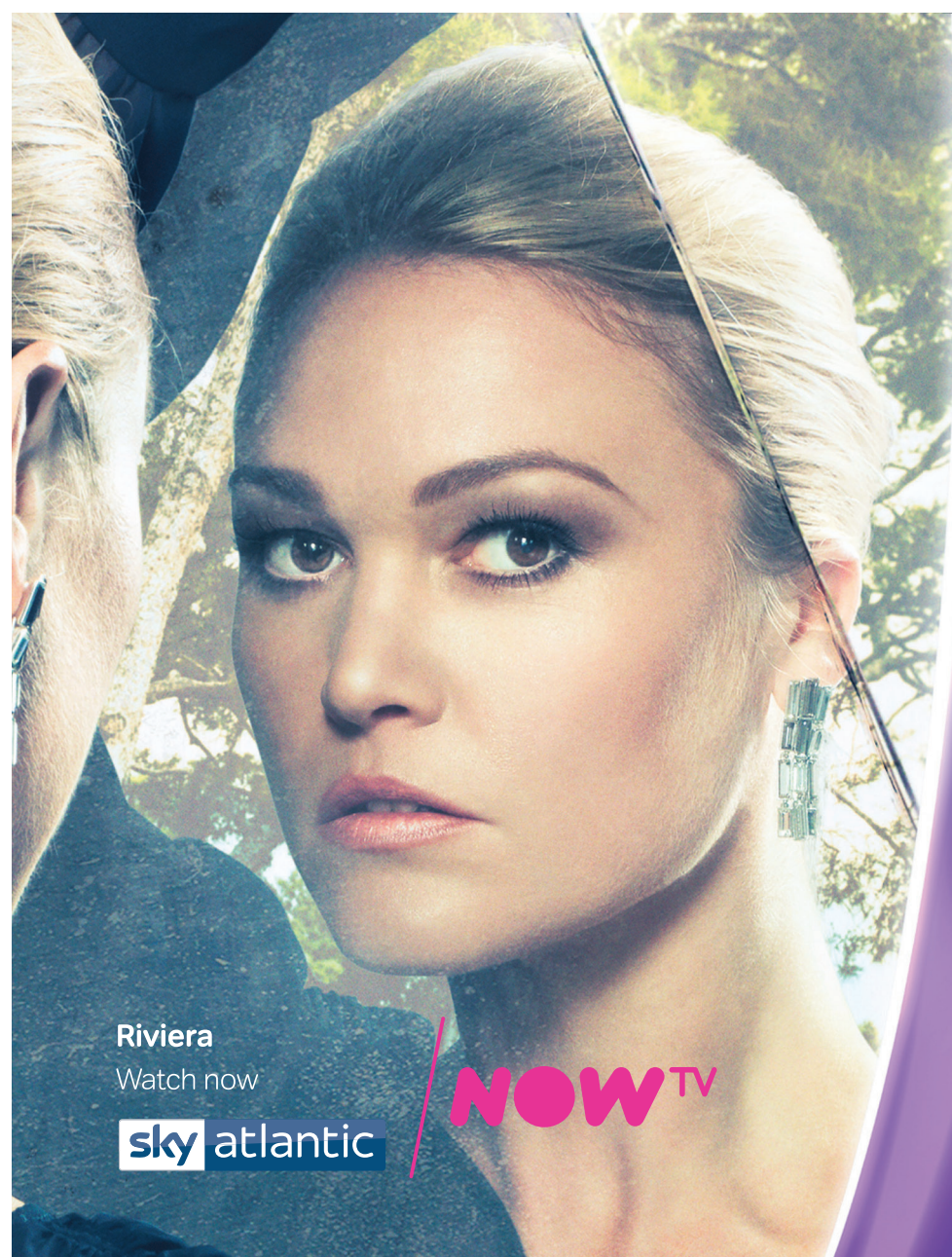
"There is a lot of talk about offsetting but the reality is that every country and every sector needs to reach zero emissions," said Lewis.

"Use of forests as an offset is largely a marketing tool for companies to try to continue with business as usual."

The uptake of carbon from the atmosphere by tropical forests peaked

in the 1990s, when about 46bn tonnes were removed from the air, equivalent to about 17% of carbon dioxide emissions from human activities. By the last decade that had fallen to 25bn tonnes, or 6% of global emissions. The difference is the same as 10 years of fossil fuel emissions from the UK, Germany, France and Canada together.

Scientists have warned of climate tipping points" which when passed will condemn us to runaway heating.



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Dance review

Farce deepens into an unmissable revelation

Revisor

Sadler's Wells, London

★★★★★

Sanjoy Roy

Actors speak, dancers move. In *Revisor*, the choreographer Crystal Pite and the theatre-maker Jonathon Young once again sync their worlds. As with the searing *Betroffenheit* and the wire-taut *The Statement*, *Revisor* finds Pite's phenomenal dancers performing a kind of physical lip-syncing to scripted voiceovers by Young's actors. The result is astonishing not for its imitation but for its exactitude: the rhythms and intonations of speech drive every gesture, stance and step.

Choreographically it's riveting, both for the inventive articulation of individual bodies and for the fine-tuned dynamics of the ensemble, as responsive as conversation itself.

Young's text derives from Gogol's 1836 play *The Government Inspector* (*Revizor* in Russian), a tale of petty bureaucracy, mistaken identity, mixed motives and revolving doors – in short, a farce. With their hunches, strides, flinches and shrugs the dancers give the script an exaggerated, silent-film feel: broad humour in fine form. Yet there's an undertow of unease: body and voice (and indeed sound and lighting) may be super-synced, but they're also uncannily dissociated.

Just as the action seems on the point of revelation, the music turns to a throb, the stage is cleared of its set and the performers replay the first act to a voiceover that is more choreographic than dramatic. It describes moves and figures, gives



▲ *Revisor* derives from Gogol's 1836 play *The Government Inspector*

PHOTOGRAPH: TRISTRAM KENTON/THE GUARDIAN

The mood is of unnameable anxiety, as if in a dream. When the farce returns, it's laced with duplicity

stage instructions and enumerates scenes. Loosened from the ties of speech and script, the dancing is stretchier and less staccato, but instead of release, the mood is of unnameable anxiety, as in a dream. There are unnerving glitches where the choreography sticks like a scratched record. If this act revisits the first, which is the real version and which the revised? When the farce returns, it's irredeemably laced with a disturbing duplicity.

Revisor's handling of material is virtuoso. I wanted to see it again, immediately.

Until 5 March

Police will not be investigated over Flack case

Matthew Weaver

The police watchdog has decided against investigating how the Metropolitan police dealt with an assault case against the *Love Island* host Caroline Flack. The 40-year-old presenter killed herself on 15 February while awaiting trial on charges that she assaulted her boyfriend, Lewis Burton.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said yesterday there was no indication of a causal link between the actions or omissions of the police and Flack's death. The Met had referred itself to the watchdog, as is required when a member of the public dies after recent contact with police.

The IOPC noted that while Flack was in custody Met officers arranged for her to see a healthcare professional and followed relevant procedures.

Separately, the Crown Prosecution Service has said it will review its handling of the assault case against Flack.

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Artists and spies boost women in blue plaque citations

Mark Brown

Arts correspondent

Second world war spies, suffrage organisations and one of the most important British artists of the 20th century are to get blue plaques in a push to correct a historical gender imbalance with the scheme.

The London scheme has been running since 1866 but only 14% of about 950 blue plaques celebrate women. In 2018 English Heritage called on the public for more nominations, saying that figure was “far too low”.

Yesterday it announced details of six new blue plaques for 2020. They are for the secret agents Christine Granville and Noor Inayat Khan, the artist Barbara Hepworth, and the first world war leader and botanist Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan. They also commemorate the headquarters of two suffrage organisations.

Anna Eavis, the curatorial director and secretary of the blue plaques panel, said efforts to address the gender imbalance were yielding results. “It is a long road but we are well on our way to receiving equal number of public nominations for men and women. There are now more women shortlisted than men, and 2020 will see more plaques to women than we have unveiled in 20 years.”

Gwynne-Vaughan will be the first to get her plaque, which will be placed on her home of 50 years in Bedford Avenue in Bloomsbury, London. She was much admired for her leadership during the first world war helping to form



▲ Honoured by a blue plaque in London, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth, pictured in 1968

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

▼ UK's first and longest serving female special agent, Christine Granville, is also recognised



the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and lay foundations and set standards for all women's air services. She was also an important figure in botany and mycology and has a number of fungal species named in her honour.

The renowned sculptor Hepworth is mostly associated with St Ives in Cornwall and West Yorkshire, but she also lived in a basement flat in St John's Wood with her first husband, John Skeaping. It was there that she created one of her earliest mother and child sculptures, a motif that was to recur frequently in her work. The plaque will mark both Hepworth and Skeaping.

Granville, a Polish countess born Krystyna Skarbek, was the first and longest-serving female special agent working for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) in the second world war. Her many acts of heroism included skiing out of Nazi-occupied Poland with the first evidence of Operation Barbarossa - the Nazi plans for invading Soviet Russia. The Granville plaque will be placed on the west London hotel where she lived for three years until her death in 1952.

Khan was also renowned for her service with the SOE and has been called Britain's only female Muslim war heroine. The first female radio operator sent into Nazi-occupied France, she was shot by the Gestapo in 1944 and awarded a posthumous George Cross in 1949.

Blue plaques will also be erected on London buildings that were the headquarters of the two main suffrage organisations, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, formed in 1897 and led by Millicent Fawcett, and the more militant Women's Social and Political Union, co-founded in Manchester in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst.

The first female recipient of a blue plaque was the actor Sarah Siddons, in 1876, though that sign no longer survives. By the time English Heritage took over the scheme in 1986 there were only 45 plaques celebrating women. Since then there have been more than 80, including those for the MP Nancy Astor, the computing innovator Ada Lovelace and the DNA pioneer Rosalind Franklin.

A new start for Genesis: band reunite for first tour in 13 years

Laura Snapes

Genesis have announced they will reunite for a series of UK stadium shows in November and December. “There's a Genesis sound which is still there,” said guitarist Mike Rutherford. “I missed it, it's nice to play it again.”

The prog rock band announced the Last Domino tour on Zoe Ball's BBC Radio 2 breakfast show. Rutherford said: “It feels great, it feels the right time, we're looking forward to doing it. A lot of our contemporaries have been playing a lot - we've done two shows in the UK in the last 28 years.”

The group - now comprising Rutherford, the vocalist Phil Collins and keyboardist Tony Banks - said that they would be joined by Collins's 18-year-old son, Nicholas, on drums for the shows. “He plays like me and he kind of has the same attitude as me,” said Collins. “So that was a good starter.”

Quizzed on the potential setlist, Collins said: “There are songs you feel you have to play because the audience would feel cheated if you didn't, then it's a question of putting the rest of the stuff together from songs we haven't played for a long time.” The group last played together in 2007.

Tickets go on sale at 9am tomorrow.



▲ Mike Rutherford, Tony Banks and Phil Collins announcing their tour

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Crime

Boy aged 16 found dead in London scrubland

A 16-year-old boy has been found dead after a group of 30 men were seen armed with baseball bats near a railway station.

Ahmed Shamur, from Manor Park in east London, was found with head injuries on scrubland near Gallions Reach DLR station just after 8.30am on Tuesday. His family had reported him missing in the early hours of that morning after he did not come home.

DCI Larry Smith said: "A young teenage boy has died and his family and friends are devastated. They want answers and they deserve all the help the public can give them. We need anyone with information to tell us what they know. In particular, we want to speak to anyone who was in the vicinity of Gallions Reach at around 8pm on Monday.

"If you were a passing motorist using a dashcam you may have recorded something vital. Please make contact. My officers are ready to take your call and you will be fully supported."

Anyone with information can call police on 020-8345 3985 quoting CAD 1573/03MAR, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or online. **PA Media**

PHOTOGRAPH: MATT ALEXANDER/PA



Suits you Tilda Swinton, right, and the costume designer Sandy Powell with her suit signed by stars at the Baftas and Oscars. It is being auctioned to raise money to save the director Derek Jarman's Kent home.

Housing

More than 2m over-55s in peril in their homes

More than 2 million people aged over 55 live in homes that endanger their health, according to a report.

Accidents and illnesses caused by dangerous homes cost the NHS £1.4bn a year, found Home and Dry, a report by the Centre for Ageing Better and Care & Repair England. Anna Dixon of the Centre for Ageing Better said: "The NHS spends £513m on emergency treatment for people over-55 who live in the poorest quality housing and suffered incidents linked to non-decent homes." The average non-decent home could be brought up to a decent standard for £28,660. A third of these homes could be repaired for less than £1,000, but previous funding has been withdrawn, research found. The report says 4.3m homes in England do not meet basic standards of decency.

A government spokesperson said: "The government has invested more than £4bn in helping people live independently and safely in their homes. The government's National Planning Policy Framework also makes clear that councils must take older people's needs into account when planning for housing."

Amelia Hill

Policing

Senior Met officer faces sack after conviction

One of Britain's most senior black female officers, who was praised for helping victims of the Grenfell disaster, faces being sacked from the Metropolitan police.

The force has set a date of 13 March for a fast-track hearing after Supt Robyn Williams, 54, was convicted by a jury of possessing an indecent image of a child.

While the Metropolitan Black Police Association has said her trial was an example of institutional racism, some Met chiefs think the jury verdict means she lied.

Williams was sent an unsolicited video of a child being abused in February 2018 by her sister, who wanted the paedophile behind it hunted down and caught. It was sent via WhatsApp and Williams said she never watched it, which the jury appeared to accept in acquitting her of a charge of covering up knowledge about the video to protect her sister.

Williams, 54, is appealing against her conviction by majority verdict in November 2019. The court of appeal is yet to decide whether it will hear her case. Williams is accused of gross misconduct by the Met.

Vikram Dodd

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Transgender man fights ruling that he cannot be named father

Robert Booth

“Mother” is a gendered term and so should not be used to describe a transgender man who gave birth in 2018 after transitioning from female to male, the court of appeal has been told.

Freddy McConnell, a journalist who writes for the Guardian, is appealing against a high court ruling that he could not be named as the father or parent on his child’s birth certificate.

Sir Andrew McFarlane, the president of the family division, last year ruled that motherhood was about being pregnant and giving birth regardless of whether the person who does so was considered a man or a woman in law. McConnell held a gender recognition

certificate that made it clear the law considered him male.

Representing him, Hannah Markham QC said McFarlane was “wrong to focus on giving birth as the determining issue when deciding parental role” on the birth certificate and that the judge “fell into error in determining the term ‘mother’ not to be a gendered term”.

She said the judge had failed to consider whether the current birth registration system was “fit for purpose”. She argued that giving birth was not the determining issue when deciding the parental role described on an administrative document.

“In society, being a mother is a social construct and for a person who is trying to move away from those gendered terms because of their

gender dysphoria, then that is an offence to their right to a private life, an offence to their being and identity,” Markham said. She told the court the situation had caused McConnell distress, and the impact on him had not fully been taken into account.

“We are talking about the impact on transgender people of being misgendered and it is the right and responsibility of this court to ensure that this does not continue,” she said. “Parenthood has many hats and what we mustn’t do is tie this up in a gendered way.”

The legal dispute began when McConnell went to register his child’s birth and the registrar insisted he be recorded as “mother”. His journey to parenthood was captured in a feature film, *Seahorse*. He said he was

“saddened” by the decision which said had “serious implications for non-traditional family structures”.

McConnell started testosterone treatment in April 2013 and underwent chest reshaping surgery in Florida. In 2016, he sought advice from a fertility clinic about becoming pregnant. His hormone treatment was suspended, which had the effect of reversing some of the gender-reassignment process. He became pregnant in 2017 using sperm from a donor.

His unwillingness to be recorded as his child’s mother plunged him into a web of different laws. His intrauterine insemination fertility treatment was governed by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 which defines treatments as “assisting women to carry children”, his gender reassignment was under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and he registered the birth under the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 which allows for people to tick “father/parent” only where a woman is to be a second female parent.

The appeal hearing is set to conclude today.



▲ Rev Canon Mpho Tutu van Furth is the daughter of Desmond Tutu

Lesbian priests to preach on eve of Anglican conference

Harriet Sherwood

LGBT+ campaigners will hold a church service led by two high-profile married lesbian priests on the eve of the Lambeth conference, a once-a-decade assembly of Anglican bishops from around the world expected to be dominated by conflicts over sexuality and marriage.

The move is likely to rile conservative bishops who maintain that homosexuality is a sin.

An “inclusive” eucharist at a church in Canterbury will be presided over by the Rt Rev Mary Glasspool, the assistant bishop in New York.

The preacher will be the Rev Canon Mpho Tutu van Furth, a daughter of Desmond Tutu, the veteran South African anti-apartheid campaigner.

The service is intended to send a strong message to up to 1,000 bishops from 165 countries who are due to gather at the University of Kent at the end of July to discuss issues facing the worldwide Anglican church.

The split over sexuality - between those who seek to uphold “biblical truth” and those who want inclusivity - dominated the last Lambeth conference, in 2008, leading Rowan Williams, then archbishop of Canterbury, to warn that the church was in “grave peril”.

Tutu van Furth, who stepped aside as an Anglican priest in South Africa following her same-sex marriage said her message at the eucharist would be one of a “Christian welcome and hospitality”.

Glasspool, the first married lesbian bishop in the global Anglican church, said the inclusive service would carry an important message.

“The LGBT+ community in the UK and other places might not understand that they are invited to celebrate at the Christian table. We need to make it known that everyone is included - all are invited to this particular celebration.”

She said Justin Welby, Williams’ successor had “gone out of his way to uninvite individual persons in a breach of hospitality”.



Taking wing again

Lauren Cuthbertson as Odette and Gary Avis as Von Rothbart in a revived production of *Swan Lake* by the Royal Ballet, which opens at the Royal Opera House today.



PHOTOGRAPH: TRISTRAM KENTON/ THE GUARDIAN

Bid of £50,000 softens Princess Anne hero’s bravery medal sale

PA Media

The George Medal for bravery awarded to a former heavyweight boxer for helping to thwart an attempted kidnap of Princess Anne has sold for £50,000 at auction.

Ronnie Russell, 72, punched Ian Ball twice in the head as he tried to kidnap Anne at gunpoint in central London in March 1974.

He was awarded the George Medal by the Queen, who told him: “The medal is from the Queen, but I want to thank you as Anne’s mother.”

Russell, who lives in Bristol, has treasured the medal ever since but put it up for auction to pay for his funeral costs after suffering from ill-health.

He was at the Dix Noonan Webb auction house in London yesterday to see the medal, which had been expected to fetch up to £20,000, sell for £50,000 to a private collector in the UK.

Speaking afterwards, Russell said: “For something I thought that I would never sell, I never believed it would sell for this amount. I am absolutely blown away with this price and it gives me opportunities to do things that I never thought we could.”

The medal was sold with related items, including a letter from Downing Street informing Russell of the award, a telegram from the princess royal and a letter from the Metropolitan police commissioner.

Russell, who boxed at the Repton Club in Bethnal Green, east London, was an area manager for an office cleaning firm in the capital at the time of the kidnap attempt.

He had been working in Princess

Square on Pall Mall on the evening of 20 March 1974 and was returning home to Strood, Kent, at about 8pm.

Ball had blocked the princess’s car with his own as it drove along the Mall towards Buckingham Palace, and fired a series of shots through the rear window.

Russell, who is 6ft 2in and weighed 17 stone rushed to Anne’s assistance when he realised what was happening.

He later recalled how the princess told Ball: “Just go away and don’t be such a silly man,” as he tried to drag her from the car.

“I hit [Ball] as hard as I could - if he had been a tree he would have fallen over - and he was flat on the floor face down,” Russell said.



Inside agri-valley

Backlash as Dutch go from famine to feast

Hi-tech Netherlands university is driving the tiny nation's controversial food export industry

Vidhi Doshi
Wageningen

In the low-lying Gelderse Valley some 53 miles east of Amsterdam, a Dutch university is changing how humans eat. There, a bright-eyed press officer with Willy-Wonka flair is showing me the miracles of modern food science. One laboratory door swings open to reveal giant, fragrant basil leaves growing under multicoloured lights. In a greenhouse nearby, thousands of tomatoes are suspended mid-air like plump, levitating Buddhas.

A few steps away, I shake hands with a world-famous banana scientist, who dreams of introducing Europeans to the many varieties of banana eaten across Asia, Africa and Latin America, and ending the tyranny of the common yellow Cavendish.

For miles in every direction, fields bulge with crops; in some, drones monitor soil fertility and giant luminescent panels light up greenhouses at night. The press officer is accustomed to impressing visitors. "What do you think?" he asks at every turn.

The Netherlands is not a big place. You can drive across the whole country from the north to the south in under four hours. And yet it ranks consistently among the world's top food exporting nations, in terms of gross value.

The country's surpluses are mind-boggling; exporting more eggs and cocoa butter than any nation on Earth, how does the second largest exporter of tomatoes and onions also produce such outsize quantities of dairy and potatoes? The mystery of how this tiny patch of northern Europe does it draws government delegations, multinational companies and agriculture students from around the world to marvel at the nucleus of the Dutch innovation juggernaut: Wageningen University.

Wageningen is set to face its biggest challenge yet. By 2050, according to some estimates, the number of mouths to feed on Earth will exceed 9.7 billion. That's the equivalent of having a second



Europe and a second Africa on the planet. To feed all of humanity, according to the World Resources Institute, we will need to produce 56% more food while avoiding further deforestation. Climate change will not help: pests will multiply as temperatures rise; floods, droughts and extreme weather will ravage crops; and desertification will cut arable land.

If the answer to the problem of humanity's survival is going to come out of a laboratory, there's a good chance that it will happen in Wageningen. Multinational companies and startups are pouring money into the collective brainpower of the university's 8,000 international food scientists.

The other option - championed by a small but spirited group of Wageningen students - is rather more drastic. The Earth has been driven to crisis point, the students say, by the Wageningen establishment's neurosis about surplus and production. Hunger continues, even as agriculture occupies 40%-50% of the Earth's habitable land, guzzles 70% of all the fresh water, and adds

▲ *Traditional attempts to 'feed the world' have relied on food aid*
PHOTOGRAPH: GUILLEM SARTORIO/AFP/GETTY

about 10-12% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans. The cycle of year-on-year growth fuels unnecessary demand, while market-led models of resource allocation cause huge inequalities in access to food. The Wageningen model, one student tells me, is flawed. "The question of how to feed the world is a political one," she says.

Global hunger

Louise Fresco, one of the world's leading food scientists and president of Wageningen University, has been thinking about how to feed the world since age 15. In 1967, the budding scientist saw photographs of a famine in Biafra, Nigeria, and awakened to the urgency of global hunger. The images set Fresco off on journeys to Papua New Guinea and Democratic Republic of the Congo, where she saw scarcity first-hand. "I contemplated how little was available to the world's population," she writes.

Fresco was born in the aftermath of one of the most traumatic chapters in modern Dutch history, a manmade famine known as the Hunger Winter during the second world war in which about 20,000 Dutch people starved to death in a few months, as wartime rations in some regions fell to 500 calories per day. The echo of this event reverberates through Fresco's discourse, and through many conversations at Wageningen. "There was a great sense that something had to be done, that there is more than just going about your own life and being rich," Fresco says in an interview at her office.

The Dutch obsession with agricultural surplus is at the heart of the story of Europe. In the years

after the war, the Netherlands' agriculture minister Sicco Mansholt piloted large-scale mechanised farming. Heavy machinery, chemical fertilisers, and new research and technology were part of a modernising mission that Mansholt later evangelised across the continent as the first European commissioner for agriculture through the common agricultural policy (CAP). He sought to build a postwar Europe of plenty while lifting small farmers out of poverty and integrating Europe's economies.

But by the 1980s, CAP's guaranteed minimum prices for farmers led to production overdrive, environmental devastation and obscene amounts of waste: Europe was paying millions to store hoards of unwanted meat, undrinkable "wine lakes" and mountains of grain and butter. Agriculture was devouring nearly 70% of the EU budget, disproportionately rewarding the biggest producers.

Public opinion turned against Europe's state-sponsored excesses, in favour of efficiency-driven American capitalism. Wageningen was suffering an existential crisis. "There was a questioning (sic) of - should we take responsibility, shouldn't the market do things?" says Fresco, who at the time was a rising star at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, would have been aware of the waste mountains and the first international conversations about sustainability. Wageningen turned to the giants of industry to keep itself afloat.

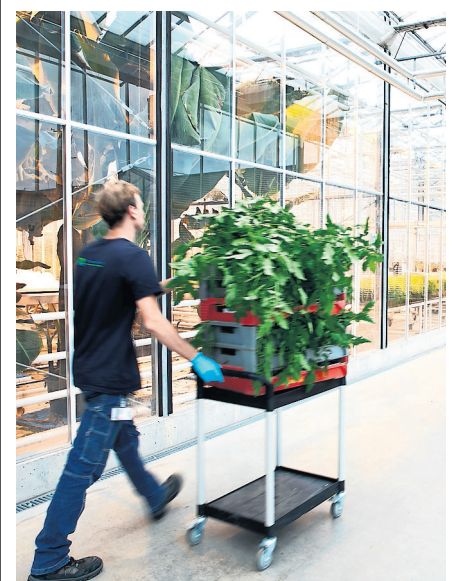
Walking around Wageningen with Fresco, Wageningen's new swagger propelled by big money is evident. Sleek corporate buildings of companies such as Unilever and Dutch dairy giant FrieslandCampina blend seamlessly into the campus architecture and the old university town has rebranded as "Food Valley" - a shiny agri-tech mecca with one big goal: shaping the future of food.

This mission-driven Wageningen is providing dazzling solutions to humanity's impending food supply problem. As an example, one of the university's star scientists Leo Marcelis is pioneering vertical farming techniques as a means to reduce land use.

The potential is immense, says Marcelis, conjuring skyscrapers of herbs and abandoned buildings stacked with vegetable farms. But there is a small-print environmental cost attached, Marcelis admits. His vertical farms require huge inputs of artificial light, and are partially funded by Phillips, the lightbulb manufacturer.

The close relationship between Wageningen scientists and industry makes many people uncomfortable. The Dutch investigative journalist Vincent Harmsen from One World magazine recently went to court asking Wageningen to release information about scientists' communications with agrochemical firms Syngenta, Monsanto and Bayer.

The university refused, and a court upheld its right to do so, on the grounds that Wageningen University and Research's funding is partially private. But without understanding the relationships between scientists and companies, Harmsen argues,



56%

Additional food production estimated necessary by 2050 to feed a projected global population of 9.7 billion

70%

Share of global fresh water used by agriculture currently occupying up to half of the Earth's habitable land

20,000

Deaths in the Netherlands during the second world war due to starvation, prompting Dutch agronomy research



◀ Coloured lights shine on plants at a laboratory in Wageningen University, where some activist students, bottom, are challenging the value of research carried out on campus into GM technologies, below, which attracts funding from global agritech firms

PHOTOGRAPHS:
JUDITH JOCKEL/
THE GUARDIAN

it is impossible to discern scientific fact from sponsored fiction.

Fresco argues that collaboration between private companies and science is necessary, and can be positive. She is a paid non-executive director of the multinational Syngenta where she says her role involves advising the company about sustainability. “We work with all kinds of industry because we fundamentally believe that these big companies have such an influence in the world that they need to be helped to formulate sustainable products and ideas,” she says.

Meanwhile, on an abandoned apple orchard in Wageningen, a handful of students are planting a forest. In it, they will grow pumpkins, walnuts and berries. The aim is to demonstrate that small-scale farming is viable and more environmentally friendly than industrial mega-farms. “Louise Fresco still thinks quite a lot in terms of: ‘We have to feed the world,’” says Louise Vercruyse, one of the students planting the farm. “I’m not really into that. You have to first look at why the world can’t feed itself.”

The young Wageningeners believe profit-seeking industrial farming has driven the planet to the edge of crisis. Dutch bees and butterflies are vanishing, while Dutch children suffer from pollution-induced asthma at rates higher than any country on the continent.

Nitrogen levels, caused in part by Dutch dairy farms, when mapped from space resemble a wound over the country. To combat emissions, in 2019 Dutch courts delayed 18,000 construction projects and cut the national speed limit.

The activist students say Wageningen’s curriculum is still prioritising industry over the environment. To introduce new ideas to her peers, a student, Eva van Dijk, organises lunchtime lectures by the forest farming champion Wouter van Eck. He promotes the foraging for or cultivation of food in ecologically diverse forest ecosystems.

Van Eck says the calculations used to bump the Netherlands up in the export rankings are misleading. They are based on the monetary value of exports rather than the quantity or nutritional value of the produce. The Dutch dairy industry, for example, buys huge amounts of fodder from Brazil, using up farmland that could be used to grow food for Brazil’s population.

To Van Eck, the idea that the Netherlands’ surpluses feed the world is a hollow and dangerous lie. “The Netherlands is a black hole for food production,” he says.

“Wageningen is not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.”

Wageningen students who support Van Eck’s approach organise

‘We work with all kinds of industry because we believe they need to be helped to formulate sustainable ideas’

Louise Fresco
Wageningen University



underground seed exchanges, encouraging farmers to bypass the highly regulated, industry-dominated seed market.

Some organise events where they throw seed “bombs” into parks and fields to break the monotony of the country’s controlled green spaces.

The students believe the rational response to ecological crisis is to produce and consume less, even if it causes an economic backslide. This idea is catching fire around the world. Economists, such as Giorgos Kallis, who champion “degrowth”, say western economies have achieved an optimal state, and should stop chasing GDP-driven yearly growth and focus instead on limiting environmental damage.

The young Wageningeners are aware they will live through an era of environmental calamity that will shape their lives. Their university years lack outward signs of frivolous indulgence and are characterised by astounding personal choices.

Minimise waste

At Droeendaal, an ecological complex near the university, Eva van Dijk explains how students bulk order organic produce and share it between households to keep costs low. Their primary mode of transport is cycling. They spend their spare time cultivating vegetable patches in their gardens and eat omelettes made from their free-roaming chickens’s eggs. Solar panels provide their energy. Unwanted clothes, books and scrap are traded at the “Giveawayshop” to minimise waste.

The students’ ideas, though, are untested. Van Eck admits his technique of farming is still a pilot project, and that he is not advocating for all farmers to turn their fields into forests. Scientists have raised questions about other alternative farming methods. Some organic fertilisers and pesticides have been shown to be harmful to the environment, while lower yields on organic farms could mean having to use more land. Disrupting food supply chains runs huge socio-economic risks, threatening millions of livelihoods around the world.

In the apple orchard, the students agree that their experiments are only a starting point. “I am still figuring out what the ideal path is,” said one. “One thing is clear. The system we have now is not going to feed the planet without completely destroying the Earth.”



Ten billion eggs and counting
Scale of a food exporting industry

The Netherlands is the EU’s biggest food exporter and the second biggest in the world after the US, exporting €94.5bn (£81bn) worth of agricultural goods in 2019.

It does all this with an ever shrinking number of farms and agricultural workers, with just over 50,000 farms and 170,000 employees in 2017.

Dutch chickens lay 10bn eggs a year, of which 6.5bn are exported. And it does this from just 2,000 active poultry farms.

The country’s biggest exports

in 2018 were ornamental plants and flowers (€5.8bn), dairy products and eggs (€4.3bn), meat (€4bn) and vegetables (€3.5bn).

It also exported €9.2bn of non-food goods, including machinery, fertiliser and pesticides.

The Netherlands has the highest density of livestock (3.8 units) per hectare of agricultural area in the EU.

While it has a human population of 17 million, it has almost the same number of pigs, cattle and goats (12 million pigs, 3.8 million cattle and 600,000 goats).



Eyewitness



▼ Nashville, Tennessee

East Nashville residents survey the damage to their homes after a night of tornadoes in which at least 25 people died PHOTOGRAPH: USA TODAY/PA

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Tornadoes kill dozens and wreck homes in Tennessee

Associated Press
Nashville

Tornadoes that ripped across the US state of Tennessee on Tuesday night killed at least 25 people, destroyed more than 140 buildings and left hundreds of residents homeless.

John Cooper, the mayor of Tennessee, the capital, declared a state of emergency. "Last night was a reminder about how fragile life is," he said. The White House said Donald Trump would visit the state tomorrow.

Police and fire crews spent hours pulling survivors and bodies from wrecked buildings. One tornado caused severe damage across downtown Nashville, with daybreak revealing blown-down walls and roofs, snapped power lines and broken trees, leaving city streets in gridlock.

Schools, courts, transit lines, an airport and the state capitol were closed. In the historic Germantown neighbourhood, roofs were torn off blocks of flats, large trees were uprooted and debris littered pavements.

The storm is believed to be the deadliest in the US since 24 people were killed when a tornado hit the town of Moore, Oklahoma, in May 2013.

The state governor, Bill Lee, said. "We have had loss of life all across the state. The devastation has been heart-breaking." He ordered all non-essential state workers to stay at home.

In Nashville, the tornadoes tore through areas transformed by a recent building boom. Germantown and East Nashville are two of the city's most fashionable neighbourhoods, with restaurants, music venues, and blocks of luxury flats.

"The dogs started barking before the sirens went off, they knew what was coming," said Paula Wade, of East Nashville. "Then we heard the roar ... Something made me just sit straight up in bed, and something came through the window right above my head. If I hadn't moved, I would've gotten a face full of glass."

In Cookeville, one couple described flying through the air in their house after taking refuge in their bathroom.

Seth Wells told CBS he had been woken in the early hours by a tornado warning on his phone, and described hearing a "deep roar". "We were flying in the air, into the trees back there, where once we hit those trees, the house... it just exploded. The house just disintegrated," Wells said.

His partner, Danielle Theophile, said could feel herself "lifting and flipping over". She needed 15 stitches to a head wound.

One tornado reportedly stayed on the ground for about 10 miles, into Nashville's eastern suburbs, causing more damage in Mt Juliet, Lebanon, Hermitage and other communities.



World



Bloomberg's Super Tuesday calamity brings new boost for resurgent Biden

Enjoli Liston
Joanna Walters *New York*

Mike Bloomberg dropped out of the Democratic presidential campaign yesterday after spending more than \$500m (£390m) on an attempt to grab the moderate lane from Joe Biden.

Bloomberg, one of the richest people in the world, blitzed the Super Tuesday voting states with an extensive and expensive advertising campaign, after controversially skipping the early primary voting states – and ended up with almost nothing to show for his millions of dollars.

Speaking after a bruising night at the polls, the 78-year-old former mayor of New York said: “The delegate

math has become virtually impossible – and a viable path to the nomination no longer exists.”

Bloomberg was hit by controversy after entering the race in November and put up weak performances in the two TV debates in which he took part.

He drew fierce criticism from fellow candidates for his wealth and decision to self-fund his campaign; for the New York police department’s stop-and-frisk policy, which disproportionately targeted men of colour during his time in office as mayor; and his history of derogatory comments against women and minorities.

Bloomberg said he would now work to elect Biden, the moderate candidate he had joined the race expecting to trounce but instead watched rise to

be the unexpected frontrunner. “I’ve always believed that defeating Donald Trump starts with uniting behind the candidate with the best shot to do it. After yesterday’s vote, it is clear that candidate is my friend and a great American, Joe Biden,” he said.

Bloomberg had a disastrous Super Tuesday, when he was tested by voters for the first time. He began his campaign late last year but delayed his official entry on to the ballot until after the first four contests had taken place in February – in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina.

As 14 states went to the polls, Bloomberg was banking on making a big splash and washing Biden out of the race, to emerge as the saviour of the divided centrists and go on to crush

the progressive wing of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and clinch the nomination. He failed spectacularly.

Donald Trump rushed to gloat over an old New York “frenemy”.

After entering the race in late November, when others began their runs as early as last spring, Bloomberg

‘After yesterday’s results a viable path to the nomination no longer exists’

Michael Bloomberg
Former contender

splashed the cash on slick television and online advertising and held rallies across the country, organised by a huge paid staff, but didn’t submit to probing media interviews.

He touted his record as a supposed get-things-done mayor of New York who guided the city to improved prosperity and lower crime – even if the path to get there was ruthless gentrification amid a developer-friendly environment, and his stop-and-frisk crusade focused chiefly in minority neighbourhoods that was ultimately ruled unconstitutional.

Moves to ban smoking in bars, restaurants and other public places, tackle obesity via food regulation, and build a nationwide coalition of local leaders and activists campaigning for gun control, made the public safer and healthier – but his autocratic style alienated many.

His jump into the Democratic presidential race quickly brought back to the surface a slew of lawsuits accusing his eponymous financial news and information company of discrimination against women.

Bloomberg had a history of making

Climate discord
Thunberg critical
of EU's green plan
Page 31



Ronan Farrow
Publisher condemned
over Allen memoir
Page 32

Joe Biden with his wife, Jill, and sister, Valerie Biden Owens, celebrate with supporters in Los Angeles

PHOTOGRAPH: MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

sexist jokes, allegedly undermining women in his workforce and, some of those suing said, openly discriminating against employees who got pregnant, including a corroborated report of him asking one of his workers who was joyously sharing news of her pregnancy with colleagues if she was going to “kill it”.

Having qualified for the Democratic debates, he got on stage for the first time in Las Vegas in late February and was almost immediately speared by a laser-like attack from Warren on his record with female employees. He lacked charisma and articulacy, and despite improving somewhat in the next debate, struggled to look like a top contender.

Warren last night also seemed to be considering her future in the race. Her campaign manager, Roger Lau, wrote to staff saying: “We are obviously disappointed. Elizabeth is talking to the team to assess the path forward.

“All of us have worked for Elizabeth long enough to know that she isn’t a lifetime politician and doesn’t think like one. She’s going to take time right now to think through the right way to continue this fight.”

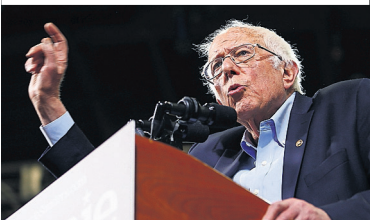
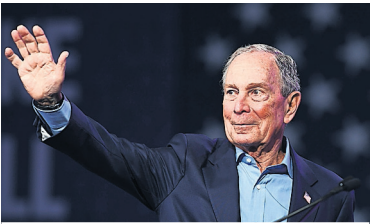
The Massachusetts senator, who once led the polls, failed to win a single state on Tuesday and gained only 50 delegates - a fraction of the figure won by Biden and Sanders.

Bloomberg spent Super Tuesday in Florida and ended the night with a short speech to subdued supporters, signalling a moribund campaign.

He lost badly to Biden and Sanders in every state and, humiliatingly, had just one victory to brandish - the tiny island territory of American Samoa in the Pacific, where he had sent a clutch of well-paid campaigners to get out the vote.

He said: “Three months ago I entered the race for president to defeat Donald Trump. Today, I am leaving the race for the same reason: to defeat Donald Trump - because it is clear to me that staying in would make achieving that goal more difficult.”

Bloomberg has promised to carry on spending on the Democratic ticket for rest of the election cycle.



Top, Mike Bloomberg; above, Bernie Sanders still leads the delegate count

Analysis
David Smith



A stunning
change of
fortune
for the new
comeback kid

American politics has a new comeback kid. That was what Bill Clinton called himself after reviving his presidential campaign in 1992. Now, even more improbably, Joe Biden - who, at 77, is the youngest of the two men left in the race for the Democratic nomination - has risen like Lazarus to win nine states on Super Tuesday and become the frontrunner.

“We are very much alive!” he told rejoicing supporters in Los Angeles.

It was one of the stunning reversals in recent political history. Less than a month ago Biden slunk away from New Hampshire even before the votes were counted. When he trailed in fifth, political obituaries were written. Bob Shrum, a Democratic strategist, told the Guardian: “For him to recover from this would be a political miracle unlike anything we’ve seen in modern presidential politics.”

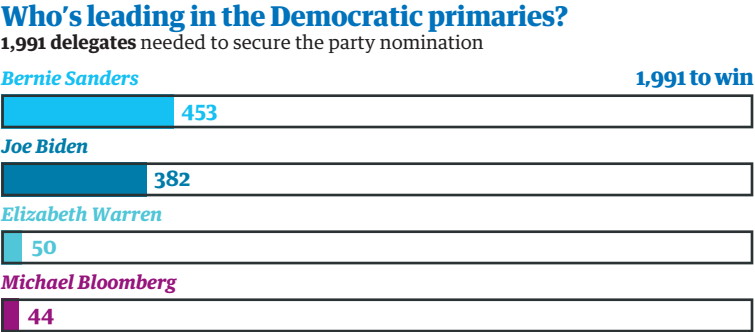
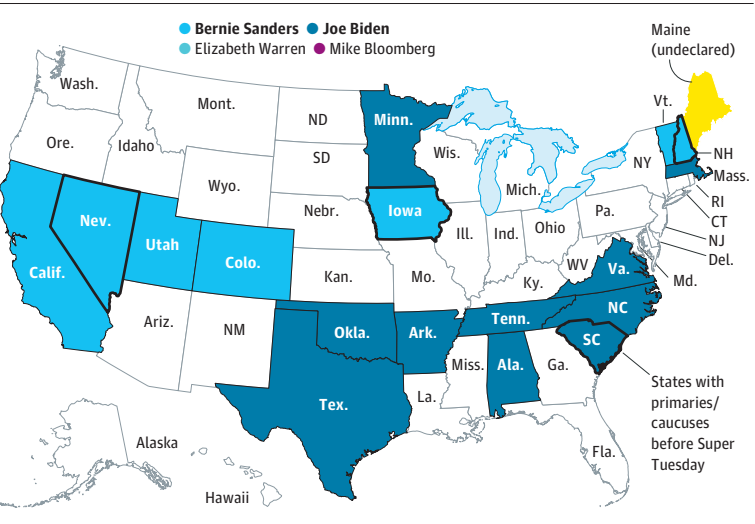
The conventional wisdom was that Super Tuesday - when a third of Democratic primary delegates (who eventually nominate the candidate at the party’s national convention in July) are decided - would not be a question of can Bernie Sanders win, but how big will his lead be.

But last week, everything changed. It started with James Clyburn, who is African American and became a member of the House of Representatives in 1993. Attending his accountant’s funeral, Clyburn was stopped by an older woman in the church. “Young man, I want you to whisper in my ear who you are voting for,” she told him.

At that moment, Clyburn, 79, effectively the dean of South Carolina politics, felt he had to make a public endorsement. He did so for Biden in an emotional speech, handing Barack Obama’s vice-president a massive boost. Biden won the state’s primary vote on Saturday by nearly 30 percentage points, including 61% of the black vote. He was back off the ropes.

It was the pivotal moment because it established Biden’s credibility, electability and viability

Super Tuesday winners and losers



Source: Associated Press. Data correct as of 12pm GMT on 4 March

for the moderate wing of the party. It was clear that he - not the billionaire former New York mayor, Mike Bloomberg, the former South Bend mayor, Pete Buttigieg, or the Minnesota senator Amy Klobuchar - stood the best chance of defeating first Bernie Sanders, then Donald Trump in November’s election.

It was time for moderates to get in line, especially after Sanders’ comments in a television interview - acknowledging the success of Cuba’s literacy programme, “Is that a bad thing, even if Fidel Castro did it?” - crystallised their fear of an electoral car crash.

Buttigieg remarked: “I don’t want as a Democrat to be explaining why our nominee is encouraging people to look on the bright side of the Castro regime when we are going into the election of our lives.”

On Monday Buttigieg and Klobuchar duly quit the race and endorsed Biden. The former presidential candidate Beto O’Rourke, the ex-senator Harry Reid and the former national security adviser Susan Rice did so too. Suddenly, Super Tuesday would pit Sanders against the centrists.

South Carolina proved a blueprint as Biden looked on course to win the most delegates on Super Tuesday. Moderates, suburbanites and African Americans in the south supported him in droves. A massive surge in Virginia worked in Biden’s favour, a clue as to why Trump has long been wary of him. Moe Vela, a board director at TransparentBusiness and

a former senior adviser to Biden at the White House, said: “We’re seeing a very clear pattern that Democrats across the country, across racial lines, across gender lines, are loudly saying that socialism is not for them and it’s not a revolution they seek.”

Democrats have held 10 televised presidential debates, with Biden performing terribly. But in the end, all that talking and sparring counted for nothing. There were five states where Biden did not campaign, and where Sanders and Bloomberg built big operations, yet Biden still won.

Momentum, or “Joementum” as his campaign calls it, beat money. It is, once again, a reminder that most voters are not tuned into every debate or every twist and turn of Twitter. Go to any Trump rally and ask about the latest Washington scandal and you will often be met by blank stares or “so-what?” shrugs.

But Super Tuesday has been clarifying in two other ways: one uplifting, one sad. First, money can’t buy you the presidency: Bloomberg had splashed out half a billion dollars and got hammered. Second, the glass ceiling has been reinforced and America will again not elect a female president: Elizabeth Warren could not even win her home state of Massachusetts.

So what began as the biggest, most diverse field in history is now a two-person race that looks a lot like 2016: a moderate establishment Democrat representing a third term of Obama versus the leftwing populist Sanders.



Elizabeth Warren on Super Tuesday

Fallback option
What happens
at a contested
convention?

Super Tuesday was meant to be the moment when one Democratic candidate stormed to victory in the race to be the nominee taking on Donald Trump in the November presidential elections. Instead, it is still possible that no one will win the race if none of the candidates gets the 1,991 delegates required to win. In that scenario the mud-slinging between Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders - and potentially Elizabeth Warren - would intensify until the party’s national convention in July.

How is it possible for no one to win the Democratic primary race?

The party allocates 3,979 delegates during its primary process, distributed proportionately to each state. For example, in Virginia, Joe Biden won 53.3% of the vote and took 66 of the 99 available delegates. Sanders won 23.1% of the vote, taking 31 delegates, while Warren won 10.8% and took two delegates. To win the nomination - and go on to face Trump - someone needs to win a majority of 1,991 delegates. Neither Biden nor Sanders is likely to drop out. They could, then, prevent each other from reaching that 1,991 figure. One could win a “plurality” but not a majority, and the Democrats would have a contested convention.

What happens at this convention?

If no one has an outright majority the “superdelegates” enter the fray. The 771 superdelegates are picked by Democratic party leaders and are free to make their choice. In the past, superdelegates have aligned with the centre “establishment” wing of the party, which would suggest Biden could benefit.

How likely is this to happen?

Pretty likely, pollsters think. One forecaster, FiveThirtyEight, says it is the most likely outcome. The final delegates will be assigned on 6 June, when the US Virgin Islands will yield six delegates. Few Democrats want the primary to drag on for another three months. But with neither Biden nor Sanders ready to blink that could be what Democrats face when they get to Milwaukee.

Adam Gabbatt

Netanyahu backlash helps Arab parties to historic gains

Oliver Holmes
Jerusalem

Arab politicians are set to make historic gains in the Israeli election, taking more seats than ever before and solidifying their position as the third largest force in the Knesset, the country's parliament.

With 99% of the votes counted, the Joint List alliance, a merger of politicians predominantly representing Palestinian citizens of Israel, had 15 out of 120 Knesset seats.

Arab candidates, boosted by a backlash against racist campaigning by Benjamin Netanyahu, also capitalised on anger towards the prime minister's ally, Donald Trump. The US president's recent "peace plan" included a controversial clause that could strip some Arab-Israelis of their citizenship.

The country's approximately 21%

Arab minority, mostly descended from Palestinians who remained on their land after Israel was formed in 1948, broadly support the Palestinian cause and have often boycotted previous elections.

Since the 2015 election, Netanyahu has warned his supporters that the minority could vote en masse to block him from power. Five years later, they may have succeeded.

In Monday's vote, Arab turnout surged to 64.7%, according to estimates from the Israel Democracy Institute thinktank.

"We know that the Arabs came to the polling stations in droves," said the chairman of the Joint List, Ayman Odeh, in comments that mockingly mirrored Netanyahu's derogatory language from 2015. "It was clear to everyone that the Joint List was leading the battle against any right-wing government," he added.

No Arab party has ever served in an Israeli governing coalition because of ideological differences, but any Joint List gains will dampen Netanyahu's chances of leading the next government. While his Likud party won the most votes of any faction, Netanyahu's alliance with ultranationalist and religious allies is still short of two or three seats to secure a clear majority.

Dean Issacharoff, a spokesman for Odeh, said: "As far as we are concerned, we've already done our part. We've stopped Netanyahu's far-right government."

Unless Netanyahu can persuade other opposition politicians to defect,

15

Number of seats taken by the Joint List alliance, which could block Benjamin Netanyahu from power

Israel's political deadlock will almost certainly continue, with the possibility of another breakdown and a fourth election.

In last April's election, Arab candidates, including communists, Islamists, secularists and Palestinian nationalists, claimed 10 seats. After they unified to form the Joint List alliance in September, they pushed that number to 13, promising better services but also to present a bulwark against anti-Arab policies.

This time, the Joint List also sought to win votes from progressive Jewish Israelis. Some are dismayed with traditionally leftwing Jewish candidates, who have seen their influence plummet as domestic politics lurched to the right.

Meretz, a small Zionist party that opposes the occupation of the Palestinian territories, appeared to have lost voters to the Joint List after it joined forces with the less vocal Labor party. It made the move to avoid disappearing from the Knesset altogether, but alienated some supporters.

"A lot of leftwing voters were disillusioned or disappointed," said Issacharoff, adding that the Joint List estimated it had doubled its support from Jewish people. "We've never been in a place that is so influential."



▲ Mittens is a social media celebrity with 30,000 Facebook followers

Residents of Wellington paws for selfies with celebrity roaming cat

Eleanor Ainge Roy
Dunedin

A feline that roams New Zealand's capital city and is welcomed into tattoo parlours, hairdressers and high-rise offices has become a social media star, with 30,000 followers who track his every movement online.

Mittens first came to attention in 2018 after repeatedly wandering in inner-city locations, including the university, the post office, and a Catholic church. He was also reportedly taken to the police station by concerned local people.

After repeated encounters with Mittens, an animal welfare charity employee started a Facebook page to reassure would-be rescuers that the cat wasn't lost and didn't need to be "rescued" - he was just adventurous.

The page now has 30,000 followers, with Wellington residents tracking Mittens' daily activities around town.

The page, The Wondrous Adventures of Mittens, also lists a series of rules for interacting with him, including "do not tell Mittens to go home", "no speculating or asking where Mittens is", and "no discussing Mittens being picked up".

Mittens also has a Wikipedia page, where his occupation is listed as pet/local celebrity/media personality.

A selfie with Mittens has become a bucket-list item for many in Wellington. The cat's owner, Silvio Bruinsma, says Mittens had similar venturesome habits when they lived in Auckland, but Wellington's compact inner city has made him easier to track.

Mittens' brother Latte, also a Turkish cat, does not share his intrepid streak and rarely ventures more than 20 metres from home, while Mittens can roam more than a mile.

"He has made Wellington his playground," Bruinsma told the Dominion Post. "I suppose my philosophy is, he doesn't like being locked up and I don't want to give him a life that is miserable."

Although there was some initial concern for Mittens' apparently aimless wanderings (no one feeds him but Bruinsma), residents and visitors now actively go looking for the cat and say he shows caution around roads - reportedly even stopping to wait at traffic lights.



Kim Jong-un's sister lashes out at Seoul in first public statement

Staff and agencies
Seoul

The sister of North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, has condemned South Korea as a "frightened dog barking" after Seoul protested against a live-fire military exercise by the North.

Kim Yo-jong's comments - her first known official statement - came after Seoul's security ministers expressed "strong concern" over Pyongyang's

firing of two short-range ballistic missiles on Monday - its first weapons test for more than three months.

In a statement published by state media on Tuesday, Kim said the North was entitled to carry out military drills and called the South's condemnation a "truly senseless act". "Such incoherent assertions and actions ... only magnify our distrust, hatred and scorn for the south side as a whole," she said.

Kim is one of her brother's closest advisers and has frequently been

pictured alongside him. She acted as his envoy to the South during the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in 2018, which ushered in a rapid rapprochement on the peninsula.

Kim did not mention South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in - whom she met several times - but described Seoul's presidential office as "a burnt child dreading fire".

The publication of a political statement in her name highlights her central role in the regime, analysts said. Go Myong-hyun, an analyst at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, said: "By having someone like Kim Yo-jong - who has been a dovish figure towards the South and acting as a soft and friendly messenger - issue

such a strong statement condemning the current government, the North is raising its pressure."

Monday's drills came days after the one-year anniversary of the failed Hanoi summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un, and followed the expiry of an end-of-year deadline Pyongyang set Washington to offer it fresh concessions.

Seoul and Washington last week postponed forthcoming joint military exercises over the coronavirus outbreak - the South has more than 5,000 infections - and the South's president, Moon, offered to cooperate over the disease with the North, which has closed its borders to try to prevent a potentially devastating outbreak.

'Incoherent assertions and actions only magnify our distrust, hatred and scorn for the South'

Kim Yo-jong

◀ Kim Yo-jong pictured in 2018 with Moon Jae-in of South Korea, left, and her brother Kim Jong-un
PHOTOGRAPH: AP

▼ Greta Thunberg shows her disdain for the long-awaited climate law that was unveiled in Brussels yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: ISOPIX/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ Frans Timmermans, the European commission lead on the climate crisis

EU under attack after unveiling its climate 'compass for 30 years'

Some political leaders have argued the commission needs to focus on the protection of the EU's external border, rather than the climate crisis – arguments Timmermans rejected.

"The focus this week should be completely on [what is] happening in Syria, in Turkey and what is happening in Greece, [and] ... on containing the coronavirus and solving it. That's absolutely a priority," he said.

However, he added that the climate law was "so important" because "it allows you to focus on other things without losing track of what you need to do to reach climate neutrality".

"Even if the Eye of Sauron is on something else for a bit, the trajectory to 2050 will be clear," he said, in a reference to the dark forces in the Lord of the Rings. "Because we discipline ourselves with the climate law."

Speaking to the Guardian and six other European newspapers shortly before the law was published, Timmermans said the proposal was revolutionary because all EU legislation would have to be in line with net zero emissions by the mid-century.

'When your house is on fire you don't wait a few years to start putting it out, and yet this is what the commission proposes'

Greta Thunberg
Climate campaigner

Even before the text was officially released, the climate activist Greta Thunberg and teenage school strike leaders across Europe gave a blistering verdict, accusing the commission of ignoring climate science.

Thunberg, who met Von der Leyen, Timmermans and the rest of the commission's top team yesterday, described the law as "surrender".

In an open letter, she said it failed to respect the goal of capping global heating at 1.5C above pre-industrial levels – an aspiration the EU signed up to in

the 2015 Paris agreement. She repeated that message at a meeting with MEPs on the European parliament's environment committee yesterday.

"In November 2019 the European parliament declared a climate and environment emergency," she said. "You stated that yes, the house is actually burning, this was no false alarm, but then you went back inside, finished your dinner and watched your movie and went to bed without even calling the fire department."

"When your house is on fire you don't wait a few more years to start putting it out, and yet this is what the commission are proposing today."

Earlier, at a private meeting with EU commissioners, the teenage activist was told by Timmermans that the movement she started was the reason the European Green Deal and climate law existed.

The climate scientist Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, a former vice-chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), said the EU was aiming too low and its current targets on reducing emissions set in 2014 were not in line with the 1.5C goal.

An IPCC report in 2018 showed that going beyond 1.5C, even by half a degree, would significantly increase the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for millions of people. Van Ypersele said the EU should be aiming for carbon neutrality one decade earlier. "If a region as technologically rich, as scientifically rich as the EU is only able to achieve that by 2050 how can you imagine that the rest of the world will do that by the same year? I don't think it's very likely."

A dozen EU member states have also voiced reservations about Timmermans' timetable for proposing an EU climate target for 2030, widely seen as a crucial goal if the world is not to exceed its carbon budget.

Timmermans plans to set out the EU's 2030 goal in September, but a dozen countries argue this is too late to galvanise the rest of the world to make commitments at crucial UN climate talks in Glasgow at the end of the year.



Jennifer Rankin
Brussels

The European Union needs a climate law that binds member states to net zero emissions by 2050 despite distractions from crises such as migration and coronavirus, the EU's top official on climate action has said.

Frans Timmermans, a European commission vice-president who leads on the climate emergency, said different crises facing Europe underlined the need for climate regulations in order not to lose track of reducing emissions.

The long-awaited climate law unveiled yesterday is the centre-piece of the European Green Deal, a plan to transform Europe's economy, promised by the European commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, within her first 100 days.

"It will be our compass for the next 30 years and it will guide us every step as we build a sustainable new growth model," Von der Leyen said.

Graham Readfearn

The hot and dry conditions that helped drive Australia's bushfire crisis would be eight times more likely to happen if global heating reached 2C, according to new analysis.

An international team of scientists found the risk of Australia being hit by intense fire weather had already risen since 1900 "by more than a factor of four". The scientists said it was "scary" a country as well prepared for tackling bushfires as Australia had seen its systems "severely strained" by what they called the Black Summer Bushfires.

Australia's bushfire crisis burned at

least 7.7m hectares in the south of the country, claiming 34 lives and causing an environmental disaster.

The 17 scientists from across Europe and the US, used computer models to examine the impact of increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere on the risk of intense fires.

The study used the models to look at the fire weather index, which is one way to predict the severity of fires by combining wind speed, humidity, temperature, drought and the flammability of the fuel. The models found the probability of the index reaching levels seen during Australia's bushfires had increased by 30% because of human-caused climate change.

Prof Geert Jan van Oldenborgh,

lead author of the study, of the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, said: "We found that climate models struggle to reproduce these extreme events and their trends realistically. However, they always underestimate the increase in chances for extreme fire risks such as Australia saw in the last few months. This means we know the effect is likely larger than 30% increase lower bound, which is already a significant influence of global warming."

30%

Increase in the probability of the fire weather index reaching levels seen in Australia in 2019, scientists say

The analysis looked at conditions under a climate that warms by 2C above pre-industrial levels. Two climate models found that fire weather conditions such as those seen in 2019 "become about eight times more likely" in a 2C world, with a "lower bound of four times more likely".

The study released today has not been peer reviewed, but is being submitted to a journal. The methods and climate models had been used in previous studies that had been peer reviewed, they said.

The scientists found the chances of Australia experiencing fire weather index ratings as high as 2019 had already risen by "more than a factor of four" since 1900.

Bushfire conditions 'eight times more likely if warming reaches 2C'

Ronan Farrow criticises publisher over plan to release Allen memoirs

André Wheeler

Ronan Farrow has distanced himself from the publisher of his latest book after the company announced plans for a memoir by his father, Woody Allen. Farrow said the move showed “a lack of ethics and compassion for victims of sexual abuse”.

The journalist, known for his investigations into claims of sexual abuse and misconduct against powerful men, issued a statement in response to Hachette’s announcement on Monday that it would release Allen’s memoir, *Apropos of Nothing*, on 7 April.

Ronan Farrow’s sister, Dylan, has alleged Allen sexually abused her as a child, an allegation that Allen has strongly denied.

Catch and Kill was released by Hachette in October last year and tracked the reporting process behind allegations against Matt Lauer, Harvey Weinstein and Leslie Moonves.

Ronan Farrow’s statement read: “I was disappointed to learn through press reports that Hachette, my publisher, acquired Woody Allen’s memoir after other major publishers refused to do so and concealed the decision from me and its own employees while we were working on *Catch and Kill* – a book about how powerful men, including Woody Allen, avoid accountability for sexual abuse.”

Farrow suggested he would no longer work with Hachette, saying: “I’ve also told Hachette that a publisher that would conduct itself in this way is one I can’t work with in good conscience.”

Dylan Farrow issued her own statement earlier this week, saying: “Hachette’s publishing of Woody Allen’s memoir is deeply upsetting to me personally and an utter betrayal of my brother whose brave reporting, capitalised on by Hachette, gave voice to numerous survivors of sexual assault by powerful men.”

She added that she had never been



▲ Woody Allen, Mia, Dylan and Ronan Farrow in 1988.

◀ Ronan Farrow this year
PHOTOGRAPH: PHOTOREPORTERS INC./REX



contacted by factcheckers for Allen’s memoir: “This provides yet another example of the profound privilege that power, money and notoriety affords. Hachette’s complicity in this should be called out for what it is and they should have to answer for it.”

In 2003, Allen signed a deal with Penguin to release a memoir, but the book was never released. Last year it was reported that multiple publishers

‘It’s a betrayal of Ronan’s work, which gave voice to sexual assault survivors’

Dylan Farrow
Woody Allen’s daughter

had turned down his memoir in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

In an interview with the New York Times on Tuesday, Michael Pietsch, the chief executive of Hachette, said that the memoir would be published by Grand Central, an imprint within Hachette that is separate from the one that worked on *Catch and Kill*. “We do not allow anyone’s publishing programme to interfere with anyone else’s,” Pietsch said.

The New York Times shared emails it obtained between Ronan Farrow and Pietsch. Farrow wrote: “Your policy of editorial independence among your imprints does not relieve you of your moral and professional obligations as the publisher of *Catch and Kill*, and as the leader of a company being asked to assist in efforts by abusive men to whitewash their crimes.”

Farrow later made a plea to Pietsch’s conscience, writing in an email published by the New York Times: “Imagine this were your sister.”

Wolf Hall The final chapter

Hilary Mantel returns with the final instalment in her Booker-winning Wolf Hall trilogy, *The Mirror & the Light*. This much anticipated novel follows the remaining four years of Thomas Cromwell’s life.

Present this half price voucher at WHSmith High Street stores, redeemable from 5 March



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We don't want repeat of 2015's refugee flood, says Merkel aide

Philip Oltermann
Berlin

The German government - anxious about the political consequences of a "repeat of 2015" - is tolerating Greece's decision to suspend asylum claims at its borders and has launched a social media campaign to deter Syrian refugees from embarking on a journey to central Europe.

About 12,500 people are estimated to be waiting on the Turkish side of the Greek border, after the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, said on Saturday he would open borders for refugees fleeing the nine-year war in Syria to cross over into Europe.

While Angela Merkel's government has declined to publicly criticise Greece for suspending asylum claims for a month, Horst Seehofer, her conservative interior minister, warned: "We don't want a repeat of the year 2015", referring to the arrival of a million asylum seekers in Germany five years ago.

The situation on the European Union's outer borders escalated further yesterday, with reports of Greek authorities firing teargas and stun grenades to repulse a push by migrants to cross its land border from Turkey.

In 2015, social media played a crucial role in drawing many refugees to Germany, after an ambiguously-worded tweet from the federal agency for migration and refugees led many



▲ Migrants try to remove fences on the Greek side of the border with Turkey near Pazarkule

PHOTOGRAPH: BÜLENT KILIÇ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

'What the EU is doing is Donald Trump's dream: abolish the right to asylum and militarise the borders'

Gerald Knaus European Stability Initiative

Syrians to believe the country was no longer enforcing the Dublin process for handling applications.

Tweets sent by the German interior ministry in Arabic, Farsi, English and German on Tuesday night looked designed to suppress similar pull-effects this time around. "We need orderly conditions at the EU's external border", the tweets read. "We will use our best efforts to support Greece in achieving this. Europe's borders are not open for #refugees from #Turkey, and neither are our German borders."

A government spokesperson said Germany would not seek a unilateral solution to the dramatic situation on Greece's border: "We are looking for a European situation, Germany cannot do it alone."

▲ Afghan migrants in Skala Sikamias on Lesbos wait to be transferred to the Greek island's port of Mytilene

PHOTOGRAPH: COSTAS BALTAS/REUTERS

Seehofer said his government was, however, open to joining a "coalition of the willing" that would take in about 5,000 minors from Greek migrant camps.

Turkish authorities said one person was killed and five were wounded in clashes near the border village of Kastanies yesterday - an assertion the Greek government strongly rejected. "I deny it categorically," Stelios Petsas, a Greek government spokesman, said. "Turkey fabricates and channels fake news against our country."

Under the conditions of a €6bn deal struck between the EU and Turkey in 2016, both sides said they would work together to stop migrants from crossing over into the EU. While the EU has allocated the promised funds, Turkey says the money is inadequate and claims to have already spent more than \$30bn helping 3.6 million Syrian refugees living in its territory.

Gerald Knaus, the head of the European Stability Initiative thinktank, who is seen as the initial architect of the EU-Turkey deal, has called for a new pact with Turkey in order to avoid another refugee crisis.

Knaus emphatically criticised the EU's reaction to the crisis on the Greek-Turkish border. "We are witnessing a watershed in international asylum policy," he told the German newspaper Die Welt.

"What the EU is currently doing is Donald Trump's biggest dream: to abolish the right to asylum and militarise the border. If this approach becomes the norm in Europe, then 2020 will be the year in which the Geneva refugee convention dies."

Deaths from noise pollution in Europe set to rise as road traffic tops risk

Fiona Harvey

Environment correspondent

One in five Europeans is exposed to harmful levels of noise pollution, and this number is set to rise in the next decade, with road traffic the biggest culprit, a new study has shown.

Excessive noise can cause illness, both physical and mental, and is associated with higher levels of heart disease, stress and sleeplessness. About 12,000 premature deaths are caused by noise in Europe each year, according to the European Environment Agency (EEA), while noise contributes to about 48,000 cases of coronary heart disease.

Wildlife is also affected: a study last year showed noise hampers birds' ability to communicate, and can stop them from mating.

The EEA, Europe's environmental watchdog, warns in a report today that more people were likely to be affected by harmful noise levels in future, as the result of increasing urbanisation and mobility. Reducing noise levels would improve health and in some cases help to reduce greenhouse gases too.

Across Europe, an estimated 113 million people are affected by road traffic noise levels of at least 55 decibels, the threshold above which noise becomes harmful to human health, by the World Health Organization's definition. In addition, 22 million people are exposed to high levels of railway noise and 4 million people to high levels of aircraft noise, and at least 12,500 European children are estimated to suffer learning impairment at school because of aircraft noise. Other noisy industries affect about 1 million people across the continent.

In the UK, more than 18% of the population in urban areas were estimated to be exposed to harmful noise levels, the great majority of those (14.5%) by road traffic alone, and about 7% of people living outside urban areas, nearly all of those by road traffic.

There are many ways to reduce noise. Electric vehicles are quieter than diesel and petrol-driven cars - so quiet that there have been warnings of their danger to pedestrians. Like electric vehicles, walking and cycling reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the same time as cutting down on noise. Roads can be resurfaced with smoother asphalt, traffic management can also help, and reducing speed limits works in urban areas.

Town planners can also ensure there are quiet areas, such as parks or other green spaces, where citydwellers can take refuge from their noisy surroundings.

The EEA said it was hampered in its research by EU member states failing to supply the data required by the EU Noise Directive. Nearly a third of the data required was not available, which the EEA said showed countries were failing to address the noise problem.

Scientists hopeful of beating locusts in east Africa

Karen McVeigh

Scientists monitoring the movements of the worst locust outbreak in Kenya in 70 years are hopeful that a new tracking programme will help prevent a second infestation of the insects.

The UN has described the outbreak in the Horn of Africa, and the rise in numbers of locusts in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, as “extremely alarming”.

The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization has warned an imminent second hatch could threaten the food security of 25 million people across the region as it enters the cropping season.

Kenneth Mwangi, a satellite information scientist based at the Intergovernmental Authority on



25m

The number of people at risk of food insecurity as the region enters the cropping season

◀ A man tries in vain to swat away desert locusts at a ranch in Kenya

PHOTOGRAPH: BAZ RATNER/REUTERS

Development climate prediction and applications centre based in Nairobi, said researchers were running a supercomputer model to predict breeding areas that may have been missed by ground monitoring and could become sources of new swarms if not sprayed.

“The model will be able to tell us the areas in which hoppers [young juvenile locusts] are emerging,” said Mwangi.

“These areas can become a source of an upsurge, or a new generation

of hoppers. It becomes very difficult and expensive to control, which is why we are looking to prevent an upsurge. The focus will be on stopping hoppers becoming adults, as that leads to another cycle of infestation. We want to avoid that. We want to advise governments early, before an upsurge happens.”

So far, the supercomputer, funded by £35m of UK aid as part of its Weather and Climate Information Services for

Africa programme, has successfully forecast the movement of locusts using data such as wind speed and direction, temperature and humidity. The model has achieved 90% accuracy in forecasting the future locations of the swarms, Mwangi said.

Researchers are now inputting data on soil moisture and vegetation cover to help predict where eggs have been laid and are likely to hatch and thrive. This will then provide data on where

African governments can direct their spraying efforts, helping to control the hoppers before they swarm. “So far, we’ve been able to catch where the swarms are going to be,” Mwangi said. “We were able to tell the government of Uganda that locusts are expected to come through and they mobilised the army, and that worked well.”

Billions of locusts have already devastated crops in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, countries with fragile food security. Swarms have also been spotted in Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. A single swarm can contain up to 150m locusts per sq km of farmland.

The last locust surge in Africa, in 2003-04, involved two or three generations of the insects across 23 African countries and took two years to control, Mwangi said. “Effective control is estimated to be around \$60m (£47m) but, if an upsurge occurs, the cost will soar to \$500m.”

Now is the most critical period for control of the desert locusts, because any eggs laid in the past month coincide with the cropping season. Abubakr Salih Babiker, a climate scientist at Nairobi’s climate and prediction centre, said: “The risk for us is that this is the beginning of a new growing season, from Somalia and Uganda, and if the desert locusts are not controlled it can be a huge crisis in food security of the whole region.”

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Financial

Shopping centre sell-offs on cards as Intu cash call fails

Mark Sweney

Intu Properties, which owns nine of the UK's top 20 shopping centres, has been forced to abandon an emergency cash call after admitting "extreme" market conditions had left it unable to raise its minimum target of £1.3bn from jittery investors.

The failure to secure the funding means Intu, which is struggling under a £4.5bn debt mountain, has missed the criteria set by its banks to grant a new four-year £440m revolving credit facility - raising fresh doubts about its future. The company said this meant it could breach bank covenants when they are next tested in July.

The owner of the Trafford Centre in Manchester and Lakeside in Essex has been involved in discussions with shareholders and potential new investors over recent months to try to raise the target to shore up its balance sheet.

"Following these discussions, Intu has concluded it is unable to proceed with an equity raise at this point," the company said yesterday.

"While a number of Intu's shareholders and potential new investors indicated their support for an equity raise, the board believes the current uncertainty in the equity markets and retail property investment markets precluded a number of potential investors from committing capital into the business and Intu was therefore unable to reach the target quantum at the current time."

Shares in Intu fell 41% yesterday to close at a new all-time low of 6.3p.

Intu said that during the emergency fundraising process the company had received "several expressions of interest to explore alternative capital structures and asset disposals". The company is exploring these strategic options, which include selling some of its centres.

Intu said that the estimated value

of its portfolio dropped 22% from £8.78bn in 2018 to £6.6bn in 2019, amid rising shop closures and retailers demanding rent cuts.

Matthew Roberts, the chief executive of Intu, said: "While it is



▲ Lakeside in Essex, one of Intu's nine leading shopping centre properties

disappointing that the extreme market conditions have prevented us from moving forward with our planned equity raise, I am pleased that a number of alternative options have presented themselves, which we will now explore further.

"We remain focused on fixing our balance sheet in the near term to ensure this business has the financial footing it needs to realise its significant potential."

The company said it is meeting the terms of its debt covenants but that "there is a risk that, depending on the performance of Intu's business and movements in valuations, it could be in breach of certain covenants at their scheduled testing date in July 2020".

The company said it had nearly £190m debt due to be repaid or refinanced within the next 12 months.

Intu's combined credit score, which measures on a scale of 100 to 1 how likely a company is to default on its debts in the next year, is "1", according to data from Refinitiv Eikon.

The company said it is seeking to take "timely mitigating actions", including seeking covenant waivers, to deal with potential breaches in July.

The company, which reports its 2019 results on 12 March, said losses widened by 72% to £1.95bn last year while total revenues fell from £581m to £541m.

Metro Bank sacks chief risk officer after two weeks in role

Kalyeena Makortoff
Banking correspondent

Metro Bank is facing fresh problems after ousting its new chief risk officer little more than a fortnight after he joined the troubled bank.

Grahame McGirr, who had 20 years of experience including at Allied Irish Bank and Co-op Bank, joined Metro in early February to ensure a smooth handover from Aileen Gillan, who is stepping down. But by 24 February - just days before his formal takeover - McGirr was gone.

A spokeswoman for the lender said the bank had asked McGirr to leave, saying he was "not a good fit" for the lender. She did not provide further detail, saying only that he had "left the business".

Metro's shares closed down 3% at 159p. Two years ago they were changing hands at more than £40.

The bank has been forced to ask Gillan to stay on for a month, and is now scrambling to appoint a replacement by 31 March.

The role of a chief risk officer is to keep tabs on how much risk the bank takes on through loans or accounts that might harm its operations, or put it in breach of regulations.

McGirr's departure, first reported by Sky News, is a further blow to the bank, which is still struggling to find a permanent chairman following a clear-out of its top ranks.

Vernon Hill and Craig Donaldson resigned as chairman and chief executive respectively in the final weeks of 2019 after a turbulent year for the bank, sparked by a major accounting error involving the misclassification of £900m of loans as less risky than they were.

Metro was subsequently put under investigation by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority. That inquiry is expected to last another year.

The lender's new chief executive Daniel Frumkin warned last week that he expected more staff to leave in the coming months. It came as Metro reported it was significantly scaling back expansion plans as part of a new strategy meant to rein in costs following £130m annual loss.

3%

Fall in the value of Metro shares yesterday to 159p after it announced the departure of its chief risk officer

New Bank boss signals possible move out of London for some staff

Richard Partington
Economics correspondent

Andrew Bailey, the incoming governor of the Bank of England has hinted that the Bank could relocate some of its staff outside the capital.

"The time has come to now say: 'What's the right distribution of the Bank?'" he told MPs, adding that the Bank had already started work to examine where it could locate operations to outside London.

John McDonnell, the shadow chancellor, had promised that a Labour government would relocate parts of the Bank to Birmingham and a key pledge of Boris Johnson's government is a promise to "level up" Britain by boosting prosperity outside London.

In a wide-ranging hearing to consider his suitability as governor before the Treasury committee approves his appointment, Bailey defended his time in charge of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) City watchdog.

Critics have attacked Bailey the FCA's investigations of the treatment of business customers by RBS and Lloyds, and the failed investment firm London Capital & Finance.



▲ Andrew Bailey told MPs some staff could move out of Threadneedle St
PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN KEEBLE/GETTY IMAGES

Although saying he was "not proud of some of the things that happened during my time", he added that the watchdog had changed for the better under his leadership, including a crackdown on payday lenders that he said helped low-paid families.

"It's hellishly tough at times, but that's the nature of it. [But] I don't regret it for a moment."

Bailey said there would be no let up in the Bank's pursuit of tackling the climate emergency and forcing the finance industry to adapt to the challenges posed by global heating.

'The FCA is hellishly tough at times ... but I don't regret a moment of it'

Andrew Bailey
Incoming governor

Saying he would build on the plans for climate stress tests of banks and insurers launched by Carney, he said: "We should be incredibly proud of what Mark's done because it's world leading. You can be assured that none of the momentum behind this is going to decline."

Asked whether he was still the right person for the job given he was appointed by the former chancellor, Sajid Javid, amid rumours that No10 wanted to pick someone else, Bailey said he didn't sense that Rishi Sunak had buyer's remorse.

▼ Bridgend's future as a successful town is in the balance with the closure of the Ford plant looming

PHOTOGRAPH: DIMITRIS LEGAKIS/THE GUARDIAN

Wales

Life after Ford looks uncertain for workers of Bridgend

In the budget next week the new chancellor, Rishi Sunak, is expected to announce measures to kickstart the 'levelling up' of Britain's lopsided economy. The Guardian has visited three places that the government should be targeting - to discover the scale of the local problems, and what help is needed

Joanna Partridge

In May, Ford will clock up 40 years of making car engines in Bridgend, south Wales. But the anniversary will pass without celebration. Just a few months later, by 25 September, the production lines will come to a halt for the final time.

Some 1,700 people were working at the site halfway between Cardiff and Swansea when the closure was announced last June, with Ford blaming "changing customer demand and cost".

Dick Jenkins, 47, an electrician, has clocked in and out of the plant for three decades, the only workplace he has known since he joined a few days after his 17th birthday. "I have never filled out a CV until now because I never had to. It's scary. I know I'm not alone, but whatever happens next will only be the second job I have ever had."

The community is bracing for the loss of some of the region's best-paid manufacturing jobs. The average Ford salary is £41,000, according to the GMB trade union. The carmaker has spent a significant amount of money to close the factory, with one source describing the redundancy

and pension payouts for workers as the most generous they had seen.

Local businesses fear the impact on the town nonetheless. Craig Williams, 34, runs Capelli Salons on the main shopping street, where takeaway restaurants and barber's shops sit alongside vacant premises. On a wet afternoon, behind the hairdresser's steamed-up windows, a couple of clients are being shampooed and blow-dried. When the Ford closure was announced "there was almost mass panic", and a few regular customers stayed away. "It's a luxury to have hair and beauty done, you've got a priority to pay your mortgage," said Williams.

The carmaker is the town's largest employer and its biggest business-rates payer. The property consultancy Altus Group calculates the plant paid £1.6m in rates in 2019/20. Business rates are pooled in Wales between councils, and distributed centrally, meaning the shortfall will also be felt further afield.

Six villages or estates in the Bridgend local authority area are among the nation's 10% most deprived, according to the most recent Welsh index of multiple deprivation. One is Bettws, a former mining village in the Ogmore valley, where a colourful mural on the

community centre wall recalls its industrial heyday.

In the 1970s, when the region began to lose mining and heavy industry, Wales attracted foreign investment, often to Bridgend, with its proximity to the M4. However, many local people can reel off a list of the big firms that have come and gone - Sony, LG, Bosch - and concerns remain about the future of Tata Steel in Port Talbot.

The Ford workers and the Welsh government hope that new arrivals will go some way to filling the hole left by Ford. The chemicals firm Ineos will assemble its Land Rover-Defender-inspired 4x4 at a new plant being built next to the Ford factory. But the first car won't roll

off the line until 2021, and Ineos is initially only taking on 200 staff. Jenkins has sent off his CV. Other Ford workers are looking to Aston Martin Lagonda, which will start building its first SUV at St Athan, 10 miles from Bridgend, in the summer. However, both of those companies combined will employ only a fraction of the Ford workforce.

The Welsh government has responsibility for economic development. A block grant from the UK government accounts for the majority of Cardiff's £20bn annual budget but many in Wales feel overlooked by Westminster, and believe they are at the back of the queue.

"Wales is only equivalent to 5%



◀ Hair salon owner Craig Williams fears business could suffer as his clients prioritise essentials over luxuries

PHOTOGRAPH: DIMITRIS LEGAKIS/THE GUARDIAN

In numbers

Election result

The Conservatives won Bridgend for the first time in 32 years, with a 6.8% swing from Labour

Pay

The average salary is £24,114 (97% of the UK average, Dec 2019)*

Average house price

£161,648 (for Bridgend local authority area; UK average £233,000)**

GDP per head

94% of EU average***

Unemployment

3.6%. Percentage of jobless households: 22.3% (UK average 14.5%)

* Office for National Statistics

** HM Land Registry

*** Data for Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot area compared with Eurostat data

of the English population, it gets forgotten about," says Victoria Winckler, director of the Welsh thinktank, the Bevan Foundation.

Infrastructure is not a devolved power, an issue that rankles locally, especially since the former transport secretary Chris Grayling scrapped plans to electrify the rail line beyond Cardiff. The £106bn for the HS2 high-speed line connecting London with Birmingham and the north of England is "another reminder of the gross inequality", says Huw David, a Labour councillor and leader of Bridgend county borough council. "We are still waiting for them to electrify the railway between the capital and Swansea, the second city, never mind high-speed."

Carwyn Jones was first minister of Wales until 2018, and the Labour politician is in his final term as Welsh assembly member for Bridgend. He believes Westminster has "let Wales down sorely" when it comes to infrastructure and energy strategy, pointing to the scrapped £1.3bn Swansea tidal lagoon project and the cancelled £16bn nuclear power station on Anglesey.

One in six workers in Bridgend is employed in manufacturing, double the UK figure. Future economic success means securing hi-tech, quality jobs, says Jones.

Leeds hit hardest as Barclays announces job cuts and moves

Kalyeena Makortoff
Banking correspondent

Barclays has announced a staff shake-up that will affect more than 1,000 workers, and which includes the closure of a centre in Leeds.

Plans to permanently shut the Leeds site by the end of the year will affect 800 staff, 200 of whom will be cut outright. A further 90 contractors will lose their jobs. Most of the job

cuts at the Leeds processing centre are expected to have an impact on technology, operations teams and some customer service staff.

It is understood that 270 of the remaining 510 roles are being shifted to Manchester and Sunderland. Barclays is giving financial support for relocations but has not disclosed how much it is offering staff.

The company is offering a further 100 of the affected workers in Leeds the option of working from home or at

other Barclays sites in the area. It has not confirmed its plans for the remainder of the processing centre's workers, accounting for about 140 staff.

The bank is putting a further 340 staff on notice for job cuts or relocations across the UK. About 50 of those jobs will be cut outright, while the remainder will be moved to other sites, including to Glasgow and Northampton. The majority of the affected staff are in Coventry, where about 157 roles are at risk.

A Barclays spokesman said: "To drive collaboration Barclays is moving teams closer together at our UK sites in Glasgow, Greater Manchester and Northampton, where we are investing in new campuses and office space.

This will enable us to innovate at pace for the customers and clients. We will do everything we can to support colleagues impacted by the changes, working closely with [union] Unite."

200

Number of Barclays jobs being cut outright in line with the closure of a processing centre in Leeds

270

Number of jobs in Leeds that will be transferred to Manchester and Sunderland

Barclays' decision to close the Leeds office, a move that has been blamed on the landlord's plans to sell the site to housing developers, was criticised by Unite.

Dominic Hook, a national officer for the union, said: "The sheer scale of the job cuts announced today by Barclays is alarming. The decision to close the Barclays site in Leeds will be devastating for the workforce and the local community.

"Unite has argued for some time that the bank has a social responsibility not to walk away from its committed workforce in Leeds. Today is indeed a dark day for nearly 800 people who have worked to deliver the highest customer service for Barclays customers."

Ministries 'often ignore rules to prevent repeat of Carillion collapse'

Jasper Jolly

The government regularly ignores its own outsourcing guidelines brought in to prevent a repeat of the Carillion collapse, according to a report by an influential Whitehall thinktank.

Several government departments have not updated internal policies on outsourcing to match the "outsourcing playbook" published in the wake of Carillion's failure, meaning private companies were still being awarded contracts that were too risky for them to handle, the Institute for Government (IfG) said in a report.

Departments are still too focused on securing the lowest cost for outsourcing contracts, at the expense of factors such as quality delivery, the IfG report said.

Carillion was the second largest construction and services company in the UK at the time of its collapse in January 2018. The IfG said that it held 420 public contracts when it went under, from

building hospitals to cleaning prisons and maintaining homes for the armed forces. Carillion owed 30,000 suppliers £2bn, while more than 2,000 of its 18,000 staff were made redundant.

The government contributed to creating a "corporate monster" by creating "low-margin, high-risk" projects, the report said. It added that the government also offloaded too much risk on to private-sector suppliers, a problem that has also plagued the HS2 railway project.

Tom Sasse, an IfG senior researcher and author of the report, said: "Carillion was a wake-up call, with its collapse showing where a careless approach to outsourcing can lead. The government must implement serious reform if it is to secure services that are reliable, high quality and value for money - and avoid the prospect of contractors collapsing in future."

▼ Carillion held 420 public contracts when it went bust in 2018, costing the taxpayer £62m, the IfG report found

PHOTOGRAPH: JOE GIDDENS/PA MEDIA



The report praised the government's immediate handling of the crisis and said that training offered by the Cabinet Office on procurement had been effective. It also found that the cost to the taxpayer of letting Carillion collapse was about £62m, less than half of the £160m requested by Carillion executives who wanted a government bailout.

However, it said unidentified projects were still contravening the guidelines, including a large facilities management programme and multiple IT services, construction and consultancy contracts.

Among its other recommendations, the IfG said a Cabinet Office minister should be given direct responsibility for improving outsourcing, and extend training to other public bodies such as the NHS and local governments.

The Carillion collapse was also a key trigger for a slew of 13 reviews of business and the accounting sector, after MPs found that its auditors, KPMG, had signed off "increasingly fantastical figures" over 19 years in the role.

The IfG's report described the collapse as a "stark illustration of a rotten corporate culture", including taking big, debt-fuelled risks and using aggressive accounting to hide its problems.

"That the company was able to behave so recklessly for so long demonstrated that the system of checks and balances was wholly inadequate," the report said.

A Cabinet Office spokesperson said: "Through our outsourcing playbook we have rewritten the rules for how the government works with suppliers to deliver public services. We have made progress but there is more to do and we are working with departments to deliver training, targeted support and strengthened approval processes."

Labour said the report showed that the government had failed to tackle the "outsourcing rip-off", arguing that private companies were opaque and unaccountable.

Jon Trickett MP, the shadow minister for the Cabinet Office, said: "[The government's] reforms have barely scratched the surface of a deeply dysfunctional system, as many contractors remain unstable and too many outsourced public services suffer inflated costs, delays and delivery problems."

to invest £1.2bn in the next five years we believe we can make a real difference to the environment and people we serve, while delivering strong business outcomes at the same time."

The FTSE 100 company outlined the plans at a capital markets day where it also told investors it would funnel 1% of its annual profits, usually exceeding £10m a year, to its community fund.

Severn Trent supplies fresh water and wastewater services for about eight million people in the Midlands and in a small area of Wales.

Tony Juniper, chair of Natural England, said Severn Trent's plans would make a "very significant contribution" toward the national Nature Recovery Network, which aims to rebuild Britain's woodlands and peatlands, and work with farmers to protect species and restore soil quality.

Severn Trent set out its green commitments after pressure from the industry regulator, whose improvement demands it accepted.

Business view

Nils Pratley



Just too many unanswered questions at Flybe to justify throwing good money after bad

If you want a £100m loan from government to keep flying, make sure your case is transparent and solid. Flybe's pleas, sadly, seemed to fail on both scores. The company's possible collapse creates a headache for ministers, as the airline operates almost 40% of UK domestic flights and employs more than 2,000 people, but it's hard to save a company when the owners haven't obviously dug deep themselves.

The list of unanswered questions around the loan proposal, when floated in January, was long and there have been few answers since. How much at-risk capital has the Connect consortium - Virgin Atlantic, Southend airport owner Stobart Air plus Cyrus Capital, a US hedge fund - injected since it bought the assets for a mere £2.8m a year ago?

The sale price reflected the need for heavy investment, but the main revelation in the past seven weeks has been the extent to which Flybe's assets have been mortgaged. Any government loan needed to be on commercial terms to satisfy state-aid rules, but that's a hard hurdle to clear if few assets are available to be used as security. The spread of the coronavirus has clearly intensified commercial pressures on Flybe, but the government's calculations also become messier. If the virus hits demand for flights until the peak summer, how could ministers be sure £100m would be enough?

An alternative approach was always available if Flybe failed: simply subsidise the routes that are deemed vital to regional connectivity and ensure new operators fill the gap. The test for the government is to show it has such a back-up plan in place.

Out of options

Intu's plan B, it seems, is to whistle cheerfully and hope something turns up. That was not how the shopping centre group described its re-jigged thinking after the failure to raise £1.3bn-plus to repair a horribly over-stretched balance sheet.

"I am pleased that a number of alternative options have presented themselves," declared chief executive Matthew Roberts, while offering little detail about how "alternative capital structures and asset disposals" might ease shareholders' pain.

A few centres could be flogged, though Intu would be reluctant to part with trophies such as the Trafford Centre near Manchester

or Lakeside in Thurrock. Or part-stakes in centres could be sold, as Intu did in Derby last year. The hard part is believing a distressed seller can attract whizzy offers.

There's little point in shedding assets at way below their supposed value, because the debt-to-asset ratio is the critical measure of a property group's health. Intu's ratio was 68% at the end of 2019; sub-40% would be advisable.

Last year's big shopkeeping failures, which saw Debenhams, Arcadia and Monsoon seek rent reductions via administration, hasn't been repeated this year, which is a plus. Coronavirus, though, is a definite negative when your business is attracting punters to congregate in enclosed spaces.

The company can try to chip away at debts of £4.5bn but, as the Jefferies analyst Mike Prew put it, it's now "intu the eye of the covenant storm". Banking covenants are tested every six months and, if nothing else changes, Intu would be in breach if valuations fall 10% in the first half of this year, a scenario that merely requires 2019's rate of decline to be maintained.

Striving merely to stay alive is not entirely hopeless since the banks are also motivated to hope for a change in retail property weather and may waive covenants for a while. But Intu's misadventure with debt has taken it to a desperate position.

The company owns nine of the top 20 shopping centres in the UK but the equity in this enterprise, after yesterday's 41% slump in the share price to just 6.3p, is now worth less than £100m. Prew was a seller at 400p in 2015, so take his analysis seriously: "The business has run out of options."

All in L&G's stride

One can rely on Nigel Wilson, chief executive of Legal & General, for optimism. The coronavirus threat to the economy will pass, the second half of the year will be better than the first - so take the long view, he advised, alongside another slick set of results.

L&G's model of "inclusive capitalism" - which essentially means investing in socially useful assets - has certainly coped with all recent challenges. Earnings per share have improved at a compound annual rate of 11% over the last nine years, and the dividend by 13%. Impressive.

L&G's shares have been whacked as hard as the banks' in the recent stock market slide, and it's not obvious why. A core mix of investment management and annuities looks far less volatile.

Emissions pledge in Severn Trent's £1.2bn green plan

Jillian Ambrose

One of the UK's biggest water firms plans to spend £1.2bn to "help repair the environment" and end its contribution to the climate crisis by 2030.

Severn Trent plans to cut its emissions to almost zero within the next 10 years by using 100% renewable energy to power its water pumps, and by having an all-electric vehicle fleet.

Alongside its "triple carbon pledge" the firm will also invest in schemes to improve the biodiversity of 5,000 hectares (12,355 acres) of land by 2027, and has promised to work with 9,000 farmers to use nature based practices that

reduce the need for chemical fertilisers which can pollute local waterways.

Liv Garfield, chief executive of Severn Trent, said: "By committing

'By committing to invest £1.2bn we believe we can make a real difference to the environment and people we serve'

Liv Garfield
Severn Trent

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JULY 2021

Mon 12 **Embark the new flagship *Amy Johnson* and depart London Tilbury for your 10 night maiden season voyage**

Wed 14 **Invergordon, Scotland**
Situating on the shores of the deep Cromarty Firth and with a fine natural harbour, Invergordon is a key port with an important naval history stretching back through two World Wars. The small, yet modern town is a charming coastal gateway to the beautiful Scottish Highlands and the incredible scenery that forms a stunning backdrop to the romantic castles and historic battlefields

Thu 15 **Lerwick, Shetland Islands**

Fri 16 **Kirkwall, Orkney Islands** (depart early pm)
The Orkneys comprise of 70 or so islands, rocks and skerries that cover an area of 376 square miles. You can still detect the Norse influence and the Stone Age settlement of Skara Brae, older than either the Pyramids or Stonehenge, is fascinating. The magnificent St. Magnus Cathedral, a legacy of the town's rich Viking heritage, dominates Kirkwall's skyline

Sun 18 **Belfast, Northern Ireland** (depart early pm)

Mon 19 **St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly** (arrive late am)
Britain's only island archipelago, the magical Isles of Scilly lie just 28 miles off the coast of Cornwall. Lose yourself in the sub-tropical wonderland of the Tresco Abbey Garden – home to many rare plants that cannot be grown anywhere else in Britain

Tue 20 **St. Peter Port, Guernsey**
For over 800 years Castle Cornet has stood guard over St. Peter Port. The attractive town is a delight with cobbled streets, steep stairways and alleyways winding their way down between the houses to a picturesque waterfront of grey and white stone buildings. Guernsey is geographically closer to France, yet loyal to the British crown, and this is reflected in the wonderful Anglo-French ambience around the town

Wed 21 **Honfleur, France**
The port at the Normandy city of Honfleur sets the standard for picturesque ports everywhere. This beautiful setting has been captured on canvas by a multitude of Impressionist painters, and a walk through its romantic streets will easily show you why

Thu 22 **Arrive in London Tilbury**

Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea

CRUISE & MARITIME VOYAGES' NEW FLAGSHIP

Amy Johnson will become the proud new flagship of the Cruise & Maritime Voyages fleet in April 2021. Given her size she will provide a very generous, spacious and relaxing feel. As a celebration of the courageous exploits of past female explorers and adventurers, Cruise & Maritime Voyages have recognised their remarkable achievements by naming their new ship after Amy Johnson, the pioneering English pilot who was the first woman to fly solo from London to Australia.



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Weather

Thursday 5 March 2020

UK and Ireland Noon today

Sunny

Mist

Fog

Sunny intervals

Hazy

Mostly cloudy

Overcast/dull

Sunny showers

Sunny and heavy showers

Light showers

Rain

Sleet

Light snow

Snow showers

Heavy snow

Ice

Thundery rain

Thundery showers

Temperature, °C

Wind speed, mph

Windy

35C

30

25

20

15

10

5

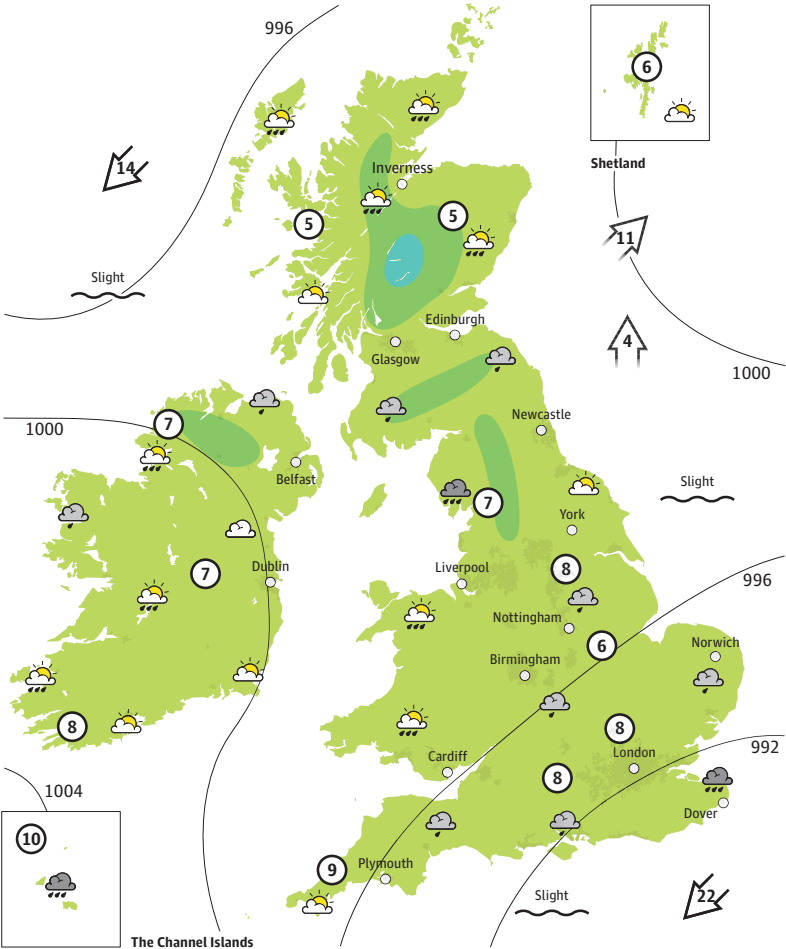
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-5

-10

-15

-20



Forecast

Low 0 High 8

Tomorrow

Low 1 High 10

Saturday

Around the UK

London

Low 1 High 8

Precipitation 75%

Air pollution Low

Manchester

Low 0 High 8

Precipitation 40%

Air pollution Low

Edinburgh

Low -1 High 7

Precipitation 15%

Air pollution Low

Belfast

Low 1 High 7

Precipitation 65%

Air pollution Low

Birmingham

Low -1 High 7

Precipitation 40%

Air pollution Low

Brighton

Low 2 High 8

Precipitation 80%

Air pollution Low

Bristol

Low 0 High 6

Precipitation 65%

Air pollution Low

Cardiff

Low 2 High 8

Precipitation 25%

Air pollution Low

Newcastle

Low -1 High 7

Precipitation 5%

Air pollution Low

Penzance

Low 6 High 8

Precipitation 25%

Air pollution Low

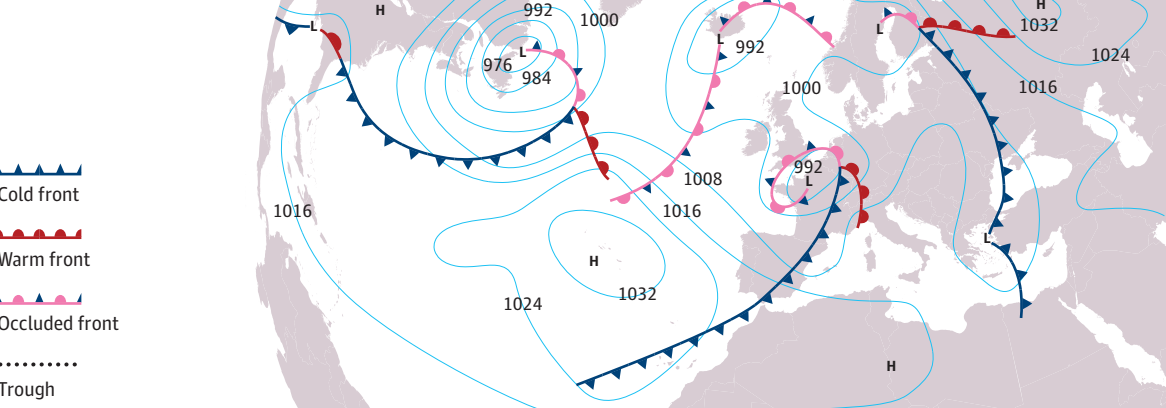
Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO₂ readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

Latest	414.01
Weekly average	
23 Feb 2020	413.72
04 Mar 2019	412.25
04 Mar 2010	388.72
Pre-industrial base	280
Safe level	350

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Atlantic front



High tides

Aberdeen	0933	3.3m	2212	3.5m
Avonmouth	0210	9.7m	1511	9.8m
Barrow	0713	7.0m	1957	7.2m
Belfast	0700	2.8m	1936	2.8m
Cobh	0045	3.2m	1328	3.2m
Cromer	0210	3.8m	1454	3.9m
Dover	0705	5.3m	1948	5.3m
Dublin	0748	3.2m	2022	3.3m
Galway	0043	3.9m	1327	4.0m
Greenock	0745	2.7m	2056	2.7m
Harwich	0714	3.2m	1953	3.2m
Holyhead	0627	4.4m	1906	4.5m
Hull	0130	5.8m	1425	5.8m
Leith	1043	4.3m	2319	4.5m
Liverpool	0656	7.2m	1938	7.4m

London Bridge	0915	5.8m	2207	5.7m
Lossiemouth	0736	3.0m	2020	3.2m
Milford Haven	0138	5.1m	1429	5.2m
Newquay	0036	5.2m	1326	5.3m
North Shields	--	--	1140	3.9m
Oban	0144	2.8m	1514	3.0m
Penzance	0048	4.2m	1255	4.2m
Plymouth	0049	4.3m	1341	4.3m
Portsmouth	0719	3.7m	2019	3.8m
Southport	0557	6.9m	1846	7.1m
Stornoway	0314	3.6m	1547	3.7m
Weymouth	0216	0.5m	1505	0.5m
Whitby	--	--	1211	4.3m
Wick	0713	2.7m	1954	2.8m
Workington	0721	6.3m	2006	6.5m

Sun & Moon

Sun rises 0635

Sun sets 1748

Moon rises 1213

Moon sets 0415

Full Moon 9 March

AccuWeather.com

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather ©2020

Lighting up

Belfast	1810 to 0701
Birm'ham	1754 to 0641
Brighton	1749 to 0633
Bristol	1759 to 0644
Carlisle	1756 to 0648
Cork	1822 to 0708
Dublin	1811 to 0700
Glasgow	1801 to 0655
Harlech	1803 to 0651
Inverness	1758 to 0656
London	1748 to 0633
M'chester	1755 to 0644
Newcastle	1751 to 0644
Norwich	1742 to 0629
Penzance	1811 to 0654

World weatherwatch

Climatological winter came to an end last weekend and it was an exceptionally mild and wet winter across north-western parts of Europe. According to the World Meteorological Organization, Germany and Austria had their second warmest winters on record, 3.2C and 2.7C above the 1981-2010 average respectively. In Germany's case, only 2006-07 had a milder winter. France also had one of its three mildest winters on record and its warmest since 1900.

Further afield, the US had an extreme east-west split in rainfall amounts during February. The south-east had a very wet month with many locations getting more than 25cm (10 inches), with places such as Greensboro in North Carolina and Starkville in Mississippi beating all-time records. The rain lead to floods with the River Pearl reaching a level not seen since 1983.

California had hardly any rainfall over the whole month. Many places in the north of the state recorded no rainfall whatsoever, including San Francisco. It is the first time that neither San Francisco airport nor Sacramento have recorded no rain since records began in 1857. February is in the middle of California's wet season.

Andrew Stewart MetDesk

Around the world

Algiers	24	Lisbon	16
Ams'dam	7	Madrid	15
Athens	16	Malaga	23
Auckland	23	Melb'rne	21
B Aires	28	Mexico C	27
Bangkok	33	Miami	32
Barcelona	18	Milan	10
Basra	26	Mombasa	33
Beijing	10	Moscow	7
Berlin	8	Mumbai	29
Bermuda	22	N Orleans	20
Brussels	8	Nairobi	27
Budapest	11	New Delhi	24
C'hagen	5	New York	11
Cairo	28	Oslo	3
Cape Town	26	Paris	11
Chicago	11	Perth	30
Corfu	16	Prague	9
Dakar	27	Reykjavik	0
Dhaka	31	Rio de J	26
Dublin	6	Rome	13
Florence	13	Shanghai	11
Gibraltar	18	Singapore	31
H Kong	21	Stockh'm	3
Harare	23	Strasb'g	10
Helsinki	4	Sydney	25
Istanbul	15	Tel Aviv	27
Jo'burg	26	Tenerife	22
K Lumpur	32	Tokyo	13
K'mandu	20	Toronto	4
Kabul	11	Vancouv'r	8
Kingston	31	Vienna	11
Kolkata	29	Warsaw	9
L Angeles	25	Wash'ton	12
Lagos	32	Well'ton	17
Lima	26	Zurich	7

Cricket

Worcestershire upbeat despite 'extreme' floods

Page 42 →

Football

They believe: Lionesses out to fell world champions

Page 46 →



Sport

41



▲ You can assume Paul Scholes, Patrick Vieira and Roy Keane will make the cut, but who else should be in the Premier League's Hall of Fame?

MATTHEW PETERS/
MAN UTD VIA GETTY IMAGES

Blame game

Roll up, roll up for the Premier League Hall of Fame, and let the arguments begin

Marina Hyde

Sports writer of the year



A lot of the tech giants tell you they're investing so heavily in driverless cars because they want to save lives. And you know, that's so close to the truth - but it's not quite it. In fact, they're investing so heavily in driverless cars because they want to capture ever more of your behavioural data, and that's much easier to do when you're interacting with their products instead of driving a car. Be in a car, by all means - but ideally you will soon be interacting with their products in that car, as opposed to driving it. Or to put it another way: these guys don't want to save lives! They want to ruin them a bit more! (I'm kidding, of course. We're only at the very beginning of understanding all the great stuff this type of technology has done for us.)

It's hard not to see the same relentless altruism in the Premier League, who seem to be making yet further investment in the idea of football-less football. As discussed here a few weeks ago, the sheer volume of content generated about the league's first winter break showed how much less essential football itself is becoming to the "product", while football-adjacent content - off-pitch drama, social media engagement, sponsorship culture and so on - performs better and better all the time.

Against this backdrop, then, the announcement of a Premier League Hall of Fame met with the expected reception. Which is to say: vast interaction, in the form of vast derision. But as we know, the type of interaction seems to be largely irrelevant these days. Only last week, as has been much noted, Manchester United's managing director Richard Arnold was announcing smugly that the loan signing of Odion Ighalo was the

top trend worldwide on Twitter. It's an interesting metric of success, though by no means one we should discount. As I type this, the top two trending topics on UK Twitter are Peter Andre and Liz Truss - both of whom would arguably be similarly impressive signings for Arnold, who has yet to alight on one Official Derision Partner of Manchester United.

But before we go on, a quick recap on the Premier League's big idea. At this stage, there do not appear to be plans to make the Premier League Hall of Fame a physical facility, like the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. This is sadly not a museum of Premier League history, which could make space for such priceless cultural artefacts as the Chateau Petrus-soaked napkin on which Richard Scudamore once scribbled "Game 39???", or the air rifle Ashley Cole shot the work experience kid with.

Instead, according to the official portentous press release on the matter, being inducted will come with a medal and will be "the highest individual honour awarded to players by the League". Think of this as the Victoria Cross, with any medal a player might have got for actually winning the Premier League hereby immediately downgraded to the equivalent of a mere mention in dispatches. The first two inductees will be announced in two weeks' time, with the gazillions of fans inevitably enraged by the choice invited to get involved and vote for others to join them. Yup, classic Premier League. They've got us right where they want us.

We also learned that the Hall of Fame is to be "presented by Budweiser", whatever that means, whose global vice-president of marketing says: "We are passionate about football, and so are our consumers." And he might be right. They certainly aren't passionate about beer, that's for sure.

Anyway, that's about the size of the plan. On the one hand, I quite enjoy the first big idea of new Premier League chief Richard Masters being a best-of-the-best initiative. As a man who was famously something like the seventh choice for his role, this marks him out as a keen ironist.

On the other hand, what is the point of any of this stuff but the endless, ferociously pointless online rows it generates? We don't call them that, of course - it is "engagement", or "interaction", or "loyalty". Inspired by the Eskimos of cliché, we now have 100 different words for calling someone wrong on the internet. Great swathes of modern life and culture are now governed by a series of euphemistic abstract nouns for what is - let's face it - the business of getting people to spend hours furiously insulting each other online.

Or as Masters prefers to sanitise it: "It will be an occasion for our fans around the world to look back over the years and help us celebrate some truly exceptional playing careers."

It will also be an occasion for a lot of newspaper articles - like this one, in fact - that can't leave well alone. After all, this is how they get you. At the weekend I read a column stating that this Hall of Fame devalues the worthy Hall of Fame that already exists at the National Football Museum in Manchester - a column which then immediately proceeded to devalue the latter Hall of Fame by demanding to know why Terry Butcher wasn't the crowning glory of it. "Surely nobody can disagree," this stated, "that he should bestride the Hall of Fame, a bloody bandage round his head." "If it helps," I immediately began replying sarcastically to the pixels on my phone, "I can totally disagree?"

On that day, I managed to find the strength to delete this wildly unnecessary interjection before I posted it - but now I've fallen right off the wagon and written this. That's the siren-song of football-less football for you: only the truly pure and the truly strong fail to get sucked in.

Formula One

Seven teams in legal threat over Ferrari engine deal

Giles Richards

Formula One's governing body has been confronted with the threat of legal action by seven teams. They issued a joint statement yesterday demanding clarification of a confidential agreement the FIA agreed with Ferrari after an investigation into the legality of the team's engine from last season.

Mercedes, Red Bull, McLaren, Racing Point, Renault, AlphaTauri

and Williams joined forces to demand answers. The only teams who did not join the protest were Alfa Romeo and Haas, both of whom use Ferrari engines.

The schism, which will overshadow the first race of the season in Melbourne on 15 March, comes as F1 is also struggling to deal with the consequences of the coronavirus. The Chinese Grand Prix has already been postponed and Australia, Bahrain and Vietnam remain under threat. Moreover the fallout has occurred as F1 seeks

an agreement with the teams for a commercial deal for 2021 onwards.

Last year there was concern over the legality of Ferrari's engine amid suspicion they were able to circumvent fuel flow regulations. The FIA conducted an analysis of the engine and issued a statement regarding its research, concluding only that it had "reached a settlement with the team" but that the "specifics of the agreement will remain between the parties".

That no further information was supplied, nor a definitive conclusion of the legality or otherwise of the engine, left the majority of teams indignant. Their statement read: "We, the undersigned teams, were surprised and shocked by the FIA's statement of 28 February regarding the conclusion of its investigation into the Scuderia Ferrari Formula One power unit.



▲ Ferrari's settlement with the FIA has left other teams indignant

"An international sporting regulator has the responsibility to act with the highest standards of governance, integrity and transparency. After months of investigations that were undertaken by the FIA only following queries raised by other teams, we strongly object to the FIA reaching a confidential settlement agreement with Ferrari to conclude this matter.

"Therefore, we hereby state publicly our shared commitment to pursue full and proper disclosure in this matter to ensure that our sport treats all competitors fairly and equally. We do so on behalf of the fans, the participants and the stakeholders of Formula One. In addition we reserve our rights to seek legal redress."

Ferrari finished second in the constructors' championship last season. Prize money is allocated according to position and without clarification of whether there had been breach of regulations it is not clear whether their standing should remain, which is of financial import to everyone involved.

Ferrari do not intend to respond to the statement as yet. The FIA and F1 management have also not made a comment.



MIGUEL SIERRA/EPA

Winning ways Johanna Konta recorded her first victory of the year by thwarting the latest stage of Kim Clijsters' comeback. Konta won 6-3, 7-5 at the Abierto GNP Seguros tournament in Monterrey, Mexico. Clijsters, 36, was playing only her second match since retiring at the US Open in 2012. **PA Media**

Racing

Epatante gets all-clear for Cheltenham

Chris Cook

Confidence is growing once more in Epatante, the Champion Hurdle favourite, who appears to have left behind whatever it was that caused her to cough last week. She was reported to have "jumped brilliantly" in a schooling session yesterday by her trainer, Nicky Henderson, who has no lingering doubts about her wellbeing ahead of the feature race on day one of the Cheltenham Festival next week.

"She coughed for two days," Henderson said, "and as soon as I said something, she never coughed again. She's 100% and has been ever since."

Henderson also sounded in good

form after a schooling session at which a number of his big-name horses evidently fared well. "Epatante jumped brilliantly, Santini was great, Altior was electric. We've had a good morning."

Cheltenham racecourse officials are braced for a hit to the bottom line as a result of the coronavirus, with ticket sales declining in the build-up to jump racing's biggest week. "The uncertainty has slowed down ticket sales and a few people are heeding advice that if they are elderly or unwell they should consider if they should be travelling or coming to an event of this nature," said Ian Renton, the Jockey Club's regional director.

Additional toilets and hand-washing facilities are being set up and extra staff will operate in all toilet areas to ensure soap and drying facilities are constantly available. Antibacterial hand gel will be offered and posters around the racecourse will remind people of the public health advice. Renton said there was no sign that the number of Irish visitors, who traditionally travel to Cheltenham in huge numbers, would drop significantly.

Even at this late stage there is widespread concern about the meeting. On a day when the number of cases in Britain jumped by 32 to 85 and the chief medical officer said the virus was likely to be spreading undetected, the odds shortened about Cheltenham's first day not taking place.

In Betfair's much-watched "Will racing go ahead?" market, "No" had drifted out to 13-2 on Tuesday in the wake of reassuring government statements. It was back in to 9-4 yesterday evening.

Chris Cook's tips

Wincanton 1.50 Little River Bay 2.25 Sending Love 3.00 Dr Oakley 3.35 Putdecashonthedash 4.10 Darsi In The Park (nap) 4.45 Quite By Chance 5.20 Time To Tinker
Southwell 2.00 Light Lily 2.35 Betushka 3.10 Champagne Mondays 3.45 Charlie Arthur 4.20 Samovar 4.50 Mukha Magic
Carlisle 2.15 Barnay 2.50 Lastin' Memories 3.25 First Account 4.00 Real Armani (nb) 4.35 Mint Condition 5.10 Charlie Snow Angel 5.45 Honda Fifty
Newcastle 4.55 Agreed 5.30 Street Life 6.00 War Whisper 6.30 Mia Mento 7.00 Hunters Step 7.30 Betty Grable 8.00 Inductive 8.30 Patrick

Cricket

Worcestershire plans hit by 'extreme' floods and virus fears

Ali Martin

Worcestershire could be forgiven for feeling down on their luck, with their ground still submerged following its fifth flood of the winter and their pre-season tour in the balance owing to the coronavirus.

The county announced yesterday that their first home match of the season against Sussex on 25 April must now be staged in nearby Kidderminster given New Road has spent 66 of the past 131 days under water.

And in the background the county's trip to Abu Dhabi on 18 March remains subject to official clearance given their intended hotel, the Crowne Plaza, has been on lockdown since last Friday in response to the two suspected cases of Covid-19 that meant cycling's UAE Tour was cancelled early.

"It's a hold-our-breath and fingers-crossed job," said Alex Gidman, the club's first XI coach. "The health of the players comes first and we'll be guided by the governments at both ends, the people who know what they are talking about. Essex are due to head over to the UAE next week on pre-season and Somerset a few days before us, so hopefully they will be good to go and we can follow suit."

Losing the use of New Road to flooding is not new for Worcestershire - last year alone saw three fixtures moved

- and the latest switch in venue may yet be for only one match, with their second not until 15 May.

The full extent of the latest damage will not be known until the water has retreated. Gidman said: "It's the highest I have ever seen the water. It's been quite extreme and one issue is what is left behind once it's gone."

"You can have clean floods where the water comes and goes but with these longer ones they become dirty floods. You get two or three inches of silt - pretty rotten stuff - and various bits and bobs left behind once the water retreats. One year there was a picnic bench.

"Our groundsman, Tim Packwood, is as upbeat as groundsman get and has dealt with flooding for donkey's years. The biggest challenge is that the square hasn't been dry all winter and the seed planted at the end of last season hasn't taken. I expect the square will be quite a challenge for him but he's an expert."

The England spinner Jack Leach has revealed he feared for his life after being struck down by sepsis on the winter tour of New Zealand.

Leach told PA Media: "I didn't know too much about it at the time, how serious it could be but I remember feeling very ill. I remember thinking, 'Don't fall asleep because you might not wake up'. It was that serious in terms of how I was feeling."

"That's when they got me to hospital. Once I got the antibiotics in my arm I started to feel better quite quickly. It took longer to get over than I thought."

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◀ New Road, always flood-prone, has spent 66 of the past 131 days under water



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Vunipola barred from England training base on medical advice

Prop to play no further part in Six Nations but still available for Saracens

Gerard Meagher

Mako Vunipola was told to stay away from England training because of concerns over a coronavirus outbreak in their "camp-based environment" and is not expected to play any further part in this Six Nations.

The Rugby Football Union sparked confusion on Tuesday by stating Vunipola had been put in self-isolation only for Saracens to declare him available for selection this weekend.

Yesterday England sought to clarify the situation by admitting Vunipola had not been quarantined but insisting they were being overly cautious because of the 24/7 nature of their training camps. Vunipola has been ruled out of the match against Wales on Saturday and is not expected to feature against Italy a week later if that game goes ahead.

Vunipola did not join England on Monday after it emerged he had a brief stopover in Hong Kong on his way back from Tonga, where he had travelled after a relative was taken sick. In response to the RFU's claim that he was in self-isolation, Saracens issued a statement on Tuesday insisting that, in line with government advice, the

prop would be available for selection to face Leicester on Saturday as he is symptom-free.

England have since admitted they were acting on advice from the RFU's lead medical expert, Simon Kemp, and the team doctor, Richard Tingay, and have confirmed Saracens' approach would not lead to a change in their own policy. That means Vunipola would not be considered for selection to face Wales in the event of an injury to Joe Marler or Ellis Genge, nor Italy on Saturday week.

"Our medical team look at our team environment not other people's and that's the advice we followed," the England assistant coach Steve



▲ Mako Vunipola could play in Saracens' match against Leicester

Borthwick said. "We are a camp-based environment and we stay in together 24 hours a day effectively.

"Mako didn't come into camp on the advice of our medical team. Mako is not ill, he is not in self-isolation, but the advice we got for our environment from our medical team and the relevant parties they consulted was that he should not come into camp."

Eddie Jones had said he did not expect Vunipola to be available to face Wales. He was a surprise inclusion in the squad announced on Monday but the RFU was adamant the decision to stand down Vunipola was taken before he arrived at their Bagshot training base, allaying fears over potentially spreading the virus through the squad.

England have not banned handshakes but they have received lessons in "infection control" after it emerged that pupils from the school at which they trained in Oxford last week had been put in self-isolation.

"I'm not concerned in the slightest," Marler said. "I'm taking every precaution under the sun. I'm washing my hands with soap and water - warm water - and I'm singing Happy Birthday twice, as my prime minister has instructed me to do, as well as using plenty of hand sanitiser."

Vunipola's absence is offset by the form of Marler and Genge, who dovetailed to impressive effect against Ireland. Marler was picked to start ahead of Genge and Vunipola for England's opening match against France, suggesting he has emerged as first-choice in the position since the appointment of the former Springboks scrum guru Matt Proudfoot as the forwards coach.

"I like the way he works, he's a very emotive character and places a huge amount of pride and respect on the set piece still, which is great for someone who enjoys the set piece," Marler said.

"Steve Borthwick had turned us into a world-class outfit in the lineout, particularly the way we can defend mauls and maul now. But Matt has come in and added a different mindset and mentality to the scrum and a little bit more licence to attack more there. Which is always nice for a prop to hear."



Moriarty out to ruffle feathers in physical showdown

Paul Rees

Wales have been trying to open up this season after 12 years of Warrenball but they will be getting physical against England as they seek a first Six Nations victory at Twickenham since 2012 on Saturday.

Ireland were overwhelmed 24-12 by England in the last round two weeks after securing a bonus-point victory

against Wales in Dublin and the reigning champions are determined to meet England head on.

"If you do not match England physically, you have no chance," said the Wales flanker Ross Moriarty, who was born in St Helens and played for England at under-18 and under-20 level.

"We have to go and meet them in their backyard as a pack and as a backline. They pride themselves on having a big and physical pack with a few big backs, so we know what is coming. Getting stuck into people is my bread and butter and I will be looking to do that from the start.

"The first 20 minutes are key, especially when you are playing away from home. You want to put down a marker and keep the crowd quiet. It is not nice when someone comes into your home and ruffles your feathers. It has been disappointing to lose our last two games but France was a game that could have gone either way. There were a number of positives for us and we are looking to build on them."

Moriarty was in the England

'We have a duty of care to protect all our riders and staff'

Continued from page 52

ing" including all three Italian races. "We, as team doctors and the wider team, have a duty of care to protect health and wellbeing of all our riders and staff," the team said, citing an inability to influence measures taken to preserve athlete health as a reason for their decision.

"We will not have any input into, or control over, the measures that race organisers may or may not put in place to manage the Covid-19 risks."

The American men's team EF Pro Cycling have also written to the Union Cycliste Internationale asking to withdraw from all three races,

according to the Wall Street Journal. The Dutch women's team Parkhotel Valkenburg will not compete in the Strade Bianche. This week RSC Sport, the organiser of all three Italian races, had insisted they would go ahead.

Several cycling teams remain under forced quarantine in an Abu Dhabi hotel. Members of the French teams Cofidis and Groupama-FDJ as well as the Russian collective Gazprom, including 18 riders, have been confined to the fourth floor of the Crowne Plaza since last Thursday.

The United Arab Emirates health ministry said yesterday that six new cases relating to the cycling event had been discovered. They were identified as Russian, Italian, German and Colombian nationals but it was not clear if they had been confined to their hotels. In a statement FDJ said: "All of our riders and staff in the UAE have been tested negative for Covid-19. Still several positive results - not involving our team - have been reported inside our hotel."

Away from the immediate effects officials have been striking more

confident notes about the prospects for the Olympic Games this summer. The International Olympic Committee president, Thomas Bach, spoke bluntly on the subject following the second day of the IOC's annual meeting in Lausanne.

"I can tell you that today ... neither the word 'cancellation', nor the word 'postponement' was even mentioned," Bach said. "Of course we are a responsible organisation and this is why we have a joint task force, which is having regular meetings, but we are not speculating on any kind of future developments."

Bach's remarks were echoed by the head of the British Olympic Association, Andy Anson, who told BBC Sport: "It is not affecting our plans in any way, in that we are focused on getting the team to Tokyo for the Olympics in July and everyone is obsessed with that."

"At the same time we are getting information from all the relevant bodies, so we have got the most up to date information on coronavirus, and it is changing every day."

▼ Jonny Wilkinson leads George Ford and Owen Farrell in a training session
ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA



team who won the 2014 Junior World Championship by defeating South Africa in the final. The side were captained by Maro Itoje and in the centre was Nick Tompkins, who this year was called up by Wales having qualified through a grandmother. The Saracens player has featured in all three games, starting the last two.

"Nick has done well," Moriarty said. "He is still very fresh at this level and is only going to get better. Like me, he has played for Wales via England: I did not know he was qualified."



Ross Moriarty played for England at junior level

Ashton joins Harlequins

Chris Ashton, who left Sale on Monday over differing views on how the team should play, has joined Harlequins. The 32-year-old wing won the last of his 44 England caps a year ago and has scored 20 Test tries. Quins wasted little time making a move for Ashton who will reinforce their Premiership play-off push. In a statement released by Quins, Ashton said: "I can't wait to get started. It is a club filled with incredibly experienced and talented players. I know lots of the lads at Quins, like Danny Care, through our England careers. I like the look of what Quins are doing. They are growing a strong squad and the foundations for future success are in place." Ashton (86) is third in the Premiership's try-scorers' list behind Tom Varndell (92) and Mark Cueto (90). **PA Media**

When he was picked, I sent him a message asking if he knew how to get to Cardiff!"

Asked if it felt strange pulling on the white jersey given that his father, Paul, and uncle, Richard, both played for Wales, Moriarty said: "Playing for England was an opportunity I grabbed with both hands. If I had not gone down that route, I might never have been capped by Wales. You have to be the best you can, although I have always considered myself to be Welsh."

Moriarty started against France having been on the bench for the opening two matches following the rise of Aaron Wainwright and the return of Taulupe Faletau but his abrasive approach was missed.

"It was disappointing not to start but I feel I did well when I came off the bench," he said. "I have belief in myself. If I did not feel I was good enough to start, I would not be here."

"England have a good back row I know well from my time with Gloucester. It is personal every time I take the field, and just a little bit more when it is England."

Golf

It's time to streamline events, says McIlroy

World No 1 feels talk of Premier League Golf may influence tours' planning

Ewan Murray
Bay Hill

Rory McIlroy hopes the threat of a breakaway circuit can be the trigger for a "streamlined" version of existing tours.

McIlroy has been extremely candid with his dismissal of the Premier Golf League proposal, which is seeking to coax the world's best from the US PGA and European tours. While the notion remains a long shot, he has suggested structural change would be a positive outcome.

"I don't want to come across as sort of elitist but I think some smaller fields [would help], maybe a few more events with no cuts," said the world No 1 when considering how the game can be modified. "There's so many tournaments and there might be an over-saturation in a way. You look at the NFL and they play 18 games a year, 20 games a year max, and people want it all the time."

"I know football's different than golf, but I think being a golf fan these days can get quite exhausting following so many different tournaments, different tours. So maybe streamlining it a bit might be a good place to start."

Adam Scott, who has been supportive of the PGL plan, has not altered that approach despite McIlroy's view. "I'm still very positive about the concept of what it could be, for sure," the world No 7 said. "It doesn't mean I think it's going to happen necessarily."

"Everyone sees it from somewhat of their own agenda. Being an international player, the thought of a world tour sounds really great. Maybe less so for someone based in Florida who

doesn't have to necessarily travel as much. I don't think my sentiment has changed at all. I still think it's fantastic."

McIlroy and Scott are among the leading lights at the Arnold Palmer Invitational this week. Thirteen of the world's top 25 will tee up at Bay Hill.

The Masters, meanwhile, the first major of the year, may be little over a month away but McIlroy insists thoughts of Augusta National are not yet occupying his mind. "For some people it [the Masters buildup] starts the Monday they arrive at Augusta," he said. "For some people it started in January."

"What I realised is I can't make things too big in my head. So if I started to gear up for Augusta in January by the time Augusta got around in April my head would be absolutely fried. So I try to push it out as late as possible. I've got four tournaments to play between now and then and my biggest concern and my top priority are those four tournaments."

McIlroy is expected to make his Olympic debut in Tokyo this summer, although coronavirus fears mean the Games are shrouded in doubt. "If the organisers and the Olympic committee believe it's safe enough that athletes can go and compete, then you have to take their word for it. They're obviously liaising with the people who are the best at doing this."



▲ Rory McIlroy starts at Bay Hill today, one of four events pre-Masters

In brief

Boxing

Joshua v Fury could take place in December

Eddie Hearn has revealed he is "ready to conclude a deal" for a December showdown between Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury to determine the undisputed world heavyweight champion. Clamour for a bout between the pair has been building but Joshua will first fight the IBF mandatory challenger Kubrat Pulev on 20 June while Fury is likely to settle a contractual obligation to face Wilder in a rematch the following month. But Hearn, Joshua's promoter, has divulged that talks with Fury's handlers are progressing smoothly for a blockbuster fight this winter - provided both combatants come

through their summer tests. "Myself and Bob Arum [Fury's promoter] have been talking to a point where we're ready to conclude a deal and try to move forward to get that deal done for December," said Hearn. Meanwhile Dillian Whyte has banished any thoughts of fighting for the world heavyweight title as he insists his focus is on the challenge of the veteran Russian Alexander Povetkin in May. **PA Media**

Cricket

Ngidi rips through Australia to seal series

Lungi Ngidi's blistering haul and an unbeaten century from Janneman Malan helped South Africa to secure a dominant six-wicket victory against Australia in Bloemfontein as they clinched the one-day international series. The Proteas, who won the opening match at Paarl by 74 runs, bowled Australia out for 271, with Ngidi claiming six wickets in a brilliant performance. **PA Media**

Neville's England youngsters to face test of 'best and biggest'

Suzanne Wrack
Orlando

Phil Neville has said it would be “weak” of him to not throw his young England players into the breach against USA in the SheBelieves Cup tonight – the first time the teams have met since the World Cup semi-finals.

Neville has leaned towards bloodling young talent and taken a step towards phasing out some of the older players. The uncapped Everton goalkeeper Sandy MacIvcer, the West Ham centre-back Grace Fisk and North Carolina's Alessia Russo have flown to the US, with the Birmingham keeper Hannah Hampton and the South Carolina defender Anna Patten joining as training players.

Then there are the players from the fringes pushing to the fore. The Manchester City goalkeeper Ellie Roebuck, her clubmate Lauren Hemp and the Everton winger Chloe Kelly all have fewer than five caps but have been impressive in the Women's Super League.

Neville dismissed the idea he would not use young players in the opening game against the world champions. “Feed the old ones to the lions you mean?” he said with a laugh. “No I trust them. Some of them will play. When I named the squad the easiest

thing would have been to name the squad, celebrate these young players and then put them to one side.

“These players have to play in the best and biggest games. They've earned the right to play, they've earned the right to start, they've earned to come on and it would be weak of me as a manager to not play them in the biggest occasions. That's when your philosophy is tested the most, on the big occasions.”

Many of their opponents will be the same, with the pregnant Alex Morgan the most noticeable absence, but a change of manager, with a new system and approach, has left Neville describing the game as somewhat of a step into the unknown.

“They have a new coach, he's tweaked the system a bit,” Neville said of USA's changes since the two-times World Cup-winning manager Jill Ellis stepped down to be replaced by Reign FC's Vlatko Andonovski.

“We obviously have a newish team as well so there is something of an unknown going into the game about how our team will handle the occasion and how they will handle playing against USA, the best team in the world. That is the exciting challenge.”

Finding out how his young charges will cope with that pressure well ahead of the 2021 European Championship finals is important to Neville: “Two

▼ Lauren Hemp has excelled for Manchester City in the WSL
LYNNE CAMERON FOR THE FA/SHUTTERSTOCK



years ago I came here for my first tournament and I remember coming off at the end and speaking to Kiera Walsh about the speed, the power and the fitness of the US team.

“Then 12 months later the strides she has made in terms of those three

qualities is only because she had been on the pitch against USA. She had felt the burn and feeling of playing against the best and what it takes to play at that level.”

England have a lot to prove. With only two unconvincing wins in seven

USA

England

Tonight, 12am

● USA
4-3-3
Naeher; O'Hara, Sauerbrunn, Dahlkemper, Dunn; Ertz, Lavelle, Horan; Rapinoe, Lloyd, Heath

● England
4-2-3-1
Telford; Daly, Houghton, Bright, Stokes; Walsh, Scott; Parris, Nobbs, Hemp; White

(probable teams)

Venue Exploria Stadium, Orlando
Referee Odette Hamilton (Jam)

TV BBC Two

27°

matches since their World Cup semi-final defeat, a winter pause has done little to silence critics.

Neville defended his response to the disquiet. “The thing I was really passionate about was that I wanted to protect my players.

“I knew they were sensitive to criticism, sensitive to the fact that we had this big expectation but they probably weren't at their best, 100%. I wanted you to hit me rather than hit them. Now I see a set of players who have their mojo back.”

Going from the highs of the World Cup to the low coming out of it was extreme, Neville said. “When I went to major tournaments you came back to Premier League football, the gap isn't as big. World Cups, European Championships and then you're playing at Old Trafford in front of 60,000, so you still that get that massive emotional high and kick. The gap and the emotional high is something you shouldn't underestimate.”

Analysis Football League David Conn



Bury's needless demise shows why financial fair play is much needed

In the days after Manchester City received their two-year Champions League ban for overstating their sponsorships, Uefa's financial fair play concept became a target of some misdirected fury, accused of stifling clubs' ambitions by limiting the subsidies of owners.

While that ire was playing out, the Football League's review into the calamitous collapse of Bury, 10 miles up the road from City, was concluding that reliance on an owner's subsidies was the prime reason for the club's demise, a painful illustration of the need for FFP. Jonathan Taylor QC,

commissioned to review the process leading to Bury's expulsion from the EFL after 125 years' membership, determined the club crumbled because its last owner but one, Stewart Day, funded excessive players' wages, creating a terminal crisis when his money ran out. Many clubs across Europe have fallen to this most basic financial danger, and Uefa gave a lead by introducing FFP in 2010-11, encouraging clubs to spend not much more than the revenues they make.

While City's sanction led to an onslaught from some against the “break-even” principle, all three EFL divisions are engaged in work to tighten their FFP rules. Salary caps have been suggested for the Championship, whose clubs in 2017-18 spent 106% of their collective revenues on wages, and in Leagues One and Two, where Bury's demise has injected urgency into the search for stronger cost management.

Taylor's review is understood to have cut through the outrage Bury fans understandably feel towards Steve Dale, who bought the club from Day for £1 in December 2018, and as the end approached, said in an interview: “I didn't even know there was a football team called Bury.”

Taylor concluded in his report, which the EFL will soon publish, that Bury were in terminal crisis when Day handed over the club, because he had steeped the wage bill far above the revenues, bankrolling the losses from his own money.

The fatal flaw in this method of funding a club's ambitions is that when the owner runs out of money – which many do – the players' contracts still need to be paid and the club is stricken.

The crisis at Bolton, another historic club up the road from Manchester, was similarly caused after Eddie Davies, a very wealthy owner, had bankrolled excessive wages and losses for years. Shortly before he died in 2018, Davies announced he could no longer do so and, although he wrote off the extraordinary loss of £180m, Bolton were almost immediately insolvent, collapsing into administration in May 2019.

Bury, taken over by Day in 2013, funded to win promotion from League Two in 2015, then for another push following relegation in 2018, were doomed when his property companies collapsed. After seeing the figures submitted to the EFL, Taylor is understood to have concluded Bury were committed to wages so far beyond the club's revenues Dale's grim few months as the owner only delayed inevitable insolvency.

The maddening reality of this,

the needless destruction of a club, is that this expulsion happened during the richest period by far in football's history. Bury, formed in 1885, endured through economic depression, recessions, the collapse of Lancashire's cotton industry, two world wars, football's bleak 1980s, only to implode in an age of billions.

Rather than pay players from its fabulous revenues, the game still allows clubs to be perilously dependent on limited extra funding from owners and the financial vagaries of their own industries. Day is said to have put £9m into Bury, yet the club and their 134-year-old Gigg Lane home have nothing to show for it, only ruin.

Such existence-threatening overspending is the bottom-line reason Uefa introduced FFP, as it saw a majority of Europe's clubs in the red, owing money everywhere including to each other, during football's greatest boom. The Premier League sneered at first, then suffered Portsmouth's hideous

collapse in 2010 and quickly after that introduced rules limiting owner-funded losses. The Championship's system allows clubs to lose £39m across three seasons if bankrolled by an owner but the division's finances are English football's most stressful. They are distorted by parachute payments for clubs relegated from the Premier League and a review is under way.

In Leagues One and Two, a “salary cost management protocol” limits wage spending, to 60% of turnover in League One, 50% in League Two, but owners are allowed to put in unlimited extra money as “football fortune” money, which can all be spent on wages.

The system is almost designed to inflate wages beyond clubs' means – Bury signed players from competitor clubs by offering fabulous pay packages they could not then afford – and it has a fundamental hole in it. Owners are required only to guarantee funding for a season but players' contracts are for two, three, five years; in Day's case, they outlasted his ability to pay.

It seems to be seductive for some to allege financial restraints were introduced only to thwart Manchester City's rise fuelled by an oil-rich state. At the bottom of the League One table, the asterisks tell a different story: Bolton deducted 12 points, Bury expelled.



▲ The EFL expelled Bury in August after 125 years of membership

Sport
Football**Gilmour relishing his learning curve**

◀ *Billy Gilmour impressed against Liverpool in front of the Scotland manager, Steve Clarke*
MIKE EGERTON/PA

Chelsea's teenage midfielder may be small in stature but is big in personality and talent, according to his manager

David Hytner

The way Billy Gilmour tells the story it was a rite of passage, rather like a little schoolboy being shaken down for his lunch money by the big, bad bully. The Chelsea midfielder still looks like that schoolboy and - for the other role in the scene - please read the Manchester United captain, Harry Maguire, who stands at 6ft 4in and is most surely not a guy to mess with.

It was Gilmour's third appearance for Chelsea in the Carabao Cup tie against United at Stamford Bridge last October, which ended in a 2-1 defeat, and the 18-year-old Scot, who is 5ft 6in, remembers how things turned ugly.

"He is going to try and bully young ones and that's where I need to learn in the game - how to be stronger,"

Gilmour says. "I've been working on that and I can only get stronger. But that was a learning curve, definitely, when he gripped me up in the box. I remember that really well.

"Basically he was saying I'm a wee guy. He was pushing me off, gripping me by the throat, and that's something I have to deal with. But I won't let that happen again, that's for sure. That was a lesson."

When considering Gilmour, it is difficult not to fixate on his size, particularly as his workplace is the battleground of the top-level English football pitch and his position is in front of the backline. Everybody seems to mention it, as Frank Lampard admitted.

"I remember when he first came on against Sheffield United [for his debut last August] and people questioned: 'This kid, he looks like a 15-year-old or something,'" the

I'm not here to be a quiet player; I need to tell folk to get into position. I have to communicate'

Chelsea manager says. "I remember, individually, someone saying that to me."

But with Gilmour, as Lampard adds in the next breath, it does not matter "because if he is small in stature, he is huge in personality and talent". The former is certainly the buzzword when it comes to Gilmour. Lampard said Gilmour had shown "real personality" on Chelsea's pre-season trip to Ireland, when he played against Bohemians and St Patrick's Athletic, and the former Chelsea midfielder Cesc Fàbregas said the same after Gilmour had impressed against Grimsby in the 7-1 Carabao Cup win last September - his second appearance for the club and first start. "Personality is the most important at this age and he's got it all right," Fàbregas said.

Gilmour vowed after the Maguire incident that he would not be pushed around and the way he asserted himself in the 2-0 FA Cup win against Liverpool on Tuesday was a major part of his man-of-the-match performance. There was crisp and effective passing from him, lovely skills and awareness of space but, at the same time, grit, which was first in

evidence when he crunched into a challenge on Curtis Jones. He knows that he has to earn the right to play his game. "Most folk would say that because I'm small I won't do that but I love a good tackle and I've done two and come out on top so that's good," Gilmour says.

Nor was he afraid to shout instructions to more established teammates. "I'm not here to be a quiet player; I need to tell folk to get into position. I have to communicate - specifically with my position and the way that I play."

Gilmour has always been a single-minded individual who has football in his blood. His father, Billy Sr, played at the lower levels of the Scottish game in Ayrshire and his younger brother, Harvey, is a prospect in the youth setup at Kilmarnock.

Gilmour swapped Rangers for Chelsea as a 16-year-old in the summer of 2017 and he is not the type to allow fame to go to his head. He modelled for Burberry in September 2017 but he did so with the minimum of fuss. For him it is all about football, putting in extra training and study to improve himself. Fàbregas is an idol and, although he did not train with him at Chelsea, he has pored over footage of him.

"When I first came to Chelsea, we were given IEPs [individual education plans] and you had to focus yourself on a player. Mine was Cesc. I loved how he played. I watched a lot of videos of him and now I'm older I've tried to put it into the games and it's working."

With Jorginho suspended for three matches and N'Golo Kanté and Mateo Kovacic injured, Gilmour can feel the knock of opportunity and it may also come at international level. Steve Clarke, the Scotland head coach, was at Stamford Bridge for the Liverpool game and he would have liked what he saw. Gilmour has represented Scotland from under-15 to under-21 level.

"I was speaking to Andy Robertson [the Liverpool defender and Scotland captain] and he told me after the game [that Clarke was there]," Gilmour says. "Who are my Scottish role models? There is the captain and Scott McTominay. Also John McGinn. But, at the same time, I'm trying to get into the squad so I need to push myself."

With Gilmour, that is a given.

Leko lets rip at Kick It Out and PFA for lack of support

Jonathan Leko has criticised Kick It Out and the Professional Footballers' Association for what he claims was their lack of support during his racism case against Kiko Casilla.

Leko also criticised the process that led to Casilla being handed an eight-match ban, calling it "extremely stressful" and adding he had been "made to feel I had done something wrong".

The Leeds goalkeeper was found to have used racist language towards Leko, who was playing for Charlton on 28 September. Leko, who has returned to his parent club West Brom because of injury, said he is "relieved" the process is over.

He said in a statement: "I have been disappointed with the amount of time it has taken to reach this point. It was 22 weeks between the incident and the hearing during which I had minimal contact from the PFA and no contact in the way of support from leading anti-racism bodies such as Kick It Out and Show Racism The Red Card. Some support or guidance would have been very welcome."

Casilla denied the charge but an independent regulatory commission found him guilty after concluding it "was satisfied of the evidence in excess of the balance of probabilities". The Spaniard was also fined £60,000 and ordered to attend education classes.

Leko, who was born in DR Congo, also said: "I am naturally relieved the FA has upheld what I have always known to be true - that I was racially abused by Kiko Casilla in a manner which shocked me and angers and upsets me to this day. Knowing what occurred in the game that day, it has been difficult to watch Kiko Casilla continue to play as if nothing had happened. I would urge the governing bodies to look into their own processes when such incidents are reported."

Leko said the trauma of the case had left him questioning "whether I would be prepared to go through it all again were I on the receiving end of similar abuse". He added: "I certainly would think twice about how to advise another player in the same situation."

"All I have done is report something that had to be challenged and exposed for what it is - racial abuse. I now want to put the episode behind me and concentrate on recovering from my injury."

The PFA had no immediate response while a reaction was being sought from Kick It Out and Show Racism The Red Card. **PA Media**



Jonathan Leko questions if he would go through with such a case again

In brief**England****Southgate regrets Smalling treatment**

Gareth Southgate regrets the way he treated Chris Smalling after the player dropped by England three years ago put himself back in contention for a Euro 2020 spot with his form for Roma this season. At the time Southgate cited an ability to "use the ball from the back" as the

reason for choosing other players ahead of Smalling. It was a decision that frustrated the defender and one Southgate admits he got wrong. "I probably regretted the way of [relaying the message]," the England manager said. "By praising others for certain attributes there was [implied] criticism for Chris. It was my fault and it was unfair on him." Harry Kane has said he "definitely" expects to be fit for Euro 2020 and is targeting a comeback for Tottenham by the middle of April. "In my head, I am definitely at the Euros. Unless something pretty drastic happens between now and then I'll be there. I'm getting stronger all the time." **Paul MacInnes**

Aston Villa**Villa make £69m loss despite promotion**

Aston Villa made a £69m loss last season when winning promotion



▲ **Chris Smalling's club form has put him in contention for Euro 2020**

from the Championship, their accounts have revealed. That loss would have been much greater, and possibly breached Football League "profit and sustainability" rules, if the owners had not bought Villa Park for £56.7m via another of their companies. The accounts of the Villa holding company, Recon Group UK Limited, for the year to 31 May 2019, record a £36m profit on selling Villa Park; without it, the club's loss could have been £105m. The Land Registry notes the £56.7m ground sale to NSW Stadium Limited, owned by Villa's joint owners Nassef Sawiris and Wes Edens, was completed on 21 May, 10 days before the financial year end. **David Conn**

'As a kid, every half-time I argued with Ferguson'

As he prepares to face his former club, Wayne Rooney discusses his new role at Derby, why his final Everton exit still rankles and the way back for Manchester United

Ben Fisher

Four months on, the sight of Wayne Rooney in a Derby tracksuit is still somewhat unusual. Even more so given he is discussing tackling Manchester United tonight, emitting a warm glow as he tries to sum up more than a decade at Old Trafford: 13 years, 12 trophies, 559 appearances and a record 253 goals. "I loved it there," he says. "Some huge highs and some lows. When you've been somewhere so long and you look back on it, your old teammates and the staff, it was the main part of my career. It was enjoyable with great memories. There was obviously the time when I nearly left, which I regret. There were lows but they were certainly outweighed by the highs."

For Rooney the FA Cup fifth round promises to be a special, if not a slightly strange occasion at a sold-out Pride Park but facing United is not an alien prospect after twice doing so on his return to Everton three years ago. By the end of the 2017-18 season, Everton deemed Rooney dispensable and



Rooney believes Max Bird is a future England player

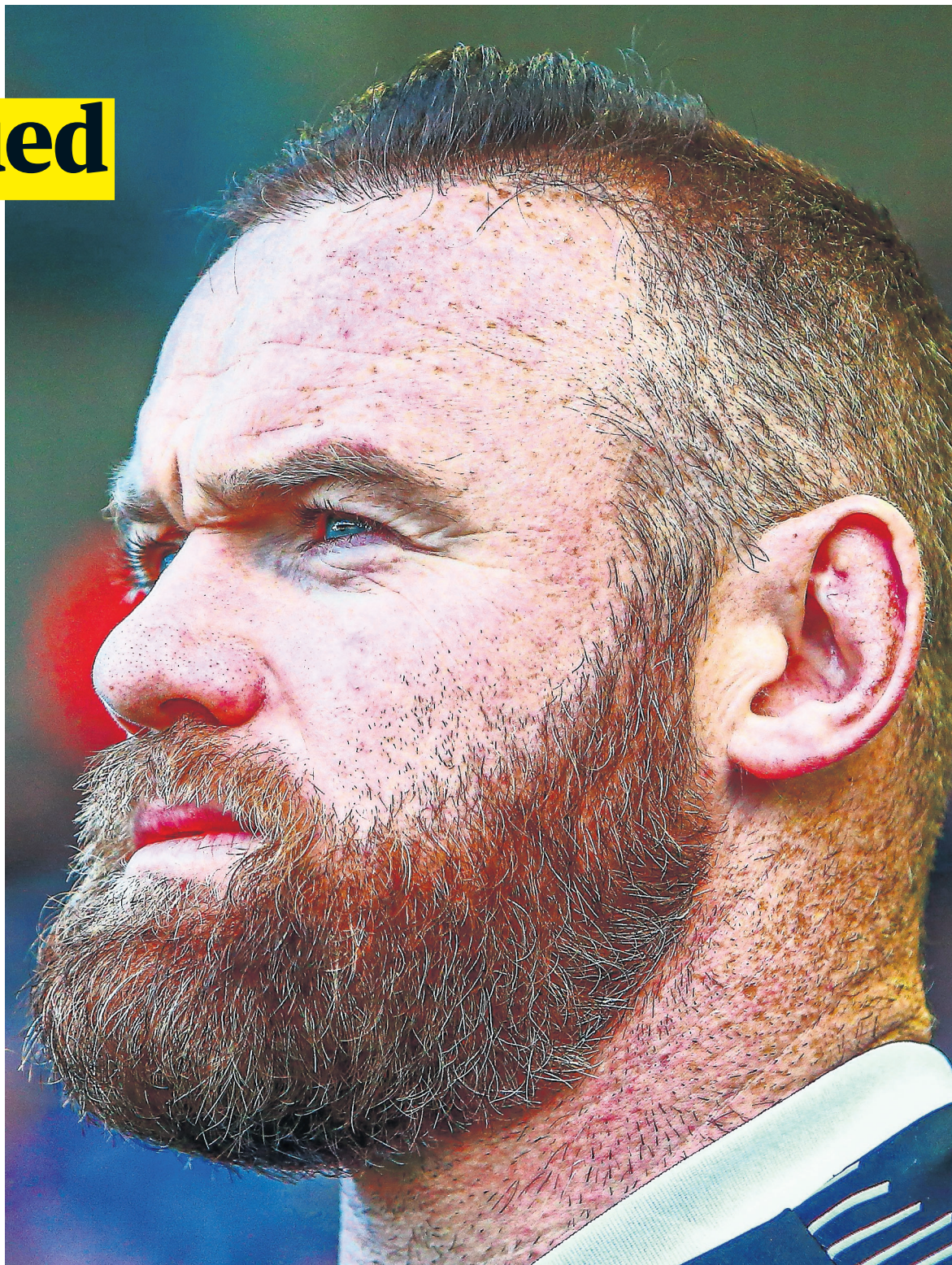
he left for DC United until touching down at Derby. The muddiness of that second Goodison Park exit rankles. "It was a big thing for me to go back there. There were things that got said, or didn't get said. At the end of the day all I wanted from Everton was a bit of honesty with the situation. I said to them: 'I'm not a child, I'll accept whatever you want to happen here.' That was the only disappointment but Everton is a fantastic club, I'm delighted for them bringing Carlo Ancelotti in and they look like they are thankfully, finally, moving forward."

Rooney has a greying, bushy beard but, as he details his evolution into a quarterback, he conveys the same earthy enthusiasm he had as a kid at Everton, be it striding forward with the ball against Leeds despite losing his right boot on halfway or thinking on his feet as a 14-year-old in the under-19s.

"Physically, it is easier. I think some people think playing midfield is more demanding but it is more about having the endurance, there is not as much high-speed running, so that is not a problem," the captain says, with a wry smile. "Then it is about trying to get on the ball and trying to drag players out of position. A lot of the games teams try to put players on me - they have in a few of the games - which allows me to drag them out of position and leave space for Tom Lawrence, Jason Knight, Duane Holmes or whoever comes into that space."

Rooney's role may have altered but his hunger has not diminished. Since his Derby debut in January, the 34-year-old has completed 90 minutes on all but one occasion, when withdrawn with Phillip Cocu's side 4-0 up against Stoke. He has had a positive impact on the squad, notably the 19-year-olds Knight and Max Bird, who Rooney believes should be considered by England in the coming years, but his influence does not stop there. Rooney is a player-coach and spent December, while ineligible to play, watching Cocu at close quarters, immersing in the world of match preparation.

"You sometimes make a



▲ Wayne Rooney has been playing a 'quarterback' role for Championship Derby

RYAN CROCKETT/JMP/SHUTTERSTOCK

'It's a shame when you see great players not really having a go at managing'

suggestion on players, on how we should play, or a set piece and you're thinking: 'I hope it pays off!'" he says, breaking into laughter. "He [Phillip] is open to that [input] with all the staff. I think the best managers do. You can't be naive and think: 'I'm going to do it all my own way.' Phillip has got a team around him where we all try to help but the final decision is his."

This summer Rooney, who has designs on being a manager, will complete his Uefa A licence before applying for the pro licence. After

matches his ritual remains the same: he returns home to the north-west and sifts through the game. "I've done that since I was a kid," he says, but his dual role has meant subtle changes. For example, on matchday Rooney arrives earlier than the rest of the players to finalise tactics with Cocu and his staff and, last Sunday, he spent the afternoon making notes on United's visit to Goodison Park, assessing their weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

"I can't play forever, so I need to think about my future after my

United in spirit Record scorer still a presence at Old Trafford

Jamie Jackson

Ole Gunnar Solskjær says Wayne Rooney could one day manage Manchester United, saying it would depend on how much the club's record goalscorer would want the role.

Rooney is expected to face United as Derby's player-coach in tonight's FA Cup tie at Pride Park. This will be a third time he has lined up against

them since leaving for Everton in 2017, ending a 13-year stay at Old Trafford in which he scored 253 goals and won 12 trophies.

Solskjær was asked if the 34-year-old, who signed for Derby in January after a spell at DC United, could emulate him and become United's manager.

"Yes," Solskjær said. "It depends on how much you put into the job and how much you want it - it takes over your life but it's the second best

after playing. I am sure there are many ex-players and managers who want my job."

Solskjær said Rooney still visits the Old Trafford dressing room after matches. "Wayne hasn't been at the training ground but he has been in and around the stadium and in the dressing room after games and he keeps in touch with the boys. Hopefully he can come in and congratulate us after this game and wish us all the best."

Regarding United Solskjær said



▲ Ole Gunnar Solskjær backed Wayne Rooney to manage United

Rooney on ...

Best goal for Manchester United “There’s the City one [bicycle kick in 2011] or Newcastle one [volley in April 2005]. The Newcastle one technically was my best goal but probably the City one in terms of it was the derby, the winning goal and we were fighting with City to win the Premier League.”

Most memorable United match “Champions League final, probably. Actually, probably Arsenal v Chelsea! We’d played City the day before and I remember sitting at home watching it thinking if Chelsea didn’t win we’d won the league [his first time, in May 2007]. That was a good memory!”



▲ Rooney’s spectacular overhead kick against Manchester City in 2011

Best United teammate “There were so many I’m close with: Wes Brown, Darren Fletcher, Michael Carrick, John O’Shea, Rio Ferdinand. We had a good core of players who did things off the pitch together and we’re still in touch now.”

playing days. I love the game, I want to stay in it, so this is where I am and I want to learn as much as I can. I think it’s a shame when you see players who have been great players walking away and not really having a go at managing or coaching. Over the last few years it’s been great to see Frank Lampard, Steven Gerrard, John Terry, Scott Parker, to see all of these former teammates of mine going into it.”

In Sir Alex Ferguson, Rooney had a priceless education. “His man-management is the best I’ve ever seen. I always remember as a kid, every half-time arguing with him. Constantly. I remember thinking: ‘Why does he keep having a go at me? There are players far worse than what I’ve been.’ But the older you get, you realise why he’s doing it. He would have a go at me for dribbling, which I very rarely ... well, I dribbled a bit more then,” he says, smiling. “But for [players such as] Nani, it would just maybe trigger something in their head, make them think: ‘Maybe I shouldn’t dribble as much.’ If he [Sir Alex] spoke to Nani the way he spoke to me, he’d break down in tears. He [Nani] wouldn’t be able to come back out.”

From an unforgettable hat-trick on debut against Fenerbahce to his farewell appearance in the Europa League final in Stockholm three years ago, Rooney is better qualified than most to take United’s temperature. “The important thing is for them to try to get into the Champions League this year. It is really tight at the minute. I think that will help them a lot if they can do that but it is going to take time. It is going to take another two or three years, I believe.



▲ Alex Ferguson’s man-management was the best, says Rooney

players who do not heed his warnings may not get a second chance. “You give them one and that’s it probably. The next thing maybe they are not here anymore.”

Solskjær believes he is seeing more of himself in the group. “The squad I was in with Roy Keane, Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes - you win something but you move on,” he said. “I didn’t have that when I came to Man United [in 1996]. I was happy-smiley, but I started to win things and realised

that was not what football is all about. It’s challenging yourself, being hungry.

“There are still some days here when I am not 100% happy but you understand because we are human beings. But I am not going to feel sorry for you. I like to see players who say, OK, he has left me out for a few games without explanation and I will show him.”

The midfielder Paul Pogba is expected to return to full training next week following ankle surgery.

Pereira puts Leicester in sight of return to glory

Leicester	1
Pereira 82	
Birmingham	0

Peter Lansley
King Power Stadium

The FA Cup can so often be seen by bigger clubs as a distraction but for Leicester this run could hardly have come at a better time. Ricardo Pereira’s goal eight minutes from time allowed Brendan Rodgers’ side, flagging in the Premier League since the turn of the year, to tilt their sights towards glory once again as they reached the last eight for the first time since 2012.

Qualifying for the Champions League via a top-four finish remains a realistic priority. But after a run of three wins from 15 league games, this hard-earned victory offers Leicester a fillip as they seek to regain their *joie de vivre*.

With Jamie Vardy, without a goal in his last eight games anyway, still out of action with a calf injury, Leicester dominated this Midlands match-up against a hard-working and well-organised Birmingham, but without making too many clear chances.

Then just as extra-time beckoned, Ben Chilwell crossed from the left towards Kelechi Iheanacho at the far post. The ball fell out to Marc Albrighton who, at the second attempt, manipulated enough space to clip in a cross that Pereira - what was the right-back doing up there? - leapt to head in his fifth goal of the season. It all added up to Birmingham’s first defeat in 14 games and their supporters left proud of their team’s efforts.

Demarai Gray had been recalled for the first time since Leicester last won, in the previous round of the Cup at Brentford during January.

It was also the first time the former England Under-21 winger had played against his first club and Rodgers was

clearly hoping the occasion might provide an extra spring in the step of the Birmingham-born 23-year-old, whose career has rather stalled since he left for Leicester just over four years ago.

Jude Bellingham has been the Championship player on everyone’s lips this season and, amid speculation of intensified interest from Borussia Dortmund, the 16-year-old was again rested by Pep Clotet. A club source said before kick-off that there had been no contact from the German club.

From the off Gray looked in sprightly form on the left wing for Leicester who, seeking to rediscover their pre-Christmas form, only made three changes from the side that lost against Norwich on Friday. They still have an eight-point buffer from fifth place in their pursuit of the Champions League, but the Cup represented an invitation to ginger up their season.

Ben Chilwell, delightfully and almost instinctively found on the overlap by James Maddison, had a cross-shot deflected just wide as Leicester had a flurry of early chances.

But the best opening of the half was engineered by Kerim Mrabti in a thrilling counter-attack. The Swede

slalomed through before an exchange of passes invited Scott Hogan to lay the ball back for Mrabti to attempt a shot that was charged down.

Leicester dominated possession, unsurprisingly, and Maddison jinked his way down the left of the penalty area shortly before half-time after combining with Chilwell and Gray. Cutting back on to his right foot, the playmaker’s swerved shot was punched out by Lee Camp.

The home side attempted to play with greater tempo after the interval, and Maddison became even more pivotal. After Jonny Evans stretched his neck to head over a difficult chance from Albrighton’s clipped cross, Rodgers introduced Youri Tielemans and Harvey Barnes, making Birmingham’s task all the more challenging.

They kept a compact shape, transitioned from side to side in well-organised fashion, and did not allow Leicester anything for free. When Maddison did gain a clear sight of goal, albeit from 25 yards, his shot deflected off a Birmingham defender and against the top of the crossbar, with Camp beaten.

Leicester City 4-2-3-1 Schmeichel; Pereira, Evans, Soyuncu, Chilwell; Ndidi (Tielemans 60), Praet; Albrighton, Maddison (Choudhury 84), Gray (Barnes 66); Iheanacho <i>Subs not used</i> Justin, Morgan, Ward, Perez	Birmingham City 4-4-2 Camp; Colin, Clarke-Salter, Dean, Pedersen; Harding (Gardner 71), Sunjic, Kieftenbeld (Montero 84), Mrabti (Crowley 84); Hogan, Jutkiewicz <i>Subs not used</i> Roberts, Trueman, Boyd-Munce, Burke
Referee J Ross Attendance 27,181	



▲ Ricardo Pereira celebrates his headed winning goal with Kelechi Iheanacho
PLUMB IMAGES/LEICESTER CITY FC VIA GETTY IMAGES

Results

Football

EMIRATES FA CUP

Fifth round

Leicester
Pereira 82

(0) 1
Birmingham
27,181

(0) 0

Sheffield Wed
20,995

(0) 0
Manchester City
Aguero 53

(0) 1

Tottenham
Vertonghen 13
58,007

(1) 1
Norwich
Drmic 78
(score at 90min)

(0) 1

LADBROKES SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP

P W D L F A GD Pts

Celtic
28 25 2 2 84 19 +65 77

Rangers
28 20 4 4 63 19 +44 64

Motherwell
29 14 3 12 40 37 +3 45

Aberdeen
29 11 9 9 37 35 +2 42

Livingston
29 10 9 10 41 38 +3 39

Hibernian
29 9 10 10 41 46 -5 37

Kilmarnock
29 9 6 14 31 40 -9 33

St Johnstone
28 7 12 9 27 46 -19 33

Ross County
29 7 8 14 29 59 -30 29

St Mirren
28 6 8 14 23 36 -13 26

Hamilton
29 5 9 15 29 50 -21 24

Hearts
28 4 10 14 30 50 -20 22

Kilmarnock
(2) 2
Aberdeen

(1) 2

Brophy 17pen, Kiltie 23
4,217

McGinn 38
McLennan 50

Livingston	(1) 2	Celtic	(1) 2
Guthrie 24		McGregor 16, Rogic 90	
Robinson 46		8,640	
Motherwell	(2) 4	Ross County	(1) 1
O’Hara 17, Campbell 25 75		Fontaine 3	
Watt 90		3,191	
Rangers	(0) 0	Hamilton	(0) 1
48,167		Moyo 56	
St Mirren	(0) 0	St Johnstone	(0) 0
4,287			
LADBROKES SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP			
Arbroath 0 Dunfermline 0			
LADBROKES SCOTTISH LEAGUE TWO			
Brechin P Annan Athletic P			
BETVICTOR ISTHMIAN PREMIER			
Kingstonian P Haringey Borough P			
BETVICTOR SOUTHERN PREMIER SOUTH			
Taunton Town 3 Hendon 3			
BREEDON HIGHLAND LEAGUE			
Clachnacuddin 0 Formartine United 3; Fort William 0 Strathspey Thistle 1; Rothes P Buckie Thistle P			
COUPE DE FRANCE			
Semi-final Lyon L Paris St-Germain L			
DFB POKAL			
Quarter-finals Bayer Leverkusen 3 Union Berlin 1; Eintracht Frankfurt 2 Werder Bremen 0			
KNVB BEKER			
Semi-final Utrecht 2 Ajax 0			
COPA DEL REY			
Semi-final: Second leg Mirandés 0 Real Sociedad 1 (agg 1-3)			
WOMEN’S PINATAR CUP (Spain)			
Northern Ireland 0 Iceland 1; Ukraine 0 Scotland 3			

Cricket
FIRST T20 INTERNATIONAL
Pallekele West Indies 196-4 (LMP Simmons 67no). Sri Lanka 171 (MDKJ Perera 66; OR Thomas 5-28). West Indies won by 25 runs.
SECOND ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL
Bloemfontein Australia 271 (AJ Finch 69, DJM Short 69; L Ngidi 6-58). South Africa 274-4 (JN Malan 129no, H Klaasen 51). South Africa won by six wickets.
TOUR MATCH (third day of four)
Wollongong New South Wales XI 405-8 dec (R Hackney 95, JJS Sangha 85, DR Sams 80). England Lions 202-5 (SA Northeast 77no, DW Lawrence 52).
Tennis
WTA ABIERTO GNP SEGUROS (Monterrey, Mexico)
First round: A Rus (Neth) bt V Flink (Rus) 4-3 ret; L Davis (US) bt N Podoroska (Arg) 6-0 6-3; T Maria (Ger) bt H Watson (GB) 7-6 (4) 3-6 7-5; K Bondarenko (Ukr) bt S Sorribes Tormo (Sp) 4-6 6-0 6-2; E Svitolina (Ukr) bt D Kovinic (Mnt) 6-3 6-2; L Fernandez (Can) bt S Vögele (Swi) 7-6 (5) 6-2; T Zidansek (Svn) bt V Azarenka (Blr) 6-2 6-2; J Konta (GB) bt K Klijsters (Bel) 6-3 7-5.
Fixtures
Football
Emirates FA Cup
Fifth round Derby v Manchester Utd (7.45pm)
Rugby league
Betfred Super League
Leeds v Toronto Wolfpack (7.45pm)
Cricket
ICC Women’s World Twenty20
Semi-finals
Sydney India v England (4am)
Sydney South Africa v Australia (8am)

Record-breaker makes his mark

Sergio Agüero fires past Dominic Iorfa to score the winner for Manchester City
MARK COSGROVE/NEWS IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK



Agüero the difference as City's Cup defence rolls on

Sheffield Wednesday0

Manchester City1

Agüero 53

Possession

Sheff Wed21%

Man City79%

Shots on target

0

9

Corners

2

6

Jamie Jackson

Hillsborough

For the umpteenth time in his glittering Manchester City career Sergio Agüero ensured the tale of this tie had a happy ending for the holders. His second-half winner took them into the quarter-finals and secured the striker a remarkable 254th goal for the club.

This puts City's record goalscorer one ahead of Wayne Rooney's all-time mark for Manchester United - in five fewer years - and is a 23rd of another standout season. Guardiola made six changes from Sunday's XI that claimed the Carabao Cup, though a team including Sergio Agüero, David Silva and Rodri remained formidable.

This was true particularly for a Sheffield Wednesday that had won only once in their last eight outings, Garry Monk's side sitting in 12th in the Championship, eight points from a play-off position. The manager selected the 24-year-old Joe Wildsmith in goal for his first appearance since August 2018.

At kick-off, though, Wednesday would have seen some hope in the



▲ Pep Guardiola made six changes to his team from the Carabao Cup final

pairing of Nicolás Otamendi and John Stones in central defence for the first time since September: an indication of their vulnerability. Last week however City were schooling Real Madrid at the Bernabéu and they had won their last four games, so Dominic Iorfa allowing Agüero in early on was not what they needed, though the defender recovered and hustled the striker off the ball.

Better for the Owls was when a Riyad Mahrez corner became a Wednesday breakaway and Benjamin Mendy was forced to foul Fernando Forestieri.

They did not capitalise from the free-kick - taken by their playmaker Barry Bannan - yet City had been rattled.

Hillsborough was far from full, perhaps in protest at Wednesday's poor form. A pity as Monk's men took the contest to their visitors when possible. The next burst from Jacob Murphy drew another foul, this time due to an Otamendi bodycheck.

City are relentless, of course. As the match moved towards the half-hour mark the familiar sight of the ball being relayed in and around Wednesday had them moving from their territory to near goal. Mahrez was set up and really should not have blasted over.

Neither should Julian Börner have headed out for a City corner when the safety of Wildsmith's hands beckoned. He will have been relieved neither this nor a second mistake from the opposite left quadrant did not presage his team conceding.

A further scare came when Mahrez floated in a free-kick and Otamendi beat Wildsmith with a deft header but not the bar. City were moving closer though Agüero could still mis-control a standard ball in to him, and Stones later had to scurry to clear close to Claudio Bravo's area.

Missing was the devilish invention and spark of a high-end City display. As the interval approached Guardiola may have prepared instructions for his

side to up concentration and tempo in the second half.

So far there had been only the odd threat to Wildsmith's goal: a concern for Guardiola but not for Monk, who saw Stones's stooping header bounce over just before the whistle for the break. A quickfire Bernardo Silva cross and Agüero shot immediately following half-time suggested Guardiola had reminded his side they are defending this trophy. But when the No 10 was caught offside moments later the manager threw his hands in a frustration that was threatening to become the tale of his team's evening.

The sense was heightened when David Silva rolled the ball to Benjamin Mendy and Wildsmith's fingertips pushed the ball on to the bar. Now, though, the left-back turned creator, threading a pass to Agüero for the marksman to break the deadlock, a pivot and shot that beat Wildsmith despite the keeper getting something on this.

Quarter-final draw

Sheff Utd v Arsenal; Newcastle v Man City; Tottenham or Norwich v Derby or Man Utd; Leicester v Chelsea

Ties to be played 20-22 March



Spurs suffer Krul twist of fate as Norwich win in shootout

Tottenham	1
Vertonghen 13	
Norwich	1
Drmic 78	
aet; Norwich win 3-2 on pens	
Tumaini Carayol	
Tottenham Hotspur Stadium	

Tottenham suffered a fourth defeat in a row as they were bundled out of the FA Cup by a resolute Norwich – the visitors, bottom of the Premier League, outlasting José Mourinho’s team to reach the quarter-finals for the first time since 1992.

After Jan Vertonghen’s early goal was cancelled out by a goalkeeping error from Michel Vorm that elicited an equaliser from Josip Drmic, Spurs fell apart in the shootout as Tim Krul saved two penalties. Erik Lamela, Troy Parrott and Gedson Fernandes all failed to score from the spot.

Tottenham arrived in the fifth round with their form crumbling before their eyes, three consecutive defeats. As the frustration has risen, Mourinho has spent so much of his time attempting to manage expectations and divert attention from his own decisions by reminding the world at every opportunity of the crippling injuries surrounding his team.

But even if the absences of key players like Harry Kane and Son Heung-min would be a nightmare for most teams, they hadn’t fully explained his own indecision as he flitted through four different formations in the last four games. Here he altered the chemistry again, abandoning the back three employed in the 3-2 defeat to Wolves in favour of a return to 4-2-3-1, with Vorm appearing for his first game since October 2018 while youngster Oliver Skipp was drafted into midfield.

It was only natural that the decisive moment of the opening half should

From here the expectation was for City to strangle the contest with keep-ball play, while adding to the score. And though Otamendi had to be sharp to head an interception when Forestier looked to run clear from halfway, those in the yellow and orange shirts did now toy with Wednesday.

If this was an unwanted kind of vindication for the sparse home support – announced as 20,900 – Stones would have doubled the lead if not for Wildsmith’s reflexes. A sweeping sequence that took Mendy along the left and came close to setting up Agüero was City in smooth gear. Stones falling into Bravo’s goal as Steven Fletcher threatened to equalise was not.

This had Wednesday fans raising the roof and Guardiola’s men in frantic mode. But it did not last and when Raheem Sterling came on for Agüero this was hardly encouragement for Monk’s men. By the end this was a job well done by City.

Sheffield Wednesday
4-3-3
Wildsmith; Palmer, Iorfa, Börner (Lees ht), Fox; Bannan, Pelupessy, Lee (Hunt 63); Da Cruz, Forestieri (Fletcher 56), Murphy
Subs not used
Dawson, Harris, Nuhui, Urhoghide

Manchester City
4-1-4-1
Bravo; Cancelo, Stones, Otamendi, Mendy; Rodrigo; Mahrez, D Silva, B Silva, Jesus, Agüero (Sterling 86)
Subs not used
Ederson, Gundogan, Zinchenko, Fernandinho, Foden, Garcia

Referee Michael Oliver Attendance 20,995

▼ Tim Krul saves the penalty of Troy Parrott in Norwich’s shootout win
GLYN KIRK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



come from Mourinho’s other change. A month ago, Vertonghen sat inconsolable on the Spurs bench, fighting tears after being substituted in the 54th minute of Spurs’ 3-2 win over Southampton. After a battering by Mason Mount against Chelsea later that month, he was dropped against Wolves and he had every reason to hang his head low.

Instead, Vertonghen burst into this match by setting the scene. After waves of promising counter-attacks and excellent play from the likes of Harry Winks and Giovani Lo Celso, it was the Belgian who turned their encouraging start into something meaningful as he headed a Lo Celso free-kick into the net for the first goal. Throughout the first half, Norwich showed precisely why they have

generated so much goodwill despite sitting rock bottom. As usual, they built nicely from the back and silkily combined with pretty combinations but the likes of Emi Buendia and Todd Cantwell also failed to endanger Tottenham with their possession. Meanwhile, the home team was a constant threat each time they picked up the ball soared into counter-attacks, often driven by Lo Celso. By the end of the first half, Norwich crept closer to the final third and generated more opportunities, but they were fleeting and their most opportune moment was underlined by Vorm, rusty after so long absent, who fumbled a routine catch that very nearly comically spun backwards into his own net.

However, Norwich had built a solid foundation by the end of the first half and they opened the second half by creating opportunities. In the thick of everything good was Cantwell, hair flowing and feet twirling as he made his mark on the match. His influence was underlined by one particularly succulent combination as he was almost sent clear on goal by Buendia after a silky pair of one-two combinations.

By the 70th minute, Norwich had dominated much of the second half and Josip Drmic came closest for the away team as his attempt bounced just wide, but industrious defending from Dier in particular kept them at bay.

Mourinho responded to the pressure by replacing a puffing Steven Bergwijn with Fernandes and as the game settled down, he brought on Erik Lamela for a tired Moura.

But after their earlier suffering, Norwich were in full flow and their sustained pressure finally led to an equaliser. In the end, it was another disastrous piece of goalkeeping from Vorm as he dropped a routine attempted save straight into the path of Drmic, who scored easily. As the away side flowed, Tottenham struggled and in their most advanced role, Alli looked a shadow of himself as he continually lost the ball and halted attacks.

As the game flitted to its conclusion, Tottenham responded immediately and moved on to the front foot, but they simply could not finish it off. An attempt from Serge Aurier was heroically cleared off the line by Ben Godfrey, but otherwise their consistent pressure came to nothing as the game was forced into extra time.

How shootout unfolded			
Tottenham		Norwich	
Dier	1-0		
	1-0	McLean	
Lamela	1-0		
	1-1	Idah	
Lo Celso	2-1		
	2-2	Stiepermann	
Parrott	2-2		
	2-3	Cantwell	
Fernandes	2-3		

Tottenham 4-2-3-1 Vorm; Aurier, Dier, Sánchez, Vertonghen; Winks (Ndombele 81), Skipp, Lo Celso, Alli (Parrott 96), Bergwijn (Fernandes 54); Moura (Lamela 70) Subs not used Alderweireld, Gazzaniga, Tanganga	Norwich 4-2-3-1 Krul; Aarons, Godfrey, Hanley, Lewis; Vrancic (McLean 67), Trybull (Tetty 89); Buendia (Stiepermann 97), Rupp (Idah 72), Cantwell; Drmic Subs not used Pukki, Duda, McGovern
Referee Paul Tierney Attendance 58,007	

Portugal

Top clubs and agent’s offices raided in fraud investigation

Ed Aarons

The Portuguese attorney’s office conducted dozens of searches yesterday as part of its investigation into tax evasion and money laundering at some of the country’s biggest clubs, as well as the agent Jorge Mendes.

The latest stage of Operation Fora de Jogo (Operation Offside) involved almost 300 tax and police inspectors from the public prosecutor’s office conducting 76 searches, including the offices of the top-division sides Porto, Benfica, Sporting, Braga, Guimarães, Marítimo, Estoril and Portimonense. “Sport Lisboa e Benfica – Futebol SAD and its chairman of the board of directors confirm the search this morning of their facilities, reaffirming their total availability, as always, to collaborate with the authorities in clarifying all issues that may arise,” Benfica said in a statement.

The offices of Carlos Osório de Castro, Cristiano Ronaldo’s lawyer, and the Gestifute agency in Porto and Lisbon – the Juventus forward’s representative that was established by Mendes – were also targeted, as

were two of the agent’s homes in the Portuguese capital.

“As part of an investigation conducted by the public ministry of the Central Department of Investigation and Penal Action ... 76 searches are under way, in several football clubs, their societies and managers, law firms and intermediaries,” the attorney’s office said in a statement. “The investigation is likely to be part of the practice of crimes of qualified tax fraud and money laundering.”

The Portuguese magazine Sabado showed pictures of officials leaving Gestifute’s headquarters with the Porto president, Jorge Nino Pinto da Costa, and the Benfica president, Luís Filipe Vieira, also said to be part of the investigation. Last month it was claimed authorities were looking into potential money laundering relating

to the transfers of players including Radamel Falcao, James Rodríguez and Iker Casillas acting on information disclosed by Football Leaks, although Porto denied anyone at the club had been questioned. According to Sabado the homes of Casillas, Jackson Martínez, Maxi Pereira and Danilo Pereira were also searched.

“The facts under investigation and which motivated the opening of the cases in question originated in several inspection procedures carried out since 2015 by the Tax and Customs Authority,” added a statement from the Portuguese tax authority.

Gestifute also represents José Mourinho and several members of the Wolves squad, where Mendes also acts as an adviser to the club and to its owner, Fosun. He has yet to comment on yesterday’s developments.

Wayne Rooney interview

Half-time rows with Ferguson, coaching with Cocu and an unexpected United reunion

FA Cup special Pages 48-49 →



The Guardian
Thursday 5 March 2020



Sport

Sport left in limbo by virus

England trip in doubt as Italy closes its doors

Paul MacInnes



▲ Fans are to be shut out of Serie A matches as part of new measures ordered by Italy's government

The Italian government has confirmed that all sporting events must be staged behind closed doors until 3 April, affecting England's Six Nations matches against Italy in Rome and all Serie A games, after the country's death toll from the coronavirus passed 100 people.

There was no immediate confirmation from rugby union authorities about whether either of England's men and women's matches on 14 and 15 March will go ahead but the announcement means 20,000 England supporters will now not be making the trip unless the games are postponed until a later date.

That remained a possibility last night, with Six Nations organisers yet to make a decision on whether to play the matches behind closed doors. ITV is reported to have decided not to send a commentary team to Rome, even if the men's game goes ahead, with the broadcast based in London instead.

Schools and universities throughout Italy have also been closed until 15 March after a further 28 people died yesterday from the outbreak, with the government decree concerning sports events later ratified by Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. It means all sporting fixtures are suspended for 30 days and can be staged only behind closed doors if in "closed structures", with all events due to take place in northern Italy's red zones cancelled.

"Sports events and competitions of all kinds and disciplines, held in every place, both public and private, are suspended; however it is permitted to carry out the aforementioned events and competitions behind closed doors, or outdoors without the presence of the public," read the decree.

Italian football has already been strongly affected, with a growing number of postponed matches that include the Coppa Italia semi-finals. So far 10 Serie A matches have been postponed, as well as the two Coppa games between Juventus and Milan and Napoli v Inter. In cycling the Strade Bianche, Milan-San Remo and Tirreno-Adriatico all appear in difficulty after teams began asking to drop out. Mitchelton Scott said it would "withdraw from rac-



Match report
Page 51 →



Tottenham



Norwich

1

Vertonghen 13

1

Drmic 78

aet; Norwich win 3-2 on penalties

Sick as a Parrott

Tottenham pay the penalty as teenager misses in shootout to send Canaries into last eight

No return for Vunipola
England prop to miss rest of Six Nations over concerns
Page 44 →

JOHN WALTON/PA WIRE

Kitchen continental

Chefs on Europe's most delicious dishes

The Guardian



Thursday 05/03/20

Life

& Arts

How Oxford Street invented modern shopping *page 6*



Are French standups gutsier than British comics?

page 10



Nº 4,111

Kate Bush

Age: 61.
Appearance: Dramatic but infrequent.
Status: Absolutely, categorically, not a Tory, whatever Boris Johnson might imply.
Sorry, you’ve lost me. Johnson has chosen the “five women who have shaped my life” for Grazia magazine to mark International Women’s Day on 8 March, and Kate Bush is one of them. He says that in his adolescence she “stirred his emotions”, even though he didn’t understand all the lyrics to her songs or why she “hopped around in a red chiffon thing”.
Who are his other four inspirations? Wives, mistresses, mothers of his many offspring? Johnson has ignored his numerous lovers – Grazia would have needed a special issue for that – and gone for his paternal grandmother Yvonne Williams, the warrior queen Boudicca, the No 10 Downing Street policy chief Munira Mirza and the human rights activist Malala Yousafzai, as well as poor old Kate.
Poor old Kate? Yes, Bush is very touchy about being linked to the Tories.
Who wouldn’t be touchy? I didn’t know she was a Tory. Look, can we get this straight: Bush is not a Tory. She just gave a very unfortunate interview to the Canadian magazine Maclean’s in 2016 in which she expressed her admiration for Theresa May, who had replaced David Cameron as PM a few months earlier.
What did she say? “I think she is wonderful ... it’s the best thing that’s happened to us in a long time. It is great to have a woman in charge of the country.”
What was the reaction? Many of Bush’s fans were horrified – she was vilified on social media.
Did she retract? Yes, but not until more than two years later, when she posted a “clarification” on her website saying that the quote had been taken out of context.
That old chestnut. Don’t be such a cynic. “My response to the interviewer was not meant to be political but rather was in the defence of women in power,” she explained.
Do we know what her political views really are? No, but in a 1990 episode of The Comic Strip Presents, chronicling the fight over the Greater London Council, she produced and performed the theme song Ken, a bizarre homage to Ken Livingstone. It had the immortal lines: “Who’s the man we all need? Ken! Who’s a funky sex machine? Ken!”
Hardly Wuthering Heights. Livingstone called it her greatest song. He may have been joking.
Not to be confused with: George HW Bush, George W Bush, Jeb Bush, Lulu (who was not afraid to shout about her support for the Tories under Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s).
Do say: “Why doesn’t Jennifer Arcuri feature in Johnson’s list?”
Don’t say: “Personally, I don’t see what’s wrong with avant-garde pop stars being Tories.”



How to work from home like a pro

As coronavirus spreads around the world, more companies are urging their employees to work from home. Sony closed offices in London, Paris and Gdynia, Poland, yesterday. Twitter announced this week that it was “strongly encouraging” its 5,000 global workforce not to come into the office. Google’s European headquarters in Dublin are empty as its staff of 8,000 work from home to avoid spreading the virus. But how best to work from home if you’ve never done it before? The experts weigh in.

Be prepared
“Engage with the possibility that you might need to work from home now, rather than on day one of having to do it,” suggests Matthew Knight of Leapers, a community that supports the mental health of freelancers and the self-employed. “Make sure you have all the technology you’ll need set up already, so you’re set to go from day one.”
Don’t neglect your wellbeing
If you aren’t in quarantine, try not to spend all day cooped up indoors. “Get out of the house at least once a day,” advises Anna Codrea-Rado, the founder of the Professional Freelancer, a newsletter and community for self-employed workers, and co-host of the Is This Working? podcast. “Even if it’s just going to the shops. You’ll get cabin fever otherwise.” Make sure you are taking proper breaks. “One of the joys of working from home is that you can cook a proper meal,” says Codrea-Rado.

Set boundaries between work and home life
Codrea-Rado encourages you to not work from your sofa, or worse still, your bed. “Have a dedicated place to work, even if it’s just the end of your kitchen table,” she says. “If you don’t, it muddies the boundaries between

home life and work life – working from your sofa all day and then sitting there watching TV doesn’t feel as relaxing.” But don’t feel you need to put on a suit. “People say: don’t work in your pyjamas,” she adds. “But I really disagree with that. The beauty of working from home is that you just have to focus on getting your work done.”
Establish ground rules
Many of the people working from home due to coronavirus will usually work in offices. To make the transition as smooth as possible, Coreia-Rado advises managers to establish ground rules. “Set the tone for how the team is going to work from home,” she says. “Schedule regular one-to-one check-ins and explain how and when you’d like people to report back to you.”

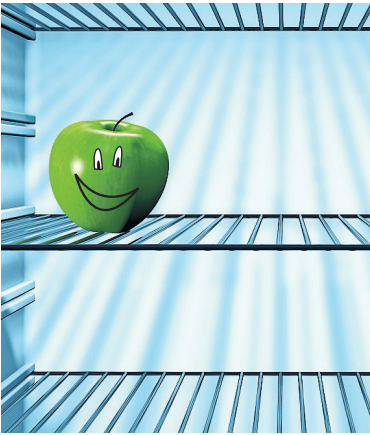
If you feel lonely, reach out to people
Although it is tempting to just send an email, Knight advises making the effort to call co-workers or employees whenever you can, particularly if you are a manager, to check in on their mental wellbeing. “Ask them how they are doing and really listen to the answer,” he says. If you’re feeling low, let people know. “Don’t just suffer in silence,” he says.

Sirin Kale



Can gloves fend off the coronavirus?

The Queen has sent the internet – and, one imagines, glovemakers – into a tailspin by wearing gloves to an investiture for the first time since the 50s. At a ceremony on Tuesday, she donned a pair of cream wrist-length classics to shake hands with honours recipients including the D-day veteran Harry Billinge and the actor Wendy Craig (pictured).
Whether or not the Queen’s decision to cover her hands was informed by the coronavirus outbreak – she didn’t wear gloves during her audiences yesterday – it comes amid warnings that Covid-19 can cause more severe symptoms among older people and those with weakened immune systems or long-term conditions. The Queen turns 94 in April. So, as Majesty magazine’s Joe Little put it to Sky News, “it’s a sensible precaution”.
Is it, though? Can gloves help? Lindsay Broadbent, a virologist at Queen’s University Belfast, says no. “If you’re touching unclean surfaces with gloves and then touching your face, you might as well not wear them at all,” she says. Gloves would work only if you changed them and washed them as methodically as



Cupboard or fridge: a food-storage guide

The line between what “could” and “should” be kept in the fridge can be furrier than a year-old jar of pesto.
A survey by Which? found that just one in five of the people surveyed checked a condiment’s label to see where it should be stored. Marriages have exploded, families have warred and housemates have done unspeakable things with toothbrushes over the kinds of arguments that can erupt over whether ketchup should be kept in the fridge or the cupboard.
The Love Food Hate Waste campaign has an A-Z of food storage on its website, full of titbits such as



you wash or sanitise your hands. Even the nitrile gloves worn in laboratories – which can be sanitised with alcohol spray or hand gel – have to be changed regularly. Broadbent is clear that people should not start wearing these in public. It is all about understanding “the journey of germ”, as Sally Bloomfield, a professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, puts it. Although we do not know exactly how Covid-19 spreads, similar viruses are transmitted in cough droplets. These viruses can infect you if they get into your eyes, your ears, your nose or an open wound. In short, touching your face with potentially infected fingers is not something you want to do. So, what do you do when your hands could be carrying harmful germs? Broadbent, Bloomfield and all the other health practitioners out there are clear: you wash them. If you can’t, don’t touch your face.

Dale Berning Sawa



“tucking in” your mushrooms under a tea towel in the fridge. Adorable. According to the site, eggs are best kept in the fridge. Bananas and pineapple should live in the fruit bowl, but most other fresh fruit and vegetables can be given an extended shelf life by being refrigerated. Just be sure to bring them back up to room temperature before cooking or eating to increase the flavour. Potatoes and onions belong in a cool, dark place such as a vegetable basket, ideally in a cloth bag (except spring onions, which should be kept in the fridge). You can also store soy sauce, ketchup, mustard, olive oil, pickles and chutneys in a cupboard away from sunlight, even if the label advises refrigerating after opening, according to Which?. “Storing it in the right place keeps your food fresher for longer – and it saves you money,” says Helen White from Love Food Hate Waste. “If you’re keeping bread in the fridge, it will go stale quicker; it needs to be in the cupboard or a bread bin. If you keep your apples in the fruit bowl, they will go wrinkly quicker. Store apples in the fridge – you’ll be amazed at how long they last.” The broad message seems to be that keeping things in the fridge can keep them better for longer and therefore cause less food waste. Pesto, mayonnaise, avocados, butter and dips will last longer in a fridge than a cupboard. But when it comes to honey, bread, pastries, grains, nuts and cake, a cool, dark cupboard with well-sealed containers is fine.

Nell Frizzell



Say what?
The ultimate bed for gamers has been created by a Japanese company. For ¥126,300 (£920), it comes kitted out with a desk for screens, a headphone hanger, bottle rack, headrest, side table and an “energy wagon” for easy access to snacks and drinks.

Adrian Chiles



Mass without the handshakes is unusually intimate

On Sunday, at St Mary’s church in Harbourne, Birmingham, Father John told us there would be a few changes during mass. Mindful of coronavirus – no respecter of nations or faiths – there would be no blessed chalice and the communion wafers would be placed only in our hands, not on our tongues. There had been no holy water to bless ourselves on the way in. And Fr John assured us it should not be taken as rudeness when he didn’t shake hands with each of us on the way out. I have never been one for the taking of the wafer directly on to the tongue; a bit old-school for me. But the ritual of the holy water – the four faint, soon-fading, watery marks on our foreheads and chests – have always kind of ached with meaning for me. But what really unsettled me was the plea not to shake hands during the sign of peace. Just in case you have never had the pleasure, the sign of peace, in a Catholic mass, comes between the Lord’s Prayer and the breaking of the bread. The priest invites us to “Offer each other the sign of peace”. We then shake hands with those around us and say: “Peace be with you”. Before I was a Catholic, this bit astounded me. I would go along to mass with one or more of my beery, footbally college mates, and then suddenly we would be wishing each other peace, which wasn’t the kind of thing we ever wished each other in the general run of things. Nice. It has always been a highlight of mass for me, and not only because it is a sign that you are, er, nearer to the end of mass than the beginning. I love it for its simplicity. Who, of whatever faith or none, could possibly object to having peace wished upon them? And so the moment came for this unfamiliar, no-touching, sign of peace. I assumed it would lack something but curiously the opposite was true: for me, it actually felt more sincere without the handshake. Less was more. There are two key components to the standard sign of peace: the handshake and the words. But the key bit is the eye contact, which can be fleeting or missed out entirely. The beauty of taking the handshake away was that it elevated the eye contact to a level of great importance. After all, in the absence of physical contact, if you do not make eye contact, the whole enterprise is rendered somewhat pointless. So, uncertainly – gingerly, even – we bowed awkwardly in each other’s direction and had no alternative but to lock eyes. And then, staring into each other’s souls, we wished each other peace. Now this was real intimacy. And there was the added advantage that we were not restricted to those around us. Eyes met and the words were mouthed across the aisles. So never mind the toe tapping and elbow bumping, and what not, let’s just say hello by stopping, nodding slightly (optional), and meeting eyes for a little more than a moment. I really think it is better. And how much simpler, too. Let’s say goodbye to the handshake with all its troubling variables – whether to shake, how hard to grasp, how long to hold on for etc. And as for kissing – whether to kiss, how to kiss, how many kisses, which cheek first – don’t get me started. It’s all in the eyes; the eyes have it.



It’s high time that Marmite went down the tubes



Every foodie is banging on about Marmite. I love it, but I hate the squeezey bottles you can buy it in. They don’t work. It’s too thick and is a right fiddle to scrape out when you get to the top/bottom. Often have I thought how much better it would be if it came in toothpaste-style tubes. And blow me down if the Australians haven’t done just that with Vegemite. Respect. I packed several tubes in my suitcase to bring home when there recently, unlike the poor woman at the airport I saw getting a dozen tubes confiscated from her hand luggage.

Mums go off the smell of their kids – is it the Brut?

Mothers can fall out with their teenage offspring because they stop liking the way they smell. This is from a study conducted by the Dresden University of Technology. I have been reflecting on what I smelled of as a teenager. I am pretty sure the overwhelming aroma round me was of cheap antiperspirants and colognes. Having seen Kevin Keegan advertise Brut, that was my first fragrance of choice. I complied all too willingly with the command to splash it all over. The only smell I recall my mum having a view on was my feet. She was always badgering me to wash them in the bidet in our bathroom (yes, we had a bidet). I honestly did not realise bidets were for washing anything other than feet until I was well into my teens. My schoolmates who came for tea were also confused. More than once, they took it (not illogically) to be a junior toilet and weed in it. When I was about 16, my only concern in life was getting served in pubs. This necessitated the development of facial hair and that meant shaving. Accordingly, I helped myself to one of Dad’s razors. It took me almost five seconds to erase all my bum fluff, and even less time to empty half his aftershave over my face. And so began what you might call my Yardley Gold years. This stuff made me feel mature and wonderful. I even started to get served in pubs, although by then I had passed my 18th birthday anyway. I stuck with it until I went off to college, where it was soon pointed out to me that I was wearing so much of it that my new friends could smell me coming. The Yardley Gold was ditched; adult life could commence.

'It was an agonising birth – I asked for an epidural three times'

A new report concludes that women are being denied epidurals and not being fully informed about pain relief by NHS trusts. Does a cultural belief in natural births lie behind this?
By **Amelia Hill**

Giving birth was, for Kate, like going “through a war”. She had repeatedly asked for an epidural; instead, she was allowed only gas and air and two paracetamol. She was “exhausted, dazed, torn, bloody and frightened” by the time her healthy son was placed in her arms.

“I asked three times for an epidural,” Kate says of her 26-hour labour to deliver her baby, who was back to back and breech. “The first time the midwives said I wasn’t far enough along. The second time, they said I didn’t need it. Finally, they said I was too far along.

“It was an excruciating and technically difficult birth. I was in such agony for so long,” she

says. “I believe it almost certainly contributed to the crippling postnatal depression I suffered for three years afterwards ... I shouldn’t have had to beg and plead, or shout and argue not to be treated cruelly.”

There is no such thing as a predictable or usual birth: having a child is a highly complex, individual and volatile experience. Mary Cork, who gave birth in 2018, says she is glad that her pleas for an epidural weren’t granted: “Despite it being something that I knew I had wanted [on arrival at the hospital], not having it made the recovery much easier and I was able to go home the same day.”

At the other end of the spectrum is Cathy, who had her request for an epidural granted: “I wish the doctor had had the conversation that maybe I shouldn’t have the epidural,” she says now. “Afterwards, the doctor said he couldn’t insert it properly. It only numbed the top half of my belly. Because I’d had it, I wasn’t given any other painkiller. I was hysterical with the pain. There is no way I would ever get pregnant again.”

While every woman’s birth experience is different, the one thing that links all women is the fear of what happens if the pain becomes too much: will they be given sufficient pain relief to ensure the safety of themselves and their baby? Epidural blocks are a pain-relieving spinal injection. They are highly effective but not risk-free: they have to be given by an anaesthetist in an obstetric unit and, among other risks, can lead to a precipitous drop in blood pressure.

NHS guidelines say that women can ask for pain relief at any time during labour and should be given information and support to choose what is right for them. However, a Sunday Telegraph investigation in January claimed that some women were being denied epidurals because of what it called a “cult of natural childbirth” in some NHS trusts. Matt Hancock, the health secretary, promised an investigation, the results of which have now been released to the Guardian. The Department of Health and Social

Care has concluded that women are not receiving pain relief when they ask for it, contrary to Nice (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidelines on epidurals. Nor are they being kept fully informed of the potential outcome of their choices on pain relief. This week, the government will write to NHS Trusts, reminding them of Nice guidance regarding pain relief during childbirth, to ensure it is being followed.

The Guardian did a call-out recently, asking women for their

experiences of epidurals. We received positive and negative accounts. But perhaps most striking were the anaesthetists who said they were denied the epidurals they wanted when giving birth. One consultant anaesthetist, Anna, said: “I’m still traumatised. Even as an anaesthetist, I wasn’t listened to. I have a lot of experience in obstetrics and labour yet I didn’t get adequate pain relief when I requested it during and after labour. I was screaming in pain, which isn’t necessary.”

While the most commonly

discussed risk associated with an epidural is a drop in blood pressure, there is a one-in-10 chance of the anaesthetic failing, a one-in-100 chance of a headache so bad it can render women bedbound, a one-in-1,000 chance of temporary nerve damage, a one-in-10,000 chance of permanent nerve damage and a one-in-100,000 to one-in-250,000 chance of spinal infection, haematoma and injecting in the wrong place, which can cause loss of consciousness and cardiac arrest.





It's never too early and never too late if an epidural is what a woman wants

Mary Cork with her children Zadie and Dexter

is appropriate to give an epidural. “Epidurals can’t be given until a woman is in established labour, which is when women have regular painful contractions often associated with dilation of the cervix to 4cm,” says Walton. “It’s too late for an epidural when women are in transition, which is when the cervix is fully dilated and just before they start pushing. Transition is the really intense bit when lots of women ask for epidurals. But if you listened to women in transition, you’d find yourself giving epidurals to women who are just about to push their baby out,” she says. “There wouldn’t be time for it to start working.”

But Dr David Bogod, a council member of the Royal College of Anaesthetists and a consultant at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS trust with a special interest in obstetrics, strongly disagrees. “All that stuff about ‘too early’ and ‘too late’ is nonsense that’s not supported by evidence and specifically runs counter to national guidance that says women should be given an epidural if they want one,” he says.

“It’s never too early and never too late, if that’s what a woman wants,” he says. “An epidural can be effective within 25 to 30 minutes of an anaesthetist walking into a hospital room. It’s also not true that anaesthetists can’t give epidurals to women having contractions because they move around too much,” he adds. “That’s when most women want an epidural, so that’s the situation in which we get most practice and are most skilled at inserting them.”

This is not the only area where there is disagreement. A significant proportion of women responded to our call-out with tales of midwives telling them that they couldn’t have an epidural because the anaesthetist wasn’t available – often for the entire length of a prolonged labour.

Walton says that sometimes, anaesthetists just aren’t available because they are dealing with emergencies elsewhere on the labour ward. Bogod, however, says it’s not always so simple. “Labour

wards are amply supplied with anaesthetists. The most common reason for women to be denied an epidural is because of a lack in midwife numbers. We have a drastic national shortage of midwives – the NHS in England is short of the equivalent of almost 2,500 full-time midwives. My obstetrics unit should have 10 midwives but often operates with half that – and sometimes less.

“The national standard is that a woman should be given an epidural within 30 minutes of asking for one and must be given it within an hour. That’s an entirely achievable target in most units.”

Bogod suggests another reason for women being denied epidurals. “There’s reasonable, anecdotal evidence that some midwives will use the excuse that an anaesthetist isn’t available if they themselves feel an epidural isn’t appropriate for the woman based on their own beliefs around intervention-free births,” he says. Bogod points to the scandal at Morecambe Bay, where babies and mothers died preventable deaths, at least partly because midwives had a focus on making women give birth without medical intervention. He also points to the leaked interim report of the scandal at Shrewsbury and Telford hospital NHS trust, where similar allegations have been made about malpractice. “I’m not saying it’s common or regular but there are anecdotal cases,” he says. “And it’s completely unacceptable.”

Lessons have been learned from these tragedies. Andrea Sutcliffe, the chief executive and registrar for the Nursing and Midwifery Council, says that “excellent maternity care happens when women are empowered to make informed choices – and when those choices are respected. I believe it’s critical that everyone involved in the care of women during pregnancy and birth work together to ensure that they are listened to and treated with respect – making safe, person-centred care the norm.”

Despite this, University Hospitals Bristol NHS trust was criticised this month for advising pregnant women to avoid having epidurals. After the advice was reported in the press, the trust deleted it from its website and accepted it was “outdated”.

Dr Pat O’Brien, a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at University College London Hospitals, says although there may still be pockets of bad practice – of midwives encouraging women to have non-medicalised births against their wishes – things have changed drastically in the past few years. “There has been a real culture shift,” he says.

The reiterated guidelines will hopefully help to eradicate the last remaining pockets of any outdated ideological support of so-called “normal births”, but funding – and the resulting staff shortages – remains an issue. As one woman said when asked if she had complained about being refused an epidural: “Who could I complain to? The country voted for a decade of austerity, so how can I be surprised by staff shortages?”

Some names have been changed.

Yomi Adegoke



Why can’t a woman be proudly single – and still openly want to find love?

Although Love Island officially ended on 23 February, it was pretty much game over 10 days earlier, when Netflix launched the vastly superior car crash of a reality TV show, Love Is Blind. Over three weeks, we watch participants date, profess their love and get engaged, but with one catch – they have never set eyes on each other. The toxic TV spawn of Dating in the Dark, The Circle and Married at First Sight, it is equal parts enchanting and excruciating, oscillating between the two at breakneck speed.

Love Is Blind is fascinating for several reasons, but what particularly captivates is how in love contestants are with the idea of being in love. They are essentially strapped on to a love conveyor belt with the sole intention of coming out of it married. Watching them be so candid makes me think about how rare it is to see women comfortably say that they want a relationship in such plain terms, without apology – even in less extreme circumstances.

Recently, there has been the rise of a much-needed single positivity movement: last year, Emma Watson announced herself proudly “self-partnered”; Lizzo, meanwhile, declared that she puts the “sing in single” in her hit song Truth Hurts. Onscreen, happily ever after is being rewritten for a generation where romance ranks low on a list of priorities – shows such as Crazy Ex Girlfriend and Fleabag concluded with the female protagonists going it alone. In the upcoming live-action remake of Mulan, Disney has axed the love interest, Li Shang.

This can only be a good thing: women have been defined by their relationships – or lack of – since the dawn of time. But an earnest, unabashed want to find “the one” is increasingly characterised as cringeworthy. A friend of mine recently confided that while she was sick of the idea that marriage was something women should aspire to, she was also sick of being told she shouldn’t waste her time yearning for a partner because she has a great job and Valentine’s Day is only a capitalist scam. Her want of a relationship almost felt embarrassing – she began to feel as if

she was failing by not being satisfied with solely “dating herself”. It is increasingly unfashionable to wear your heart on your sleeve.

“Single” is fine, but becomes a dirty word when “and looking” is affixed. Women are rarely permitted to express romantic wants. Smart women are supposed to consider themselves above them – it is deemed at best desperate, at worst unfeminist. As Ru Paul has said many a time: “If you can’t love yourself, how the hell are you going to love somebody else?” But self-love and romantic love aren’t necessarily mutually exclusive – and women who are open about their romantic aspirations shouldn’t need to be coy.



On Love Is Blind, it is captivating how in love contestants are with being in love



The unlikely survival of Oxford Street

It is one of the world's most famous shopping destinations, its history combining glamour and grubbiness. Why hasn't it succumbed to the slow death of the high street?
By **Simon Jenkins**

Harry Gordon Selfridge was out to win. The year was 1909 and the US retail magnate was opening his new store in London's Oxford Street. His rival was the terracotta monolith of Harrods in Knightsbridge. The latter had just opened complete with an escalator, which so terrified customers that staff had to offer them glasses of brandy as they stumbled off it. Selfridge's answer was a facade like a Roman temple and an exhibition of the plane in which Louis Blériot had just crossed the Channel. In doing so, Selfridge also invented what is now called the retail experience, "shopping for pleasure not necessity". He offered

his largely female customers a library, a writing and "silent room", a mini-golf course, a rooftop exercise terrace and a "girls-only gun club". He also hosted the world's first television show, by John Logie Baird in 1925. Oxford Street never looked back; it was now high street to the nation.

Today, however, it is in trouble. The great names have mostly gone. BHS is closed. John Lewis is retrenching. House of Fraser (which, as DH Evans, has had a presence on the street since 1879) and Debenhams are at the mercy of Mike Ashley's Sports Direct. Selfridges survives in the ownership of the Weston family, but as an upmarket mall of other brands, which dust themselves in its glory. The street as a whole still boasts 300 shops, but it faces assaults from online shopping and crippling business rates. In my youth, I lived in a flat opposite Selfridges, and can still hardly imagine the downfall of my mighty hero.

A scholarly enterprise, the Survey of London has toiled in these parts since 1894. Mostly it records London's parish buildings, but this year it has devoted volume 53 to a single thoroughfare - Oxford Street. It traces the story from Roman times to today. It has the aura of an obituary.

Oxford Street came slowly to glamour. It began as a muddy track linking London to Roman Watling Street, now Edgware Road. It was noted chiefly as the route along which convicts were taken from the Old Bailey to the gallows at Tyburn, later Marble Arch. Their fate was eased by the cart stopping at every pub along the way, where they and their friends got so drunk they hardly noticed being hanged.

By the 1780s, the gallows had gone. Oxford Street's Georgian houses had begun to service the smart estates that had been established to the south and north, across Mayfair and Marylebone, those of Grosvenor, Portman, Hanover and Cavendish squares.



Last-minute Christmas shopping in Oxford Street, 1964

The street's eastern arm served Soho and what is now Fitzrovia.

By the early 1800s, there were 92 shops on Oxford Street, a third of them selling clothes and patronised almost exclusively by "unaccompanied" women. Known as the Ladies' Mile, it was an early champion of women's economic emancipation. Jane Austen, on her visits to London, was an early addict, once confessing to spending £5 in one go - roughly £500 today.

A German visitor in 1784, Sophie von La Roche, was equally enthralled. She wrote home to explain how she had walked "for half an hour past brilliantly illuminated windows, with pavements of people standing six deep". She noted "the highest lord and humblest labourer ... both receiving equally rapid and courteous attention." There was nothing like it in Frankfurt.

As the shops grew in size, they found they had to accommodate their own staff, usually in crowded

By the early 1800s, there were 92 shops on the street, patronised by 'unaccompanied' women

upper floors. One 19th-century department store, Marshall & Snelgrove, housed 250 shop girls who, after work, enlivened the pavements and pubs. Congestion became intense. Entertainment venues sprang up, with bands, concerts and travelling shows, one boasting the "fattest woman and smallest man on Earth". When trams came to London in 1860, the shop owners made sure they would not run in Oxford Street, fearing that the loss of footfall would mean customers would stop crowding at their windows. A few years later, the tube was opposed for the same reason. When the Central line arrived in 1900, its four Oxford Street stations had to be located closer than those on any other network. The Central line became Oxford Street's river of gold.

From the initial free-for-all emerged the "department store" partnerships that dominated the west end in the first half of the 20th century - and were still there in the



Princess's theatre at the street's east end; Tyburn in 1798 (bottom)

1960s. They were the emporiums of Marshall & Snelgrove, Bourne & Hollingsworth, Waring & Gillow, Swears & Wells, Lilley & Skinner and Peter Robinson. The upper-crust Debenham & Freebody turned its back on the street and opened a store 100m north in Wigmore Street. Its facade still stands like a stern Victorian aunt opposite Wigmore Hall. Curiously, all the big stores were on the smart north side of the street, allegedly to catch the sun. Those on the south side were smaller and cheaper – still being described in the 1880s as “rickety, tumble-down shanties”.

A few places were clothes-free. At first there was the Princess's theatre, the Pantheon assembly room, a skating rink and somewhere Thomas de Quincy bought opium, not to mention prostitutes. There was Purdeys for guns, Bumpus for books, Morris & Co for wallpaper, Duveen for pictures. Shoes became an Oxford Street speciality, with 27 shoe shops at the peak, including True Form, Dolcis, Saxone and Bata. Originally, there was almost nowhere to eat, as ladies on “shopping expeditions” were assumed to prefer hotels. Fast food came from street vendors. That changed with the advent of the day tripper, bringing 10 Lyons corner houses by 1910.

Between the wars, Oxford Street began to suffer competition from Bond Street and then the rebuilt Regent Street, beginning what became a steady drift downmarket. Marks & Spencer, Woolworths and C&A took up the baton. The survey records them as supplying “ladies of the middle classes with goods of general utility for that exuberant pair, Mr and Mrs Everybody”. Harrods would have sniffed.

The crowds were awesome. One newspaper described “agitated spinsters holding hands while trying to cross the road”, while the writer Ivor Brown detected the “aroma of perspiration”. Wigmore Street behind was mercifully “disinfected by its many chemists”.



In the 1930s, Selfridge took to gambling and sold up, but his creation never lost its panache. It was Oxford Street's talisman of quality and innovation. I remember the horror that greeted its first food offerings. The apex of fashion had become a grocer. It even boasted a bakery. In the event, food did not drive Selfridges downmarket; rather, Selfridges took food upmarket.

Like much of central London, Oxford Street in the 1960s came close to disaster. Its crowded pavements, dirt, noise and the shabbiness of its south-side shops offended the sensibility of clean-living modernist planners. One of them, Colin Buchanan, dismissed it as “the most uncivilised street in Europe”, which he was determined to correct. The street should be decked and pedestrians forced on to podiums while the traffic flowed freely beneath, he said.

London's county council and Westminster's city council produced

one plan after another for taming Oxford Street. Most involved total rebuilding and decks. There were proposals to run minicars on air cushions down the centre, and for a fly-over at Oxford Circus. One fragment that did get built was a block designed by the LCC for the London College of Fashion, backing on to Cavendish Square. It still displays its podium, awaiting its deck.

The shops were strong enough to fight against this nonsense. But they could not stop the catastrophe that hit Oxford Street's east end – its problem quarter at Tottenham Court Road. New Oxford Street had been pushed through the St Giles slum in 1847, and was linked by the Edwardians to Kingsway further east. It was instantly London's most characterless neighbourhood.

This was followed, in 1963, by a secret deal between the LCC and the architect Richard Seifert to demolish most of old St Giles for a large traffic roundabout at the top

of Charing Cross Road. Seifert agreed to build it, only if he was allowed to break height restrictions with an unprecedented London tower, Centre Point. The roundabout was never used and the tower was left unoccupied, although its owner, the property developer Harry Hyams, walked away with a £11m profit.

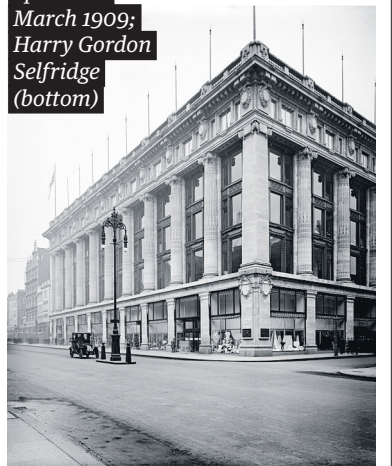
The scheme's decks, concrete walls and dirty fountains formed an impenetrable barrier between Soho and Bloomsbury, a planning fiasco that stood for half a century. Westminster council is currently trying to rectify the Centre Point disaster. It is erecting two huge buildings at the top of Charing Cross Road and Tottenham Court Road, allied to a new Crossrail station and a £150m square. It is hard to believe it will be an advance on St Giles piazza.

Oxford Street has never had a true friend. It has never been pedestrianised, and is still clogged with half-empty buses, echoes of the horse-drawn ones that London Transport had the courage to reroute. As the street went downmarket in the 60s and 70s, it was written off. Its Christmas decorations are commercial tat, as are many of its tourist shops. In 1985, a Times editorial asked: “Why is Oxford Street such a visual mess?” Even the Survey of London's Andrew Saint calls it “widely disliked, even disdained”.

Yet for all that, Saint admits “Oxford Street flourishes ... indeed is a howling success”. It may not have seen off Harrods, but it has outlasted such historical west end rivals as Holborn (Gamages), Victoria (Army & Navy Stores), the Strand (Civil Service Supply Association), Kensington High Street (Derry & Toms) and Queensway (Whiteleys). Two hundred million shoppers still crowd its streets every year, despite its battered facades sheltering the same shops as any other high street; Next, Gap and H&M.

So how has Oxford Street bucked the national trend of our dying high streets and the giant shopping centres outside city centres? The street's worldwide reputation, of course, means it is as much a tourist

Selfridges opened in March 1909; Harry Gordon Selfridge (bottom)



destination as a shopping street, while the range of shops in such close proximity makes it more like a linear mall than your average high street. Moreover, it learned its lesson in the 18th century, so it understands the retail experience and still has fashion shows, music, gyms, vegan cafes and calls to “detox the body and soul”.

Long blessed with the Central line, Oxford Street is also blessed by a government inexplicably eager to attract ever more people into central London. It will get two Crossrail stations, bringing it a forecasted 90 million more shoppers. Birmingham and Manchester can eat their hearts out.

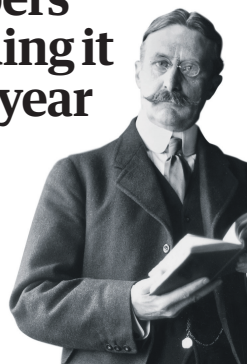
Of equal importance is that Oxford Street has the right hinterland, one of the most attractive commercial communities in Europe. Studies by the architects Arup show that Marylebone, Soho and Fitzrovia contain the most intensive economic activity outside the City of London and Canary Wharf. It is not housed in towers, but in old workshops, warehouses, alleys and courtyards. Here lurk boutiques, clubs, galleries, studios, musicians and ethnic food outlets of the creative urban economy. Just as digital startups have flourished in scruffy Shoreditch, so in the streets off Oxford Street have developed two of the most advanced tech industries, Soho's film post-production and Marylebone's diagnostic medicine.

Oxford Street is thus “front of house” to the most marked feature of London's success – that it blossoms amid traditional informality. For shopping, the new city spenders go to Covent Garden and Westbourne Grove, King's Road and Marylebone High Street, Portobello Road and Borough Market. They hate hard edges. They seek reassurance, comfort and surprise – just what Centre Point will not give them.

For all its ugliness, Oxford Street's longevity is astonishing. Generations of planners have tried to bludgeon it into respectability. It has defied them all. The street may have lost its looks, drifting from style and fashion to tackiness and bling. It is really just another high street. But it has survival in its genes. It will outlive us all.

Survey of London Vol 53: Oxford Street, by Andrew Saint, will be published in April by Yale (£75). Simon Jenkins's A Short History of London (Penguin, £9.99) appears in paperback in July

The street has seen off its west end rivals, with 200 million shoppers crowding it every year



Fit food with David Atherton



Homemade baked beans

Tinned baked beans have long been touted as the perfect post-exercise snack. They are a great source of protein, fibre and resistant starch, which helps to feed our gut bacteria. They are also quick and easy to prepare. Yet shop-bought beans can be laced with needless sugars and additives – while homemade ones are easy to make. I love having homemade beans on toast after a weekend run. You can experiment with whatever beans you want. I prefer haricots as these remind me of the classic baked beans, but going for a mix will give you more texture and flavour. Whatever you choose, they taste better after a couple of days in the fridge.

Bring the passata and stock to a simmer in a large saucepan.

Add the salt, spices, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce and half of the garlic.

Continue simmering until half the volume and thick.

Simmer the beans in the water from their cans, plus 100ml extra water, with a pinch of bicarbonate of soda, for 10 minutes. (This makes them softer, like tinned baked beans. If you want to keep more integrity to your beans, ignore this step.)

Add the beans and 40ml of the water to the tomato mix, plus the remaining garlic, and warm through.

Adding the olive oil will give them a glossy sheen, but this is optional.

I suggest serving on sourdough toast, with an egg, cooked according to your taste.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients
300ml passata
50ml vegetable stock
¼ tsp salt
½ tsp smoked paprika
¼ tsp allspice
5ml sherry vinegar
5 drops of Worcestershire sauce
5ml soy sauce
1 clove of garlic, minced
2 cans of beans
Bicarbonate of soda (optional)
10ml olive oil (optional)



Sweden
Semla



Belgium
Waterzooi



France
Sweetbread
vol-au-vent



Germany
Eisbein



Ireland
Boxty



Spain
Txangurro a la
donostiarra



Food without frontiers

What are the local dishes that European chefs think we should all be eating? Some of the finest offer their advice to **Dale Berning Sawa**

After all these years of Swedes working in French kitchens and Italian chefs moving to Denmark, you could be forgiven for thinking of European cuisine as one big homogenous offering, a pot not so much melting as melted into one big lump of Eurofood. But all it takes is a walk through a market in some new place for the untapped riches

of the continental table to hit you. We asked some stellar chefs to tell us about the local dishes they think we need to try.

Belgium Waterzooi (chicken stew)

In Flanders we make waterzooi, a fragrant chicken stew. You boil a chicken with carrots, leeks and celery to make a stock. You take the chicken out and add a roux, to thicken up the stock into a white sauce, with a bit of cream and some fresh herbs, then you put the chicken back in and serve with potato or bread. Belgian cuisine is full of robust flavours and slow cooking.

Peter Goossens, Hof van Cleve, Kruisem

Sweden Semla (cardamom and cream buns)

Everyone is eating semla right now – big fat cardamom buns with marzipan and sugar, topped with whipped cream. Traditionally, you would eat them on the last Tuesday of February or the first of March, for Mardi Gras. Nowadays, people eat

them throughout Lent. Bakeries all over the country compete for the newspaper verdicts of whose is the best each year. I make the version my mother taught me.

Niklas Ekstedt, Ekstedt, Stockholm

Germany Eisbein (pickled ham hock)

I am a Berlin native, and eisbein is something I grew up with. My grandmother always made it for me. It's a pretty ugly dish and very fatty, as it is traditionally made with ham hock; it comes with half a kilo of sauerkraut and half a kilo of yellow peas. At the restaurant we have brought it up to date. We have substituted the pork for suckling pig, so it's less greasy. We flavour and cook it like my grandmother did, and then the Asian part of my cooking philosophy steps in and we deep-fry the meat, so that it becomes really crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside. We serve it with a hint of the cream from the yellow peas, and we substitute the sauerkraut for pickled ginger.

Tim Raue, Restaurant Tim Raue, Berlin

France Sweetbread vol-au-vent

I have always loved the texture of sweetbreads, the dish's gourmet side. Rather than braising it, my grandfather André would cook it in a vol-au-vent and combine with crayfish. Sweetbreads are still very commonly found in this form or in a bouchée à la reine, with a mushroom sauce, as a Sunday starter for many families in

France. The textures and flavours of my grandfather's dish, which has become a classic of gastronomy, were part of my childhood. These days, I poach the sweetbread in milk flavoured with beeswax and honey, then enclose it in a beeswax shell and leave it to mature. Once ready, I cook it in a pan with butter.

Anne-Sophie Pic, Maison Pic, Paris

Spain Txangurro a la donostiarra (stuffed crab)

Like most Basques, I'm crazy about fish and seafood. Txangurro a la donostiarra is a stuffed crab dish created in the early 20th century by a local Basque chef. Crabmeat is mixed with onion, tomato and breadcrumbs and stuffed into the empty crab shell to be baked. Our yellow-crab dish is a nod to this classic, still redolent of the sea, but true to our philosophy. We use collagen, cauliflower, spider crab and an in-your-face fashion-yellow shell. We are always playing with the relationship between tradition and modernity.

Elena Arzak, Arzak, San Sebastian

Poland Zur (white borsch with sausage)

Zur is a soup with a lightly sour flavour that is very popular in rural Poland. It is made from so-called white borsch: whole-rye bread and crusts placed in a jar and left in a warm place for two days to ferment. It can be stored for up to two weeks in tightly corked bottles in a cool place. The soup is prepared with a vegetable stock of parsley root, carrots, leeks, onion and crushed garlic cloves, with dried forest mushrooms. You add traditional rural sausage, which you remove once cooked and slice thinly before returning to the soup to serve. You can also add lean bacon, finely cubed and fried. You serve the zur with potatoes seasoned with onion fried in oil.

Zbyszek Siemieniec, Restauracja Wentzl, Krakow

Estonia Black bread with pickled herrings

Black bread with Baltic herring and boiled eggs is a fairly rustic dish that people usually eat at home on Sundays. The herrings are pickled with strong pepper and a bit of garlic, and the bread is savoury, salted and intensely malted. It makes for a beautiful dish, and will bring back memories for every Estonian person. It's the first thing people miss when they are abroad.

Orm Oja, Noa, Tallinn

Ireland Boxty (fermented potato cake)

Boxty is a semi-fermented potato cake you find all over Ireland, but I think it comes from Cavan, in the border region. You cook the potato out and mix it with flour and seasoning, then leave to age and dry for a couple of days or weeks, until it's like a very firm gnocchi, which you can then slice. To eat it, you fry it in a bit of oil, finish with butter, then serve with runny fried eggs and smoked fish - kippers or haddock. It's one of my favourite things to have for breakfast.

Keelan Higgs, Variety Jones, Dublin

The problem with bottomless brunch

Zoe Williams



All you can drink The idea of unlimited prosecco sounds great, but it doesn't survive contact with the real world



I was eavesdropping, on a bus. What struck me was less the content than that the couple didn't look like the kind of young people this kind of thing would happen to. They looked like they played touch rugby and drank alcohol-free gin. But anyway ...

At a bottomless brunch, the girl's friend had been ejected after 45 minutes. She wasn't even that drunk - the bouncer had just decided she was. "What was she doing that made them think that?" is the question the guy should have asked, but clearly he wasn't a trained journalist. While the bouncer was outside arguing with the friend, a third bruncher, a man, stood up - he, again, wasn't that drunk, apparently - and just happened to fall clean over, like a tree that had been chainsawed. Then they all got kicked out, and wasn't that quite unfair, given that they had each paid £30 to drink as much prosecco as they humanly could?

I nodded in silent, eavesdroppers' agreement: it was unfair. But then, I think the whole fandango of the bottomless brunch is pretty rum.

Prosecco is not the only option - cocktails are another favourite - but it's the clear frontrunner. My Mr is a fierce prosecco-phobe, so I have only

done it once or twice. It's so-so value, I suppose. You have to be drinking pretty fast to make it worthwhile, considering a regular bottle in a bar would be only £24 and it's so early in the day. There's also usually a time limit of 90 minutes, even for people who don't fall over, which goes against both the principle of brunch (an American import, possibly their only contribution to laziness) and that of binge-drinking (homegrown, signifying that, once you have started, you don't stop).

Recently, themes have started to spring up: a Mexican-themed taco bottomless brunch, a drag theme. I was snooty about these from a distance, believing them to be a calculated distraction from the main downside: that the other tables are fiendishly noisy. Something in that combination of drinking so fast,



Some mysterious alchemy happens where speed drinking fizzy wine makes everyone shout their heads off

and the drink always being fizzy and usually stronger than beer - some mysterious alchemy - makes everyone shout their heads off. I hate being that person who glares at people who are laughing. Yet when I hear the joke, because it was delivered at 10,000 decibels, and it wasn't that funny, but the blast of laughter afterwards could lift a toupee, I'm afraid I am that person.

Anyway, as I dove deeper into the themes, I came across the West End musical bottomless brunch, and even though this was more expensive and I hate pastries and muffins, and I couldn't drink 65 quid's worth of anything in an hour and a half, you could rinse me for any amount of money for showtunes.

The marketing for this kind of thing is usually heavily feminised "girls' day out" kind of stuff, the language of the spa day without the wellness. This is in marked contrast to the original all-you-can-drink concept, which was (look away if you can't abide international bickering) from either Tokyo or Moscow or New York or Ayia Napa. Someone I know who can remain anonymous (my brother) used to go to Tokyo specifically for the *nomihoudai*, which translates as all-you-can-drink, a companion activity to the *tabehoudai*, all-you-can-eat, and had precisely no complaints except that there were never any women there. It's possible he was frequenting the wrong establishments.

Nomihoudai tend to be really good value - about a tenner - but this is where the 90- or 120-minute slots originated, and there is a ton of accrued etiquette. You're not supposed to take a sip until everyone is present, so people hate you if you're late. It's very vulgar to order five drinks as your final round - I don't know why I called this etiquette, this is just "try to be normal" - and you should never try to tack a second nomihoudai on to your first. That said, you can always go somewhere else and do it again. There are bizarre places where you have to order everything you will want to drink in the first 10 minutes, ripoff joints where the drinks are ersatz beer and watery cocktails, and places where you can negotiate your terms with a tout outside the bar, but frankly, you could put that kind of chutzpah and language skill to better use, maybe start a gambling ring or fight crime.

On balance, I feel that there are so many downsides, pitfalls and hazards to the bottomless brunch that you could save more money just drinking half a bottle of vodka before you go out. But the young people on the bus disagreed; they were pretty adamant that if they could just shed the rogue elements of their group, they would be back next week.

Post-shame and
anti-demure...
Shirley Souagnon



Allez les standups!

They're inspired by Charlie Hebdo and tell jokes that would get British comics cancelled. But they're also diverse, engaged and hard-hitting. Closing our series on Europe, **Brian Logan** spends a week in the company of French standups

A plagiarism scandal has swept French standup in recent years, with many of its biggest names being accused of having stolen jokes from their British and American counterparts. Some of the examples - posted online by anonymous whistleblower CopyComic - date from 15 years back, before the internet made the exposure of joke theft far more likely. Big-hitters implicated in the scandal included French-Moroccan superstars Jamel Debbouze and Gad Elmaleh, who are said to have ripped off Dave Chappelle and Jerry Seinfeld respectively. Debbouze responded by saying he was inspired by, but did not model himself on, Chappelle; while Elmaleh claimed the accusations, while partly true, had been blown out of proportion.

It's a story that is, paradoxically, a gift to comedy. The standup Shirley Souagnon refers to it at the start of her Netflix set, joking that she's

going to be performing Chris Rock jokes, the better to preserve her own material's shelf life. It's also a story that shores up our Anglo-Saxon sense of comic superiority. It's an English-language artform, right? And we Brits are uniquely funny, n'est-ce pas? To many of us, the beginning and end of French standup is probably Eddie Izzard's famous 1990s routine about "le singe" being "dans l'arbre".

When I began my deep dive into French standup, one of the first acts I watched was Tania Dutel - also on Netflix - addressing the new "for women" Bic pens. It seemed to resemble one of the best-loved English-language routines of the last decade, Bridget Christie's Bic for Her set. Here they go, I thought, at it again! But any sense of Anglo superiority didn't survive extended contact with French standup. Yes, it's a younger artform in France: its boom is often dated to the opening of Debbouze's Jamel Comedy Club in Paris in the mid-00s. In France, the roots of sketch and character comedy, as well as Jacques Tati-style physical

humour, run deeper than those of verbal, conversational standup.

But - using subtitles and my basic grasp of French - I watched a dozen comics from across la Manche for this article. None of them seemed to be trading in someone else's material. All had something compelling to say. Dutel - described in the French press as "la standuppeuse qui dynamite les tabous féminins" (no translation required) - is no plagiarist. She's a post-shame, anti-demure female comic in the Fleabag/Amy Schumer vein, albeit beadier and blunter than either. There's first-base carnal comedy in her Netflix set, including the routine about smear tests and why she doesn't like men ejaculating on her back. But she brings a winning dryness to it, and to the life experiences of a thirtysomething singleton whose every boyfriend finds Ms Right, she laments, immediately after dumping her.

If the sample available online is representative (and it may not be), there's no gender bias in French standup. It has some

Ouch! It's hard to imagine an Anglo standup going near this material

iconic female exponents, including Florence Foresti (playing London's Hammersmith Apollo this month) and Blanche Gardin, the first female winner of the Molière award for humour. Gardin's last show, *Bonne Nuit, Blanche*, was broadcast live from the European theatre in Paris to 337 cinemas nationwide, reaching a total audience of 92,000. And yet, in the English-speaking world, she's best known as the ex-partner of disgraced US standup Louis CK. How awful, I thought, to discover that your ex-boyfriend did such sordid things. Then I realised that Gardin hooked up with CK *after* his sexual misconduct came to light.

Her love life and her comedy are marching in lock-step, then - because Gardin is renowned (as is France in general) for an ambiguous response to #MeToo. In this, she has no female equivalent in mainstream Anglo comedy where, give or take a few male outriders, the movement has been warmly welcomed.

"We should rejoice," Gardin told the audience at France's César awards ceremony in 2018. "From now on, it's clear, producers are not allowed to rape actresses. But what's not clear is - do we women have the right to continue to sleep [with men] for roles? Because if not, well - we'll have to learn our lines and go to auditions, and we don't have the time, frankly." She addresses similar concerns on stage, arguing in one routine - about street harassment - that when a woman decorates herself like a Christmas tree: "You have to risk that someone says you're well decorated. That's the game."

On paper, that might look plain reactionary. On stage, it comes across as more thoughtful - as does Gardin's



Britain-bound ...
Florence Foresti;
right, trailblazer
Jamel Debbouze



PHOTOGRAPHS: GONG/ALAMY; PATRICK KOVARIK/AFP/GETTY; LOIC VENCE/AF/GETTY; BERTRAND RINDOFF/GETTY



Blanche Gardin
... takes subtle
pops at #MeToo

twisty routine proposing, from a feminist-historical standpoint, that wives should charge their husbands for sex. It's arch gadfly-ism, in the Sarah Silverman fashion, performed with a winning stillness and control. Gardin's personal style (she looks like a time traveller from the 1940s) adds to the frisson.

The more French standups you see, the more you realise none of them is trivial. All the acts I watched are social commentators. Of course, there are light-hearted routines - the most famous being Gad Elmaleh's "Where is Brian?" set-piece. Imagine my surprise to discover that, if you say "Where is Brian?" to a *citoyen* of France, they'll instantly reply: "Brian is in the kitchen" - so popular, apparently, is Elmaleh's riff on English lessons in French schools. "I am traumatised by Brian," says Elmaleh.

But, Brian aside, French standup does seem less flippant and more politicised than its UK equivalent. It's no coincidence that one of the icons of the gilets jaunes movement, referenced on many of its placards, is the late comedian Coluche, a working-class insurrectionist who ran for president in 1981. Coluche's campaign - which at its peak polled support from 16% of the French population - was backed by the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. (Coluche, real name Michel Colucci, died in 1986 in a motorbike accident.)

Charlie Hebdo is itself an icon of French humour - and it's noticeable that the country's standups (unlike their Anglo counterparts) refer to themselves as *humoristes*, implying a kinship with deployers of funny in other media. Charlie Hebdo is an icon of free speech, too, after the



'Salut les
blancs!' ...
Fary Lopes

terror attack on its office in 2015. Several of the French standup shows I watched addressed terrorism, specifically the attack on Paris's Bataclan concert hall, and several more broach the strained racial politics of a country pulled between a burgeoning population of colour and Marine Le Pen's National Front. That's another salient feature of French standup, at least as viewed through the Netflix prism: it's strikingly diverse. "Do you know the difference," Souagnon asks her audience, "between theatre and standup?" Then the lesbian, Franco-Ivorian comic answers her own question: "The colour."

"Politics has always been present in French humour," says Kader Aoun, the producer who helped set up Jamel Debbouze's influential comedy club. "But standup brought forward a whole population left out by the system - the poor, uneducated sons and daughters of immigrants."

You just can't ignore the marginalised voices on France's standup stage, where French-Africans and French-Arabs anatomise contemporary racial and cultural mores: from the relative status of Senegalese and Moroccan identity (Fadily Camara); the question of whether, if your parents are poor, you are automatically poor too (Jason Brokerss); to the notorious work of French comic Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, who has been convicted of hate speech and censured for Holocaust denial.

Then there's Souagnon's remarkable routine about the Christian faith of people descended from colonised Africa. Your ancestors were raped in the name of Christianity, she reports telling an audience in Haiti. "Why are you writing 'Thank you Jesus' on your taxis? Who writes their rapist's name on their car?" Ouch. It's hard to imagine an Anglo standup going near that material - or at least, not as blithely as Souagnon does.

But French standups aren't tiptoeing around 21st-century sensitivities like Brits do. Another rising standup is Fary Lopes, whose parents came from Cape Verde. There are plenty of loose jokes in his Netflix special - about homosexuality, say, and supposedly funny Asian surnames - that would be judged indelicate on this side of the Channel.

Yet Fary is no old-school chauvinist. He's best known for the row he provoked at last year's prestigious Molière awards when, presenting a prize, he hailed the audience with the greeting "Salut les blancs!" (Hello, white people!) Some hailed him as a speaker of truth to power; some, as a racist. Either way, the incident, along with a week's exposure to French standup, gives a vivid impression of an artform doing what it should be doing: heckling complacency and groupthink, picking the scabs off faultlines in the culture - and making people laugh. Perhaps French comedians started out by copying their British and American counterparts. But it looks like they're now making standup their own.

My best shot

Giancarlo Staubmann

'We were in the Alps, on one of the most spectacular train journeys you can make. I love how the yawning man contrasts with the majesty of the mountains'



I'm very attached to this photograph. It was taken during the first real holiday I had with my father. Of course I'd travelled with him and my mother when I was a child, but I had to wait until I was 39 to have the experience of travelling just with him. There was no specific reason why in September 2015 we decided to take a trip into Switzerland, but I'm so glad we did. It was a magical experience and helped us better know each other. And this image proved a turning point in my career.

We were on the Bernina Express, which leaves Tirano in the north of Italy every day for Switzerland. The distinctive red train takes a historic Unesco world heritage route on the Alps' highest railway and is one of the steepest climbs in the world. It's surely one of the most spectacular train journeys you'll ever make.

In that cramped train compartment my original intention had been to take a photo that showed the silhouettes of the people inside contrasted with the bright sun and mountains outside. The man closest to the window kept moving, fidgeting, yawning and breaking the balance of the composition I had envisaged. I was feeling very frustrated. Then I realised that if I changed my way of seeing the scene, what had been an annoyance could instead become the focus. Instead of a simple photo with a landscape and shadows I had an image that was humorous, ironic and full of meaning.

The man was a German tourist - at least he and his companions spoke German and I understood they were on the train to go trekking in the Alps. He knew I was taking photos but he didn't say anything, just continued to yawn. What I love is how it contrasts a banal event - a man who yawns and is indifferent to the landscape - with the sheer majesty of the mountains outside.

Prior to this I hadn't done much street photography. I am shy and found it difficult to go into public places and take photos of people I didn't know. I had dedicated myself to landscapes - which meant I didn't have to engage with people! But that day in the train, the yawning man didn't object to my camera

and I realised the worst thing that can happen if you're photographing people in public was that they'd ask you not to, or to delete the photo. I realised my fellow humans weren't all that intimidating, and from that day in the Bernina Express I started to take a different kind of photo.

The best street photography should present the ordinary through a new perspective. I like to shoot in trains, restaurants, public places where you can be sure that with so many people something is always happening, and often something unexpected. I like to observe people and capture moments where we are unguarded.

I live in Trieste, on the north-east coast of Italy, and I take a lot of my photographs on the beach. Martin Parr has called the beach "that rare public space in which all absurdities and quirky national behaviours can be found". When people are off duty, you find strange or surreal moments that don't happen when the usual constraints of everyday life are on us. A good photo is not just a reproduction of reality but your interpretation of it. I work mostly in black and white as it gives you the opportunity to offer a different way of seeing the everyday.

I love the opportunities photography gives me to experiment. My day job is teaching Italian literature and Latin at a high school. Maybe I wouldn't enjoy taking pictures so much if it were my job and I couldn't shoot what I wanted.

Interview by Imogen Tilden

The CV

Born Trieste, Italy, 1976.
Training Self-taught.
Influences Robert Doisneau, Vivian Maier, Martin Parr.
High point 'Selected for the Urban Photo awards 2019.'
Low point 'When I can't shoot as I'd like.'
Top tip 'Never stop questioning.'





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Knockout punches through velvet gloves ...
Michael Kiwanuka

Pop Michael Kiwanuka

★★★★☆

O2 Academy, Birmingham

Touring until 27 November

After two Brit award nominations and the critical rapture that greeted Michael Kiwanuka's third album - *Kiwanuka*, which reached No 2 in November - this should be the 32-year-old singer-songwriter's victory lap. Not a bit of it. He shuffles on in a denim jacket and doesn't say a word. Heavy piano chords and two outstanding backing vocalists ease into downbeat opener *Piano Joint*, as a mournful-sounding singer pleads for personal connection: "All I want is to talk to you. Turn me on to something true."

Although the gig is beautifully lit, it isn't showbiz. The London-born son of Ugandan immigrants is connecting with something deeper: soulful music steeped in self-doubt, global problems, emotional agony and fleeting glimpses of ecstasy. For a moment, though, his low-key approach is met with too much audience chatter. However, as calm descends, you realise that people are just stood, rapt, hushed by the powerful beauty of his music.

A superb six-piece band recreate album highlights. Although there are echoes of Bill Withers and Trouble Man-era Marvin Gaye, it's not overburdened by nostalgia. *Black Man in a White World* taps into timeless African spirituals and Kiwanuka's experiences in the modern music industry.

Kiwanuka straps on an electric guitar for *You Ain't the Problem*, but the best moments land knockout punches through velvet gloves. He picks up his acoustic guitar for *Hero*, and *I've Been Dazed* soars with its "time is a healer" coda. *Final Days* ponders the end of the world with symphonic gospel. *Cold Little Heart* delivers six minutes of breathtaking melancholy before *Love and Hate* becomes a mantra that artist and audience keep going. Kiwanuka doesn't punch the air, but deep down he must be having the time of his life.

Dave Simpson



As rude as she is rich ...
Elaine C Smith

Theatre Mrs Puntila and Her Man Matti

★★★☆☆

Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh

Until 21 March

There are sad drunks and there are happy drunks. Elaine C Smith's *Mrs Puntila* is a relentless drunk. In Denise Mina's cross-cast Brecht update, the actor ploughs ahead with the sturdy determination - and lack of nuance - of a seasoned boozier.

In this socialist satire, she is a millionaire who swings from intolerance to benevolence the more

she drinks. But Smith paints the benevolent Puntila with too broad a brush stroke. Her drunken outrage at social injustice should be funny - or at least heavily ironic - and the inner compassion released by the bottle should be endearing. Instead, the inebriated Puntila comes across as troublesome, contrary and, oddly, not especially different from her sober self. There have been productions where the drunk/sober joke wears thin, but this one struggles to make it funny in the first place.

That's partly because Murat Daltaban's production lacks a governing idea. Even if we recognise the voice-of-the-people good sense of the chauffeur Matti (an excellent Steven McNicoll), it's hard to place this Puntila. As rude as she is rich, she is an unlikely fit for the upper-class Scotland of today or the 1940s Germany of the original. Who is this figure of satirical ridicule?

That's not to say Daltaban doesn't have ideas; he has plenty. From

the distracting game of invisible badminton to the multi-genre choruses of Oğuz Kaplangi's score, a lot happens on Tom Piper's scaffolding set. There are also scenes, particularly in the second half, that flash into political life, as Mina lets in the acrid smell of payday loans, the gig economy and food banks.

Such real-life injustices could make sense of Brecht's play. But they are fighting against the production's tonal uncertainty; where some performances are precisely rooted, others are vague and cartoon-like and jokes fall flat.

Perhaps this is why Mina's most provocative theme becomes apparent way too late. Only in the closing minutes do we see Puntila as a symbol of Scotland's arrogant landowning class, boozily romanticising the country she exploits. With that as a starting point, the production might have had a clearer sense of purpose.

Mark Fisher

Comedy Mark Thomas

★★★★☆

Radlett Centre, Hertfordshire

Touring until 1 May

How did we get here? asks Mark Thomas. His new show, *50 Things About Us*, promises little-known facts about the UK to explain our current predicament. Six per cent of UK land mass is grouse moor, he claims - while there are only 22 countries that we haven't invaded (yet). It's a compelling conceit, even if Thomas's inventory of Britishness - demanding that, for a change, we see ourselves as others see us - sheds



Red-faced routines ...
Mark Thomas

little new light on Brexit, Boris Johnson and our political travails.

That is partly because our host doesn't stay on topic, as he ties up loose ends from previous shows and teases new material (about displaced Chagos Islanders and their fledgling football team) from his next. His thesis that our EU exit is the last spasm of the British empire has been widely aired elsewhere.

But it needs restating, and Thomas gives it a characteristically emphatic workout, with red-faced routines about Gibraltar (whose claim to Britishness he finds less persuasive than the Calais refugee camp), the national anthem and the larcenous British Museum.

Beyond any argument, the show is a grab bag of stats and titbits that give Thomas licence to roam where he pleases, via very funny caricatures of Democratic Unionist party zealots, rebel songs dedicated to Boris Johnson (the accidental enabler of a united Ireland?) and a striking account of Britain's historical (and not-so-historical) compensation to slaveowners. A subplot traces Thomas's late-middle-aged bodily decline, which parallels the decrepitude of Britain's imperial self-image. Let's hope the parallel isn't too close, as there is plenty of life left in Thomas and his bullshit-busting comedy.

Brian Logan



Loud and lovable ...
Shaban Dar as Rav,
the pub quizmaster

Theatre The Last Quiz Night on Earth

★★★☆☆

Hope Mill, Manchester

Touring until 11 April

The local boozier might not be a bad place to wait for the impending apocalypse. At least, that's the premise of Alison Carr's new play, in which the end is nigh but the beer is still flowing.

As an asteroid hurtles towards Earth, the punters of the *Four Horsemen* (get it?) are brandishing their pens for one final quiz night. Or rather, we are. In *Box of Tricks*' immersive production, the audience are the pub regulars. In between quiz rounds, characters try to right old regrets and settle old scores as time ticks down to oblivion.

There are some witty nuggets of dialogue, delivered with easy charm by the cast of four. Meriel Scholfield's Kathy, the landlady, holds everything together. Our quizmaster for the night is Rav, loud and lovable as played by Shaban Dar, while Amy Drake and Chris Jack both make suitably dramatic entrances as unexpected blasts from the past.

There's a light touch to Hannah Tyrrell-Pinder's direction and Katie Scott's design, using small details to evoke the pub setting. Seated around tables, spectators quickly embrace the spirit of the event, scribbling down answers. The pedestrian familiarity of the set-up makes an enjoyably absurd contrast with the subject matter.

But the blend of quiz and drama doesn't quite do justice to either. The mixed format creates some awkward moments, as exchanges between the actors get lost under chatter. The main content of the play is slight, playing on the predictable end-of-the-world themes of reunion, repentance and regret. Cliche is never far away.

As a variation on your typical pub quiz, it is an entertaining enough evening. But as an imagining of Armageddon, *The Last Quiz Night on Earth* brings little that's new or surprising to an already well-rehearsed scenario.

Catherine Love



Jane Levy as
Zoey and John
Clarence Stewart
as Simon

Review Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist, E4

Flat drama, not lifted by the same old songs

★★★★☆

Lucy Mangan



There are some programmes that make you wish there was a special award every year for Hardest Grafting Actors. Not those who are in everything - they are generally earning and being petted enough to make their game worth the candle already. I mean actors who find themselves in a second-rate production and can still be seen giving it their all on screen, selling the shit out of whatever lacklustre material they have been given.

Were there such a piece of industry recognition, the cast of Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist would surely be contenders for this year's prize. What an extraordinary band of high-energy, high-talent people they are, in a show that must have looked so full of potential on paper, but fails.

Jane Levy plays Zoey, a brilliant coder at a San Francisco tech firm, who suddenly develops the ability to hear people's thoughts and feelings as musical numbers, thanks to an earthquake that takes place while she is having a brain scan. Soon she is an unwilling party to the news that most people you pass on the street are wrestling with some form of misery: her work crush Simon (John Clarence Stewart) is still mourning the death of his father when he was a child; her best friend and colleague Max (Pitch Perfect's Skylar Austin) is in love with her; and her tyrannical boss Joan (Gilmore Girls' Lauren Graham) is sexually frustrated.

The musical interludes are the best bits but even these are a mixed bag. The logic of the two-step conceit (that is, hearing thoughts through songs) doesn't work properly,

even if you don't feel that a two-step conceit is already one step more than a conceit should have. Why do all the people around a thinker-singer join in as choreographed backing artistes, for example? Why would entire groups of unrelated people all suddenly have the same specific gripe? Internal consistency matters.

Then there is the leaden literalness of the song choices on the playlist.

Lonely people get Celine Dion singing All By Myself, as if they aren't suffering enough. We discover Joan's problem because she sings the Rolling Stones' I Can't Get No Satisfaction in the office loos. Elsewhere, Zoey's rival for promotion is revealed to be more ambitious than she thought via DJ Khaled's All I Do Is Win and so, very much, on.

When Zoey first confides in Mo (Glee's Alex Newell) - whose gender fluidity is a twist that does nothing to disguise the fact that the character is given little else to do than other than fill the role of the sassy black neighbour, a figure that should have been retired long ago - they explain "good music can make you feel things you can't express in words".

This is only partially true - music's greatest property is surely to express things you are feeling but can't put into words - and not what's happening with the characters in Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist.

Metaphors, evocation, anything less instantly comprehensible than a woman eyeing a hunk in the street and singing Whatta Man have no place here. When you compare the life, vigour and inventiveness of something like Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, with original lyrics pushing the story forward, it seems like even more of a terrible, enervating waste.

There is also a remarkably distasteful strand to the whole thing. Zoey has been given a father (Peter Gallagher, a Broadway veteran as well as an eyebrow-wrangler, it seems) who is paralysed by a non-specific neurological disease. His condition seems to exist solely for the dramatic potential that is unleashed when Zoey goes home and reads his mind (which would surely be the first thing you did if you suddenly developed her gift?) and we see him get up and dance round their living room.

There's also some woefully underbaked dialogue ("I've become a real expert at bottling and hiding my pain and shame from the world," Simon tells Zoey, as they bond over their troubles after she hears him singing Mad World late one night at the office. "We live in a very, very bad world, Simon," replies Zoey. "But if you open up ... it's amazing.")

But the actors - every one of them, every minute - work like Trojans to hold it all together. That they come so close to succeeding - you will pass a mildly diverting hour, maybe even go back once or twice - deserves recognition. An award, perhaps. Or, ideally, better parts in a better show next time.

Noughts + Crosses 9pm, BBC One



This much anticipated adaptation of Malorie Blackman's race-reversal narrative centres on the star-crossed lovers' story of Sephy, a member of the black ruling class of Crosses, whose feelings for white Nought Callum go against the rigid prejudices of the society they live in. An alternative universe this may be, yet the unflinching portrayal of racism is no less shocking - a stark reminder of the continuing inequalities most people of colour experience today. The full series is on iPlayer.

Ammar Kalia

This Is Crafts 3pm, Channel 4

Dog lovers, get your grooming gear ready as the competition to crown the best pooch returns. Clare Balding presents day one's highlights of the flyball, agility and heelwork-to-music rounds. There will be all shapes and sizes on display but who could beat last year's fluffy champion, the pint-sized papillon, Dylan? **AK**

Secrets of the Museum 8pm, BBC Two

Staff at the Victoria & Albert museum enjoy some glamorous tasks in the absorbing behind-the-scenes documentary, from cataloguing a typically extravagant Elton John stage costume to repairing a coat from the 1935 film The Bride of Frankenstein. **Jack Seale**

Hospital 9pm, BBC Two

Thanks to its pioneering treatments, Alder Hey children's hospital has saved many lives. Elsie is one such patient: although her pregnant mother had been advised to "prepare for the worst, I was adamant I wanted to meet her," she says.

Ali Catterall

War of the Worlds 9pm, Fox

Yet another adaptation of the HG Wells alien-invasion classic, this time set in the present day and starring Gabriel Byrne. After the first contact is made with extraterrestrial beings, humanity waits with bated breath for signs of more life. **AK**

Ascending Afghanistan, Rising Women 9pm, Vice

In 2015, 13 women set out to become the first Afghan female climbers to reach the summit of the 5,809m Mir Samir in the Hindu Kush mountain range. They create a hopeful narrative through a gruelling ascent. Inspirational. **AK**

My Friend Dahmer 9pm, Film4

This chilling biopic of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer is based on a graphic novel by Derf Backderf, one of the high school friends-cum-tormentors who, by his own account, may have contributed to the making of the monster. But Ross Lynch's unsettling performance suggests Dahmer would have got there by himself.

Paul Howlett



And
another
thing

Emily Alyn Lind of *Revenge* (two series on E4) and *Code Black* (Prime and Apple TV) has been cast as the first lead in HBO's *Gossip Girl* reboot. The glory inches ever closer.

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** **9.15** Britain's Housing Scandal **10.0** Homes Under the Hammer **11.0** Wanted Down Under Revisited (R) **11.45** Saved on Camera **12.15** Bargain Hunt (R) **1.0** News **1.30** Regional News (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Moving On (T) (4/5) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** Money for Nothing (T) **4.30** Ready Steady Cook (T) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News (T) **6.55** Party Political Broadcast (T) (R) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **MasterChef** (T) Six more compete in the second heat. **9.0** **Noughts and Crosses** (T) New series. Drama set in a fictional world where black people rule over a white underclass, following two young people who are divided by their race but united by love. With Masali Baduza and Jack Rowan.

10.0 **News** (T) **10.25** **Regional News** (T) Weather **10.35** **Question Time** (T) Fiona Bruce hosts the topical debate in Tunbridge Wells. **11.35** **News**cast (T) Adam Fleming, Laura Kuenssberg and friends discuss the week's biggest stories in their roundup from Westminster. **12.05** **Weather** (T) **12.10** **News** (T)

BBC Two

6.30 **Money for Nothing** **7.15** Ready Steady Cook **8.0** Great British Railway Journeys **8.30** Lose Weight and Get Fit With Tom Kerridge **9.0** News **10.0** Victoria Derbyshire **11.0** Newsroom Live **12.15** Politics Live **1.0** Hardball **1.45** Best House in Town **2.30** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip **3.0** Red Rock **3.45** The Great Interior Design Challenge **4.45** Portillo's State Secrets **5.15** Flog It! (R) **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **6.30** Great British Railway Journeys (R) **7.0** MOTDx **7.30** Villages By the Sea (R)

8.0 **Secrets of the Museum** (T) Frankenstein's monster is brought back to life at the V&A. **9.0** **Hospital** (T) The work of Alder Hey children's hospital, following a baby about to have surgery and a 17-year-old with cerebral palsy as she nears adulthood and leaves the hospital's care.

10.0 **Vic & Bob's Big Night Out** (R) (2/4) A special rendition of That's Magic. **10.30** **Newsnight** (T) Weather **11.15** **Match of the Day: The FA Cup** (T) Highlights. **11.40** **Live SheBelieves Cup** (T) USA v England (ko 12midnight) **2.15** **Confronting Holocaust Denial With David Baddiel** **3.15** Dom Does America (R)

ITV

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News (T) **1.55** Local News (T) **2.0** Judge Rinder (T) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News (T) **6.30** News (T) **7.0** Emmerdale (T) Dawn receives news about custody of Lucas. **7.30** Tonight: Diet – Trust Your Gut? (T) Catherine Tyldesley asks what people need to know gut health, which is being linked to everything from obesity levels to mental wellbeing.

8.0 **Emmerdale** (T) Al has to work hard to get Ellis back on side. **8.30** **How to Spend It Well on Holiday** (T) New series of the consumer travel show, hosted by Phillip Schofield. **9.0** **Tyson Fury: The Gypsy King** (T) Fury's rematch against Deontay Wilder is confirmed. Last in the series.

10.0 **News** (T) **10.30** **Local News** (T) **10.45** **Liar** (T) (R) Andrew's body is found on the Kent marshes. **11.45** **Dancing on Ice** (T) (R) The celebrities take to the ice for the semi-final. **1.20** **Ideal World** **3.0** Tonight: Diet – Trust Your Gut? (T) (R) **3.25** ITV Nightscreen **5.05** Judge Rinder (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.30 **Cheers** (T) (R) **7.20** The King of Queens (T) (R) **8.10** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **9.10** Frasier (T) (R) **10.10** Undercover Boss Canada (T) (R) **11.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **12.0** News (T) **12.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **1.05** Posh Pawn (T) (R) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** Crufts (T) **4.0** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? (T) **5.0** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

8.0 **Crufts** (T) Clare Balding presents highlights from the NEC in Birmingham. **9.0** **Hunted** (T) The hunters subject a captured fugitive to devious psychological pressures, while Hayley risks returning to Wigan to be reunited with her dog – unaware she is being tracked.

10.0 **First Dates** (T) Healthcare assistant Anthony wants to put his past behind him. **11.0** **24 Hours in A&E** (T) (R) **12.0** **100 Kilo Kids: Obesity SOS** (T) (R) **1.0** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **1.50** Home (T) (R) **2.15** Baghdad Central (T) (R) **3.10** Dispatches (T) (R) **3.35** Come Dine With Me (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Paddington Station 24/7 (T) (R) **12.10** News (T) **12.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords (T) (R) **1.10** Access (T) **1.15** Home and Away (T) (R) **1.45** Neighbours (T) **2.15** **FILM** A Wedding to Die For (Tom Shell, 2019) (T) **4.0** Friends (T) (R) **4.30** Friends (T) (R) **5.0** News (T) **5.30** Neighbours (T) (R) **6.0** Home and Away (T) (R) **6.30** News (T) **7.0** The Dog Rescuers With Alan Davies (T) (R) The comedian helps with a sick staffordshire bull terrier.

8.0 **Britain's Naughtiest Nursery** (T) Day-to-day life at a nursery for challenging three-to-five year olds. Includes news update. **9.0** **10 Years Younger in 10 Days** (T) Cherry Healey meets recovering alcoholic Paulette, who has been sober for six years, helping her to transform her look.

10.0 **Me & My Beautiful Face** (T) The stories of people living with facial disfigurements. **11.05** **Billionaire Kids: Diamond Lives** (T) (R) **12.05** **Eamonn and Ruth: Blowing a Fortune** (T) (R) **1.0** Casino (T) **3.10** Paddington Station 24/7 (T) (R) **4.0** Tattoo Disasters UK (T) (R) **4.25** Tattoo Disasters UK (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Beyond 100 Days** (T) **7.30** The Yorkshire Dales (T) Paul Rose explores Wharfedale, where he meets some of the women whose story inspired Calendar Girls and finds out why bats are under threat in the area. Last in the series.

8.0 **The Real T-Rex With Chris Packham** (T) New insights into Tyrannosaurus rex's behaviour and appearance. **9.0** **The Day the Dinosaurs Died** (T) An expedition to determine whether it was an asteroid strike 66m years ago that triggered the catastrophe in which 75% of all life on Earth perished.

10.0 **The Stuarts** (T) (3/3) How the Stuarts became fatally divided by religion. **11.0** **Female Filmmakers: BBC Introducing Arts** (T) Janina Ramirez presents. **12.0** **How We Built Britain** (T) **1.0** Rhythms of India (T) **2.0** Flights of Fancy: Pigeons and the British (T) **3.0** Age of the Image (T)

Other channels

Dave
6.0am Teleshopping
7.10 Cops UK: Bodycam Squad **8.0** American Pickers **9.0** Storage Hunters UK Double Bill **10.0** American Pickers Double Bill **12.0** Timber Kings **1.0** Top Gear **2.0** Cops UK: Bodycam Squad **3.0** Sin City Motors **4.0** Top Gear Double Bill **6.0** Taskmaster **7.0** Room 101 Double Bill **8.20** Have I Got a Bit More Old News for You **9.20** QI **10.0** Meet the Richardsons **10.40** QI **11.20** Mock the Week **12.0** Taskmaster **1.0** Have I Got a Bit More Old News for You **2.10** Jon Richardson: Ultimate Worrier **3.0** Zapped **3.35** The Indestructibles **4.0** Teleshopping

E4
All programmes to 7pm are double bills **6.0am** Hollyoaks **7.0** How I Met Your Mother **8.0** Baby Daddy **9.0** Mike & Molly **10.0** Big Bang Theory **11.0** The Goldbergs **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** Big Bang Theory **2.0** Baby Daddy **3.0** Mike & Molly **4.0** The Goldbergs **5.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.0** Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Man With a Plan **8.0** Young Sheldon Double Bill **9.0** Celebs Go Dating

10.0 Celebrity Gogglebox **11.05** Big Bang Theory Double Bill **12.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine Double Bill **1.05** Celebs Go Dating **2.10** First Dates Hotel **3.05** Celebrity Gogglebox **4.0** Big Bang Theory **4.50** How I Met Your Mother Double Bill
Film4
11.0am **FILM** The Way to the Stars (1945) **1.15** **FILM** A Night to Remember (1958) **4.05** **FILM** The Dam Busters (1955) **6.45** **FILM** Now You See Me (2013) **9.0** **FILM** My Friend Dahmer (2017) **11.10** **FILM** Die Hard 2 (1990) **1.35** **FILM** Kill Your Friends (2015)

ITV2
6.0am Teleshopping **7.0** Ellen DeGeneres **7.50** Emmerdale **8.20** Coronation Street Double Bill **9.20** Superstore Double Bill **10.15** Dinner Date **11.15** Dress to Impress **12.15** Emmerdale **12.45** Coronation Street Double Bill **1.50** Ellen DeGeneres **2.45** Dinner Date **3.50** Dress to Impress **4.50** Take Me Out **6.0** You've Been Framed! Gold **7.0** YBF! Gold: Yearbook **8.0** Two and a Half Men Double Bill **9.0** **FILM** Bridesmaids (2011)

11.35 Family Guy Double Bill **12.30** American Dad! Double Bill **1.25** The Stand Up Sketch Show **1.55** Two and a Half Men **2.25** CelebAbility **3.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records

More4
8.55am A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun/Summer Sun Double Bill **11.50** Emergency Helicopter Medics **12.50** 999: On the Front Line **1.50** Escape to the Chateau: DIY **2.50** Four in a Bed **3.20** Four in a Bed **3.50** Four in a Bed **4.20** Four in a Bed **4.55** Four in a Bed **5.25** The Secret Life of the Zoo **6.30** Crufts **8.0** Grand Designs **9.0** Phil Spencer's Stately Homes **10.0** 24 Hours in A&E **11.05** 999: What's Your Emergency? **12.05** Phil Spencer's Stately Homes **1.10** 24 Hours in A&E **2.15** 999: What's Your Emergency? **3.20** Food Unwrapped

Sky One
6.0am Monkey Life Double Bill **7.0** RSPCA Animal Rescue Double Bill **8.0** The Dog Whisperer **9.0** Stop, Search, Seize **10.0** Brit Cops: Law & Disorder **11.0** NCIS: LA Double Bill **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 Double Bill **3.0** MacGyver **4.0**

Modern Family Double Bill **5.0** Simpsons **5.30** Futurama Double Bill **6.30** Simpsons **7.0** Simpsons **7.30** Simpsons **8.0** A League of Their Own **9.0** The Heist **10.0** The Force: North East **11.0** An Idiot Abroad 2 **12.0** Intelligence Double Bill **1.0** Caught on Dashcam **2.0** The Late Late Show: Best of... **3.0** The Force: Manchester **4.0** Stop, Search, Seize **5.0** Futurama Double Bill

Sky Arts
6.0am Plácido Domingo: Legends of Opera **7.0** The Lady in No 6: Music Saved My Life **7.45** Prokofiev: Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution **8.30** Watercolour Challenge **9.0** South Bank Show Originals **9.30** Auction **10.0** Tales of the Unexpected Double Bill **11.0** Discovering: Julia Roberts/Richard Gere **1.0** South Bank Show Originals **1.30** Watercolour Challenge **2.0** Margaret Atwood: A Word After a Word After a Word Is Power **4.0** Tales of the Unexpected Double Bill **5.0** Discovering: Dennis Hopper/Sissy Spacek **7.0** Sherlock Holmes v Arthur Conan Doyle **8.0** Comedy Legends

9.0 The Directors **10.0** Discovering: Robin Williams **11.0** Salman Rushdie: Death on a Trail **12.0** Supertramp: Live in Paris '79 **2.0** Soundtracks: Songs That Defined History **3.0** Off Camera **4.15** Discovering: Hopper/Spacek
Sky Atlantic
6.0am The Guest Wing **7.0** Without a Trace **8.0** Without a Trace **9.0** Without a Trace **10.0** West Wing Double Bill **12.0** Blue Bloods **1.0** CSI... **2.0** West Wing Double Bill **4.0** Without a Trace **5.0** Without a Trace **6.0** Without a Trace **7.0** CSI... **8.0** Blue Bloods **9.0** John Adams **10.20** The Sopranos Double Bill **12.45** Public Enemy **1.50** Dolittle: Special **2.0** Hotel Secrets **3.0** Public Enemy **4.10** West Wing Double Bill



Radio

Radio 3
6.30 Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics. With Ian Skelly. **12.0** Composer of the Week: Price (4/5) **1.02** Lunchtime Concert: Artist Spotlight at LSO St Luke's. Víkingur Ólafsson plays solo piano works by Bach. (R) (3/3) **2.0** Thursday Opera Matinee: Ethel Smyth – Fête galante, a Dance Dream in One Act. Principles, Lontano Ensemble, Odaline de la Martinez. Plus, Glanert's Three Pieces for Clarinet and a Concert by the BBC Symphony Orchestra with pieces by female composers. **5.0** In Tune. With the pianist Lara Melda and the choreographer Richard Alston. **7.0** In Tune Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. Live from Old Halls, Glasgow. Alissa Firsova: Die Windsbraut. 8.30 Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto no 3. Lauren Zhang (piano), BBC Scottish SO, Mark Wigglesworth. **10.0** Free Thinking **10.45** The Essay: Women Writers to Put Back on the Bookshelf – Storm Jameson. With Katie Cooper. (4/5) **11.0** Night Tracks: The Archive Remix **11.30** Unclassified. Elizabeth Alker presents music that defies classification. **12.30** Through the Night
Radio 4
6.0 Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** In Our Time **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Guest House for Young Widows, by Azadeh Moaveni. (4/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour. **10.45** The Leopard, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa. (4/10) **11.0** From Our Own Correspondent **11.30** Out Loud. Kirran Shah explores Bradford's emerging spoken-word scene. (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Apeirogon. By Colum McCann. (9/10) **12.18** You and Yours **1.0** The World at One **1.45** The Californian Century: On Ice. Stanley Tucci tells the story of Ice-T, the original gangster rapper, and his controversial hit song Cop Killer. (9/10) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Drama: Game Over, by Emily Short. (R) **3.0** Ramblings: Up to the Labyrinth on St Catherine's Hill, Winchester (4/7) **3.27** Radio 4 Appeal:

Legs4Africa (R) **3.30** Bookclub (R) **4.0** The Film Programme **4.30** Inside Science. With Adam Rutherford and co. **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **6.0** News **6.30** The Break: The Mystery of Room 66 (R) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **7.45** The Book of Strange New Things. By Michael Faber. (R) (4/10) **8.0** Law in Action: Supporting Evidence (R) (2/4) **8.30** The Bottom Line. Evan Davis talks to company bosses. (5/8) **9.0** Inside Science (R) **9.30** In Our Time (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Apeirogon (R) **11.0** The Allotment: Talking to the Bees. Comedy by Esther Coles. (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News **12.30** Book of the Week (4/5) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day

Radio 4 Extra
6.0 Deep Six (5/6) **6.30** Ansel Adams on Tape **7.0** Millport (6/6) **7.30** The Break (2/6) **8.0** The Ken Dodd Show **8.30** I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again (2/14) **9.0** Booked

(1/6) **9.30** Married (5/6) **10.0** Mr Standfast (1/2) **11.0** Here's the Thing **12.0** Ken Dodd **12.30** I'm Sorry I'll... **1.0** Deep Six (5/6) **1.30** Ansel Adams **2.0** The Rainbow (4/10) **2.15** Just So Science (4/5) **2.30** A Severed Head (4/5) **2.45** The Weather Experiment (4/5) **3.0** Mr Standfast (1/2) **4.0** Booked (1/6) **4.30** Married (5/6) **5.0** Millport (6/6) **5.30** The Break (2/6) **6.0** The Invisible Man (9/10) **6.15** Beyond Black (9/10) **6.30** Great Lives (9/9) **7.0** Ken Dodd **7.30** I'm Sorry I'll... **8.0** Deep Six (5/6) **8.30** Ansel Adams **9.0** Here's the Thing **10.0** The Break (2/6) **10.30** Newsjack (4/6) **11.0** ElvenQuest (1/6) **11.30** Sam Simmons Is Not a People Person (4/4) **11.45** The Future of Radio (4/4) **12.0** The Invisible Man (9/10) **12.15** Beyond Black (9/10) **12.30** Great Lives (9/9) **1.0** Deep Six (5/6) **1.30** Ansel Adams **2.0** The Rainbow (4/10) **2.15** Just So Science (4/5) **2.30** A Severed Head (4/5) **2.45** The Weather Experiment (4/5) **3.0** Mr Standfast (1/2) **4.0** Booked (1/6) **4.30** Married (5/6) **5.0** Millport (6/6) **5.30** The Break (2/6)

Yesterday's solutions

Wordsearch

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

Solution no 15,545

C	H	O	R	E	O	G	R	A	P	H	E	R
D	A	U	B	F	L	U	O	R	I	N	E	
W	U	E	N	F	E							
C	A	T	S	C	R	A	D	L	E			
S	H	R	E	W	D							
A	N											
L	O	R	B	I	A							
C	A	R	R	I	A	G	E					
G	S	U	R	I	E							
A	S	D	E	A	D	A	S	A	D	O	D	O

Sudoku no 4,733

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

Word wheel
GYRFALCON

Suguru

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

Quick crossword no 15,546

Across

- 1 Early American revolver (4)
3 Broke through (8)
8 Become weary (4)
9 Seafood (8)
11 Fairground attraction (7,3)
14 Square peg in a round hole (6)
15 Have ambitious plans for (6)
17 In a sticky situation? (2,1,3,4)
20 Self-important (8)
21 Ill-temper (4)
22 Better balanced (8)
23 Reject as false (4)

Down

- 1 Underground cemetery (8)
2 Song writer - it's Cyril (anag) (8)
4 Repeat from memory (6)
5 Nevertheless (3,3,4)
6 Cowl - violent criminal (slang) (4)
7 Directional antenna - good-looking woman or man (4)
10 Poorly (10)
12 Severe recurrent headache (8)
13 Graveyard (8)
16 Set alight (6)
18 Loch in the Great Glen (4)
19 Unemployment benefit (4)

1		2			3	4		5		6		7
8					9							
					10							
11												
										12		13
14								15				
								16				
								17				
18								19				
20										21		
22										23		

Stuck? For help call 0906 200 83 83. Calls cost £1.10 per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Service supplied by ATS. Call 0330 333 6946 for customer service (charged at standard rate). To buy puzzle books, visit guardianbookshop.com or call 0330 333 6846.

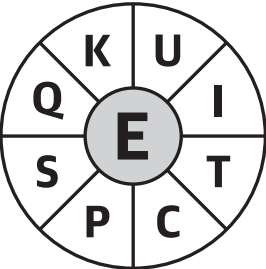
Sudoku no 4,734

Hard. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

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

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-59. Good-50. Average-38.



Suguru

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

		5			
2	3				4
			2		
3					
				2	

Wordsearch

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

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

Steve Bell
If...



Pet corner

Which hero kept a pet snake "five cubits (2.2 metres) long"?
a. Achilles
b. Ajax
c. Hector
d. Odysseus
Answer top right



The Greek 'recovery' is for the few, not the many *Yanis Varoufakis, page 4*

A death in detention that demands urgent reform *Afua Hirsch, page 5*

How a homeless man built a life underground *The long read, page 9*

G2
Daily
pullout
life &
arts
section
Inside

The Guardian **Thursday 5 March 2020**

Opinion
and ideas

Journal



Profit makes the search for a coronavirus vaccine harder

**Stephen
Buranyi**



Coronavirus appears to be with us for the long haul. Despite the unprecedented attempts at isolation and containment, with about 50 million people locked down and economic activity virtually halted in China, cases have spiked in recent weeks. Sixty-seven countries are now reporting a total of more than 8,000 infections outside China. The World Health Organization has been wary of using the word pandemic, but last week it advised countries to prepare as if one were imminent.

On the same day, in a rare bit of good news, the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) announced it had already received the first candidate for a vaccine against the novel virus, now being called Sars-CoV-2 - produced by a company called Moderna - and that trials could begin as early as April. Anthony Fauci, the institute's director, said that just three months between discovery and trials was a new record, noting that "nothing has ever gone that fast", before dropping the other shoe: even with the rapid start, completing the trials and scaling up production would take until at least next year, and there was no guarantee it would even get to that stage.

Vaccines remain science's best - and virtually only - weapon against viruses, and yet the timeline for developing a vaccine, measured in years, seems hopelessly mismatched to a pandemic, which can spread, kill and often disappear in a matter of weeks or months. The modern record doesn't inspire much confidence. There have been multiple international viral outbreaks over the past two decades - Sars-CoV-1, Mers, Zika, Ebola - that all provoked similar races to produce a vaccine. Yet to date only the efforts on Ebola have been successful, with a vaccine being approved last year.

Why is this? Vaccines for epidemics have to overcome the same scientific and regulatory hurdles as other treatments, but they also suffer from a near total lack of interest from the markets that drive the pharmaceutical industry. Only a few massive companies retain the ability to develop and produce a vaccine from start to finish, partly because of the expense and the timescales involved and partly because they've consolidated the patents on manufacturing processes - a situation analysts openly call an oligopoly. A success for one of these companies is a treatment for a widespread, persistent disease that they can sell every single year. The last blockbuster was Merck's HPV vaccine Gardasil, in

ILLUSTRATION:
BILL BRAGG

*
**Stephen
Buranyi**
is a writer
specialising in
science and the
environment

2

Profit makes the search for a coronavirus vaccine harder

Stephen Buranyi

← Continued from front

 development for nearly 20 years, released in 2006, and still bringing in over £1bn annually. There is no way to easily apply their slow-burn research and profit model to an epidemic. As the leader of the UK’s Ebola response, Adrian Hill, told the Independent in 2014, “Unless there’s a big market it’s not worth the while of a mega-company ... There was no business case to make an Ebola vaccine for the people who needed it most.” Even if research begins during a pandemic, the unpredictable nature of outbreaks means work is often shelved if the crisis dies down. Sars and Mers were also coronaviruses but after they petered out, work on them stalled. Jason Schwartz, a professor at the Yale School of Public Health, said as much to the Atlantic earlier this month: “Had we not set the Sars vaccine research programme aside, we would have had a lot more of this foundational work that we could apply to this new, closely related virus.” Clinical trials take nearly a year at minimum, but sustaining basic research on viruses known to have epidemic potential means when a novel variant pops up, we’re not starting from zero each time.

The current setup is often the worst of both worlds - too slow to pick up research on new threats because the money isn’t there, and too quick to drop it if it can’t be sure the money will be there in future. Peter Piot, head of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, previously declared the entire research and development system “not fit for purpose” for epidemics.

The question is, how can we fix it? The quick delivery of the first Sars-CoV-2 vaccine candidate suggests that some recent efforts are paying off. The Moderna vaccine is in part backed by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), based in Norway and funded by governments and foundations such as the Wellcome Trust. Its goal is to keep research attention on potentially epidemic diseases, even when there isn’t an outbreak, and to develop broader treatments it calls “platforms” that could be tailored to multiple virus variants. For example, the vaccine sent to NIAID is RNA-based, making it far easier to customise and faster to produce than traditional protein-based vaccines. And CEPI was already funding a DNA-based vaccine for another coronavirus, as well as a platform to block viral cell entry, that it hopes to quickly adapt to Sars-CoV-2.

These kinds of programmes can maintain long-term vision and planning, foster international collaboration and supercharge vaccine research - but they still can’t deliver a vaccine at pandemic scale, because the biotech firms and universities they work with are simply too small, working on the order of millions of doses. The French pharma giant Sanofi alone produces over a billion doses per year. Even the US army, after producing a promising Zika vaccine in 2017, had to sign over the rights to Sanofi to get it produced. (The deal later fell through after criticism over profiteering by watchdog organisations and senator Bernie Sanders.)

There have been calls over the years, usually after an outbreak or a terrorist attack, for the state to match its commitment to research - the US government has spent more than £500m on coronavirus research over the past 20 years - with the manufacturing capacity to become truly self-reliant. The US had a facility like that until the 1990s, producing vaccines for the army at pennies per dose. The UK recently announced a new state of the art facility in Oxford that would allow the government to manufacture its own vaccines, an incredible step, but it won’t be operational until 2022.

A panicked world will be watching the vaccines inch through clinical trials over the next year. The markets will be watching too. After Fauci said it was “very difficult and very frustrating” that no large pharma companies had stepped up to produce vaccines, both Sanofi and Johnson & Johnson announced new partnerships with the US government on potential treatments. However, the health and human services secretary, Alex Azar, gave no guarantee it would be affordable. “We need the private sector to invest,” he said, “price controls won’t get us there.”

The Guardian

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‘Comment is free... but facts are sacred’ CP Scott

Downing Street

Before real damage is done a pointless war waged on officials must be called off

Every prime minister has at some stage been frustrated with the machinery of government. They feel it is not geared to delivering their manifestos or, in more paranoid moments, that civil servants are engaged in sabotage. But the current intensity of Downing Street’s hostility to Whitehall is abnormal. Boris Johnson does not stoop to public attacks on senior mandarins, but his aides and parliamentary outriders talk about the civil service as an enemy. That view flows from the belief - not always wrong; usually exaggerated - that most civil servants thought Brexit was a mistake and approach it in terms of damage limitation. Mr Johnson wants the company of people who see only glorious opportunities in the UK’s separation from the EU. That prejudice breeds impatience with evidence and disregard for people who rely on it. That is a recipe for bad government.

Mr Johnson has already lost a chancellor by demanding that the Treasury surrender any independence from No 10. Sajid Javid resigned rather than tolerate institutional debilitation. Whether his successor, Rishi Sunak, puts up with it has yet to be seen. There might be gains in political efficiency from a submissive Treasury, but there are costs in downgrading a powerhouse of experience in economic policy. Suspicion of Whitehall also radiates from Downing Street’s defence of Priti Patel, the home secretary, over allegations of bullying. It is normal for the prime minister to take an ally’s side when there are rival accounts of what has happened, but the anonymous Conservative “sources” who have been pressing Ms Patel’s case go much further. They accuse Home Office officials of campaigning against their boss because of her political stances. The ugly inference is that officials who say

they have been bullied are lying and their motive is softness on immigration and crime.

There is often a trade-off in ministerial appointments between competence, loyalty and ideology. Prime ministers like cabinets that agree with them, but also need departments to be run well. Mr Johnson seems uninterested in balancing that equation. What matters is belief in a project that sometimes looks as if it only exists to remake Britain as a regulatory autarky away from Europe. There is no room on board for people who are mindful of the risks. Since that is a function the civil service traditionally performs, the Brexit revolution must bulldoze its way through the established structures of government. Such is the ambition of Dominic Cummings, Mr Johnson’s chief adviser, whose belief in the archaism and inadequacy of a permanent civil service is well documented. He thinks it lacks agility and imagination, which is often true. It is not true that a better system can be reached by waging total war on the system in place.

The challenge of dealing with coronavirus is instructive on this point. The politics of managing an epidemic demonstrate the value of expertise (in science and medicine) alongside the need for a professional bureaucracy (to administer emergency measures). The Johnson-Cummings doctrine denigrates those qualities, but relies on them in a crisis. Politics always contains tension between politicians’ demand for quick change and the institutional caution of the civil service. Ministerial memoirs are full of battles on this front. Nearly always some accommodation was reached, and change happened. But Mr Johnson’s team are playing a more dangerous game. They do not just see the civil service as inefficient at delivering their goals. They see breaking the apparatus of government as a goal in itself and its impartial staff as enemies to be crushed in order to complete a revolution. That would be a hazardous undertaking even in the hands of serious, evidence-led politicians. But Mr Johnson does not like having those around, perhaps because he is not one himself.

Budget

Get rid of £3bn-a-year sop to wealthy business owners and tax them properly

The respected thinktank the Resolution Foundation calls it “the worst tax break” in the UK. Analysts at the Institute for Fiscal Studies can find no evidence that it does what ministers claim. Yet entrepreneurs’ relief has cost the public nearly £25bn in just over a decade.

At next week’s budget, the first of Boris Johnson’s premiership, this costly and ineffective bung for the rich should be scrapped and the savings ploughed into something of real public value. Suitably enough for this sorry subsidy, entrepreneurs’ relief began life as an apology. In the autumn of 2007, the Labour chancellor Alistair Darling acted on newspaper reports that private-equity barons were paying less in tax than their cleaners by clamping down on the capital gains tax (CGT) regime.

That sparked a wave of protest from business lobby groups, which within a few months forced Mr Darling into a partial U-turn and the introduction of an “entrepreneurs’ relief”. Put simply, the idea was that business owners selling their companies would pay half the normal rate of CGT, 10% rather than 20%, on their first £1m of gains. It was a sop, a compromise, an olive branch that the chancellor described as part of his programme to “do as much as possible to encourage entrepreneurship in this country”.

The then shadow chancellor, George Osborne, hailed the announcement as a “humiliation” yet, in his own stint at No 11, not only kept the relief but extended it.

The result is that a tax break which Treasury officials originally costed at £200m a year now sucks an annual £2.7bn from the public purse. What the public gets for that is highly debatable. Rather than drive up investment in business, the IFS found last year it really helped business owners avoid tax.

Imagine you work as a tax consultant paying 40% higher-rate tax; if you form your own firm that retains much of your income, you can avoid paying so much to HMRC. And when you sell your enterprise, you are liable for only 10% tax on the gains. All of this is quite legal, but it hardly lives up to the government’s promise of boosting enterprise. It is, rather, a very generous payout to comparatively few wealthy people. In 2017-18, the IFS found that three-quarters of entrepreneurs’ relief benefited just 5,000 individuals, who made an average tax saving of £350,000. It cannot be right that those who own their own company are asked to pay proportionately less in tax than those who work for them.

The frontbench of neither main party today defends this giveaway. At the last election, Mr Johnson ran on a manifesto that acknowledged “some measures haven’t fully delivered on their objectives. So we will review and reform entrepreneur’s relief”. Next week is his big chance. At the budget on Wednesday, the government should scrap this terrible tax break. Those lobbyists who still wish to defend it should explain why paying 20% tax (the current rate of CGT) is so punitive when it is still half the higher rate of income tax. If any entrepreneur is seriously considering not launching a productive, sustainable company because of the extra duty they will pay when they eventually sell up, they should come forward and make their case. Instead of handouts to the rich, the government ought to be properly funding public services.



Why is Patel still in her job? Johnson needs her there

Martin Kettle



Priti Patel is a very lucky home secretary. Twenty-five years ago, when Michael Howard did her current job, the Conservative party lapped up his hardline penal policy of “three strikes and you’re out”. Patel shares much of Howard’s philosophy. But she is lucky his three strikes doctrine has gone. Patel would not be in her job if it applied.

In less than a week, three separate bullying charges have been lodged against Patel. The earliest, from when she was a junior minister at the Department for Work and Pensions in 2015, centres on a formal complaint of bullying and harassment. The second, from her time as international development secretary in 2017, involves what has been called a “tsunami of allegations” as well as “shocking” bullying of her own private secretary. The third, which came in her permanent secretary’s resignation statement, accuses her of creating fear by shouting, swearing, belittling, and making unreasonable and repeated demands.

In the not so distant past, all this would have meant curtains for Patel as home secretary. Ministers and senior officials have almost routinely had difficult relationships in the past. But they almost never resulted in career officials resigning. That’s because the expectation of robust private argument over policy is sensibly hardwired into the adviser-politician relationship from the start. For it to become personally intolerable is the unusual bit. For a minister to have triggered the very public resignation of one of Whitehall’s most senior officials makes Patel’s case unique.

Bullying in Whitehall and Westminster – and indeed more generally – was a high-profile issue during the previous parliament. The Tory party relentlessly attacked the former speaker John Bercow over alleged bullying of Commons staff. There must be “no bullying and no harassment”, wrote Boris Johnson in the August 2019 issue of the official ministerial code. Working relationships should be “proper and appropriate”, the code states. Bullying will “not be tolerated”. Only yesterday, the former Commons leader Andrea Leadsom told MPs that they must behave honourably “whatever the cost”.

Yet the cost of the bullying allegations to Patel has

The home secretary leaves Downing Street

PHOTOGRAPH: EPA/NEIL HALL

In the world of Dominic Cummings, the loss of Priti Patel would be both a victory for the hated Whitehall ‘blob’ and for the hated BBC

been very slight so far. On Monday, Michael Gove called her “a superb minister doing a great job”. Spurred on by the whips, Tory backbenchers rallied around Gove to praise the home secretary. Johnson insisted he was “sticking by” his minister. She was, he said, “doing an outstanding job”.

Johnson and Gove are smart enough, and have been around Conservative politics long enough, to know that praise of this kind for Patel is signally unmerited. Quite apart from the extremely serious allegations that she now has to answer, Patel is not a good minister, let alone an outstanding one. Her record is thin and so is her reputation. That Patel manages to combine arrogance with stupidity, a former colleague told me this week, is “toxic and terrible”.

So why is Patel still in place? It is not as if she is a particular favourite of the No 10 chief adviser, Dominic Cummings. But it may be that Cummings’s own almost pathological antagonism towards the civil service and the media means that events have forced him and Patel into becoming allies of convenience. In Cummings’s world, the loss of Patel would be both a victory for the hated Whitehall “blob” and also for the hated BBC, which has carried – with admirable fearlessness in the circumstances – two of the most damaging stories against Patel.

For that reason, some senior Tories argue, the issue for Johnson is really about timing. In this reading, the resignation of Sajid Javid as chancellor last month gives Patel a stay of execution. Johnson could not afford to lose two of his top three ministers so quickly, especially at a time when coronavirus allows him to pose as the unifying figure he would never be over Brexit. He is therefore boxed in, and dependent upon the report by his ministerial standards adviser, Alex Allan, into Patel’s behaviour. If Allan produces a damning verdict, Johnson can then decently decide that her position is no longer sustainable.

But the real reasons are surely political and ideological. Johnson feels he needs her. Patel’s presence in his government helps to preserve party unity on the contingent terms – they will become a bit clearer in next week’s budget – set by himself and Cummings.

That fact is itself remarkable, since it shows both that the party is not, in fact, as united as it pretends, and also that Johnson’s 80-seat majority does not guarantee his control over the direction of the Conservative government as decisively as it may seem.

The Tory party may have settled its arguments over Brexit. But it has not settled its arguments over the state’s role in the economy and social policy. These debates have indeed now revived. Patel stands for an essentially Thatcherite approach. At the end of a decade in which David Cameron, Theresa May and Boris Johnson have all attempted, in their very different ways, to follow something they all called “one nation” policies, Patel continues instead to emulate Thatcher’s distinctive and divisive combination of liberal possessive individualism and authoritarian social policy.

Whatever she may think about it herself, Patel is no Thatcher. But Patel as home secretary has become one of the embodiments of the Tory right’s current capture of the party. She knows it, and so does Johnson. It is why she is still there, at least for now.

The Greek 'recovery' is for the few, not the many

Yanis Varoufakis



Costas runs a small bookshop in my central Athens neighbourhood. Although jovial by constitution, he finds it difficult to hide the worry lines multiplying on his face. Fifteen years ago he put his flat up as collateral for a business loan to spruce up the bookshop. When the Greek debt crisis wreaked its havoc, it was impossible to service that loan.

Today, Costas is one of hundreds of thousands facing foreclosures by funds that have purchased debt like his from the banks at bargain basement prices. The bailiff and the auctioneer are circling above distressed homeowners and small business people such as Costas.

Intriguingly, he talks little about this, caught up in the media frenzy over the 30,000 or so refugees whom President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey released from the camps in which they had been held. "We can barely feed ourselves. How can we help these wretched souls?" Costas laments. His predicament captures nicely how Greece's crisis has spawned a rule of fear: the muted fear of the bailiff and the brash fear of the "other".

Readers of the international press, which for two years has been celebrating Greece's alleged economic recovery, will be tempted to dismiss Costas's story as unrepresentative. They will retort that investors who bought Greek debt or shares a few years ago have banked returns that no other market has provided. What's more,



Free food being given away in an Athens market during the eurozone crisis PHOTOGRAPH: REX/ZUMA

Greece's government has been borrowing for 10 years at less than 1% interest rates. Surely being able to refinance its debt at such low interest rates is evidence of recovery?

Paradox is a Greek word for good reason: today's Greece proves that it is perfectly possible for the state and for the majority of citizens to be sinking deeper into insolvency while the oligarchy makes a mint from trading in their assets. But why would investors lend to the Greek government cheaply if it remains bankrupt?

The reason is that the troika of Greece's creditors - the EU, European Central Bank and the IMF - have taken 85% of government debt out of the money markets and placed it squarely on the shoulders of Europe's taxpayers. They also deferred all repayments until after 2032 and extended another €30bn (£26bn) of official loans to the Greek government to cover its repayments to privateers. So why not lend to the Greek government at a small, yet positive, interest rate when the alternative is to lend to the German or the Dutch governments at the current negative interest rates? Paradox solved!

Turning to Greece's private sector, how can investors profit from it if it too is bankrupt? With great ease is the answer, as Costas's case illustrates. His loan of €100,000 was sold on by his bank to a hedge fund for €8,000. If the fund auctions off his flat for €20,000, its profit rate will hit an astonishing 250%. The fact that Costas will lose both his home and his bookshop, with detrimental effects on the state's taxes and outlays (as he begins to draw unemployment benefit), does not even appear on the radar of the hedge fund or the international media.

During the first phase of Greece's crisis, all social classes, with the exception of the top 0.1%, found themselves in dire straits. But, from 2018, three social groups fared differently. By far the largest group, to which Costa belongs, continue to sink deeper in hopelessness. A middle group has bottomed out, living in terribly diminished albeit more stable circumstances. Finally, a small group is doing incredibly well: buoyed up by fire sales of public assets, connected to the hedge funds profiting from trades in loans like Costas's, and linked to EU-sourced funding.

Greece's new government, led by Kyriakos Mitsotakis, is an interesting coalition of figures from within his New Democracy party. One faction, close to the prime minister's circle, represents the interests of the neoliberal-minded oligarchy. A second ultra-rightist, fully xenophobic nationalist faction is the local branch of what I refer to as the nationalist international (which includes Donald Trump, Matteo Salvini, Viktor Orbán, Marine Le Pen, Narendra Modi, Jair Bolsonaro).

This fragile coalition is kept together by a combination of free-market "solutions" favouring the oligarchy (for instance, the sale of Costas's loan), a domestic authoritarian drive (armed police entering universities to confront protesting students), and a Trumpian approach to migrants. The Nazi Golden Dawn party was, mercifully, kicked out of parliament, but tragically its racist narrative is now in government.

When, sooner or later, the narrative of economic recovery is exposed as a cruel lie, this government will exploit the little people's concerns over migration to keep those like Costas placid while, for good measure, deploying the authoritarian apparatus currently under construction to liquidate their few remaining assets.

Most recently, TV screens relayed a scene that reveals the continuing capacity of the Greek situation to symbolise Europe's conundrum: a visit to the Greek-Turkish border by the Greek prime minister accompanied by Ursula von der Leyen - who was promoted by Angela Merkel as the European commission's new president, but who would not have been elected without Orbán's support in the European parliament.

What were they doing? They were defending the policy, pioneered by Orbán, of violating the right that international law affords refugees to enter one's territory to apply for asylum. In essence, they were sealing the demise of Merkel's project of keeping the xenophobic hard right at bay. Additionally, they were unwittingly proving that Greece remains the canary in the mine.

World Book Day shouldn't just be about the fancy dress

Alice O'Keeffe



World Book Day is upon us, and primary school classrooms across the country are filled with overexcited, undersized BFGs, Mary Poppinses and Gruffalos. Meanwhile, parents will be arriving at work frazzled and smeared with facepaint. Because as we all know, despite the very best efforts of its organisers, World Book Day isn't principally about reading - it's about dressing up.

There is no disputing that kids love it. No sooner is it over than mine start planning next year's costumes - their ideas are always insanely overambitious, and usually only tangentially related to books. Has Sonic the Hedgehog ever appeared in print? Could I perhaps construct his spiky blue head using egg cartons? These are the questions I find myself grappling with approximately 15 minutes before we need to leave for school. One year I was sure I would have to cut a Willy Wonka hat out of my son's hair at the end of the day, as we hadn't allowed any time for the glue to dry.

Of course, an impressive number of parents do manage to spend hours lovingly handcrafting costumes. Last year I was particularly impressed by the boy who came to school dressed as a giant atlas, complete with geographically accurate maps. Still not sure how he managed to sit down though.

Such heroic parental effort is not, alas, always fully appreciated by the kids. One friend spent ages last year putting together a brilliant Gangsta Granny costume, only for it to be discarded, swag and all, at the school gates (the wig was too itchy).

Of course, as a booky person I am fully in favour of any initiative aimed at turning kids on to reading. With 800 libraries having closed down since 2010, and attention spans dwindling at an alarming rate, books need all the help they can get in the multimedia age.

I do, however, have a problem with the fact that World Book Day has become yet another opportunity for supermarkets to flog fancy dress to well-intentioned and time-poor parents. The internet overflows with "World Book Day special offers": cheap, polyester Elsa dresses (hello, Frozen is a *film*) and Dennis the Menace jumpers (OK, for the sake of a quiet life, let's allow a comic-book). Many of these will be worn once, and then spend the next couple of decades mouldering in landfill.

Grownups, let's try to remember, today of all days, that reading is not an end in itself. We read in order to become more conscious of the world outside our own narrow experience; we read in order to think more deeply. The attitude of a reader is the very antithesis of the rapacious, selfish short-sightedness of late-stage capitalism. Here's an idea: save your pennies on the costume, and invest in a book or two instead.



Analysing the challenges that transcend Europe's borders

✱ **Yanis Varoufakis** is the former finance minister of Greece

✱ **Alice O'Keeffe** is a literary critic and the author of *On the Up*



A cell death that demands urgent reform

Afua Hirsch



Dostoevsky said a society's civilisation can be judged by its prisons. I would add this: a society's humanity can be judged by its immigration removal centres. What does it say about us that a man who entered Britain on a valid business visa - with all the optimism and ambition that entails - died emaciated, dehydrated and in a state of utter despair, at a detention centre near Heathrow.

That Prince Kwabena Fosu's story could unfold in modern Britain is hard to comprehend. A 31-year-old Ghanaian national, he was experiencing a psychiatric crisis so acute that - it was said during the inquest - even someone with no expertise would have noticed.

He was taken to the Harmondsworth centre, where staff instead labelled him disruptive - his mental health was never assessed - and placed him in segregation, where for six days he lay naked on a concrete floor, not eating, drinking or sleeping. He died on 30 October 2012, emaciated, from hypothermia, dehydration and malnourishment, weighing only 47kg, having lost 15% of his body weight in less than a week.

In death, he suffered further. His family, unable to afford an alternative, have to live with the fact that he is buried alongside two others in a shared grave without a headstone. Then the BBC published a photo stripping him of any further dignity, showing him surrounded by detritus and human waste, his bare feet exposed from under a blanket placed over his corpse.

Who really runs Britain's immigration removal centres? In Fosu's case, the Home Office contracted the running of the centre to GEO Group, whose American counterpart is behind Donald Trump's detention of migrants at United States borders. GEO in turn contracted healthcare to Nestor Primecare Services (later placed in administration), which in turn contracted the Jersey Practice - a west London GP surgery - which in turn contracted a locum agency, Beacon Care Services. Criminal charges were brought against GEO and Nestor, but later dropped.

A vulnerable person dependent on these services would be unlikely to know any of that. What it amounted to in real life, for Fosu, was being seen by four GPs, two nurses, two Home Office contract monitors, three members of the Independent Monitoring Board and countless detention custody officers - all of whom seemingly failed to apply their humanity.

Home Office officials admitted at his inquest this week that his was a "tragic" case. The department says it has now increased staff numbers, improved safeguarding, and introduced a policy for adults at risk.

But did someone need to die for any of that to happen? The campaign organisation Inquest - which assisted Fosu's family - points out that a year earlier, in 2011, Brian Dalrymple died at Colnbrook, which together with Harmondsworth is run as a single institution. His death involved many of the same staff; his inquest uncovered similar failures.

Events since then make it hard to believe that much has changed. In 2013, evidence emerged that women in another immigration detention centre - the notorious Yarl's Wood - had been sexually abused by staff. In 2017 there were six detainee deaths in one year. A review into the entire system in 2016, four years after Fosu died, found that people facing deportation were still being put in segregation facilities - an idea copied from the prison system - that are "not suitable for any detainee with a serious mental health condition".

Successive Conservative governments continue to ignore calls for immigration detention to be limited to 28 days, a suggestion sanctioned by almost all informed observers and professionals. Not that this would not have helped Fosu. He was so vulnerable he died within six days. One of the few silver linings of a Heathrow third runway would have been the demolition of Harmondsworth, although the chances are that it would have been replaced - as Yarl's Wood was after it was set on fire in 2002, by a prison-like facility "characterised amongst other things by long corridors and an absence of natural light".

The main problem with immigration detention is that, at a cost of more than £34,000 per detainee per year, it doesn't actually work, and has been found time again to be "not a particularly effective means of ensuring that those with no right to remain do in fact leave the UK". For the utterly heartless, that is reason enough for radical change. For everyone else, there is Prince Fosu.

Differing perspectives on transgender rights

We reject the argument put forward in a column by Suzanne Moore (Women must have the right to organise. We will not be silenced, G2, 3 March) in which she implies that advocating for trans rights poses a threat to cisgender women. The British Social Attitudes Survey (2017) found that a majority of the British public were supportive of transgender people, with women more likely to be in favour of trans rights than men. Moore's column does not represent the views of the public, nor is it representative of the views of most women.

Both trans people and cisgender women are discriminated against because of their gender. This is why both groups experience harassment in the street, sexual violence, domestic abuse and poverty at much higher rates than cisgender men. Trans people experience more difficulties accessing healthcare, higher rates of suicide and more frequent mental health issues, and are more likely to be victims of hate crimes.

We stand together in opposition to such abuse and inequality. As believers in human rights and justice, it is our duty to support all marginalised communities as they fight for respect and equality. And as feminists, we believe that we need to keep fighting for gender-based services and resources together.

Reni Eddo-Lodge *Author, Jo Grady*
General secretary, UCU, Zarah
Sultana MP, Nadia Whittome MP,
Sian Berry *Co-leader, Green party,*
Amelia Womack *Deputy leader,*
Green party, Christine Jardine
MP *Equalities spokesperson,*
Liberal Democrats, Tai Shani
Co-winner, Turner prize 2019,
Martha Spurrier *Director, Liberty,*
Alison Camps *Co-chair, Pride*
in London and over 100 others.
More signatories at [gu.com/letters](https://www.guardian.co.uk/letters)

● As a trans woman, I find myself largely in agreement with Suzanne Moore – at least, up to a point. Her distinctions between sex and gender, and acknowledgment of the existence of intersex people ought to be beyond debate as matters of fact not opinion, and her analysis of the looking-glass perspective of some trans activists regarding this is acute.

I have had gender reassignment surgery, so do not know if I might pass the bar that Ms Moore sets for protection from domestic violence, say, as any other woman might lay claim to. And there is no question that placing male-bodied but female-identifying persons in hitherto exclusively natal female spaces such as prisons and refuges does pose risks that need to be managed or, occasionally, avoided through denial of entry

to those spaces. But those risks are contingent on the person concerned in each case, not on a sweeping category of trans.

I therefore feel bound to observe that following the excellent first part of her well-argued piece, she moves to a conclusion that silently endorses the notion advanced by trans-exclusionary radical feminists that all trans women still always are men and must therefore always be excluded from places open only to an essentialist conflation of sex and gender defined as “real” female.

By tacitly adopting these terms of debate, she sabotages her own argument, denying not only protection to some of the most vulnerable trans people, but also saying nothing to *any* woman, natal or otherwise, without a functioning womb or history of periods, or whatever single immutable thing is held to define womanhood. After all, women are just baby machines, aren't they? The patriarchy would approve. Surely this was not her intention?

Tanya Murray
Lancaster

Gender cannot be claimed by anyone who wants it, and saying this doesn't mean feminists are transphobic

Hilary Caldicott

● Thank you to Suzanne Moore for her column. It was a joy to read the feminist case being made with a passionate sense of the movement's historical solidarity with the oppressed, at a time when feminists who seek safe spaces for women are themselves being characterised as the oppressors. It was gratifying to read a cogent exposition of the difference between the biological fact of sex and the social construct of gender. Moore is right that there are “more of us than you think”, but to present the feminist case is to imperil careers. I write as a retired teacher, but I know many younger women who are fearful for their futures – and their safety – if they speak out on this issue.

Maggie Patel
Bearwood, West Midlands

● As someone who is neither female nor transgender, the dispute between some feminists and transgender activists is frustrating. Suzanne Moore is right to highlight the importance of solidarity. Both feminists and trans people (and there is a large overlap between the

two) are fighting for the same goals: equal basic respect; liberation from oppressive social gender roles and identities; and to abolish the power structure that enforces them. In the vast majority of situations, what's good for trans people is good for women, and vice versa.

But Moore's article has ended up as just another shot in a war that's hurting both sides. Infighting between feminist and trans groups only benefits established power. With women's and LGBT rights increasingly at risk from patriarchal movements around the world, it's long past time that both sides joined forces against their common enemy.

Alasdair Murray
Westminster, London

● Suzanne Moore is right – there are more of us (biological women who will not be silenced) than you think. This message needs to be heeded by the Labour party, once the natural choice for many feminists, before it doesn't just lose its traditional strongholds, but swathes of very angry women too.

There is a constructive way out of this quagmire. If trans people and feminists of goodwill could come together to listen to each other's concerns with kindness and respect, with the objective of jointly working out practical solutions to the clash of rights while resolving to stop the unhelpful name-calling and attempts to silence women, I believe we might begin to move forward. Whether Lisa Nandy and Rebecca Long-Bailey are big enough to admit they should have checked before signing the pledge describing Woman's Place UK as a “trans-exclusionist hate group”, apologise and back moves towards finding solutions remains to be seen.

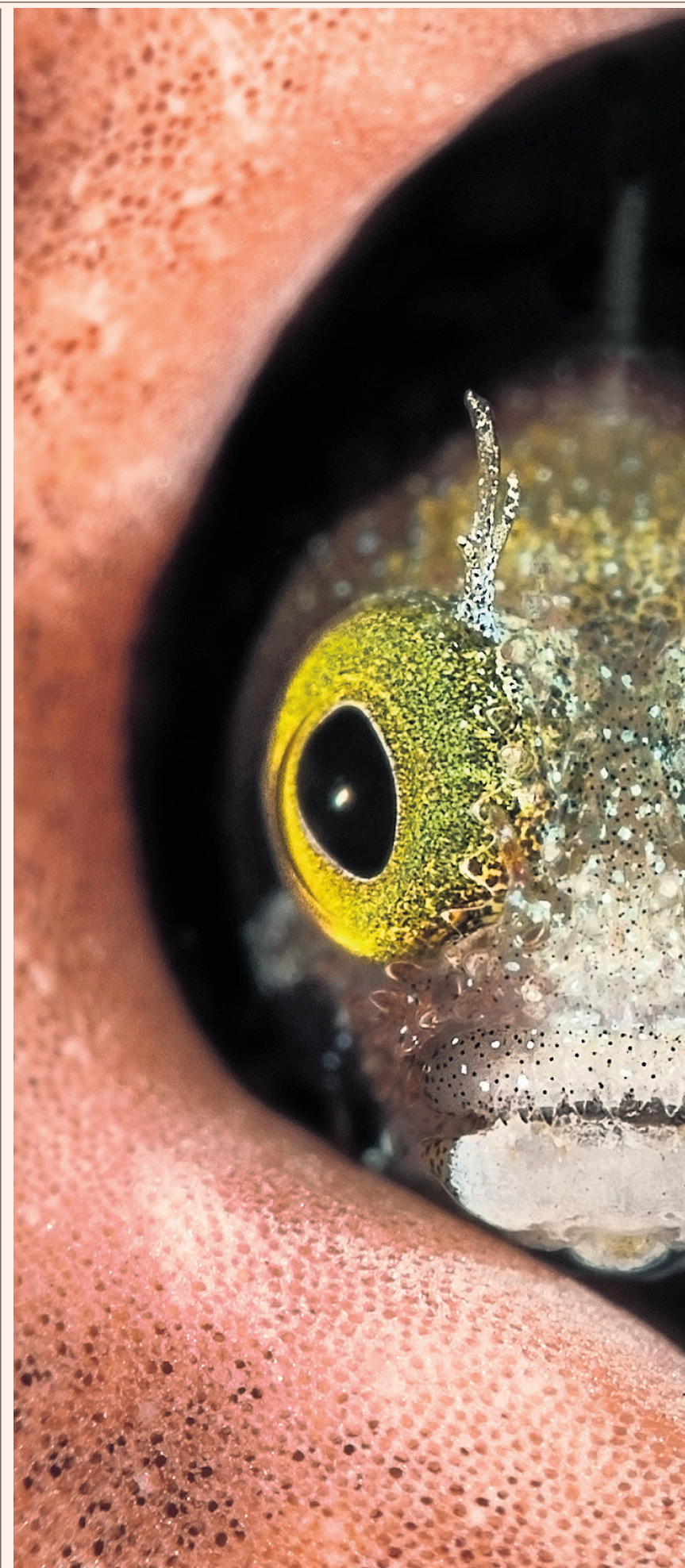
Sue Newte
London

● Thanks to Suzanne Moore for an article that got it absolutely right, with not one word needing to be altered. Gender is not something that can be claimed and possessed by anyone who wants it, and saying this doesn't mean feminists are transphobic. I'm retired so I'm not obliged to use social media in the course of my work, thereby facing threats like Suzanne and her family have to, but I'll happily chain myself to the railings over the right to speak out on this one. No-platforming is a dubious business and, if used at all, should be limited to speakers who are inciting hatred. Please, let's continue this debate in the open without hurling abuse.

Hilary Caldicott
Freeland, Oxfordshire

● Thank heavens for Suzanne Moore's clear thinking. And thank you, the Guardian, for publishing this piece. I don't underestimate the courage this must take in these days of science denial and witch-hunting of women like Selina Todd. I stand alongside Suzanne as a self-identified woman who also won't go quietly.

Jo Adams
Abingdon, Oxfordshire

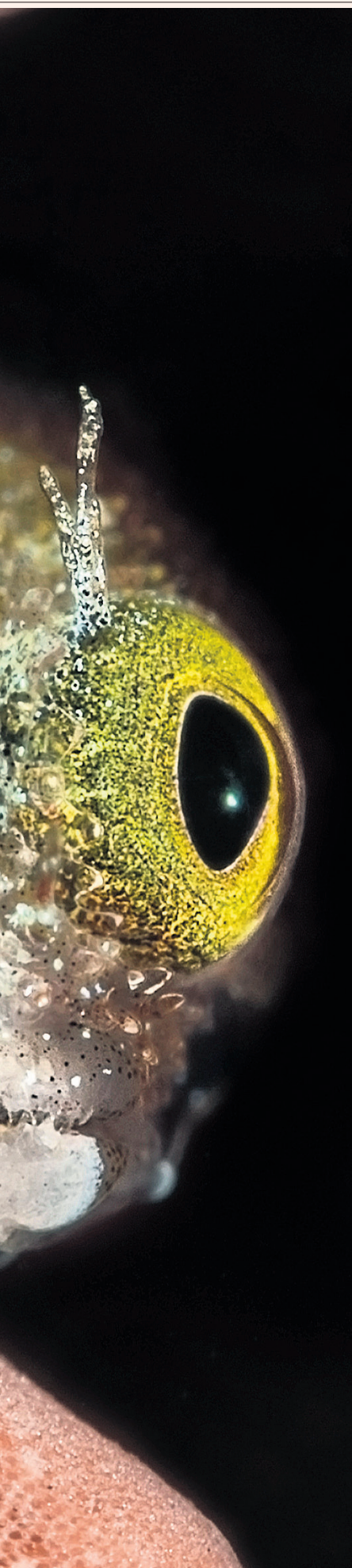


Off the scale

‘One of the little critters feeling the heat under the waves off the Caribbean island of Curaçao, which is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands’

KEVIN STOKELL/GUARDIAN COMMUNITY

Do you have a photo you'd like to share with Guardian readers? If so, visit [gu.com/letters-pics](https://www.guardian.co.uk/letters-pics) to upload it, and we'll print the best ones on these pages



Enough with 'brain is computer' analogy

I was very surprised by Matthew Cobb's long read (Why your brain is not a computer, 27 Feb) and even more shocked by Dr Dodds' letter (Give some thought to brain theorising, 3 March). It's at least 20 years since the "brain as computer" analogy and the so-called Cartesian error were thrown out by many neuroscientists and philosophers (read Damasio's *Descartes' Error*, for a start) and since then there's been a huge and exciting debate going on internationally about the diverse and growing field of embodied cognition. It has major implications for education, child development, social science, aesthetics, psychology and more, and has been driven by remarkable work in neuroscience, especially in Italy. I was amazed that neither Cobb

nor Dodds make any reference to it. Cue for another long read maybe?

Cary Bazalgette
Honorary research fellow,
UCL Institute of Education

● Yes, the human brain, or any animal's brain, is not a computer, and, as Dr Dodds points out, there is still a long way to go to resolve the mind/brain problem. Conversely, a computer is not a brain and thinking about it in this way does not help. In my last year of teaching physics, we were preparing a new integrated science course to replace the separate sciences. Regardless of the pros and cons of this scheme in general, I was horrified to see the computer described as a "giant brain" in the physics section. I wrote a memo giving my objections, but I have no knowledge of whether they had any influence on what was taught in the following years.

Frank Jackson
Harlow, Essex

Children's games are going viral

At least the very young have absorbed Boris Johnson's message not to panic (Sketch: Johnson has spent his entire life washing his hands, 4 March). At a recent children's party, a boy called out "Let's play coronavirus!" A distinctly contemporary game of tag ensued, the object of which appeared to be to infect as many as possible.

Mary Smith
Bearsted, Kent

● Delighted to see Jacob Rees-Mogg recommend the national anthem to accompany hand-washing (Letters, 4 March). Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau is a great tune, and with the customary repeat from "Gwlad, gwlad" it affords ample time for a thorough job.

Anne Cowper
Llandeilo Ferwallt, Abertawe

● I'd worked out that using the Rees-Mogg accompaniment of God Save the Queen rather than Happy Birthday lost the country an extra 82 years of work if one washed one's hands nine times a day as teachers have been told. Now Boris Johnson says we have to sing Happy Birthday twice. Does he want to collapse the economy?

Margaret Squires
St Andrews, Fife

● Your article asking "Are hugs, kisses and handshakes OK" (3 March) reminded me of one in the Yorkshire Post of 6 July 1918, in which a doctor recommended "the temporary abolition of the pernicious habit of kissing" due to "a flood of sentiment let loose by the war". He went on: "In urgent cases, where abolition would be a hardship, a small book of kissing coupons could be allowed, provided proper precautions were taken."

Martin Knight
Hovingham, North Yorkshire

Care sector shortage and unemployment

Frances Ryan says there are 122,000 social care "vacancies", implying that 122,000 jobs are available with nobody to fill them (It's children who will fill the carer gap, Journal, 28 February). The 122,000 figure is an estimate of workforce shortages in adult social care, not vacancies.

Over the past two years I have sought out such vacancies for a family member. On NHS Jobs this morning I found four social or adult care vacancies in Liverpool - and precisely zero on Liverpool city council's recruitment page. Competition has been fierce for the few jobs that do come up.

In the wake of Boris Johnson's new immigration plans, there seems to be a perverse liberal will to understate the reality of unemployment

and to scoff at the idea that the phrase "economically inactive" conceals mass unemployment. Only last autumn your economics correspondent reported that more than 3 million people are missing from unemployment figures (and that Liverpool's true unemployment rate is 19.8%) - specifically after "students, retirees and people caring for family" are removed.

We should be able to oppose Tory immigration policy without giving credence to the toxic myths that either there is near-full employment (a Tory idea now thoughtlessly redeployed against them) or the unemployed are workshy.

Peter McKenna
Liverpool

● More at [gu.com/letters](https://www.theguardian.com/letters) - *Melanie Henwood responds to arguments for and against compulsory registration of care workers put forward by Karolina Gerlich and Clenton Farquharson*

Corrections and clarifications

● An article that compiled reactions to the government's new guidance on relationships and sex education in English schools cited concerns by an activist that the curriculum was "not statutory". To clarify, the Department for Education encouraged schools to adopt the curriculum from September 2019, but it will be mandatory from September 2020 (The young people demanding sexual frankness and an end to homophobia, 3 March, page 30).

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com or The readers' editor, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU; or call 020 3353 4736 from 10am to 1pm Mon-Fri

A Tartt snack better than jam and cream

I tried David and Bryony Graham's marmite and marmalade (Letters, 21 February), but it was not for me. However, profound thanks to Donna Tartt and her novel *The Secret History* for the revelation that is cream cheese and marmalade: better even than clotted cream and jam. My earliest memory is of a fragrant, steamy kitchen that had everything to do with "granny's marmalade pan". That was 70 years ago.

Gill Rowley
Yatton, Somerset

● Miriam Margolyes is 78 years old, came out to her parents at 27 and has been in a relationship with a woman for over 50 years ('I like men - I just don't feel any groin excitement', G2, 3 March 2020). She has travelled the world, worked with hundreds of men and women on radio, TV and film, is politically active, and yet you still suggest that "Maybe she's just meeting the wrong men". Seriously?

Ruth Eversley
Paulton, Somerset

● Careful what you wish for with electoral reform. With one in six across Europe voting hard right (Analysis, Matthijs Rooduijn, 3 March), do we really want a totally PR voting system? First past the post has the advantage of culling parliamentary representation of extremist views. A good thing, surely.

Chris Collins
Irby, Wirral

● The perfect place for the poetry headquarters (Laureate calls for UK to establish national 'poetry headquarters', 27 February) should surely be Rhyme Intrinseca in Dorset.

Julia Draper
Bath

● My son is eight. His school has asked pupils to dress up as a word on World Book Day. I asked what word he wants to be and he said: "Absent!"

Susan Barton
Ventnor, Isle of Wight

Established 1906

Country diary

Wenlock Edge, Shropshire

There is something uncannily alien about living jelly. Lobes of brown, gelatinous fungus growing out of dead and fallen branches are jelly ear, *Auricularia auricula-judae*. Once called the Judas's ear fungus because it often grows on the elder, the tree Judas Iscariot was supposed to have hanged himself on, it was mistranslated in the casual racism of 16th-century English as Jew's ear.

Also known as wood ear, it has an orangey brown to a deep chocolatey colour. It is edible (not tried it yet) and, as the "fungus sambuca" of the old herbalists, has a medicinal history as a cure for sore throat and jaundice and as an astringent; it is used more widely in Chinese medicine. It contains chemicals that are anti-tumour, hypoglycaemic and cholesterol-lowering; as a source of natural melanin it has great potential in the fields of pharmacology, cosmetics and nutraceuticals - foods containing additional functional ingredients such as antioxidants, phytochemicals and vitamins.

The fruiting bodies do appear very ear-like. Their consistency is unsettling, a kind of unstill wobble as if animate, and a reminder that fungi are closer to animals than plants. The ears look as though they are listening, the sensory organs of invisible beings that infiltrate the trees and are part of a hidden intelligence.

What are they listening to? Rain. More liquid than solid themselves, the jelly ears listen to rain that feels as if it has fallen almost constantly since last autumn. The floods that have threatened the lives of towns and settlements a few miles away around Ironbridge and Shrewsbury, and caused the countless deaths of animals swept away or drowned in burrows, whisper to the jelly ears of our failure to understand the life of rivers such as the Severn, and the land that feeds it, now that the climate has changed so much.

Jelly ears listen to the rain because it tells them the fruiting time and when to release hundreds of thousands of spores, when to germinate and how to alter their competitive balance with other fungi in dead wood. Increased rainfall and temperature is giving jelly ear a much wider range of hosts. Rot is the future.

Paul Evans



Twitter: @gdncountrydiary
ILLUSTRATION: CLIFFORD HARPER

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Alan Wallwork

Innovative potter who took his inspiration from the natural world

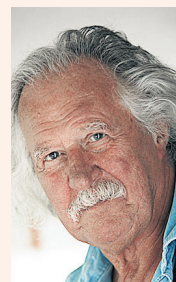
Alan Wallwork, who has died aged 88, was one of Britain's most distinctive potters, known for sculptural work that was important in the story of studio ceramics, but who should also be judged in the context of the broader artistic developments in the country in the 1950s and 60s.

For Alan, clay was the ideal expressive medium for organic and preternatural objects that explored forms in nature and the landscape, such as gourds, seeds and fossils, as well as archaic and totemic shapes from early human history.

He developed an archetypal language that echoed some of the wider artistic obsessions of that period, what the art critic Herbert Read called the "postwar ferment" of sculptural activity. Sculptors such as William Turnbull, Eduardo Paolozzi and Hubert Dalwood explored related territories of biomorphism, and painters including Alan Reynolds and Edward Middleditch were drawn to organic subjects, to the scrubby peripheries of fields and roads burgeoning with cow parsley, or

Wallwork, below, explored forms in nature and the landscape, such as gourds, seeds and fossils, as well as archaic and totemic shapes from early human history

DAVID ELLWAND



scattered with poppy seed pods. This was Wallwork country, too.

Alan was part of a postwar shift in clay that went beyond functional domestic pieces. This experimentation centred largely on London art colleges such as the Central School and Goldsmiths College, where Alan went in 1955, studying under Kenneth Clark and Gordon Baldwin, both avant-garde potters who opened up new aesthetic and technical possibilities.

The medium was being used in fresh, innovative sculpture and architectural schemes. As Alan later wrote, "We were all well aware of the large-scale ceramics being turned out by the potter William Newland and others for the Golden Egg restaurants and the coffee bars in London. The time seemed so full of optimism and encouragement." It was a heady period, when artistically anything seemed achievable.

Alan was born in Watford, Hertfordshire, the son of James Wallwork, a graphic artist, and his wife, Muriel (nee Lake). He was initially interested in film design, but after national service he opted to study art, and in 1954 he went to Newland Park teacher training college at Chalfont St Peter in Buckinghamshire. There he

discovered well-equipped pottery studios but no teacher, so he began a course of self-tuition in clay, using Bernard Leach's A Potter's Book.

On leaving Goldsmiths in 1956 he spent time teaching, and set up a communal studio of artists in Forest Hill, south London. As well as workshop space, he opened a gallery where potters from outside such as Lucie Rie and Clark were shown along with paintings by artists at the studio - but the pots sold better. Initially Alan made earthenware tinglazed domestic pots, later adopting stoneware. He was joined by a fellow student from Goldsmiths, Bernard Rooke, and both moved to larger premises in Greenwich in 1960.

Alan's functional designs and exuberant tiles were being shown at the Design Centre, Heal's department store and the Craft Potters Association in Soho. Meanwhile, like Rooke, who was adopting a similar stylistic direction, Alan was now producing adventurous individual pieces. These were coil-built, made on a wheel, hand-pinched or constructed from clay slabs. Shapes ranged from smooth pebble forms to taller, more articulated totems, with pitted, pierced and abraded surfaces enriched with glazes and oxides. Bigger objects were made with the help of assistants.

Needing to expand tile production, Alan found an old chapel at Marnhull, near Sturminster Newton, Dorset, and moved there in 1965. However, in the next decade he became worried about the environment and his heavy use of resources for fuel, and so eventually decided to downsize. In 1984 he moved to a high woodland setting above Lyme Regis that was "spectacular but somewhat impractical". There and

Birthdays

The Right Rev Tom Butler, former bishop of Southwark, 80; **The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres**, premier earl of Scotland, 93; **Daniel Kahneman**, psychologist 86; **Lord (Paul) Drayson**, entrepreneur and former Labour minister, 60; **Samantha Eggar**, actor, 81; **John Frusciante**, rock guitarist, 50; **Eddy Grant**, musician, 72; **Roy Gutman**, journalist, 76; **Prof Edith Heard**, epigeneticist, 55; **Matt Lucas**, comedian and actor, 46; **Eva Mendes**, actor, 46; **Richard Miller**, chief executive, Sentebale, 58; **Elaine Paige**, singer and actor, 72; **Charlie Reid**, musician, 58; **Craig Reid**, musician, 58; **Clodagh Rodgers**, singer, 73; **Sebastian Schwarz**, former general director, Glyndebourne Opera, 46; **Prof Sir Christopher Snowden**, former vice-chancellor, Southampton University, 64; **Dean Stockwell**, actor, 84; **Sandra Tyler-Haywood**, former diplomat, 63; **Theresa Villiers**, Conservative MP and former minister, 52; **Des Wilson**, campaigner, 79.

His work conveyed a sense of ritual and mystery

subsequently on a better site at nearby Uplyme he concentrated on his softer, more rounded, hand-built pieces, producing tactile pebbles and seed-pods, pinch pots and crescent shapes, further stimulated by Dorset's fertile coastal landscape. Such work conveyed a sense of ritual and mystery and he exhibited widely, while continuing to write discerning articles on ceramics.

In 2004 he moved to France, to Missègre, in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Here, in addition to his work, he enjoyed the sun, copious wine consumption and sending entertainingly discursive letters and emails to family and friends. However, increasingly troubled by ill health, he spent the larger part of his last years back in Dorset, finally at Bere Regis. Gratifyingly his work, which had always sold well, was enjoying a considerable renaissance.

A vivid and highly engaging character, Alan epitomised the often quietly subversive spirit of British studio pottery. He was a prolific and hardworking artist, an enabler who contributed much to ceramics' sense of community and professionalism, but he also lived life to his own rules, away from the mainstream.

He is survived by his children, Amanda, Dillon and Tristan, from his marriage to Elizabeth Hayes, and Jessica and Rebecca, from his marriage to Mary Jones. Both marriages ended in divorce.

David Whiting

Alan Wallwork, potter, born 7 June 1931; died 2 November 2019

Announcements

Deaths

EVANS, Donald Andrew, affectionately known as Don to family, friends and colleagues, passed away at home on 3 February 2020, at the age of 73. He was a dear husband, father, grandfather, brother and uncle. He was preceded by his wife's death, Heather, in 2015 and will be much missed by his children, Alastair, Catriona, Judith and Jamie, his niece Nadia, his grandchildren, his sister Joan and his nephew Vincent. He was a loved member of his local community for his caring, interested and principled nature. The funeral will be held at St Barbara's Church, Earlsdon, Coventry on Friday 13 March, 11.30am.

OGDEN, John Michael, died at his home on 13 February 2020 aged 81. He will be missed by his wife, family and all who knew him. A caring man of singular integrity. His career commenced in the days when the Child Care Departments existed. Throughout his working life his concern was to work towards achieving fairer, improved services and justice for children and young people who had suffered and been affected by adverse experiences and treatment in their short lives. Selfless in this aim he was unassuming and a rare human being. Family cremation.

In Memoriam

BRADGATE, J. Robert, 5/3/1957 - 12/4/2014. Emeritus Professor of Commercial Law, University of Sheffield. All my love as ever for ever, M.

For Announcements, Acknowledgments, Adoptions, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Births, Deaths, Engagements, Memorial Services and In Memoriam, phone 020 3353 2114 or email: announcements@theguardian.com including your name, address and telephone number between 10am and 11am Mon-Fri.

The long read

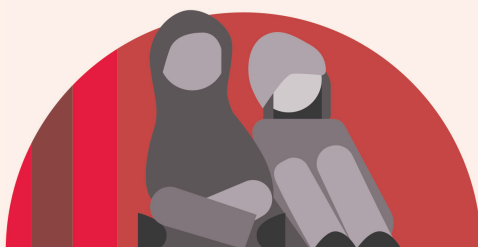


After decades among the hidden homeless, Dominic Van Allen dug himself a bunker beneath a public park. But his life would get even more precarious

By **Tom Lamont**

Most nights, before bed, before it all went wrong, Dominic Van Allen whiled away the last of the evening hours in a pub called The Garden Gate. It was easy to fit in and feel smart there, chatting and drinking with a crowd who passed through in varied states of dishevelment. Dog-walkers brought in sodden dogs. Exhausted junior doctors shambled in after shifts with their sleeves pushed up. There were scarved and suited older men, frail as antique hatstands, and casually dressed professionals with jobs in finance or entertainment who owned expensive homes nearby. “And it’s you rich buggers,” Van Allen marvelled, genially enough, as he eyed the state of their trainers, “who can afford to look the scruffiest.” He wore durable boots, khaki trousers and a leather motorcycle jacket, and could have been mistaken for a bike courier, a builder, maybe a maintenance guy at the hospital next door, where he was known in the staff canteen as someone who would wander in at dawn to buy a discount coffee.

That winter of 2017, Van Allen was 44 years old – tall, with close-cropped blond hair, blue eyes and a faint Yorkshire accent. At the pub, his was an ale. As soon as he judged it was late enough, Van Allen drank up and said his goodnights, bearing north from the pub and walking up a tree-lined road that hugged one side of Hampstead Heath. A vast open space that sits as a sort of green beehive haircut on top of metropolitan central London, the heath is untamed in parts and otherwise mown and managed like any public park. Every day, people visit by the thousand: runners, outdoor swimmers, tourists, bird-lovers. Summer brings sunbathers, picnickers and sixth-formers sat in circles, while in winter, on those rare occasions it snows, people drag in toboggans. On this night, in December 2017, forecasters had



predicted flurries overnight. Van Allen moved briskly, eager to get in.

He walked up the heath's western edge, beside a fringe of scrub where hogweed grew in tangles and brambles rose taller than him. It was known that homeless people sometimes slept rough in this scrub, pitching tents here after dark. Van Allen had done this, too, once upon a time. As a rule, he kept the fact of his homelessness to himself, "because, wouldn't you?" He knew there were a lot of people just like him, irregularly employed, regulars in pubs, the owners of passports and phones and all the right charger leads, only with nowhere stable to live. He would never plausibly make London rent. Social housing was just out of reach. A mortgage purest fantasy. Van Allen had taught himself, instead, how to borrow a piece of this expensive city, night by night, on unarranged loan. When he reached a row of mansion houses that overlooked the heath, he turned off the road on to a footpath that cut through the scrub.

Some aspects of Van Allen's story are extraordinary. Others are nowhere near extraordinary enough. There has never been an accurate count of people like him, the visible-invisible homeless. Although we know there are between 55,000 and 60,000 statutory homeless (those who apply to make use of state services) and although there are efforts towards an annual census of rough sleepers, there's a vast population the statisticians cannot account for. "You could be sat next to someone," Van Allen would say, "and not know it. Chances are the barman who served you tonight is one, sleeping in a shelter, sofa-surfing, spending nights in a car." Van Allen would say: broaden the definition of homeless to factor those in accommodation so precarious it could be taken away in a month, a week, a snap? That's millions. Charities regularly try to draw attention to the problem of hidden homelessness, a world of concealed partitions, crowded mattresses, beds-in-sheds, the back seats of nightbuses. It's a legally grey world - everything that goes on between a fixed address and "the shopping-trolley stage", as Van Allen would later put it, when he was arrested and interviewed by police. A world of "just-find-somewhere, just-stay-out-the-way".

Halfway along the footpath, he turned off again, this time stepping directly into dense bramble. He found a narrow gully cut between the thorns and followed it to a small clearing, where he bent in the dark and patted the earthy floor. There - a concealed hatch. Van Allen tugged it open with his fingers and descended into the ground, closing the hatch behind. Below, he flicked on lights at a switch. He hung up his coat.

Counter-terrorism command, lead interviewer: "This might seem a silly question. But what was the camp for?"

Dominic Van Allen: "Housing. Nowhere to live."

CTC: "[...] You made it permanent by going underground, by digging ... What year?"

Van Allen: "They bulldozed it, when, February 2018? So it was [two years before that], spring 2016. The last of the thaw just coming in ... We decided, sod it. Why not?"

There was space in the bunker for two camp beds, pushed against opposite walls. Van Allen could stand, comfortably enough, without his head scraping the trussed timber roof. The floor was poured concrete. He'd put up hooks for his coat, his bag and his cooking utensils, and there were shelves by the bed for odds and ends. Push-button LED lights were stuck to the walls using tape. There was a portable gas stove down here, and now that Van Allen was in for the night, he lit it and emptied a can of soup into a pan. After eating, he washed up with wet wipes. Litter was tied inside plastic bags, to be spirited away to a distant bin, early tomorrow, before the heath's park rangers came on duty.

On the whole, Van Allen slept well. Beyond the timber walls there was more concrete, to keep out groundwater, and together with the Hampstead clay, this muffled all but the most extreme-frequency sounds. When he first moved down here, Van Allen worried about oversleeping and he sometimes set a morning alarm on his phone. It was never needed. He was decades-trained to be up and on the move before the city's day shift began, before London became more closely observed by its security guards and park rangers and police officers, any one of

whom might inadvertently happen on the latest of his impermanent shelters and blow it.

Even by his own standards (and Van Allen had a rich history of securing guerrilla accommodation), the bunker was outrageous. He knew its eventual discovery was inevitable. He also knew that, as long as they observed small precautions, this outcome could be deferred for improbable lengths of time.

So. No giveaway litter. No lingering near the hatch during daylight. And no boasting, not at The Garden Gate, not while fulfilling handyman jobs around town. Liked by his friends for his graveyard humour, Van Allen told them he'd built a ranch. What he did not say was that the ranch was 14ft by 10ft, and hidden under one of the country's busiest parks.

That December, when he woke and popped his head out, he saw the forecasters had been right, and that several inches of snow had settled overnight. Insulated by concrete and clay, Van Allen had stayed warm enough to sleep in a T-shirt, and now he padded away in the direction of the hospital to get a coffee. He left bootprints behind, but very soon the tobogganers would be out, mushing up the snow, whizzing down the slope just a few feet from his hatch.

Counter-terrorism command: "Tell me about yourself, Dominic."

Van Allen: "In what respect ... ?"

CTC: "Just your history, basically."

Van Allen: "I've been homeless for 26 years. I don't know, I used to be stage crew. I developed some sort of bone disease ..."

CTC: "That was the end of that career?"

Van Allen: "That was the end of it."

He was born in 1973, up Wakefield way, and gone by 21, drifting south to London and a flatshare in Pimlico. He worked as a barman, a painter and decorator, a labourer and an airport cargo driver before he found a job he liked, as stage crew. He worked mostly on music concerts and outdoor TV broadcasts. He put up fencing for U2 in Hyde Park, and once pulled an all-nighter building the backstage area for Live 8. He did jobs for Channel 4, L'Oréal, the Proms. Crewing suited Van Allen's lifestyle in that it took place behind the scenes and often meant modifying city spaces to suit the needs of a moment.

He had abandoned the Pimlico flatshare when it got too expensive, taking up squatting instead, until 2011, when the laws got stricter. Van Allen's health was bad. He'd been carrying production equipment on a roof when he stepped awkwardly and broke a leg. Still on crutches, he broke the other leg, which scared him. Doctors diagnosed a bone condition. The crew work had to stop. He spent a while moving between authorities, trying to make the case that (his words) he was fucked. Hospitals referred him to councils, or councils referred him to housing trusts. There were queues. Forms. Means tests and medical evaluations. There were bad days, in waiting rooms, when he lost his patience. Van Allen wasn't especially young or old, wasn't an addict, wasn't a parent. There were so many others (my words) *more* fucked. He never quite reached the top of anybody's list.

Get him started on the subject, ale in hand at The Garden Gate, and Van Allen could go. "We're an island of, what, 96,000 sq miles? Population that's sky-high, growing, and the same number of houses we had 40 years ago. Too many people! Not enough houses! Me and most of my friends, we're all in the same boat, long-termers, a community hundreds of thousands strong, not crashed in the gutter, in paid employment, and all fucked - have been for years. It's the Housing Act of 1996 and every bullshit piece of legislation put in place since. *It's not our path.* I fought it for years and then I threw in the towel. Said to myself: 'Fuck it, I'm going camping.'"

He had a few thousand put away in the bank, and he could still take on handyman work, putting up shelves and assembling flatpack furniture for £20 or £30 a gig. Knocked, tired, but still with a Crusoe spirit, Van Allen bought good boots and a good tent and moved outdoors. Like a lot of people who drift into homelessness, the knack came piecemeal. Van Allen shaved his hair to a grade one, for easy cleaning. He got to know which swimming pools had the cheapest entry fees for shower-



There was space in the bunker for two camp beds, against opposite walls. He could stand up without his head scraping the roof

ing; which drop-in centres let you use their address for post. He bought underwear and T-shirts in bulk, cheaply, online. He became a regular at a Catholic church where they cooked a daily breakfast for the homeless.

Any possessions that did not fit in his 15-litre rucksack were understood to be temporary. He learned to keep reserves of essentials, especially tents. He had these stashed under bushes and on rooftops everywhere. Should weather prohibit camping, he kept on his keyring a skeleton key, meant for use by the fire brigade, that could open emergency-access doors. He became a confident navigator of a second, shadow London, favouring places where other people weren't: boiler rooms, back staircases, parks after dark, the tops of tower blocks.

Good-weather months he camped on the heath, becoming familiar with the park's night-time rhythms. There could be an absolute stillness on the heath at one or two in the morning - a stillness shredded, more than once in Van Allen's experience, by the arrival of joyriders, convening to gun their cars over the empty grass. A twin-rotor helicopter often flew over around 5am, signal it would soon be time for him to break down his tent, hiding it before the rangers arrived. After years of this, Van Allen wondered about something more permanent. In the language of the circuit, securing somewhere to spend the night was "parking up". What if he parked down?

Counter-terrorism command: "Tell me what you know about this area of Hampstead Heath."

Van Allen: "I've been there about seven years ... Sounds stupid, dig a friggin' bunker ... [but] I'm getting too old for breaking tents apart and shoving them under bushes."

For centuries, would-be colonists have tried to annex a piece of the heath for themselves. People in flight from plague camped here in the 17th century, as did gossellers, travellers and highwaymen. In the 1830s, an excitable lord tried to enclose a chunk of heath for his private use. He was thwarted by the courts, and the attempt helped bring Hampstead Heath into public ownership in 1879. Gardeners were permitted to dig allotments here during the first world war, and in the second, the summits were commandeered for anti-aircraft guns.

Van Allen did not immediately go for his moonshot, his bunker, and in the months before he broke ground, he prepared with practice digs, tests and other subterranean schemes of milder ambition. Between 2013 and 2015, with an accomplice, Van Allen dug a series of holes across the heath. Each hole was the exact size of a wheelie bin - because that's what they were for, buried upright and with their lids still accessible, ideal for storage.

The accomplice was a Polish labourer, then in his mid-30s, called Marek Wójcik. (His name has been altered in this story. The Guardian has been unable to contact him to learn his version of events.) According to Van Allen, Wójcik was informally employed as a labourer on sites around London. He knew carpentry, masonry and how to lay foundations, skills that meshed well with Van Allen's own improvisational bravado, learned from years of hurry-up work as stage crew. Over beers on a bench, the two men had been discussing an ambitious dig. What do you think, Van Allen asked Wójcik. Start tonight? The park's night patrol had trundled by and wouldn't be back for hours. "Sod it," Van Allen said, "why not?"

The site he'd prepared was in the same fringe of scrub that had concealed campers forever, only better hidden. He had hacked into a huge blackberry bush, hollowing out the interior using bolt-cutters. The site was close to a cluster of their underground storage bins, which contained a garden-shed miscellany of tools and materials. Van Allen and Wójcik got into a nightly routine, waiting till about midnight, downing an energising beer, and digging for an hour or more.

It had been hell, when they were burying the bins, to hack through tree roots. Now they mixed a solution of caustic soda and soaked the ground with it, to soften whatever grew under there. Stones had to be clawed out by hand. Whenever it rained between their nightly digs, the pair would return and spend ages scooping out the wet clay, which had the effect of making the bunker much bigger than they'd meant. As the shovelled-up ground formed a doughnut shape inside the bush, Van Allen worried the site might be spotted. He paused the

Illustrations
by Ben the
Illustrator



work, just in case, and bought a camouflage net.

All very Great Escape, Van Allen thought, once they were about 6ft down and deep enough to start installing timber struts. When they were ready to reinforce the walls and pour the floor, Van Allen trundled a wheelie bin in the dark over to one of the bathing ponds. (One-part water.) He trundled over to the sandy carpark. (One-part sand.) Mixed with four-parts cement powder, this was their concrete. Timber slats formed the roof, which was fitted with insulation foam and a flush, hinged hatch.

While they waited for the concrete to set and harden, Van Allen embarked on a programme of tactical horticulture. He uprooted hawthorn bushes and replanted them around the clearing as fortification. Flat squares of chicken wire sprinkled with fertiliser and seed allowed grass to grow over the bunker roof. Soon it was hard to tell where the ancient heath ended and the new plot began. Van Allen had budgeted £100 for the job, and come in under. It had taken about two months. Without ceremony, one night, they moved in.

Counter-terrorism command: “Any wildlife killed?”
Van Allen: “No ... We’re not Australians ... I’m not rustic.”
CTC: “OK. What I’m getting at is, there was a firearm inside your campsite.”
Van Allen: “We’re not knocking off the wildlife ... There’s a Marks & Spencer down the road.”

Some rules for bunker life, 2016-18. If you were in at night, no crackling around in the undergrowth for a wee. Van Allen kept an empty juice bottle by his bed for this reason. If you wanted a hot meal, you reheated soup, sometimes pre-made mashed potato, but no smellier foods, nothing that might lure a curious animal.

Van Allen had never identified, much, with the downcast-in-a-doorway image that some of the charities pushed. He was homeless but he had a travelcard, a bike locked near the hospital, a bank account. The bunker afforded other aspects of everyday normality - the camp bed, shelves for things, a place to listen to the radio aloud, a place to shave his head. When I first heard Van Allen had built a bunker, I wondered why he would choose a spot so close to the heath’s edge, a few strides from the road and the mansions. Was it provocation? A statement? Later, when everything had gone wrong, Van Allen gave a more prosaic reason, one that estate agents would instinctively understand. Better transport links.

Van Allen did not doubt that the excavation of his bunker breached park rules. He was aware that what he considered “Womble-ing” would be called vandalism by others, and he accepted the possibility of a fine, maybe a minor charge, as the price of stable shelter. The bunker was him trying something. His show of nerve. By the time of the snow in December 2017, he had been getting away with it longer than he ever realistically expected.

Van Allen: “[We invited in] a couple of other transients every now and again, but they were rare ... Once every few months ... People we met who were in a bit of a state ... people who were fucked.”
Counter-terrorism command: “And why ... ?”
Van Allen: “Because you’ll see them, they’re sat on a bench. And they look lost. It’s 10 o’clock at night and they ain’t got a pot to piss in ... [We] just [offer] a cigarette, say: ‘We’re over there, mate.’”

He had become a familiar figure to the park rangers, and they would exchange cordial hellos. Van Allen called them “Parky” - all of them. He wondered how suspicious Parky had become. “I was always [there] at dodgy times,” he later told authorities. “And no dog to walk.” The rangers knew and didn’t know. For a long time, rough sleepers on the heath had been ushered on to become somebody else’s problem. More recently, one ranger told me, a policy of “benign management” had been adopted. This meant waiting for the right time to deliver a nudge so that the homeless person moved on in the direction of help, not just another patch.

Often the rangers waited til winter to do this, when the scrub became sparser and easier to inspect for camps. Winter was also a time to plunge in to clear up litter and other items left behind. Over the years, they had

“**Rangers came across a patch where steam was rising out of what should have been solid ground**

discovered bodies on the heath, murder victims and suicides. Still: it came as a surprise, one ranger told me, when they came across a patch where steam was rising out of what ought to have been solid ground.

After the snow there were days and days of heavy rain. Van Allen was driven out of the bunker by damp and spent some time in a charity shelter waiting for it to dry out. On his return, he clomped through the bramble and saw a laminated note near the hatch. Rangers had chosen their moment. In the note, he was encouraged to move on, and perhaps approach his local council or a housing trust for help with accommodation.

He recovered a few possessions and moved these to the buried bins. He would have to abandon the camp bed; that was annoying. Otherwise, Van Allen was not sentimental, and he left the bunker without another look. Days later a mini-digger tore up the clearing. With the roof picked off, one ranger told me, it was like looking down into the foundations of someone’s home.

Four walls. A roof. Some door off a communal passage or a gate at the end of a driveway - or even, some hatch in the mud. These are the fundamentals of a home, and they insulate and shelter, they screen off a little privacy and secure our favourite bits-and-pieces. Van Allen had learned long ago that, without any legal partitions or boundary-markers around his hideaways, he could always lose possessions he liked and needed. He did not expect that, one day, he would need to argue the ownership of possessions he wanted nothing to do with.

If he had taken the advice in the laminated note, and moved on from the heath, that might have been the end of this phase of Van Allen’s life. He would be somewhere in his shadow city; maybe he would have landed more formal digs. As it was, he and Wójcik took up camping again, pitching tents in the scrub near their storage bins. A new complacency crept in, and the camp started to sprawl. They left out litter and took more risks. Van Allen and Wójcik got carried away one weekend and tried to bury an enormous new wheelie bin, without preparing the ground first. It wasn’t a job that could be finished in a night, and with nowhere to hide the bin, they left it halfway out of the ground where it was partially visible from footpaths. A couple of nights later, after his usual beer in The Garden Gate, Van Allen went up the hill after dark and collided with a crime scene.

Van Allen: “You must have found a load of my stuff, [my] clothing in the bushes?”
Counter-terrorism command: “Yeah.”

There were police vans in the heath car park and uniformed officers had formed a long, snaking cordon that encircled his camp. Later, police would erect blue-and-yellow forensic tents and bring in dogs, plainclothes detectives and investigators wearing boiler suits and hazmat wellies. Van Allen could see there were officers from neighbouring boroughs, far more than would be needed to move along some stubborn homeless people. “You can’t come through here,” Van Allen was told. He retraced his steps and found Wójcik on their usual bench. “What’s all this bollocks about?” They agreed it did not look promising. They shared a last beer together. Van Allen had other places he could sleep. A carpeted corner in a public building, lent to him by a sympathetic caretaker. The water-pump room in a tower block. Swapping between these places, through the autumn, he kept thinking about the scale of that crime scene.

Van Allen told a friend, a man named Keong Lim, that he couldn’t make sense of it. All those police for a few buried wheelie bins? His spade and discarded T-shirts? Lim worked in the Catholic church where they cooked the free breakfasts. One day, Lim recalled, Van Allen asked for help in finding out more about what had happened on the heath. They searched online and found a story in a local newspaper that had been followed up by reporters at the Sun, the Mirror and the Evening Standard. A “Breaking Bad-style makeshift crystal meth lab” had been discovered on the heath, they read. Van Allen turned to Lim and said: “Fucking hell. This is about *me*.”

He wondered if they had found his reserves of white, granular caustic soda and mistaken it for something more sinister. News outlets as far away as the US and Australia had run the story of the Hampstead meth lab,

✱
Tom Lamont
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usually illustrating coverage with a picture of chemist-turned-kingpin Walter White. Van Allen hadn’t seen Breaking Bad, but he got the idea. He decided to lie low.

In February 2019, he was contacted by police. While picking over the camp, investigators had found a padded envelope in the scrub. It came from a building-supplies company that Van Allen sometimes shopped with online. The old envelope had his name on it and the address of a drop-in centre he used for post. Investigators had traced his number and told Van Allen they wanted to chat to him about the makeshift camp. Genuinely curious, Van Allen asked: “What took you so long?”

Van Allen didn’t know it, but the investigation had altered since those fanciful stories about a drugs lab. While digging up the camp, police had found an improvised weapon, a handmade pipe gun, buried near one of his storage bins. Through a series of escalations, the case had passed to officers from counter-terrorism command. Van Allen was told he wasn’t in any trouble himself; but would he meet to talk? He suggested a McDonald’s not far from the heath, expecting the matter would be easily cleared up, 20 minutes, tops.

Counter-terrorism command: “So obviously, we met you today at McDonald’s ... And when you started talking about the hides, the things dug into the ground ... that’s when we decided to start arresting you, OK?”
Van Allen: “Mm-hm.”
CTC: “We just wanted to give you the opportunity to talk to us on tape about the situation.”
Van Allen: “Mm-hm.”

He was arrested and taken for interview, where he spoke at length about the camp. Unimpressed by an officer’s drawing of it, Van Allen borrowed a pencil and made improvements. When it came to questions about the handmade pipe gun, Van Allen issued a “flat denial”, as interviewing officers recorded in their notes. Later he was told that small traces of his DNA had been found on the weapon. Van Allen was advised by his solicitor to stop talking, at least not in his usual freewheeling style. Instead, he issued a second, written denial.

Van Allen’s trial for possession of a firearm took place in summer 2019. His legal team thought the three-day trial had gone quite well, all things considered. The prosecution’s expert witness had acknowledged there was no way of knowing if Van Allen had ever touched the weapon. Even so, the jury decided on a guilty verdict. The judge sentenced Van Allen to five years.

He was moved from HMP Pentonville to HMP Thameside, another concrete box. He would not accept that his new situation was improved from a state of homelessness. Freedom was freedom, wherever you kipped.

Not long after Van Allen was sentenced, I started to take frequent walks out of The Garden Gate pub, up the road that bordered the heath, into scrub. It took a few attempts, picking through bramble studded with cans and go-fetch balls, but, finally, there it was: a bleached lesion in the undergrowth, all that remained of the old ranch. Piles of branches had been put down by rangers to cover the holes where the storage bins were. I had a sense that I was trespassing; afterwards, a ranger said that another homeless person had claimed the patch.

In prison, Van Allen had secured a new lawyer and was working towards an appeal. Those who spoke to him said he remained in decent spirits. His sense of humour, black as a night spent in a bunker, was a blessing. As part of his rehabilitation, he was asked to take part in a self-improvement course, one strand of which covered his accommodation needs. Had he thought about applying to a housing trust, after his release? Van Allen could see the funny side of that.

There had been incongruous laughter at his trial, too. Accused, police, lawyers, members of the jury - all chuckled together at Van Allen’s wordier flights while he was under interrogation. At one stage, he’d spoken wistfully of the old bunker: “My permanent des-res,” Van Allen called it. “Just an ideal spot. You had the train station, you had a cafe, you had a Starbucks, you had the hospital, you had the 168 bus, the 24, the 46 ... You couldn’t see in from the footpath. It was bloody brilliant.” ●

Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku

Easy

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

Medium

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

Codeword

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

Cryptic crossword

Solution No. 28,072

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



Stuck? For help call 0906 200 83 83. Calls cost £1.10 per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Service supplied by AT5. Call 0330 333 6946 for customer service (charged at standard rate). Want more? Get access to more than 4,000 puzzles at theguardian.com/crossword. To buy puzzle books, visit guardianbookshop.com or call 0330 333 6846.

Killer sudoku

Easy

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

29	8			17	22		7	8
	20		8			18		
		5		11	8			24
						12		
18			21		6			
16				21		23	6	
	10	14	10					
				12			10	
14		20		7				

Medium

12	5	15			14		22	9
		28						
24			19		20		23	21
					24			
8		3	13					
21	29				8			
				9				8
	4		8	19				
	13			4		22		

Codeword

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

14	5	25	10	16		7	5	17	5	20	9	
19		6		17		6		6		12		24
14	9	15	22	22	25	16		23	6	25	7	19
17		17		7		14		23		22		16
12	17	12	24	5	14	22	13		5	25	14	19
		6		25			12		6			14
26	6	16	10		16	22	2	21	13	12	13	22
13			25		2		19		5			13
5	3	6	5	14	19	25	14		16	11	5	16
19			15		14			8		13		
25	19	15	10		4	5	1	19	25	12	16	16
19		6		2		11		25		17		11
25	6	13	16	12		14	12	20	14	6	5	17
7		19		12		17		12		26		19
	8	22	15	10	12	9		26	18	12	17	14
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

Guardian cryptic crossword No 28,073 set by Imogen

1		2		3		4		5		6	7		8
									9				
10													
12								13					
14		15											
												16	
		17				18		19					
20													
21								22			23		
24										25			
26						27							

Across

- 1 Spirited French not good digesting salmon (9)
- 6 In bed, naked woman (4)
- 10 Having second thoughts about toupee, staying at home (5)
- 11 Endless enthusiasm taxi drivers put into various items (4-1-4)
- 12 Louis Quinze style, missing nothing on way of working leather (7)
- 13 Drew a short space attached round entrance to cell (7)
- 14 No citrus flavour before with balsam? Leave well alone! (4,2,7)
- 17 Makes picture of tourist, one cleaning graffiti perhaps (5,8)
- 21 These days needing backing to keep daughter in comfort in depressed area (4,3)
- 22 Encourage to use ears for special understanding (7)
- 24 Stars also wandered, Alpha moving (9)
- 25 Chekhov, say, heading off from part of Switzerland (5)
- 26 Last of the vintage in the shade (4)
- 27 Dance a long way with cry of approval (9)

Down

- 1 A bloody year, with no small ill-feeling (8)
- 2 Town official rather a baby? (5)

- 3 In building, flagged excessive agent's fee (4,10)
- 4 Experimental wear for cold dog? (3,4)
- 5 Having washed all over, greeting American (7)
- 7 Scandal man's kept under hat, not causing much damage (4,5)
- 8 Robbed a craftsman, holding up a series of shops (6)
- 9 Unrealistic plan to broadcast Saint-Saëns clip (7,2,5)
- 15 Northerner in run getting map for one day (9)
- 16 It's just make-believe, if 12-year-old hides a tablet at church (8)
- 18 London criminal, one going to pot (3,4)
- 19 Feature of an Everest ascent, in which one may disappear (4,3)
- 20 A challenge to include whiskey in selling software (6)
- 23 In America, start to win game (3-2)