

SUNDAY

Mirror

Sunday, July 27, 2025

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SUNDAY

THE HEART OF BRITAIN

Mirror

Sunday, July 27, 2025

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SEE PAGE 28

You've got this



SEE PAGES 6,7 & SPORT

PLEA TO STAR OVER RIFT

I'M SO SORRY MARTINE

ESTRANGED
Martine & mum
Jenny Tomlin

Mum reveals grief over loss of son has ripped family apart

PAGES 4&5

TODAY'S WEATHER

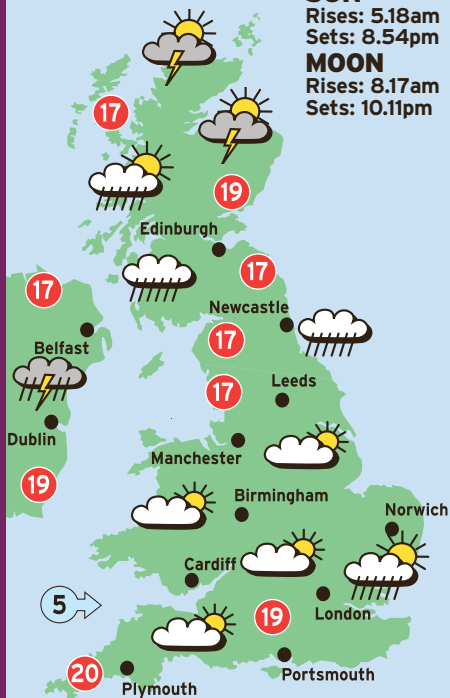
Rain affects north-west Scotland and Northern Ireland. Cloudy conditions prevail in north-east Scotland. North-west and north-east England remain cloudy. Skies are cloudy in Midlands, Southern Wales, and Northern Wales. South-west England, south-east England, London, and the Channel Islands are mostly cloudy.

SUN

Rises: 5.18am
Sets: 8.54pm

MOON

Rises: 8.17am
Sets: 10.11pm



4 DAY OUTLOOK

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR
Birmingham	22c	22c	23c	23c
Cardiff	23c	23c	24c	23c
Edinburgh	19c	18c	20c	19c
Liverpool	19c	20c	20c	20c
London	24c	23c	25c	25c
Manchester	19c	20c	21c	20c
Newcastle	20c	19c	21c	21c
Norwich	22c	20c	23c	22c
Plymouth	22c	23c	23c	23c

ABROAD YESTERDAY

	C	F		C	F
Amsterdam	f	24 75	Madrid	s	28 82
Athens	s	39 102	Majorca	f	28 82
Barcelona	s	27 81	Malaga	s	28 82
Benidorm	s	28 82	Malta	s	35 95
Corfu	s	38 100	Marmaris	s	40 104
Crete	s	31 88	Miami	s	32 90
Ibiza	s	28 82	Paris	f	24 75
Larnaca	s	35 95	Sydney	f	15 59
Las Palmas	s	26 79	Tenerife	s	27 81

- : not available, m: misty, c: cloudy, s: sunny, r: rain, dr: drizzle, sn: snow, f: fair, fg: fog, sh: showers, th: thunder, hl: hail, sl: sleet

FREE MAG INSIDE



THE LOTTERY

Last night's numbers:

LOTTO: 9, 23, 24, 28, 42, 57. **Bonus:** 18.
THUNDERBALL: 2, 5, 28, 38, 39.
Thunderball: 3. £500k is the top prize.
HEALTH LOTTERY: 2, 9, 12, 22, 25.
Bonus: 40. £100k is top prize.
FRIDAY'S EUROMILLIONS: 6, 7, 23, 32, 36. **Lucky Stars:** 11 & 12.



TEARS & FEAR
A girl cries for the dead in Gaza City

Third of people go days without food

UK is 'working to drop aid by plane' into Gaza

BY SIMON MURPHY

MORE heart-rending images of distressed Palestinian children are emerging from Gaza as it was revealed that a third of people are going days without food.

Tear-stricken youngsters were mourning their dead after at least 25 people were said to have been killed by Israeli air strikes and gunshots overnight on Friday into Saturday.

The strikes came as the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) warned malnutrition is surging in the war-torn strip, with 90,000 children and women needing urgent treatment.

Keir Starmer held talks with his French and German counterparts yesterday over what No10 said they all agreed is an "appalling" situation.

Pressure is mounting on the PM after France recognised Palestine as a state. Mr Starmer called out "Israel's disproportionate military escalation".

Writing in the Mirror yesterday, he said work was under way to get British aid on to planes and into Gaza.

A No10 spokesman said the UK, France and Germany "emphasised the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire, for Israel to lift all restrictions on aid, and urgently provide those suffering in Gaza with food".

They added: "The UK will [take] forward plans to work with partners such as Jordan to air drop aid and evacuate children requiring medical assistance."

The WFP said food aid is the only real way for people to eat in Gaza.

But the chief of the UN's Palestinian refugee agency warned airdrops were "a smoke-screen" that would fail to reverse deepening starvation and

could even harm civilians. Hundreds have been shot dead seeking food.

UNRWA boss Philippe Lazzarini urged: "Lift the siege, open the gates and guarantee safe movements and dignified access to people in need".

On Friday, Israel said it would allow aid airdrops by foreign countries. It said it was letting in 250 aid trucks a week - but this is down from 600 a day during the ceasefire in March.

The latest strikes came as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas stalled. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said

that Tel Aviv was considering "alternative options".

Hamas called the recall of Israeli and US delegations a pressure tactic.



DISTRAUGHT A boy is overcome with grief

simon.murphy@reachplc.com



CAMPAIGN Jimmy Mulville

Call to help Afghanistan creatives flee the Taliban

EXCLUSIVE

BY MIKEY SMITH
Deputy Political Editor

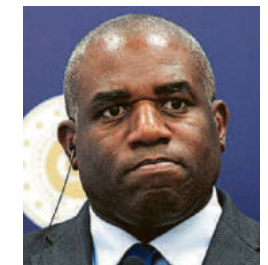
A TV producer has told how the Taliban executed an Afghan comedian who told a joke about them.

Jimmy Mulville is among the campaigners calling on Labour to help 294 writers, performers and other creatives to flee Afghanistan.

They hope to escape via neighbouring Pakistan and settle in the UK.

Jimmy, a comedian and producer of Have I Got News For You, claims many who have previously criticised the regime have gone into hiding with their families.

He said: "They recently found a comedian in hiding who had made



'PLAYER' David Lammy

jokes about the Taliban before they returned to power. They made him tell the joke and killed him."

Jimmy says he was also told about an actress who learned the Taliban had found out where she lived so "threw herself out of a window".

He and Iranian film director Mohsen Makhmalbaf are calling for a meeting with Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

Jimmy said: "It's a real opportunity for David Lammy, who is showing himself as quite a player on the international stage, to do the right thing and get these people out."

"They aren't going to take anyone's job - they have a job."

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WEDDED KISS Confetti rains down on couple



HOLD YOUR HANNI
Ecstatic pair hand in hand in front of cathedral

Pictures: MCPix

Union Jack

Corrie legend weds at cathedral

BY PHIL CARDY

CORONATION Street's Jack P. Shepherd beams as he marries Hanni Treweek.

The happy couple exchanged vows at Manchester Cathedral yesterday before sharing a kiss on the steps outside.

Jack, who plays David Platt in the ITV soap, looked smart in a white jacket and bow tie, while Hanni – who arrived fashionably late in a white Rolls-Royce

– wore an elegant white gown with a long train.

Jack's on-screen mum and sister, played by Helen Worth and Tina O'Brien, were among those at the wedding alongside fellow Corrie stars Alan Halsall and Samia Longchambon.

Jack, 37, met Hanni, 35, when she worked behind the scenes on the show. He proposed on a romantic safari last year.

phil.cardy@reachplc.com



BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL
Tina, centre, with Lucy Fallon, left, & Julia Goulding



SMILES Samia & husband Sylvain



SCREEN MUM
Helen arriving



SUMMERY Alan with girlfriend Ellie Dolan



BROAD GRIN
Soap's Tanisha Gorey

MARTINE McCUTCHEON'S MUM ON



SO HAPPY Jenny and her two children

EXCLUSIVE
BY SHELLEY SPADONI

MARTINE McCutcheon and her mum used to be joined at the hip, but a sudden death in the family led to a devastating breakdown and now they barely speak.

Now heartbroken Jenny Tomlin is desperate for a reconciliation with the former *EastEnders* actress.

She says: "We were glued together. There was nothing she didn't include me in. We did all the wonderful stuff – the premiere of *Love Actually*, the lovely restaurants – but the memories I cherish most are of us just sitting on my bed, bringing up old memories and laughing, so hard. I miss that more than anything."

Their relationship started to fall apart after the tragic death of Martine's brother Laurence – known affectionately as LJ – in 2022. He was just 31. Jenny says she suffered an emotional breakdown after losing her beloved son and pushed Martine away... just when she and her daughter needed each other the most.

BREAKDOWN

Now Jenny, 69, wants to apologise to Martine, 49, for cutting her off as she tried to process her grief.

"When I lost LJ, I detached from everyone. I was so heartbroken I couldn't talk to Martine, when I know now I should have," she says.

"There was no big row – Martine tried to contact me for several months, but I just didn't answer. Martine was grieving as well and needed me too and is probably very upset with me because of this.

"I just want the chance to say sorry to my beautiful daughter. I miss her so much – it physically hurts."

Jenny and Martine did meet once, briefly, last October, but it wasn't the reunion either would have hoped for.

"Martine texted me out of the blue," says Jenny. "She'd moved into her new home and wondered if my husband Alan could do some painting.

"We jumped at the chance and went over, but we didn't talk in depth about anything. It was awkward and the atmosphere felt heavy. I couldn't open up at that time."

There was vague talk of Christmas plans, but nothing was confirmed, and invitations were never extended. That, Jenny says, was when the silence truly began.

Reflecting on another high-profile rift that has made headlines in recent weeks, Jenny says: "I understand the pain Victoria Beckham is going through over her estrangement from Brooklyn. He was her firstborn, too. It's a heart-breaking situation to be in for

I just want to say sorry to my beautiful daughter. I miss her so much it hurts

anybody who is estranged or has lost their child." Recalling the pain of losing LJ – and the devastating effect it had on her and Martine – Jenny's voice cracks with emotion. "It's not the natural order to lose a child," she says.

"But I realise now that the mistake I made probably broke her heart. Eventually, I did pull myself out of that dark hole... but maybe it was too late."

Remembering the day she tragically lost LJ, Jenny says she received a phone call from his fiancée, who said he'd collapsed and they couldn't revive him. Still in her pyjamas, Jenny drove

the hour and a half from her home in Aylesbury, Bucks, to LJ's home by the Essex coast – but arrived too late.

"My precious boy was on the floor, wrapped up. I remember saying, 'It's OK to open your eyes now, son, I'm here,'" she says, tearfully. "They'd worked hard doing CPR on him, but just couldn't bring him back.

"It was like a nightmare. I couldn't

believe my handsome boy was gone." An autopsy later revealed that LJ – who was healthy and didn't smoke or drink – had succumbed to acute ischaemic heart disease and diabetes.

Jenny rang Martine from the scene, but was so distraught her daughter had to speak to paramedics to find out exactly what had happened.

In the early hours of the morning,

Jenny drove to Martine's house. "As soon as I arrived, Martine instinctively looked at me and realised I needed looking after and just wanted to look after me," Jenny says.

"She said she'd prepared the spare room, stroked my hair, gave me a cuddle and somehow, I slept."

LJ was laid to rest on October 31 2022. After that, Jenny says her life

“

I detached. I was so heartbroken I couldn't talk to Martine, when I know now that I should have

Build trust with time & patience

Grief expert Tina Chummun says: "When a mother loses a child, especially in such a traumatic way, her nervous system can become overwhelmed.

"We often see intense grief manifest as numbness, withdrawal or

cognitive collapse. Everyone experiences grief differently.

"The expectations placed on mothers to be everything to everyone and at any given time – even while they're falling apart – is immense." Tina adds:

"Jenny was grieving the loss of one child, and in that shattered fragile state, couldn't show up for the other. From Martine's perspective, Jenny may have seemed to disappear just when she needed her most, creating a rupture

HOW GRIEF TORE FAMILY APART



A HEART TO HEART
Jenny wants to reconcile with Martine



ESTRANGED
Martine hasn't spoken to her mum for ages



PRIME ROLE
With Hugh Grant in *Love Actually*



ENDER TIMES
Playing Tiffany



FAMILY FIRST
Martine and her brother LJ were very close

“I've lost one child and I don't want to lose another. We've been to hell and back – we're a team”

touch.” In the last couple of months, Jenny has started to feel more like herself and has begun writing a memoir about LJ.

But her guilt over Martine remains. “To navigate that terrible grief, then to not see Martine, or my grandson, for so long... has been very hard,” she says. “But I know I let Martine down and there's not a day goes by when I don't think of her. I miss them both so much it hurts.

“Losing Rafferty from my life has felt like another death,” she says, recalling how she and Alan would pick him up from school, go on day trips, and even have him for sleepovers. “He's an incredible little boy. It's killing me not to see him.”

Her love for Rafferty has inspired Jenny to write a series of children's books, which she hopes to dedicate to him and her other grandson Ronnie, five (Alan's son Jonathan's little boy). When Martine's 18-year relationship – 12 of them married – to musician Jack McManus broke down last October, she and Jenny were not in contact. And although the shock split must have worried her, it's not something Jenny is willing to discuss publicly.

“I don't know what went on, but that's between Martine and Jack,” she says. “If she wants me, though, she knows where I am.”

She adds: “I don't think I'll ever stop trying when it comes to my girl. If I could speak to Martine now, I'd tell her how sorry I am that I acted how I did. I'm so desperately sorry for that.

“I've lost one child and I don't want to lose another. She's my child, my firstborn. We've been to hell and back together – we're a team.”

Next year, Jenny turns 70. The greatest gift anyone could give her would be the chance to share a cuppa and a heart-to-heart with her daughter, while her grandson races about the garden.

“I've seen what silence does to families,” she says. “And I don't want that for us. I don't want to be another story of estrangement and regret.

“I want us to love each other again. To find our way back.”

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■ If you're suffering after the loss of a child or are estranged from family, help is available: The Compassionate Friends (0345 123 2304 / tcf.org.uk); Family Lives (0808 800 2222 or familylives.org.uk); Kinship (0300 123 7015)

went “down a deep, dark pit”. She says: “I was seen by a mental health team and given anti-anxiety meds to help me sleep.

“However, I'd wander in the night. Alan would find me and say, ‘You're not thinking of doing anything stupid, are you?’ And I'd say, ‘I don't know.’”

Martine, who played Tiffany Mitchell in the BBC soap from 1994 to

1998, was 15 when LJ was born and Jenny fondly recalls how she became a sort of surrogate mum to him.

Following LJ's death, Jenny admits she shut down emotionally, paralysed by anxiety, and suspects this is at the heart of why she hasn't seen her daughter or grandson, 10-year-old Rafferty, in so long.

“I didn't contact Martine,” she says.

“I didn't go over there, though she reached out to me. I abandoned her.

“I was so wrapped up in my own grief that I was neglecting my other child – somebody that needed me and wanted to take care of me.

“That was the start of it, and things just... snowballed. And here we are.”

Jenny, a bestselling author origi-

nally from East London, says she has reached out to Martine in recent years – calling, texting, sending cards and gifts – but has had no response. Just weeks ago, after a sudden moment of clarity, Jenny and her husband Alan drove the 90 minutes to Martine's house in Surrey, desperate to reconcile.

“I was banging on the door for 20 minutes – I must have looked like a complete lunatic, shouting her name in the street,” she admits.

“But nobody answered. So I gave up, got back in the car and drove home upset and distraught and turned to Alan and said, ‘I don't think she will ever speak to me again.’

“That's why I've done this interview as a plea to ask Martine to get in

that now feels insurmountable.

“For Jenny, emerging from that fog years later and finding the door closed can feel like experiencing a second bereavement... the

living grief of estrangement as though she's lost both children. Rebuilding trust starts with accountability, patience and time.

“Repair is possible, but it begins with

humility and understanding that grief doesn't just fracture us – it can fracture our relationships, too.

“Trauma doesn't always look like tears – sometimes, it looks like silence behind closed doors. The bridge back is built slowly, with

humility and hope. Vulnerability can be the bridge that grief once burned.”

■ Tina Chummun is a person-centred trauma specialist psychotherapist at Care2Counsel. Go to care2counsel.com



SPECIALIST Tina

Ray French, 'The Voice of Rugby League', dead at 85

BY KEITH PERRY

LEGENDARY rugby commentator Ray French has died at the age of 85.

The broadcaster, who was living with dementia in recent years, became known as the "Voice of Rugby League" after 30 years on the BBC.

Ray succeeded Eddie Waring in the role when he took the job in 1981. The St Helens-born icon played for his home town and

BROADCASTER Ray French



Widnes and also played internationally in both union and league. He got an MBE in 2011 for services to rugby league.

Jonathan Davies, the former Widnes and Great Britain star, wrote: "Sad news of the passing of my friend and legendary rugby player and broadcaster.

"Had many great days with Ray, such a lovely man." Ex-Leeds Rhinos star Barrie McDermott described French as a "genuine legend" adding "really sad news".

£20k to nail park murder

A £20,000 reward is on offer for information about a fatal stabbing a year ago. Imran Maroof, 20, died at Plashet Park, Newham, east London, on July 27 after reports of a fight.

A 16-year-old boy was charged with murder but the case was discontinued.

Crimestoppers, which is offering the reward, can be contacted anonymously on 0800 555 111.

The charity's Alexa Loukas said: "Imran's family deserve answers."

EURO 2025:

Stars are the best of nation



in sport and bringing schools, local clubs and national governing bodies together to increase access and the standard of facilities for kids to enjoy.

We're ensuring that girls will have the same chance as boys to play sport at school, as well as providing equal access for those with special needs and disabilities.

That's how we'll break down barriers, help kids to build strong characters like their heroes, and raise the next generation of Lionesses.

That's the power of sport and why we love the beautiful game. So get your England shirt on. Get on the sofa. Get your family and friends around. Or get down to the pub, which we've made sure can open late tonight. Let's bring it home again. Come on, England!

THE Euros have shown us once again why football means so much to us.

Whatever happens tonight, this team have already written their names in the history books.

They've shown the best of our national character. Not just skill, grit and determination but their calm-headedness, no matter the pressure.

Legends such as Chloe Kelly and Lucy Bronze and new heroes Michelle Agyemang and Hannah Hampton have captivated the nation. And Jess Carter's courage is an example to us all. What inspiring role models they are for the younger generation.

I'll always remember taking my daughter to see the Lionesses in the semi-final of the last Euros, and I know she'll also always remember it.

She stayed long after the final whistle, watching the team celebrate. It was a special moment for me.

This squad inspires, which is why so many young women look up to them.

Last month, I visited them training at St George's Park to wish them good luck. What I saw was a group not just playing for themselves - but for the next generation. Because they want to make a difference.

That's what we are delivering - as part of our Plan for Change. We're breaking down barriers to taking part



HAT'S THE WAY
Smiling England fans in Basel

GLORY



HISTORY Toone scores in 2022

BY HOLLIE BONE in Basel

THE Lionesses are just a final away from getting their hands on the Euros trophy today - with fans desperate to see the reigning champs bring it home again.

It's been a nail-biting tournament, with the team taking it down to the wire in their quarter and semi-finals.

But at 5pm the national side will kick off against Spain at the sold-out St Jakob-Park stadium in Basel.

Prince William will be at the game and said last night: "The nation is so proud you are through to the final after some stunning comebacks. We are all cheering you on!"

England fans have flocked to the Swiss city, where many were last night



The Sarina

Good luck. Great look.

Specsavers

ALL EYES ON ENGLAND FINAL



MATCH SAVERS
Goalie Hampton and, above, super-sub Agyemang with defender Lotte Wubben-Moy. Inset, Sarina Wiegman

IN OUR GRASP..

Lionesses can roar to victory, say families

soaking up the atmosphere. The squad were pictured training yesterday morning, watched by coach Sarina Wiegman, no doubt spurred on by memories of their 2022 Euros final, when they beat Germany 2-1.

And the players' families believe history is about to repeat itself.

Midfielder Georgia Stanway's brother, John-Paul, is confident of a Lionesses win even though opponents Spain beat England 1-0 in the 2023 World Cup final.

He said: "After the last couple of

games I just can't see them losing. They're just too relentless."

In the semi against Italy, super-sub Michelle Agyemang equalised in the 96th minute and Chloe Kelly scored the winner in extra time. The quarter final against Sweden went to a penalty shoot-out, with goalie Hannah Hampton coming out a hero.

Some of the squad's loved ones have set up a group chat called the BABS - short for "brothers and boyfriends" - that includes Stanway's other brother, Sol, and Ella Toone's

brother, Joe, as well as her boyfriend, Joe Bunney. Some of the lads enjoyed a pub crawl in Zurich on Friday - when Georgia's dad, Paul, admitted his "nerves were shot" after the 120-minute Italy game.

Midfielder Toone admitted feeling "physically sick" watching the shoot-out against Sweden. The ace - who scored England's first goal in the 2022 Euros final - said the team had sent their families on a rollercoaster.

She added: "Hopefully we can kick on in this last game and make it one

for them to remember too." Captain Leah Williamson said the team want to get tonight's game "wrapped up a little earlier and a little easier".

She revealed she would be sticking to pre-match traditions last night, including refusing to pack before a game. She said: "No packing has happened. I'll be playing Monopoly Deal with the girls and having a nap."

"Anybody that has ever played with me knows that has to happen."

hollie.bone@reachplc.com

OPINION: PAGE 14



BABS Sol out with Joes Toone & Bunney

Fresh Stats from Official partner of the
UEFA Women's EURO 2025™

England vs Spain

KO 17:00 27 July 2025

Euros head to head



England wins 3

Draws 4

Spain wins 2

Times goals scored



- 0-45
- 45-90
- Extra Time



Goals berried from (Last 3 games)



Vibe of the nation (so far)



Sour

Sweet

Fixture spiciness



EXCLUSIVE
BY **MARTIN FRICKER**
AND **ALEX FRIELING**

MADELEINE McCann suspect Christian Brueckner is set to be tagged and have his passport confiscated amid fears he could disappear when released.

Prosecutors want the convicted German paedophile to face stringent conditions if he is freed from jail as expected in September.

His lawyer previously said Brueckner, 48, wants to vanish overseas to a country that has no extradition treaty with the EU or UK.

Investigators have applied to a court for him to be subjected to a form of judicial supervision called *führungsaufsicht*.

It is reserved for prisoners who have served time for serious crimes but are still deemed high risk.

Brueckner would hand over his passport to authorities and could be made to wear an electronic ankle tag.

This would make it almost impossible for him to disappear.

Brueckner would also be banned from going near schools, nurseries or other places used by children.

And he would have to regularly check in at a local police station and need approval to change his home address.

A source told us: "Under *führungsaufsicht* you can impose conditions, seize passports and so on.

"Of course we're trying to make sure he can't flee abroad. You can absolutely count on that."

German prosecutors are desperate to keep the drifter within reach so they can arrest him immediately if a warrant is issued.

Führungsaufsicht is usually imposed for a fixed period, often up to five years, but it can be indefinite for particularly dangerous offenders.

Brueckner's lawyer told us about his client's plans earlier this year.

Philipp Marquort said: "Sometimes he wants to stay here in Germany, sometimes he wants to leave Europe.

"If I were him I would leave and look for a state which doesn't extradite to Europe or Great Britain, maybe like Suriname [in South America].

"We talked about the possibility of changing his appearance. I would get a face operation if I were him. I mentioned it would be nice for him to change how he looks so nobody can recognise him any more."

Brueckner's other lawyer, Friedrich Fuelscher, said the pervert may choose to settle on the island of Sylt off the coast of Germany.

The judicial supervision would allow him to do that.

Brueckner previously ran a cannabis dealing operation on the North Sea island and was handed a suspended sentence in 2011.

He is nearing the end of a seven-year jail term for raping a 72-year-old woman in Praia da Luz, Portugal, in 2005 – the area where Madeleine went missing two years later.

He is expected to walk free from Sehnde prison near Hanover on September 17.

FLEE RISK
Rapist is set to be freed in September



If I were him, I would get a face op and look for a state that doesn't extradite to Europe or the UK



VANISHED
Madeleine

Maddie suspect faces ban on travel

Electronic tag for rapist due to be freed from jail

German authorities had hoped outstanding fines for an offence in jail would keep him behind bars until January.

But they were dealt a blow in June when a former police officer paid the £1,300 levies out of the blue.

German prosecutors named Brueckner as their prime suspect in the Madeleine case in June 2020.

But despite a lengthy investigation, detectives appear to be no closer to charging him over Madeleine's disappearance.

He was cleared last October of a string of sex crimes he was accused of carrying out in Portugal.

Prosecutors are awaiting the outcome of an appeal against

those verdicts at Germany's Federal Court of Justice.

Brueckner denies any involvement in Madeleine's disappearance.

German teams spent three days hunting for evidence in Portugal last month. Dozens of officers searched scrubland near Praia da Luz hoping to solve the 18-year mystery.

They spent days digging and using ground-penetrating radar inside disused farm buildings.

Animal bones, two old firearms, and bits of cloth were all they had to show for the £300,000 operation.

The fresh searches were carried out at the request of the German

federal police. In April, UK ministers approved more than £100,000 of extra funding for Scotland Yard detectives investigating the case.

Brueckner was living in a ramshackle farmhouse on the edge of Praia da Luz when Madeleine, three, vanished.

Phone records are said to have placed him in the area at the time.

She was at the Algarve resort with parents Kate and Gerry, of Rothley, Leics, in May 2007.

They left her in their holiday flat with her younger twin siblings as they dined with friends in a nearby tapas restaurant.



Asylum seekers 'too scared to leave hotel' after protests

BY PATRICK HILL

ASYLUM seekers living at a hotel targeted by protesters are too frightened to go out, a charity boss has said.

Rival campaign groups have now clashed several times outside The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex.

Steve Smith, from refugee charity Care4Calais, said: "It's pretty depressing when you've already been through significant

CONCERNS Steve Smith

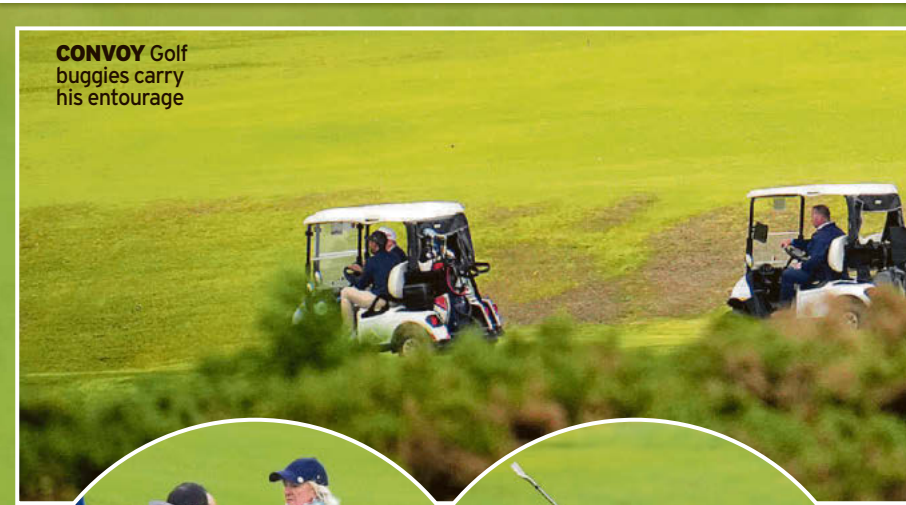


terrors elsewhere in the world. Some of the residents said they've been chased by the far-right when they simply went out for a walk or to buy milk."

On Thursday, Epping Forest District Council urged the government to close the hotel, which has housed around 140 men since 2020. Resident Hadush Kebatu, 41, from Ethiopia, was recently charged with sexually assaulting a girl, which he denies.



PROTESTS AS



CONVOY Golf buggies carry his entourage



FRISK For one golfer on course

BIG HITTER He takes swing



SEARCH Cops and military



THE BEAST Trump's presidential car at course

Landline phones are switching to digital, which could stop telecare alarms working.

If you or someone you know uses a telecare alarm, you must call the landline provider.

They will help make sure alarms keep working through the switchover.

To find out more, visit: digitalphoneswitchover.com

Scan for more information



Supported by UK Government

BY MIKEY SMITH
Deputy Political Editor

THOUSANDS of police and military personnel protected Donald Trump as he played golf yesterday.

The President's visit to Scotland teed off many locals who declared he was "not welcome here".

The huge security operation at his luxury Trump Turnberry resort in South Ayrshire included a no-fly zone, a ground exclusion zone stretching for miles around, road closures, security fencing, sniffer dogs, snipers, and up to 5,000 police officers.

It meant Trump, 79, saw no protesters as he

hit balls on the famous course he bought in 2014. Wearing a USA baseball cap and surrounded by minders, he travelled in a 15-strong motorcade of golf buggies.

Trump played his round with his son

Eric, as well as US Ambassador Warren Stephens and his son.

The President waved to journalists at one point, with hits including Billy Joel's Uptown Girl and Elaine Paige's rendition of Memory from the musical Cats heard playing from his entourage.

And when asked about links to disgraced paedophile Jeffrey Epstein, the Simon and Garfunkel hit Bridge Over Troubled Water could be heard.

Just one demonstrator turned up – and claimed everyone else had been deterred by the massive security operation.

Matt Halliday, 55, from Stranraer, told us: "I just find him morally repugnant. He's rolling back civil rights for women and minorities...and he'll try to bully us through tariffs and trade."

Mr Halliday said taxpayers would have to foot the multi-million pound

“**He's morally repugnant, rolling back civil rights...and he'll try to bully us through tariffs**”

TRUMP GOLFS IN SCOTLAND



HAVING A BALL
He waves to reporters yesterday



SWING STATE

5,000 police guard President's game

security bill for what is a private visit.

"If you saw the convoy of 27 cars last night, there were even Scottish ambulances at the back. And folk can't get them. It's madness," he said.

Before Trump teed off at about 10am, military personnel were seen scouring the grounds.

Army vehicles were spotted, while the Navy carried out sweeps in the water beside the seaside course. The

Scottish Police Federation estimated as many as 5,000 police officers were protecting Trump, who survived an assassination attempt last year.

Police Scotland asked other forces across the UK to boost numbers – with Scottish First Minister John Swinney urging people to protest "peacefully and within the law".

But one man, who did not wish to be named, raged: "Apart from a couple

of meetings, it's a holiday, it's a private visit. The resources that have been diverted from other places to protect him, it's mad."

Hundreds turned up to anti-Trump rallies in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, near the tycoon's other golf resort.

In Aberdeen, chants of "Trump Trump Trump, out out out" could be heard, along with "Donald, Donald, hear us shout, all of Scotland wants

you out". North East Scotland Green MSP Maggie Chapman said: "He is not welcome in Scotland."

Health worker Louise Brown, who came from Newcastle to the Edinburgh demo, added: "He's a convicted felon – eroding women's rights, trans rights, gay rights, immigration rights. There's too much to list.

"He's even worse than he was the first time."

The President is staying at Turnberry until tomorrow before heading to his Trump International resort in Aberdeenshire.

He will hold a meeting with EU chief Ursula Von Der Leyen today.

And tomorrow he and Prime Minister Keir Starmer are expected to discuss the fine points of the UK-US trade deal that was agreed in May.

But while it's expected to be an

informal session, they'll tackle heavier topics, including work to bring about peace in Gaza and Ukraine.

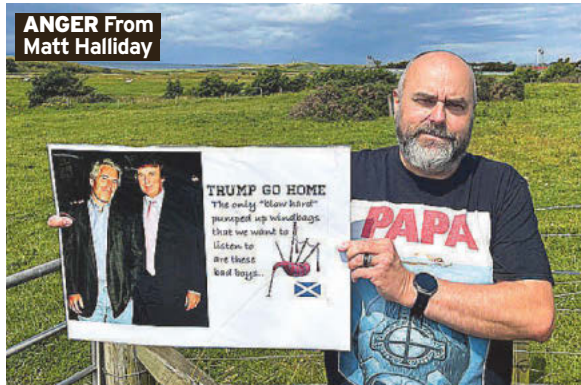
As Trump's five-day visit got under way, Mr Swinney, who is also due to hold talks with the President, announced public money to support a tournament at Trump International.

The Nexo Championship, previously known as the Scottish Championship, is set to take place there next month, supported by £180,000 of public funding.

Mr Swinney said: "The Scottish Government recognises the benefits of golf, boosting tourism and our economy."

Scottish Green co-leader Patrick Harvie likened the awarding of public cash to it to "handing some pocket money to the school bully".

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ANGER From Matt Halliday



PROTESTERS In Edinburgh

“It's a holiday, a private visit. The resources that were diverted to protect him, it's quite mad”

'Bodies' gaffe official sorry

A TOP policing official has apologised after sparking fears of a multiple murder.

Alison Hernandez, the police and crime commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, said "dead bodies" had been found in a wood – but police had only discovered one.

Ms Hernandez said she was "not in possession of all the facts at that time".

James Desborough, 39, of Lower Sticker, has been charged with the murder of Daniel Coleman, 43.

MISSED OPS WILL BE REBOOKED IN 2 WKS

NHS official's pledge to strike-hit patients

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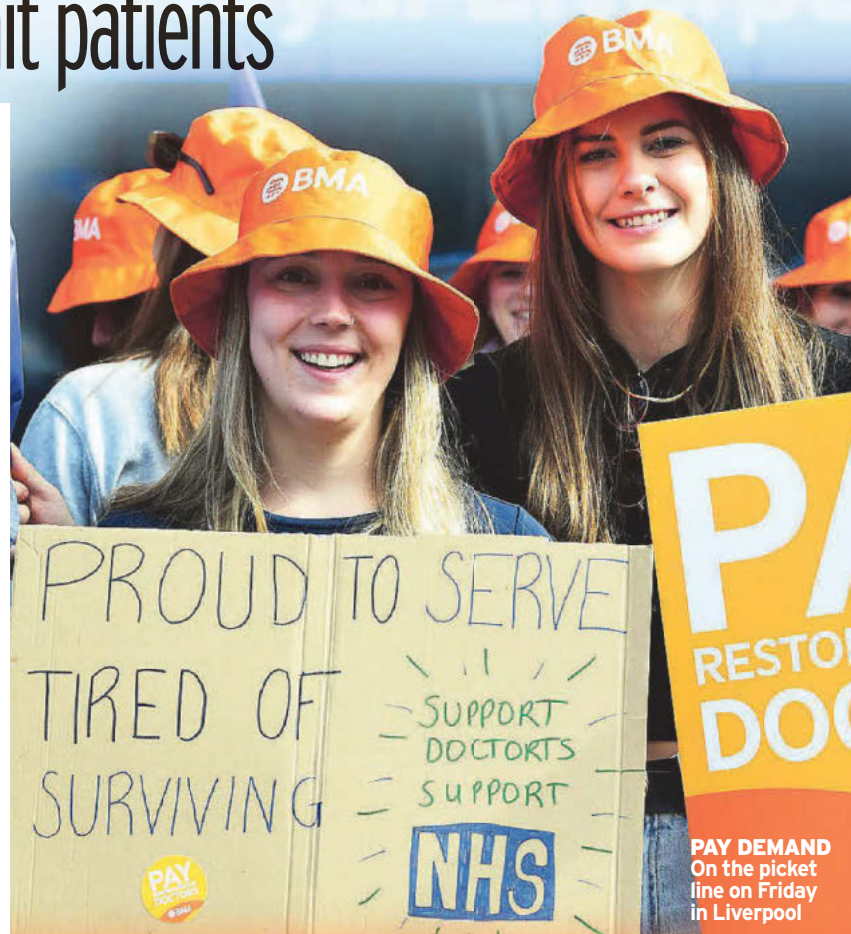


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PAY DEMAND
On the picket line on Friday in Liverpool

BY SASKIA ROWLANDS

PATIENTS who miss appointments due to the doctors' strike will be seen within a fortnight, an NHS boss vowed yesterday.

Resident doctors began a five-day walkout over pay on Friday, leaving thousands of people concerned their treatment will be cancelled or delayed.

But NHS England's Prof Meghana Pandit yesterday stressed that any appointments affected will be rebooked within a couple of weeks.

Prof Pandit, the co-national medical director of NHS England, admitted: "I know it is distressing, and even two weeks is too long for somebody to wait and actually, that has an impact on the people who are then displaced at that two-week period."

She also told how hospitals could demand striking doctors return to work if patient safety is at risk.

NHS patients fear their conditions will worsen because of the delays.

Peter Plant, 58, has kidney cancer and said surgery to remove his kidney on Friday was cancelled just 24 hours before the op.

Mr Plant, from Tamworth, Staffs, told the BBC: "Resident doctors do not care that delaying operations like mine are very likely a death sentence."

"I'm absolutely angry and frustrated. It is not just about me, it's about our whole

family. You try and gear yourself up for it and then it's utter deflation."

Health Secretary Wes Streeting promised that the government was "doing everything we can to minimise" patient harm.

Mr Streeting has condemned the action – which runs until 7am on Wednesday – as "reckless", and said the government would not allow the British Medical Association doctors' union to "hold the country to ransom".

Prime Minister Keir Starmer made a last-minute appeal to resident doctors – previously known as junior doctors – saying the strikes would "cause real damage".

He added: "These strikes threaten to turn back the clock on progress we have made in rebuilding the NHS over the last year, choking off the recovery."

The BMA says that since 2008, pay has fallen by around 20% in real terms. It wants full "pay restoration".

More than one million operations, appointments and treatments were cancelled during junior doctor strikes in March 2023, with routine care cut by half at some hospitals.

In their first year after finishing a medical degree, resident doctors in England earn a basic salary of £38,831, rising to more than £73,000 by the end of their training.

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STANDING FIRM Wes Streeting



DEVASTATION In Dnipro
Five killed in drone blasts as Ukrainians hold firm in Kremlin push

BY PATRICK HILL

FIVE people have been killed in Russia and Ukraine as the two sides trade drone attacks.

More than 200 drones and nearly 30 missiles were fired by Russia, with most targeting the Ukrainian city of Dnipro, where three people died.

Six people were also injured when a block of flats, shopping centre and industrial areas were hit.

In Russia, Rostov's acting governor said two died after a car caught fire following a drone strike.

The Kremlin also claimed it had captured two villages in Ukraine – Zelenyi Hai in the Donetsk region and Maliivka in the Dnipro region.

INTENSE

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said his troops were "gradually pushing Russian forces out" of the Sumy region.

He said: "Although this region remains one of the enemy's priority directions, our forces consistently block Russian attempts to advance deeper into the Sumy region"

There were also reports a village – Kindrativka – had been liberated from Russian control.

Mr Zelensky said there had been "51 intense combat engagements" in the Pokrovsk area of Donetsk in the past day, where his troops were defending positions.

He told how Russian drones targeted Kharkiv and Sumy and said they "cannot be left without response, and long-range drones ensure one".

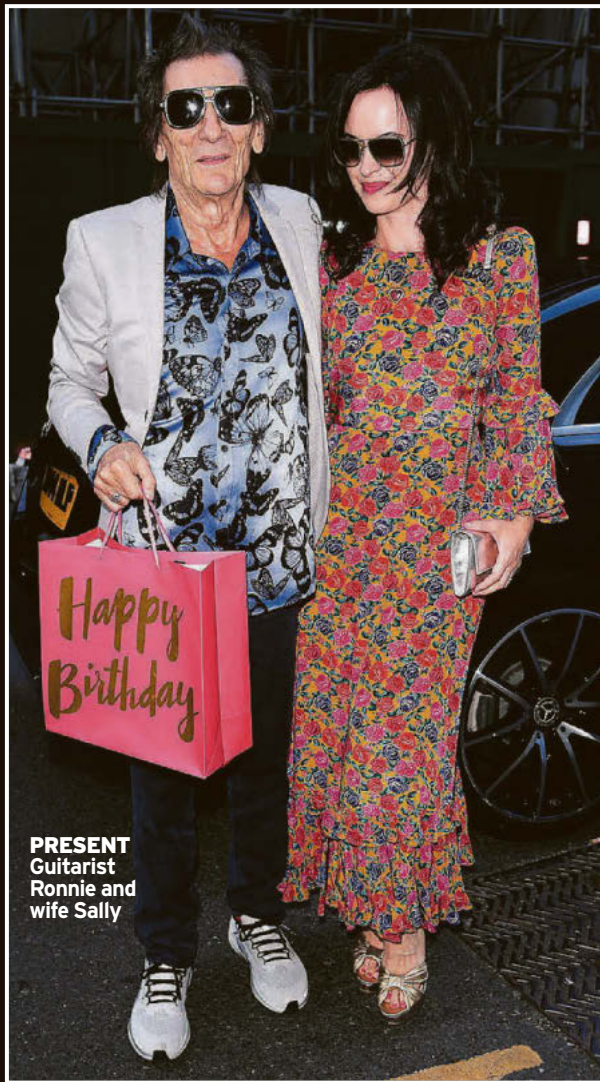
Mr Zelensky added that Russian military sites and airports "must see that Russia's own war is now hitting them back with real consequences", and insisted that Ukraine's drone attacks were "some of the arguments that will surely bring peace closer".

Delegations from both Russia and Ukraine met on Wednesday but peace talks failed.

Groove like Jagger

Stone me! Mick marks 82nd birthday in style

ROCKER OF AGES
 Birthday boy Mick with lover Melanie



PRESENT
 Guitarist Ronnie and wife Sally



BY JANINE YAQOOB
 TV and Showbiz Editor

LET'S spend the night together! Mick Jagger partied with a whole host of famous faces to mark his 82nd birthday.

The Rolling Stone rocked up for his do on Friday hand-in-hand with girlfriend Melanie Hamrick, 38.

Two of the dad-of-eight's daughters, Elizabeth, 41, and Georgia May, 33, attended the bash with their model mum Jerry Hall.

Comic Jimmy Carr, presenter Mariella Frostrup and Gene Gallagher – son of Oasis star Liam – were also among the guests invited to The Rex Rooms in London's Chelsea.

Mick's bandmate Ronnie Wood and his wife Sally arrived clutching a gift bag.

Hopefully Mick liked their pressie – because you can't always get what you want.

janine.yaqoob@reachplc.com

COMMENT: PAGE 14



FAMILY AFFAIR
 Mick's ex Jerry Hall



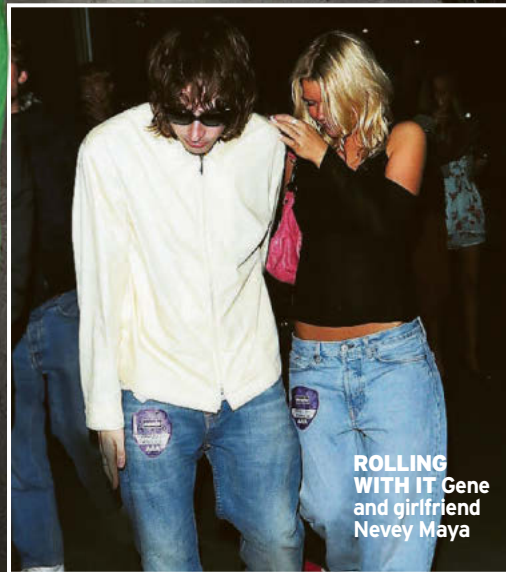
MODEL
 Daughter Georgia May



GOING GREEN
 Presenter Mariella



GAGGING TO GET THERE
 Comedian Jimmy in cab



ROLLING WITH IT
 Gene and girlfriend Nevey Maya



PARTY GIRL
 Elizabeth turns out for her dad

VOICE OF THE

SUNDAY
Mirror

Lionesses will do us all proud

NO ONE will forget the Lionesses' nail-biting Euro final win against Germany three years ago - an extra-time victory all the sweeter because it was the first major international trophy lifted by an England squad since 1966.

The whole country will unite behind them again at 5pm today when they walk out into the St Jakob-Park stadium in Basel, Switzerland, seeking to do it again.

Beating Spain would be another sweet victory after England women's heartbreaking World Cup loss in 2023.

Nothing brings our nation together like football success - and the Lionesses always have that at the forefront of their minds.

After becoming European champions, they wrote an open letter to Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss during the Tory leadership tussle saying their "legacy and goal was to inspire a nation".

Inspire us they certainly do. And a win today would be the icing on the cake of that legacy.

The Lionesses enable us to forget the differences that divide us as we cheer a common cause. We can drape ourselves in St George flags without a political thought in our heads.

After missing a semi-final penalty against Italy but going on to score, Chloe Kelly said it doesn't matter how they go in as long as they do. How right you are, Chloe.

We don't care how hard you make winning. We just pray that you do. And we know your one aim is to make the nation proud.

Whatever the final score today, the affection in which the Lionesses are held will remain universal.

Poor defence

The incursion by Palestine Action into RAF Brize Norton did not just lead to the group being declared a terror organisation.

It showed terrorists how easy it is to get into a British air base. The government launched an urgent security review as a result.

The reviewers should now get themselves urgently to Norfolk's RAF Marham, where our new fleet of F-35A stealth nuclear bombers will be located.

We discovered some of it only protected by a 5ft wooden picket fence accessible from gaps in hedges in an adjacent farmer's field.

You could drive a coach and horses right through that - or something far more sinister.

If Keir Starmer goes nuclear over our revelations today, so he should. Shoddy security such as this could have fatal consequences on an unimaginable scale.

You rock, Mick

Old rockers never disappear, they simply party until 4am. Which is exactly what Mick Jagger did to celebrate his 82nd birthday.

Sir Mick is proving time really is on his side - and showing determination, in the spirit of the Stones' hit 61 years ago, to Not Fade Away.



CHRISTINE McANEA

Unison General Secretary

IT'S SICK TO FILM THE SICK

Working on the front line is tough. Paramedics, police officers and firefighters see and deal with horrendous things all the time.

They deserve our thanks and respect. What they don't need is people making life tougher for them. But that's what's happening. Research

from my union UNISON found one in seven health workers have experienced unwanted filming or photography in the past year.

Staff being filmed as they treat heart attack victims. With the footage being livestreamed or put on platforms such as TikTok.

Someone even filmed a car crash with seriously injured people. They refused to stop and had to be escorted away by the police.

This ghoulish filming for clicks has to stop.

Let our dedicated public servants do their jobs. Put the phone away.



Taken to the cleaners

Private contracts are a bad deal for workers in NHS

Now Labour is in power, things are looking up for the NHS. We've seen record levels of investment and waiting times fall.

But this progress risks being derailed. The government plans to transfer thousands of low-paid health workers out of the NHS.

Ministers are allowing hospital bosses to set up their own companies to save cash.

Before the election, Labour promised to bring workers on private contracts back into public services. But now they are doing the opposite.

Plans to create a company in Dorset are underway. But more than 1,000 cleaners, porters and caterers at local hospitals say they want to stay in the NHS.

Hospital managers have said there'll be no impact on patients, nor on staff pay, pensions or jobs. But Unison thinks otherwise.

Ten years ago, Tory ministers had the same terrible idea. Health workers didn't like it then, and they don't like it now.

The NHS needs help to get back on its feet, recover from the pandemic and years of Tory underfunding.

No one should be making a profit from running public services.

Workers at private firms delivering NHS services rarely get a good deal. I recently met a group of Lancashire cleaners working for



contracting giant Mitie in health centres. They said the company regularly gets their pay

regularly and they receive less than they should, leaving them struggling.

To make matters worse, Mitie refuses to pay staff bonuses given to other NHS workers during Covid.

Cleaners have taken eight days of strike

action over the move, but the firm refuses to act. One in five payslips

is incorrect. That's unacceptable. Company execs would be fuming if their wages were regularly wrong and they were denied bonuses.

The staff take real pride in their jobs. But what really grates is that last year, Mitie boss Phil Bentley was paid £14.7million. And the firm's profits were £234m.

Unison has calculated that giving staff the £1,655 Covid bonus would cost Mitie £70,000. Mr Bentley earns that in 10 hours.

Neighbourhood health centres, like the ones the Mitie workers

clean, will be at the heart of the government's 10-year plan.

It mustn't be blown off course by unnecessary and unpopular privatisation, which doesn't work.

Finally, last week I went to Gloucester in a shower of rain to meet phlebotomists who have been on strike for 121 days.

These dedicated staff specialise in taking blood and want to be paid fairly. But bosses won't budge.

Other hospitals have paid up. It's time NHS managers in Gloucester did the same.

“
No one should be profiting from public services”



Millions of workers will soon be able to benefit from the contents of the Employment Rights Bill.

It will stop people on zero-hours contracts being exploited, give workers sick pay as soon

as they're poorly and make it harder for bad bosses to sack staff. This is the biggest set of workplace changes in a generation. But lots of people don't know much about it.

The government should be shouting it from the rooftops.



Even as a proud Scot, I thought the Lionesses' semi-final against Italy was a nerve-shredding epic. BBC staff were glued to the action while I prepared for Newsnight. Chloe Kelly's winner avoided nail-biting penalties and meant fans had time to watch the political debate, too. A win-win! Let's hope the inspirational Lionesses roar in tonight's final.

Fire deaths: man in court

A MAN appeared in court yesterday charged with the murder of a couple following an arson attack on their home.

Eric Greener, 77, and 83-year-old Sheila Jackson both died following the blaze in St Helens, Merseyside on July 15.

Lee Owens, 46, of no fixed address, was charged with two counts of murder and arson with intent to endanger life at Liverpool magistrates court.

Owens was remanded in custody to appear at Liverpool crown court on Tuesday.



WE'RE GOOD
Liam and Noel
join hands

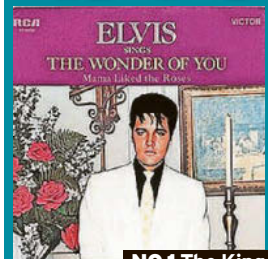


PACKED First
Wembley gig
since 2009

Mourning Glory

ON THIS DAY...
JULY 27

in 1970



From Elvis' new LP "NO.1 The King"

TOP 10 singles

- 1 The Wonder of You
Elvis Presley
- 2 All Right Now
Free
- 3 Lola
The Kinks
- 4 In the Summertime
Mungo Jerry
- 5 Something
Shirley Bassey
- 6 Neanderthal Man
Hotlegs
- 7 It's All in the Game
The Four Tops
- 8 Up Around the Bend
Creedence Clearwater Revival
- 9 I'll Say Forever
My Love
Jimmy Ruffin
- 10 Lady D'Arbanville
Cat Stevens



DATE NIGHT
Jenni & actor
hubby James



NEVER FORGET
Giant pic of
Ozzy during
Live Forever



BUCKET (HAT) LIST
Peter grabs
a hot ticket

Channel boat crosser dies

A MAN has died while trying to cross the English Channel on a small boat.

The vessel turned back towards Equihen beach in France when the man became unwell yesterday, French officials say.

He was found in cardiac arrest on the beach and died soon afterwards, despite emergency services attending.

Home Office statistics show that almost 24,000 people have arrived into the UK on small boats so far this year.

That compares to 13,489 during the first half of 2024 and nearly 37,000 for the whole of that year.



STAND BY ME
Fearne and Rylan
share a cuddle

Oasis honour rocker Ozzy at Wembley

BY JANINE YAQOOB
TV and Showbiz Editor

OASIS paid tribute to Ozzy Osbourne at their first London show, dedicating Live Forever to him.

A giant image of the Black Sabbath frontman, who died on Tuesday aged 76, was displayed above the Wembley Stadium stage during the song.

Liam said: "That one was dedicated to Ozzy Osbourne,

a Rock 'n' Roll Star." The touching moment sparked cheers and applause from the crowd - which included actress Sienna Miller, 43, and footballer Peter Crouch, 44.

Presenter Fearne Cotton, 43, TV host Rylan, 36, and radio host Jenni Falconer, 49, and her husband James Midgley, 50, were also there.

The band previously dedicated Live Forever to Liver-

pool's Diogo Jota when their Live '25 tour kicked off in Cardiff three weeks ago.

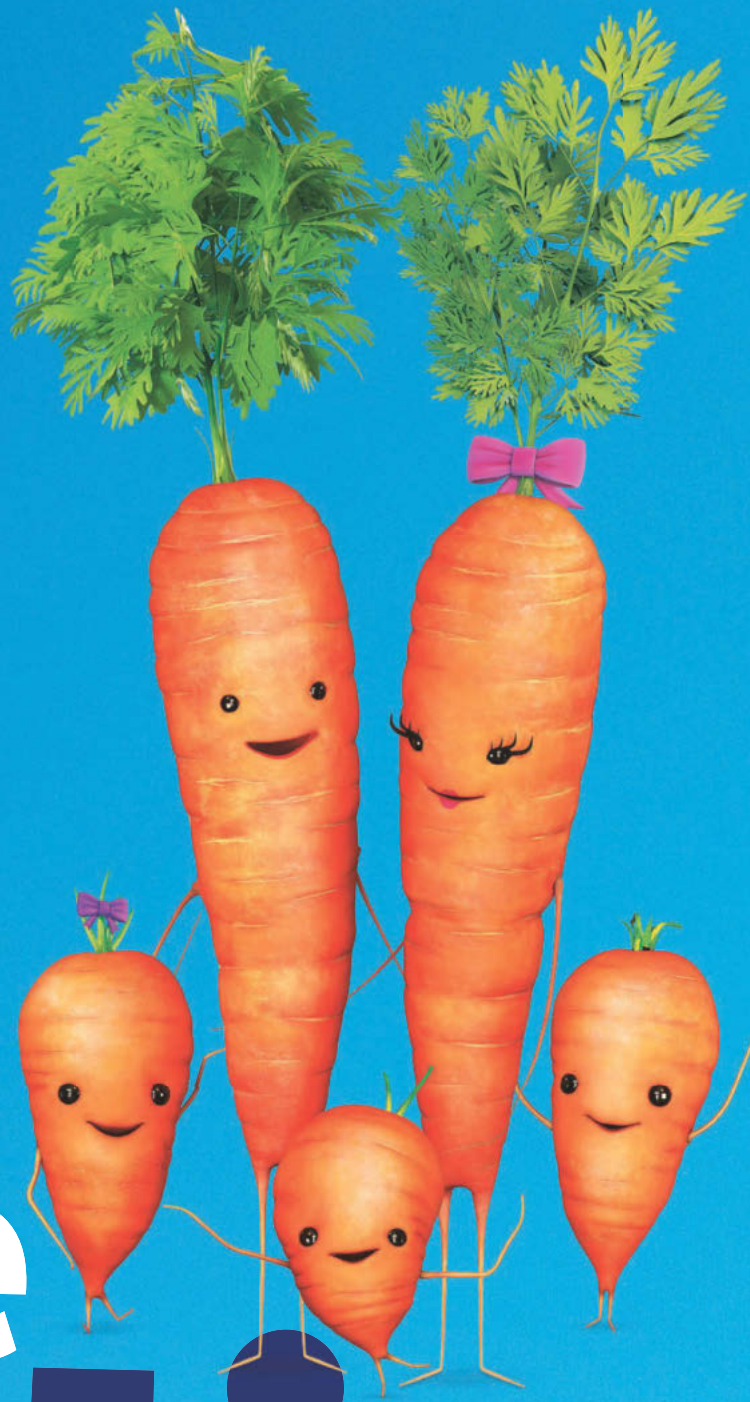
Friday's gig marked the first time Oasis had performed at Wembley since 2009. They will play five nights there.

Gallagher brothers Noel, 58, and Liam, 52, walked on to the stage holding hands, showing their animosity is behind them.

janine.yaqoob@reachplc.com



SHE'S ECLECTIC
Sienna wears
Boho outfit



We're
rooting
for you

Good luck, Lionesses!
Grate-ness awaits.



Everyday Amazing.

Scholar's 6th degree 50yrs after the first

BY PATRICK HILL

A CLEVER man has earned a sixth degree, 50 years after his first, from the same university.

Gordon Mousinho, 71, who graduated in 1975 with a degree in history and law at Keele University, has received a PhD in creative writing.

He said: "I've always enjoyed keeping myself physically fit, and to keep fit mentally, learning and education is the best thing you can do."

In his first spell at the Staffordshire university, he completed a bachelor of arts, a postgraduate certificate of education, a master of arts, and a PhD.

After his career in management consulting, Gordon, of Chesham Bois, Bucks, finished another masters and another PhD.

Missed

As part of this paper's Missed campaign, we will publish the name and photo of a missing person every day



Glenfield Atkins

Age at disappearance

80

Last seen

London

Missing since 2025

PLEASE CALL OR TEXT US ON 116 000

missing people



Scan the QR code to see missing people in your area

Globetrotting spoon's back

A SILVER teaspoon swiped from a British hotel in 1942 has been returned from Australia.

It was found in a drawer in Bundanoon, New South Wales, by John White whose parents "borrowed" it from the Queens Hotel in Portsmouth, in the war.

Hotel manager Paul Playford said: "We have a little curiosity cabinet, so it's going to live there."



THE AIR FARCE
Saskia at the fence at Marham

Rickety fence protects nuclear airbase

We expose lax security at home of £700m RAF fighter bombers

STEALTH Jet lands at Marham



EXCLUSIVE BY SASKIA ROWLANDS

AN RAF station where the country's new nuclear-armed jets will be based is protected by a 5ft wooden fence.

The flimsy barrier is 300 metres from the runway at RAF Marham, Norfolk.

Our revelation comes just weeks after protesters were arrested for causing £7million of damage to aircraft at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire.

The fence at RAF Marham can be accessed by five gaps in a hedge in a farmer's field.

We visited the spot this week and stood there for 30 minutes but no security guard came to check on us. The rest of the base is surrounded by 18-foot barbed-wire fences.

Last night Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, a former army colonel and nuclear weapons expert, said: "It seems incongruous that at the base for our stealth fighters there is only a picket fence, which a small child could vault, as protection."

"When our new tactical nuclear bombers, the F-35As, arrive at RAF Marham, a wooden fence is almost encouraging terrorists to 'have a go'."

RAF Marham is the home of 617 Squadron 'The Dambusters' who fly the F-35B Lightning multi-role stealth fighter.

A month ago Keir Starmer announced the government was buying at least 12 American-made F-35A fighter-bombers

that can carry nuclear weapons as well as conventional ones, at an estimated cost of around £700million.

At a Nato summit in The Hague, the Prime Minister said the purchase was a "response to a growing nuclear threat".

Downing Street said the move was "the biggest strengthening of the UK's nuclear posture in a generation".

It is the first time the RAF will be able to carry nukes since the 1990s.

The move comes at a time of growing global insecurity – and as the PM and his European and Canadian allies scramble to convince Donald Trump they are serious about defending Europe, rather than relying on the US. Colonel de Bretton-Gordon added: "I applaud the design to get a tactical nuclear deterrent but the protection of these aircraft is as important as the aircraft themselves."

A government spokesperson said: "Following the incident at Brize Norton, we are urgently reviewing security and have implemented a series of enhanced security measures at all sites."

"After years of hollowing out and underfunding of the armed forces, the Strategic Defence Review concluded that we need to invest more, backed by the largest sustained increase in defence spending since the end of the Cold War."

“There is only a fence that a small child could vault as protection”

Morning must-haves, price matched to Aldi.



89p
Strawberry Jam 454g

Cannabis cover up

A WOMAN has admitted trying to import nearly 24lb of skunk cannabis, worth up to £108,000.

Police intercepted the parcel, from Connecticut, US, after the UK Border Force raised concerns. It was said to contain a motorcycle

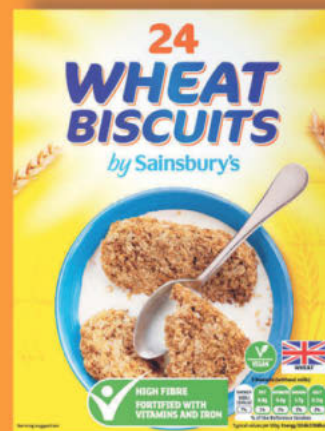
cover but held 24 packs of cannabis. Amy Dunn, 37, of Swindon, Wilts, pleaded guilty at the town's magistrates court to trying to import, and possession of, the class B drug. She was bailed ahead of sentencing on August 27.

£2.18
Buttersoft Spreadable Butter 500g



75p
Medium Sliced Wholemeal Bread 800g

£1.37
Wholewheat Biscuits Cereal x24 430g



£1.20
British Semi Skimmed Milk 1.13L



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Love letters straight from the past

1962 notes found in canal

BY PATRICK HILL

A PRECIOUS cache of love letters lost in a burglary has been returned to its owners after being pulled out of a canal by a magnet fisher.

Arthur Sims wrote the notes to Janet Millington in 1962, three years before they wed.

The new Mrs Sims tied the 32 letters together with a blue ribbon and kept them in her knicker drawer for six decades.

At the time the couple were burgled in May, they were not sure the letters had been taken.

Janet said: "I said to Arch (Arthur), 'The letters are gone', and he said, 'No, you've hid 'em somewhere. They're somewhere else'."

Shirley Elmore recovered the love letters soon after while magnet fishing in the Grand Union canal near the Fort shopping park in Birmingham.

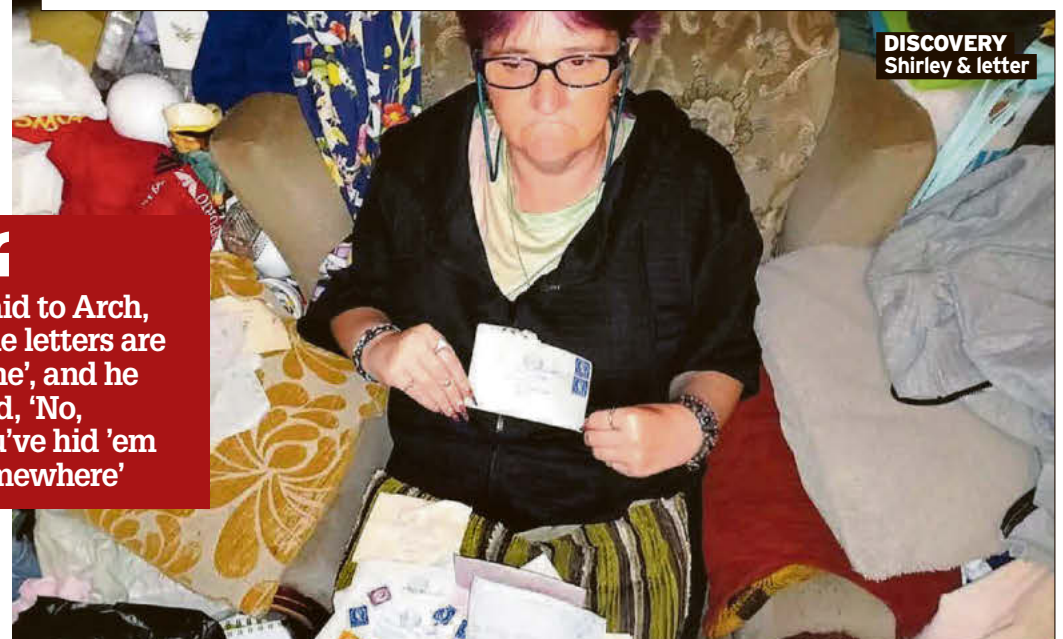
She took them home to dry and posted snaps of her find – including Arch's old address in Nottingham and Janet's in Hemel Hempstead, where each lived in 1962 – on social media.

BBC Midlands Today ran the story, and a pal of the Sims's recognised the names.

Arch said: "An old friend phoned us up. We [were] on holiday in Norfolk, and she says, 'You've just been on the telly.'"

The couple's engagement ring was also stolen in the burglary of their home in Grantham,

"I said to Arch, 'The letters are gone', and he said, 'No, you've hid 'em somewhere'"



DISCOVERY Shirley & letter

Lincs – one of three raids in the county the same day – and has not been recovered.

The letters, however, in which Arch wrote about his fondness for Janet and how much he was missing her, are back where they belong. One envelope was signed off ITALY – a wartime acronym for "I trust and love you". Magnet fisher Shirley, 52,

initially thought she had hooked a "wad of money".

Arch told her in a video call: "It has the same value as money", with Janet saying: "Shirley, you're a wonderful lady."

Asked about the content of the letters, Arch said: "I'm still who I am. I still feel the same."

Janet added that the couple had been "married 60 years,

mostly happy". Her husband joked: "I remember a Wednesday when you weren't."

Lincolnshire Police hope specifying where the letters were dumped will help identify the culprits.

Rings, pocket watches, gold chains and a phone were also taken in the three burglaries.

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PAY'S NOT RUBBISH
Tony McArdle



Bin strike chief's scented sideline

Stink-hit city's new boss has posh boutique

EXCLUSIVE
BY SIMON MURPHY

THE new commissioner of a city plagued by a long-running bin strike has been selling £46 scented candles.

Tony McArdle was made £1,200-a-day lead commissioner of cash-strapped Birmingham city council last week.

We can reveal he also co-owns a boutique shop with his wife that flogs posh homeware "carefully selected to bring a touch of indulgence into your life".

Items included £46 Berry Voyage and Rose Republic candles. A description for the former boasted: "Sensual and heady, Berry Voyage captures intrepid expeditions in the Adriatic, arboretum gardens, coastal reveries..."

We found Santa Maria, which has a website and shop in Lincoln, also selling £28 lanterns, £45 throws and £79 purity paste.

It is a world away from Birmingham where rubbish has piled up in the streets since Unite binmen went on strike in March. Last

week it emerged fly-tipping reports in the city have nearly doubled. Last month there were complaints the heatwave made things worse.

One resident told the BBC: "We have to hold our nose every time we step out."

The council declared effective bankruptcy in 2023, with government commissioners sent in to run it.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said: "We are confident Tony is the best person for this role and will make a significant contribution to Birmingham's ongoing improvement."

Mr McArdle, former boss of Lincolnshire and Wellingborough councils, said: "Alongside my wife, I am listed as the director of a small business based in Lincoln.

"This is my wife's business and I am not involved in its day-to-day operation."

The candles were removed from sale after we spotted them.

The council said the initial backlog of waste caused by the strike had been cleared.

simon.murphy@reachplc.com



'SENSUAL' Berry Voyage candle

78p
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ALDI PRICE MATCH

£1.45
Smooth Pure Orange Juice 1L

£2.69
Gold Roast Instant Coffee 200g

Cop barred over child sex offence

BY PATRICK HILL

A FORMER police constable has been barred from the force for gross misconduct after being convicted of a child sex offence.

Barry Geering, 44, admitted attempted sexual communication with a child on Snapchat and got a 28-week suspended jail sentence last month.

He was also sentenced to 30 days of rehabilitation and 80 hours of unpaid work and placed on the sex offenders register for seven years at Bristol magistrates court. Geering,



pictured, quit the Wiltshire force following his arrest in April 2024 as part of an operation by South West Regional Organised Crime Unit.

Deputy Chief Constable Mark Cooper said: "As soon as we were made aware of this matter, he was immediately suspended.

"We encourage all members of our organisation to report concerns regarding a colleague's behaviour and we won't hesitate to investigate."

Geering, from Ealing, west London, will be unable to rejoin the police.

Sainsbury's
Good food for all of us

Votes for 16-yr-olds: What teachers think

EXCLUSIVE
BY SIMON MURPHY

THEY are arguably the best judge on 16-year-olds getting the vote but teachers are split on the issue - depending on their age.

Overall 47% are in favour, while 38% disagree and 15% are neutral.

The poll of 9,626 staff showed a marked difference in opinion depending on the age group of teachers.

Those in their 20s were the most in favour - 51% compared to 35% against. Thirty-somethings were behind it 49% to 35% while those in their 40s supported the plan by 45% to 39%.

The over-50s were the only age group against the decision - by 44% to 43%.

A quarter of older teachers said they were strongly against.

The survey of secondary and primary staff by Teacher Tapp comes after the government confirmed it was lowering the voting age earlier this month.

Democracy minister Rushanara Ali declared: "By delivering our manifesto



POLITICAL CLASS
At secondary school

you want your money spent on." Naomi Smith, chief executive of campaign group Best for Britain, said the change was "a brave choice set to benefit generations to come".

“ They're old enough to go out to work and to pay their taxes

But in the Commons, Tory shadow communities minister Paul Holmes questioned: "Why does this Government think a 16-year-old can vote but not be allowed to buy a lottery ticket, an alcoholic drink, marry, or go to war, or even stand in the elections they're voting in?"

Those aged under 18 are defined as children by law.

The Greens and Lib Dems both welcomed lowering the age.

The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1969. And 16-year-olds are already able to vote in Scottish and Welsh elections.

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Poll reveals age gap in attitudes

commitment to extend the vote to 16 and 17-year-olds, we are taking a generational step forward in restoring public trust and boosting engagement in UK democracy." Backing the move, Prime

Minister Keir Starmer highlighted how "they're old enough to go out to work, they're old enough to pay taxes".

He added: "I think if you pay in you should have the opportunity to say what



ALLEGATION Adrian Burns Former RAF officer files sexism claim

BY TED HENNESSEY

A FORMER RAF officer who says a commodore told her he could "feel the emotion" after she voiced concerns is pursuing a sex discrimination claim.

Penelope McEneaney claims Air Commodore Adrian Burns made the remark in 2023, when she complained about a performance report after her maternity leave.

Air Cdre Burns is alleged to have said Ms McEneaney was normally logical and very precise, implying she was not presenting a rational concern, the tribunal in Reading heard.

Ms McEneaney argued a male colleague would not have been spoken to like that. Employment Judge Findlay ruled the tribunal can consider her claims.

B



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EXCLUSIVE
BY JANINE YAQOOB
TV and Showbiz Editor

"FANCY a part in Clueless The Musical?" an enthusiastic PR asks me out of the blue.

My initial reaction, in the style of Cher Horowitz herself, is "As if!"

I've been asked to do the weird and the wonderful in this job – but this is right up there.

I'd been to see the show at London's Trafalgar Theatre a few weeks before and was blown away by the slick performances, particularly that of lead Emma Flynn, who plays entitled Cher.

These guys are pros. My acting experience, however, extends to two nativity plays. And in one of those, I merely shook a bell.

But, as Clueless celebrates its 30th anniversary and the stage show gets ready to tour the UK, now is a wonderful time to get involved.

Even if I am flushed with fear... and if all the nervy public-speaking moments I've ever done are flashing before my eyes.

NERVES

The week before my West End debut, I pop in for a meeting with the wardrobe department.

A checked skirt with cute cardigan helps transform me, a 38-year-old mum-of-two, into a US high schooler from the 90s. That's no mean feat.

Then I get my brief: I'll be treading the boards in the party scene.

As a huge fan of director Anne Heckerling's movie, I was delighted to see they'd stayed true to it in the stage show, which included a raucous gathering at a Valley house.

This is where I will appear – at the bar, my spiritual home. I am tasked with knocking back a shot of vodka (fake, of course) and dancing (awkwardly) in the corner.

It sounds a lot like my uni days. Maybe this won't be so bad after all.

The big day finally arrives. My name may not be up in lights but I will be slightly illuminated in the corner of a two-minute scene with no lines. Believe me, it is the safest possible option.

I thought I'd be – in Clueless speak – totally buggin' with nerves but I am strangely calm. I have a job to do. The show must go on.

I share my limited past experience with the lovely cast. I tell them how I played Mary in Year 4.

I had three lines, which I still remember to this day – "I am very tired", "Let's take it" and "I can't walk another step".

There were a few whoops from the nativity audience but I think they were just being kind.

Now, running through two speedy Clueless rehearsals, I am struck by how fast-paced everything is.

As a journalist, I'm used to a deadline – but this is something else. There is no time to dilly-dally as the audience will be here in less than hour. Eeek!

I am whisked off to a makeshift dressing room (someone's office) where it is left to just little old me to

My moment on stage. I wasn't quite Clueless

Showbiz Ed offered her big break in the hit West End musical



“ I am tasked with knocking back a shot of vodka and dancing awkwardly... it's like my uni days

get myself stage ready. Even the proper cast don't have full hair and make-up at their disposal so I simply slap on five more layers of make-up than I'm used to. "More contour!" implores the lovely PR who lined me up for this gig in the first place. The five-minute call rings out over the tannoy. It is almost show time. I joke to resident director Kirsty Malpass that maybe I need a bit of

Dutch courage. Apparently that's a big no-no in theatre, I'm told. Sober it is, then! I make my way to the wings, ready for my call, and pop on my costume's final touch – sunglasses. **REASSURING** I can barely see a thing. All I can think is, "Please don't trip". Isaac J. Lewis is my patient and reassuring chaperone. He plays Christian – Cher's love interest. He leads us out on to the stage, carrying

light-up snowmen and the next couple of minutes are a blur. As the ensemble crack out their choreographed dance moves, I do a little shuffle in the corner as my alter ego, the new girl at school. The persona develops at lightning speed and before I know it, I am being called out on stage by Dionne (Chyna-Rose Frederick) for flirting with her boyfriend Murray (Rabi Konde). Well, I did want to make an impact, didn't I? Before I know it, I'm stepping back

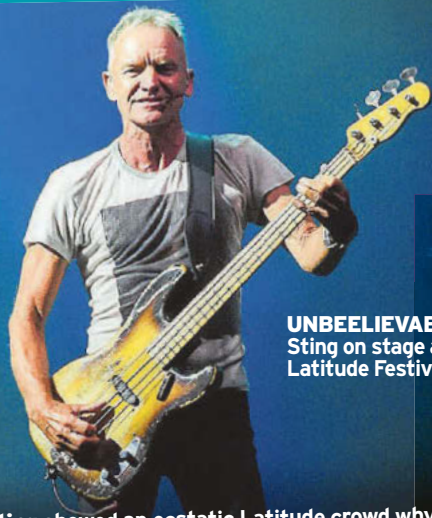
out into Trafalgar Square wondering if it ever really happened, or if it was all just a dream. Later, when asked how it went, a Clueless quote comes to mind, Cher speaking to Tai: "No, she's a full-on Monet. It's like a painting, see? From far away it's OK, but up close it's a big old mess." Sounds about right. janine.yaqoob@reachplc.com **■ Clueless The Musical is on at the Trafalgar Theatre, London, until August 23. For tickets, go to cluelessonstage.com**



Justin Bieber has bagged his eighth UK No.1 single with **DAISIES**, putting him level with Oasis, The Rolling Stones and **Sam Smith**. Not a bad list to join!

NO FILTER

with Janine Yaqoob & Kenzi Devine



UNBELIEVABLE
Sting on stage at Latitude Festival

Sting showed an ecstatic Latitude crowd why clean living rocks. The singer, who looked 20 years younger than his 73 years, wowed fans as he took to the stage in leather jeans on Friday.

Bar a couple of self-indulgent guitar solos, the evergreen Geordie had the crowd clapping and singing along to his incredible back catalogue of Police and solo classics.

From *Message in a Bottle* to *Every Little Thing She Does is Magic* via *An Englishman in New York*, *Every Breath You Take* and *Roxanne*, Sting showed that his stage venom is as potent as ever.

A fantastic headline set that left everyone buzzing.



★★★★



SUCCESS
Megan

Megan is on song

Megan McKenna is oozing confidence as a new mum, despite finding the music industry hard going.

After winning *The X Factor: Celebrity* in 2019, former *Towie* star Megan landed a record deal with *Simon Cowell's Syco* - a year before it shut.

She says: "It was tough because it happened after I worked so hard. But me and Simon had such a

nice relationship and he actually rang me to say the label was closing.

"He said, 'You know, you need to find a new home' - but it's not an easy thing to do."



SUPPORT
Simon Cowell

Ahead of her show at London's *The Shard*, Megan, who now lives in Germany with her footballer husband

Oliver Burke and their baby son *Landon*, says: "Motherhood has made

me more free... I don't worry about the little things any more. As a mum, you have the most amazing thing, so everything else is fine."



Working with stars such as **Beyonce** is not always straightforward - just ask *If I Were a Boy* co-writer **Toby Gad**. He says: "She booked me for five days and didn't turn up for three. At the time, she had *Crazy in Love* on the radio, so she was very busy."

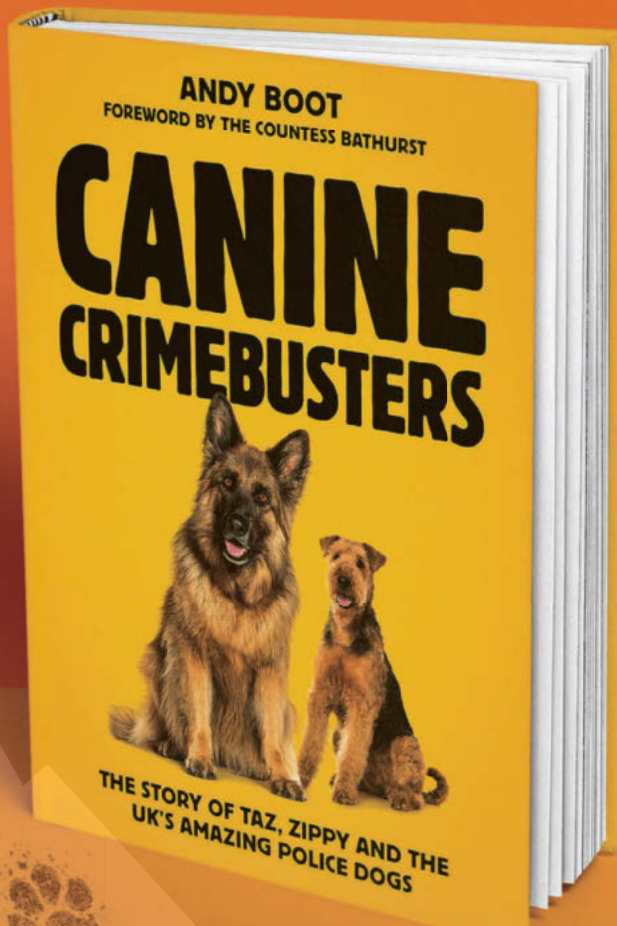
But even without *Queen B's* presence, **Toby** knew it would be a hit. "I had a strong feeling this was going to be a very important one in my career," he says.

We bet the Grammy-winner, who also co-wrote **John Legend's** *All of Me* and *Big Girls Don't Cry* by **Fergie**, has loads more celeb goss.



BEY'S BOY
Writer Toby

THE STORY OF TAZ, ZIPPY AND THE UK'S MOST AMAZING POLICE DOGS



THE STORY OF TAZ, ZIPPY AND THE UK'S AMAZING POLICE DOGS



AMAZON

On sale in all good bookshops and Amazon

Now that's service...

When the place you're staying doesn't stock your favourite tipples, it can cast a cloud over even the most romantic of mini-breaks.

So *One Direction* star **Louis Tomlinson** was eternally grateful when staff at posh hotel *The Suffolk* came to his rescue.

The singer had been drinking vodka and *Red Bull* while dining there with his reality star girlfriend **Zara McDermott**.

Their meal at the hotel, in the pretty coastal town of *Aldeburgh*, led to news of their romance emerging.

But the lovebirds were actually staying at a luxury cottage on the *Wilderness Reserve* 40 minutes away.

A source said: "Zara had a cocktail. Louis was on *Red Bull* and vodka the entire evening. At the end of the night it looked like staff went to a shop and got him cans of *Red Bull* and a bottle of vodka to take with him as they guessed where he was staying didn't have either of those drinks."

"A very appreciative Louis said that they had literally saved his life."



LOVEBIRDS Louis and Zara enjoyed romantic break. Above, couple at Glasto





SPOTTED Sydnie and Jeff in show

Having never seen the premiere of 101 Dalmatians The Musical at Regent's Park back in 2022, I was unsure what to expect from this touring musical. Yet while those first shows got raves, this one at London's Eventim Apollo is a mixed bag, to say the least.

The jokes are cringey, the puppet dalmatians are too simplistic and the set seems a tad threadbare.

Jeff Brazier and Aston Merrygold as Cruella de Vil's dim-witted nephews fail to up the excitement levels. But the one saving grace is BGT winner **Sydnie Christmas** as Cruella, whose vocal chops and menacing presence lift the show where all else fails. ■ 101 Dalmatians The Musical runs until August 30



★★★



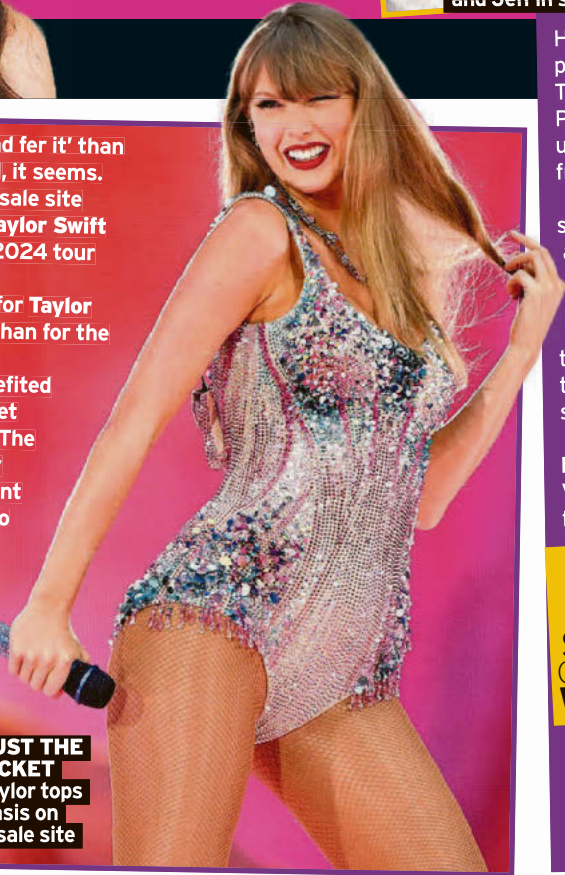
Swifties are more 'mad fer it' than fans of Liam and Noel, it seems. Figures out from resale site Viagogo show more Taylor Swift fans snapped up tickets for her 2024 tour compared to the Oasis reunion.

The total number of searches for Taylor were one-and-a-half times higher than for the Gallagher brothers.

Other Britpop bands have benefited from the Oasis reunion, too. Ticket searches for Travis, Suede, Pulp, The Charlatans and Blur increased by 70% on the day Oasis tickets went on sale. We all want their music to Live Forever...



JUST THE TICKET Taylor tops Oasis on resale site



Sharon's last act of love for Ozzy

Rocker's wife fought for farewell show to go ahead

Ozzy Osbourne's final performance in his home city almost never happened, we can reveal.

The rock legend was warned that insurers would not cover the show if he pursued his dream of standing to say goodbye to his devoted fans.

But Ozzy's determined wife

Sharon waged a secret battle with the insurance agents – and overcame any potential issues by seating the Black Sabbath frontman in a throne for his five solo tracks and four Sabbath tunes.

Ozzy, who died on Tuesday at the age of 76, just two weeks



MISSED Ozzy Osbourne

EXCLUSIVE

after the show, had vowed to "get back on that stage no matter what".

However, an LA promoter said the superstar was effectively banned from any on stage movement during the charity show by insurance firms.

It prompted concerns that the Back To The Beginning gig, at Villa Park in Birmingham, would be axed.

Ozzy had spent over a year working with physios, trainers and specialists to be able to put on a show for fans.

Our insider said: "It is heartbreaking to think about the stress that Ozzy and Sharon went through in those last few weeks. Ozzy had

worked his a** off to get himself to a place where he could at least stand up and wave to fans.

"But for shows of that magnitude, if the artists do not meet the insurers' satisfaction of risk liability then the show doesn't go ahead.

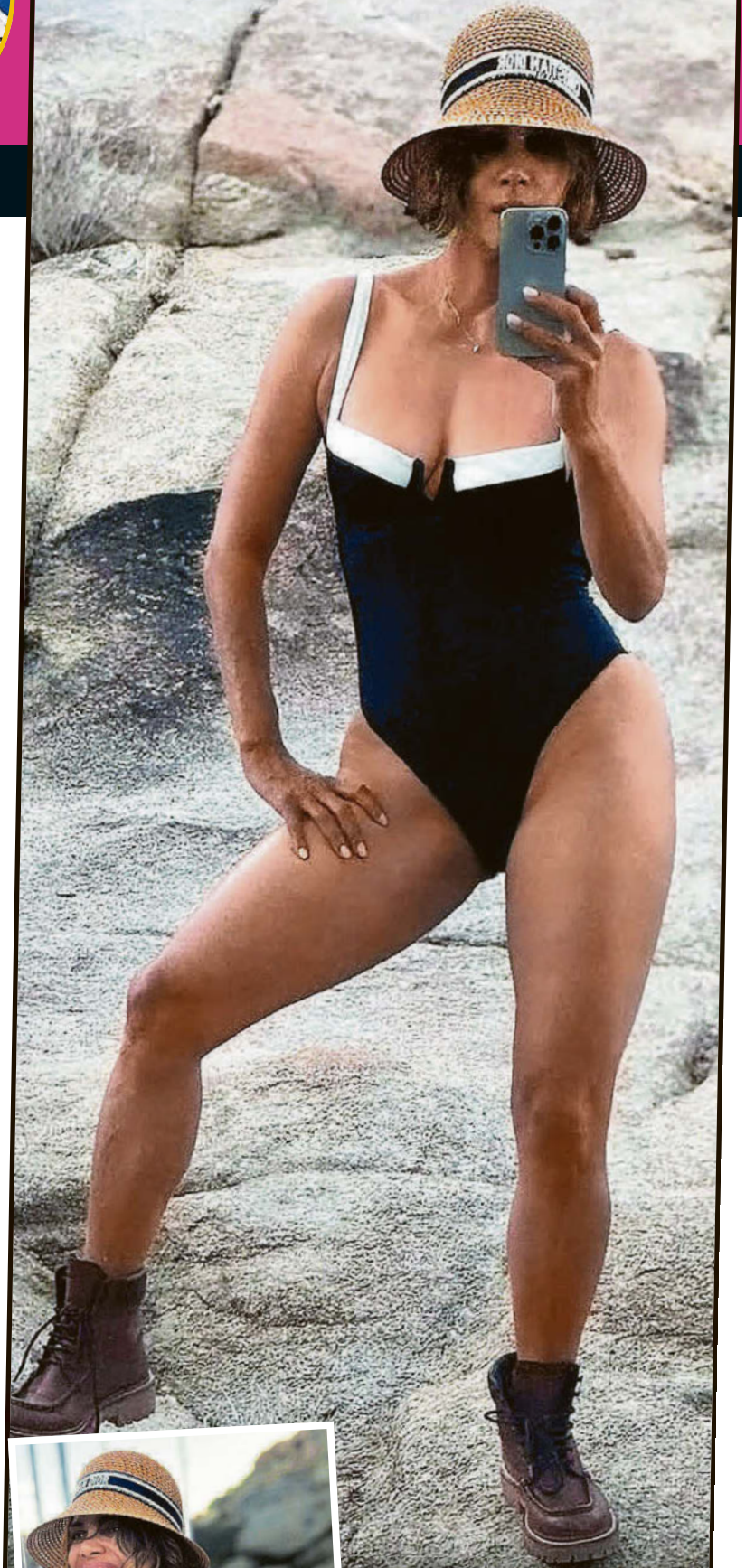
"With the Parkinson's and the walking issues, no insurance agent would agree to let Oz stand.

"So to overcome that, and not have a huge insurance premium on the charity show, they secured a deal to have him safely locked in his throne. It was a brilliant compromise.

"It really speaks so much to Sharon's drive and focus to get it all pulled off, because of the liability issues. She was a miracle worker."

In his final days, cameras had been following Ozzy for BBC series, Home To Roost. It is now expected to be released in memory of the star.

Hats off to Halle



Actress **Halle Berry** is swimsuited and booted. The former Bond girl mixed beachwear with mountain attire to trek the rocky terrain of Joshua Tree National Park in California. However you get your kicks, Halle...



TEEN Oneheart

Former fishmonger **ADMT** has us hook, line and sinker with his music. His new single **F*** You is a no-holds-barred rant about not taking any crap.** Doncaster-born Adam Taylor built his audience



busking in Yorkshire. He went from working in a bottling factory and battling depression to building a flourishing music career and signing with BMG. Catch him on his UK headline tour in October.

MUSIC PORTAL Moby

Moby has teamed up with Russian teen prodigy **Oneheart**. The ambient pair join forces on new single, **Lagrange Point**. Oneheart said: "When I was a kid, Moby's music felt



like a portal to another universe. I didn't understand it back then but years later, working on a track together feels like reaching back through time."

Boost for gigs & festivals as Chancellor rips up red tape

EXCLUSIVE BY MIKEY SMITH
Deputy Political Editor

FESTIVAL organisers will face less paperwork to get big gigs going, the Chancellor has announced.

It could particularly benefit smaller gatherings – with streamlined approvals lasting for years, instead of bosses battling red tape each season.

Safety will remain a high

GROWTH BID Rachel Reeves

priority, but councils will be told to put extra weight on the potential growth impact of licensing decisions.

Rachel Reeves said: “We’re ripping up arduous regulations to help festivals go on longer to create more price-less memories for punters, new jobs and bolster our economy.”

She is also planning to make it easier for pubs and clubs to serve people outside for longer and stay open later.



DARK EARLY

IT'S been three decades since the victims of Fred and Rose West finally received some justice. Three decades since West hanged himself in his jail cell and three decades since Rose was handed a whole life sentence.

The builder murdered at least 12 people between 1967 and 1987 but incredibly that wasn't the first time he had blood on his hands.

West ran over and killed a three-year-old in an ice cream van, two years before his presumed first victim Anne McFall disappeared.

The death was ruled an accident but, speaking for the first time, the boy's family are adamant it was deliberate.

Howard Sounes gained access to more than 100 hours of police interviews for his new book *The Fred West Tapes: Secrets of the Fred & Rose West Murder Investigation*.

Here, in Day 2 of our exclusive serialisation, he exposes family secrets that led to the making of the monster.

Fred West often lied in his police interviews. But some of his most colourful stories turned out to be true.

One of the most shocking was that of Harry Feeney.

West was living in Glasgow with his first wife Rena when he got a job driving a Mr Whippy ice cream van.

One estate he visited was Castlemilk where cheap new homes had been built after the slum clearances. He told police he befriended a three-year-old boy who regularly came to his van.

One day, when Fred was driving out of the cul-de-sac where the boy lived, he heard a dreadful sound.

“There was an almighty bang, and I stopped,” Fred told the police in these previously unseen 1994 interview transcripts. “I was on top of his head, and it was his head that made the bang.”

He looked under his van. “I see that the child was lying underneath, under the back axle,” Fred continued.

In the days after the incident on November 4, 1965, and again after police questioning in 1994, investigators decided it was most likely an accident.

But according to Harry's cousin Isabel Kirby – who was there that day – the boy's parents, labourer Peter Feeney and his wife Patsy, thought it was deliberate.

Peter went to his grave believing Harry was Fred West's first victim.

Isabel, now 72, recently told me the whole story for the first time.

Harry had been playing with her brother Raymond when West's ice cream van appeared. Seconds later there was panic.

“I saw people running, a lot of yelling and screaming,” says Isabel. “It was wee Harry lying in the street.”

Harry's family and friends maintained there had been no need for West to reverse. “He done it for the thrill of it,” says Isabel. “He was just plain evil.”

Fred was questioned at the time. While he was never charged, he fled Glasgow and returned to his home village of Much Marcle, near Gloucester.

According to Isabel, who now lives in Canada, the family never forgot West.

When Fred and Rose made national news in March 1994, Harry's father recognised him immediately.

“The first thing my Uncle Peter said was, ‘That's the f***ing bastard that



FIRST VICTIM Fred with Rena



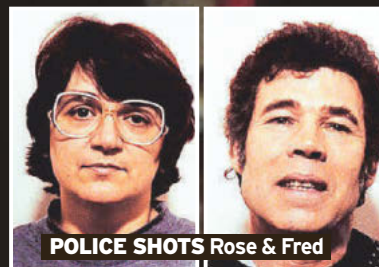
HORROR 25 Cromwell St



GRAVE OF little Harry



TREAT A Mr Whippy van



POLICE SHOTS Rose & Fred

done it to young Harry,” says Isabel. “He said, ‘That f***ing bastard murdered my boy.’ It was by no means West's first scandal. He was born in 1941 and grew up to become one of the “most handsome”, eligible, “charming” and popular bachelors in his rural area.

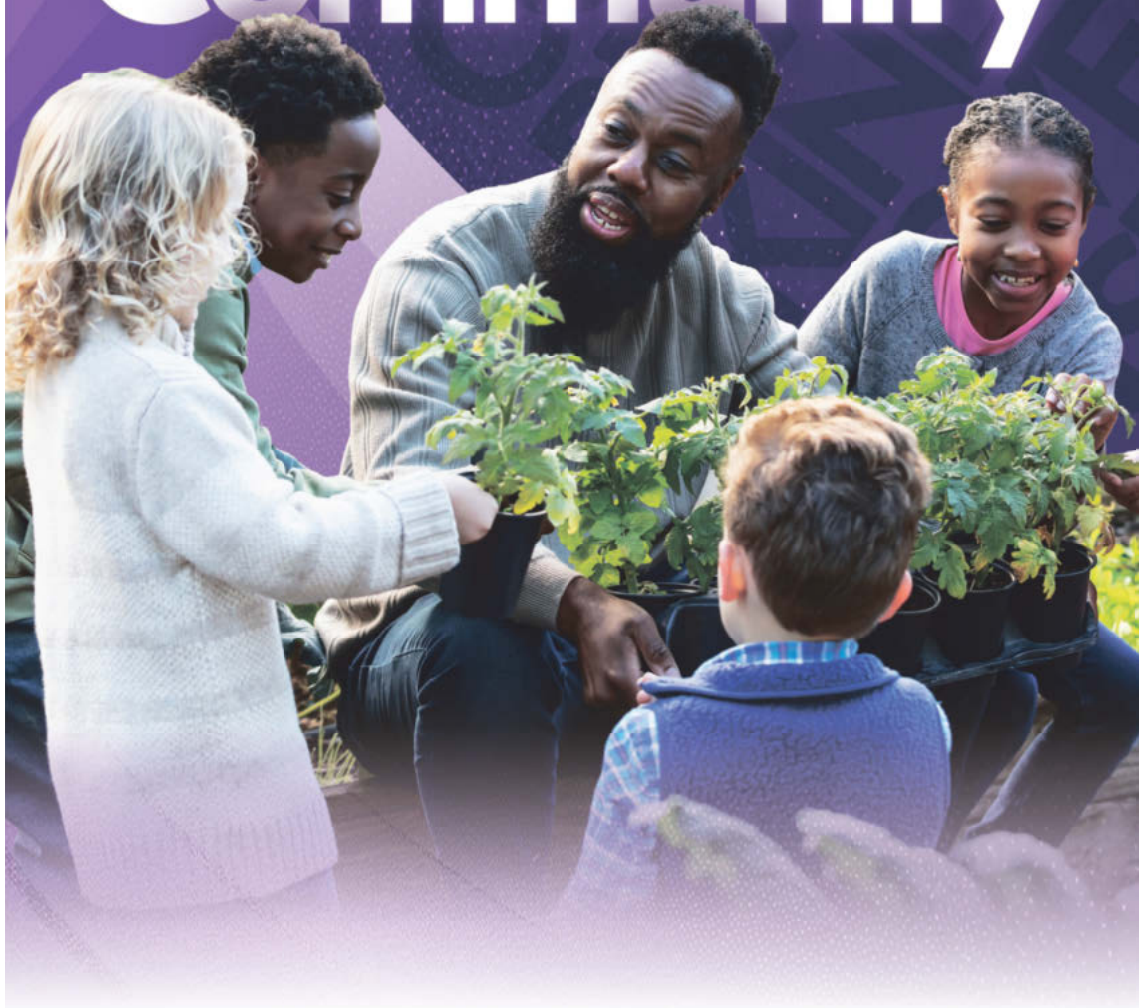
But even as a boy Frederick Walter Stephen West had an innate darkness within him. His parents Walter and Daisy were semi-literate farm workers who had eight children. Two died in infancy, leaving eldest Fred, followed by John, Daisy, Doug, Kitty and Gwen.

“We were a very happy family, very close,” Fred told the police during the

community [kuh-myoo-ni-tee] noun.

A group of people united by place, or by shared values, goals and experiences

Community



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PRIDE OF BRITAIN

AWARDS 2025 **Mirror** P&O CRUISES

YEARS THAT FORMED FRED WEST

MAKING OF A MONSTER



SON Fred as a boy

could commit a sexual offence and get away with it, even if the police became involved.

Shortly after, he began dating a 14-year-old. When she turned 15, Fred pulled over while driving her home one day and attacked her.

"He pushed me on the bank and raped me," the girl told police during the murder investigation in 1994.

His 20s would only get darker. He fell for Scottish teen Catherine 'Rena' Costello, already pregnant with another man's child, married her, went to Glasgow, and left her to prostitute herself to help make ends meet while he worked his ice cream rounds.

When he ran over young Harry Feeney, Fred was just 24. He was now a killer, a rapist, and had almost fathered his sister's child.

Two years later, his mistress Anne McFall went missing while heavily pregnant with his child.

Once again it could have stopped there but it didn't.

Fred confessed to his father that he had buried Anne's body on the edge of the woods and even took him to the site.

"I couldn't go up there on me own at that time," Fred later told his solicitor. "So he walked up there with me. He said, 'Look, son, I'm your father, I'm not going to turn you in. If you can live with it then I'll say nothing.'"

Walter told his wife Daisy who then told Fred's brother John: "Freddy's killed the girl [Anne] and buried her in Kempley Woods!"

No one told the police. If they had, Anne McFall may have been his only victim. Instead, Fred remained at large.

And then he met Rose.

scoops@reachplc.com

■ Howard Sounes helped break the West story and coined the term 'House of Horrors' for the Mirror in 1994. He was also senior producer on the Netflix series, *Fred & Rose West*.

■ Extracted by Jessica Boulton, Contributing Editor



KILLER RAPIST
Bullder West buried his victims in cellar and garden



EVIL West at Gloucester court



'CHARMING' West aged 18 with his three sisters and brother Doug



CRUSH Pal Jean Korbi



WATCH THE VIDEO

"If Fred and Rose had not met we would never have had the House of Horrors"



FAMILY West poses with his parents and siblings at Barry Island in the 1950s

“ He had a lovely smile, a nice wide smile, it lifted up his face. I had a schoolgirl crush on him

ADAPTED FROM THE FRED WEST TAPES
BY HOWARD SOUNES



murder investigation in 1994, as revealed in the new transcripts. "We all protected each other."

Few that knew them – like Kitty's schoolfriend Jean Korbi – agreed.

In reality, Fred's mother wore a thick leather belt which she used to beat her children, a habit Rose West later adopted.

His strict mum also banned girlfriends until he was 21, but his father offered different advice: "Whatever you enjoy, do. And make sure you don't get caught doing it, you know?"

Fred's daughter May later claimed: "He [Dad] said it was a father's right

to break his daughters in. According to him, that is what his father had done." Speaking for the first time about her friend Kitty, Jean recalls the day she learned an awful secret.

"I'm pregnant," Kitty, then 13, announced to a group of friends.

They didn't know that Kitty had a boyfriend. "Oh, it's not a boyfriend, me brother did it. Fred."

Jean was particularly appalled as she had been fond of Fred, then 19. "He had a lovely smile, a nice wide smile, it lifted up his face," she says. "I had a schoolgirl crush on him."

Kitty told them that she and Fred had sex in her bedroom "lots of times".

"She [Kitty] was a bit Dolly Dimple," explains Jean. "The whole family seemed a bit odd [but] I'd never heard of anything like incest, and then she proceeded to tell us how it was done, where it was done."

Jean recalls Kitty saying: "Fred said because I'm his sister I wouldn't get pregnant". Her friends suggested Kitty should have slapped Fred.

"She said, 'I wouldn't do that...I quite like it,'" says Jean.

She adds: "I remember it to this day, even where we were when she

said it, because we were all in shock."

The story reached the police, and in June 1961 a detective interviewed Kitty and West. "Well, doesn't everyone do it?" he asked.

By the time West was brought before a judge, charged with incest, he pleaded not guilty. Kitty refused to testify and West walked free.

Kitty was expelled and had an abortion. She never got over it and died in 2006, haunted by her past. Fred learned from the experience that he

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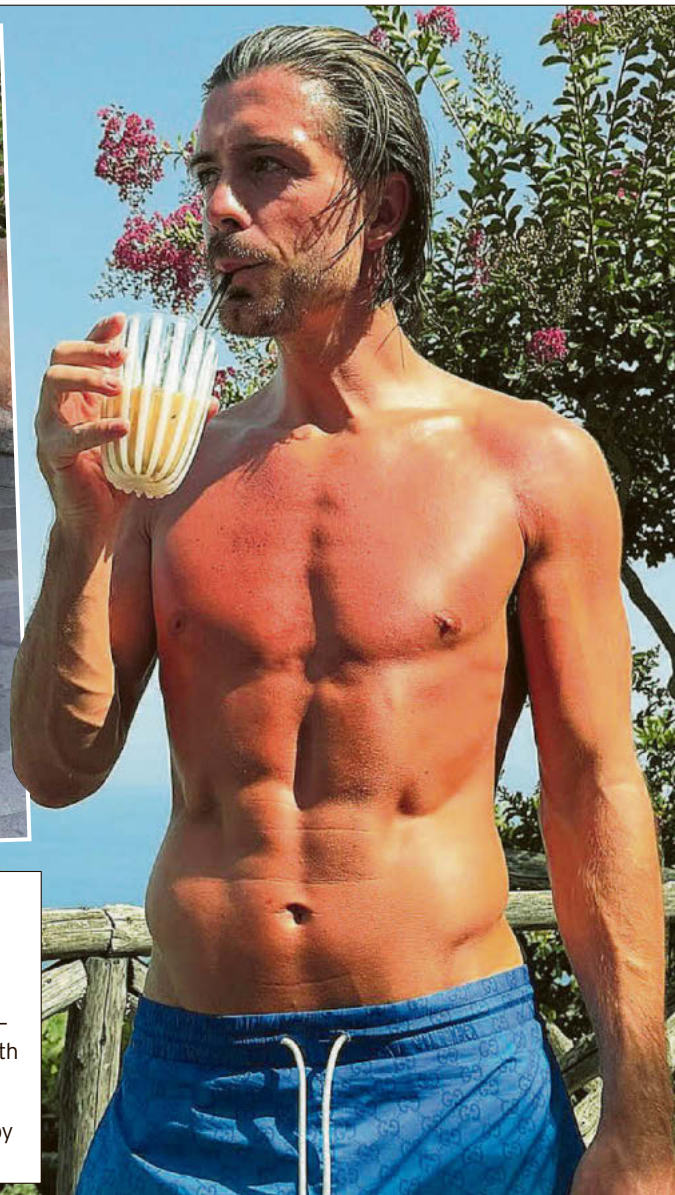


PROUD Sasha, Mila and Jack

Jack's tackling a goal-den tan

MAN City's Jack Grealish soaks up the sun - and a milkshake - on Italy's Amalfi coast with girlfriend Sasha Atwood and baby girl Mila.

His choice of holiday destination fanned the flames of a rumoured transfer to nearby Serie A side Napoli. What a smoothie!



Farage's jail plan 'threat to security'

12,000 Army-built prisons 'half-baked'

EXCLUSIVE

BY **MIKEY SMITH** Deputy Political Editor

NIGEL Farage's plan to use the Army to build prefab jails would endanger national security, say sources.

The Reform UK leader wants private contractors and troops to put up 12,000 "Nightingale" prisons on disused Ministry of Defence land.

He said: "We'll want to use the logistical skills that exist in the Army and our armed forces to make this happen."

But defence sources said this would detract from soldiers' readiness for urgent deployment: "Nigel Farage's half-baked plan to draft the

Army in to build prisons risks national security." A source added that "Putin would certainly be delighted" if troops were moved from Nato's front line for it.

Requests for military aid must normally be approved by the MoD and only after commercial, voluntary sector, and mutual aid alternatives have been discounted.

A Labour source said: "Farage's Nightingale prison plans are a total nightmare.

"Imagine hardened criminals running around a prefab site put together in just 72 hours. These are botch-job plans from a party desperate to look tough on crime."

In 2022/23 the charge rate for each soldier used was £4,000 per week.



NIGHTMARE PLAN Nigel Farage

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You can do it **B&Q**

Runner's 10 marathons for pal who died 10 years ago

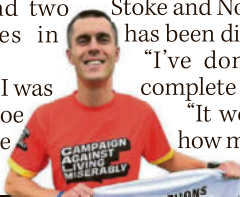
BY PHIL CARDY

A RUNNER is taking on 10 marathons in 10 days across 10 cities to remember a friend who took his life 10 years ago.

Joe Wild aims to raise awareness and money for mental health and two suicide prevention charities in memory of Dan McAllister.

He joked: "He'd have thought I was mad. I hope he'd be proud too." Joe was due to start in Newcastle

'WON'T BE FAST' Joe Wild



yesterday and finishes in the pair's home city of Sheffield on August 3 – the date Dan would have turned 30.

Joe also runs in Middlesbrough, York, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Stoke and Nottingham – but admits it has been difficult to train.

"I've done little bits, but it's a complete unknown" he said.

"It won't be fast but knowing how many people have donated – that'll get me through."



BACK FROM THE

EXCLUSIVE

BY LUCY LAING

VICTORIA Thomas was in the middle of boot camp at the gym when her heart stopped beating.

The netball-loving sports enthusiast had started to feel exhausted after a weightlifting session.

She recalls: "I said to my friend that I didn't feel like I had any power or energy, like it had just drained from my body. I was also feeling slightly dizzy. I'd only just said it when I suddenly collapsed on the floor."

The 35-year-old accountant had gone into cardiac arrest.

An ambulance arrived within minutes and paramedics started CPR – but as the clock ticked on with no result, fears rose that Victoria's heart had stopped for good.

She says: "When it happened, it went black and there was nothing, then I became aware of looking down on my body. I was floating near the roof and was looking down at myself on the gym floor. My first thought was that my legs looked really fat."

"And when I looked at a photo of myself taken just minutes before I collapsed, I could see that my legs were actually swollen."

"I didn't see a light, or feel peaceful, I was just watching myself, and I could see some yellow machines around me."

Eventually, after 17 minutes, Victoria's heart sprang back into life.

Now 41, she says: "They never gave up on me. The minutes ticked by, but they refused to stop trying. I was so young, fit and healthy and it had come completely out of the blue."

Victoria was taken to Bristol Royal Infirmary, where she spent three days in a coma.

Again, she pulled through and doctors fitted her with a defibrillator to restart her heart in the event her body went into cardiac arrest again.

Victoria, who has no family history of heart problems, was allowed home, but over the next few months her heart stopped on several occasions, with the defibrillator shocking it back into rhythm each time.

She says: "I went back to playing netball three weeks after it happened, with my defibrillator."

"It was a shock whenever it went off, but it allowed me to carry on living my normal life, which I was so grateful for."

And in February 2021, Victoria discovered she was expecting a baby.

She says: "Being pregnant was wonderful, but it put pressure on my heart and I started going into cardiac arrest regularly – although the pacemaker would kick in."

Victoria was 24 weeks pregnant when she was given a reason for the repeated cardiac arrests.

Specialists had diagnosed Danon disease – a rare genetic disorder, thought to affect fewer than a million people worldwide.

It is caused by a problem with the LAMP 2 gene, which produces an enzyme that is responsible for a process that keeps cells clean and healthy.

Life expectancy for those with the disease is 19 for men and 24 for women.



ILL During her time in hospital



ON TRACK Keeping fit

“I became aware of looking down on my body. I was floating near the roof and was looking down at myself on the gym floor”

Victoria is the first person in her family to

have Danon disease. She says: "When I read the letter from the genetics team telling me what I had, I was 24 weeks pregnant with Tommy and I was so shocked, I couldn't take it in."

"The doctors wanted to deliver Tommy at just 24 weeks, but I persuaded them to let me hang on a few more weeks. If he had been born at 24 weeks then he may not have survived."

"But by the time I was 30 weeks I couldn't breathe properly because of the fluid build up around my body, so I had to have an emergency caesarean."

Thankfully, newborn Tommy was fine. Victoria says: "It was so amazing to be a mum and to hold Tommy in my arms after everything."

But Victoria, who is now a single parent after splitting up with her boy's dad, discovered her heart had been damaged further by the pregnancy. By the time Tommy was six months, she

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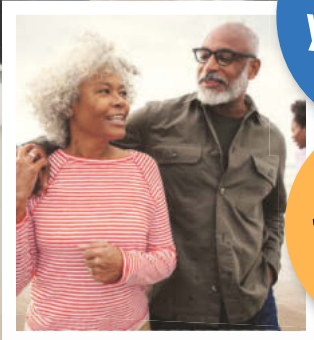


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DEAD TO HAVE BABY & TRANSPLANT



BOUNCE IS BACK
Victoria is competing in the World Transplant Games

Pictures: ROWAN GRIFFITHS

My heart stopped for 17 minutes



ARRIVAL With newborn son



LOVING LIFE She is healthy

was so breathless that even getting up the stairs was a massive struggle.

In April 2022, a hospital check-up found her heart was functioning at just 11%, meaning she was experiencing end-of-life heart failure.

She says: "I asked the doctors how long I had left and they told me I had just another couple of months."

"It was devastating. All I could think of was Tommy. I vowed I wouldn't leave him."

Victoria was put on the urgent donor register. She says: "I had to stay in hospital, and when my sisters brought him in to see me I would cuddle him and cherish every moment I had with him."

"Time was running out for me, and I had to pray that they were going to find me a heart in time."

Two hearts were found – but further tests revealed they weren't suitable. Victoria, who lives in Gloucester, says: "It was devastating,

Each time I'd get my hopes up thinking this was it, that I was going to be saved.

"And then I was told that the operation couldn't go ahead. I didn't know if they were ever going to find a heart in time. I'd given up all hope."

But in April 2023, finally a suitable and usable heart was found. Victoria had the transplant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. The surgery was a success and she was allowed home that May.

She says: "I'd been in hospital since Tommy's first birthday in October and now I was finally home with him. I couldn't believe it." Apart from a few episodes of initial rejection, Victoria is now

back to full strength.

She is also back to being sporty, playing netball four times a week, and she is due to compete in both volleyball and basketball at the World Transplant Games in Germany

next month. She says: "After the transplant, I didn't think I was going to be able to play sports again."

"However, I was introduced to the British Transplant Games and that opened my eyes to the fact I could do exactly what I wanted."

"I played volleyball and I was picked for them to play for the British team."

Tommy is now three, and tests have shown he does not have Danon disease. Checks have also put Victoria's other relatives in the clear.

The mum is grateful to her donor's family, and hopes that they get the chance to see that she has done something amazing with the brave decision they made at a terrible time.

She adds: "I'm spending time as a mum with my son and I'm back playing the sport that I love. I feel like I've been given a second chance at life, and to be a mum. It's the greatest gift I could ever have asked for."

“All I could think of was Tommy. I vowed I wouldn't leave him... I had to pray that they were going to find me a heart in time”

EXCLUSIVE

BY PHIL CARDY

THE highest rate of drink-drive convictions is in Northampton, and for drug-driving it is Liverpool, according to DVLA figures.

Some 175,000 people nationally were done for the former and 96,000 for the latter in 2020 to 2024.

In Northampton, 4.8 drivers per 1,000 were prosecuted for boozing before getting behind the wheel in the five-year period, compared to just 0.8 in Central London.

Liverpool's drug-driving rate was 6.2 drivers per 1,000 while the Shetland Islands, Scotland, saw just 0.2.

The stats also revealed nowhere in the South of England makes the top 10 of worst places for either category.

Northampton is named as drink driving capital

Free Car Mag's James Ruppert said public transport links are far better in the South than the North.

"You'll always get a cab in Central London, or a bus, or a train and mostly you can walk or stagger to

wherever you need to be. Driving while incapacitated is not an excuse but signifies options for travel are very limited in parts of the country."

Among those convicted in Liverpool was Jamie Hughes, 23, of Huyton,

who admitted causing the death of girlfriend Kate Swale, 21, in a motorway crash after he took ketamine. He got six years nine months.

In Northampton, motorist Phillip Gobvu, 42, was over the alcohol limit

twice in six days and given a suspended jail term in February.

Separate stats show in the past five years 1,199 people died when drivers were affected by drink or drugs.

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Getting silly with it

ACTOR Will Smith plays the part of a tourist perfectly as he jokes around at the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The Gettin' Jiggy Wit It rapper, who was taking some time out before a gig, said on Instagram: "Too close to the tower to not do my part to help keep it upright!"



HANDS-ON Star Will shared tourist snaps on social media



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Mask refusal nurse is fired

A NURSE was sacked for not wearing a face mask while visiting elderly and vulnerable patients in their homes in the pandemic.

Ellie Louise Bennett said she refused "until someone can prove Covid exists" and said she was medically exempt, the Nursing and Midwifery Council heard.

Blackpool Victoria Hospital fired her in 2023.

The disciplinary panel imposed conditions and sanctioned her but did not bar her from nursing.



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SOFT CELL

Inspectors praise chilled out jail

EXCLUSIVE
BY STIAN ALEXANDER

IT looks more like an Airbnb advert but this is a cushy jail.

Inmates are treated to beanbags, sofas, board games, a wall-mounted TV and air conditioning.

The room is part of a special unit for women at HMP Send in Surrey.

It was praised by prison inspectors who said the chilled out surroundings encouraged good behaviour.

The independent substance-free living unit (ISFL) also has a pleasant grassy area outside with picnic benches and pot plants.

Those on the unit can join a choir or take painting classes. Some are not cuffed for trips outside the jail.

One inmate at the unit near Woking, who is among 60 in cells known as pods, told inspectors:

"Being able to cook what you fancy, having aircon and a pod to myself has had a positive effect."

Charlie Taylor, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, said the unit was a "more relaxed environment" where inmates had a "good level of freedom".

His report stated: "Excellent new pods had replaced the old E and F wings and had been designated as the independent substance-free living unit."

"Women there were particularly positive about the impact on their well-being of the open space and quieter environment."

Prisons minister James Timpson said: "Staff at HMP Send have shown what can be achieved by supporting women to get out of a cycle of crime so we cut reoffending and fewer people become victims in the future."

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PICNIC Benches outside the unit

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A MIXED MARTIAL

EXCLUSIVE

BY JANINE YAQOUB
TV and Showbiz Editor

VIOLENT teenage drug-taker Aaron was on a path of self-destruction heading towards prison or death until he received a shock to his system.

Police were locking him up virtually every week and his loving parents, Danny and Elaine, had almost given up on the lost soul.

But then he started going to fighter and community activist Steven France's Made 4 The Cage gym in Sunderland.

Aaron is just one of many forgotten lads from a city ravaged by cuts and austerity whose lives have been turned around at the mixed martial arts gym.

Aaron and Steven's stories of growth, discovery and redemption – along with those of Sam, Faiz and Lennon – feature in *Poised*, a powerful documentary being tipped for Oscar success.

Aaron said: "I was a bit feral. Honestly, I was like a street dog. If you got too close to us, said the wrong thing, straight away I was going at you."

He said the gym is "the best therapy I've ever been to in my life".

SCRAPHEAP

Steven, 46, is battling the poverty and hopelessness, helping the next generation avoid the same traps that almost consumed him.

He reached a junction in his own life 20 years ago when his father killed himself. He said: "I had to say to myself, the writing's on the wall. The odds are not good."

"There's people around you who are going to prison for a long time. The way they were already coming to a dead end in their life at such a young age."

"We're thrown on the scrapheap. Your options are very slim, work at Nissan or a call centre. I'm grateful for those places but if you do have ambition it's hard."

Steven found solace in MMA and went on to become a black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and an England coach in the sport.

He said: "It transformed my life and it's doing the same with these young lads. It's about me trying to get people from troubled, difficult backgrounds. Getting these kids, with some complex issues, to stick to what is the hardest sport."

"The main thing about MMA is discipline. You forget about everything because you haven't got time to think about anything else. It's that intense."

He added that the sport humbles people and is a powerful tool in the fight against violence.

Aaron, 20, said: "In 2020, I was at rock bottom. Drugs, fighting, getting locked up. I was taking MDMA [ecstasy]. At 14, I did crack cocaine. I lost loads of weight. It got to the point where my hair was falling out, I was that stressed. I



LOVING Aaron with parents Danny & Elaine



HOPE FOR FUTURE Steven France



DEATH THREATS Faiz had to flee Iraq

“It takes all your pain and past trauma away as with MMA all you are thinking about is fighting

was scratching at my face all the time. I thought I either make a

change now or I'm going to live like this until I die.

"I thought the only way I'll get out of this is if I rob a bank and get millions and move abroad. Or just kill myself. I was either gonna end up in prison or dead."

When he was linked up with Steven through Sunderland's Positive Steps programme in April 2022, Aaron was told to be at the gym each morning at 5am.

It was the shock to the system he needed. "Every day I used to wake up and think, what on earth have I

got myself into? I'm going there to get picked up, to get slammed back on the floor, to get picked back up, to get slammed back on the floor. It wasn't even physically draining, it was mentally draining. But over time you build a strong wall.

"It takes all your pain and all your past trauma away because all you're thinking about is fighting."

"Once you're at rock bottom there's only one way to go and that's up and this kind of sport will help you get there. Those who've got inner anger and just need a release, this is the best thing I've ever done that's helped me."

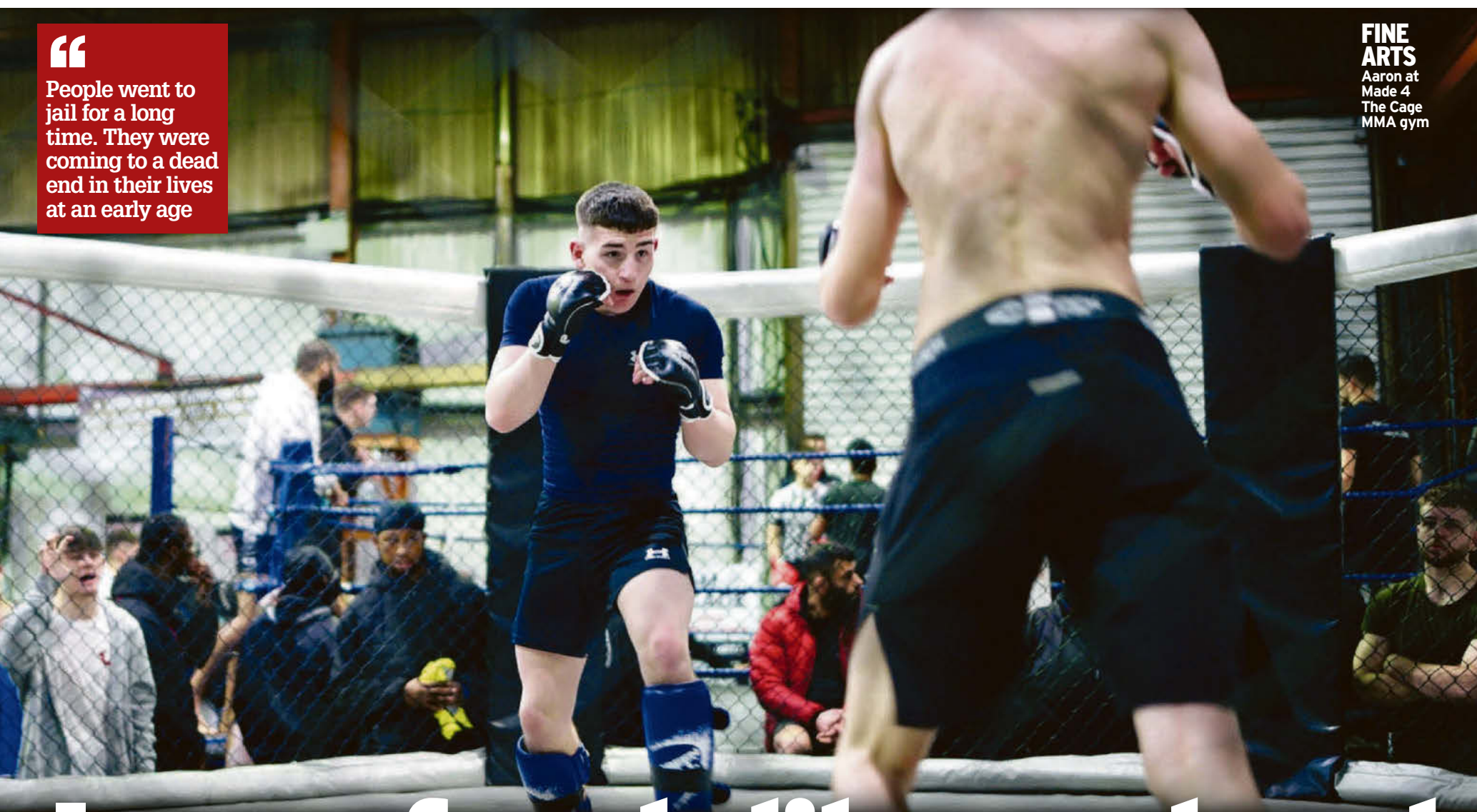
Aaron now works at events space The Point in Sunderland and

ARTS GYM GIVING KIDS A CHANCE

“

People went to jail for a long time. They were coming to a dead end in their lives at an early age

FINE ARTS
Aaron at Made 4 The Cage MMA gym



I was feral, like a street dog... this has been the best therapy of my life

wants to become cabin crew for Emirates. He is one of many lads who have been helped by Steven's programme.

Sam, 25, spiralled into nefarious activities after losing his mum to kidney failure... until he found salvation in mixed martial arts.

Steven said he was banished from Newcastle by his family and moved to Sunderland where his dad lived.

"Sam spent three months in his bedroom. His mental health was not good. And then he came across me and the rest is history," Steven added.

Sam and his brother

now own a demolition firm which works across the country. Faiz, 20, left Iraq because of death threats and persecution. He walked from Minsk in Belarus to Calais and has had no contact with his family since. Steven

said: "Faiz talks about how hard it is to get to Britain as an asylum seeker. He was 14 and licking leaves to get water. Now he's got a full-time job, drives a BMW, got his own house. He doesn't do any martial arts now but it's fantastic he's part of society. He's a taxpayer."

Lennon was just 14 when he joined the gym to escape the streets.

The film also highlights a 78% cut to the area's youth services in recent years, leaving people like Steven to plug the gaps.

His project itself was nearly scrapped when funding was not available.

He said: "The money I get literally just keeps the project running. I feel like the North - and especially the North East - gets left behind. We're left up here to defend ourselves. We are the forgotten part of the world."

Steven hopes Poised will show the need for better investment in youth services. He said: "Prevention's got to be better than cure."

Poised was celebrated at last month's Raindance Festival, where it was nominated for Best Documentary Feature and Best Cinematography. That means it now qualifies for British Independent Film Awards selection, which could take it all the way to the Oscars.

"I'm really trying to help other

young people. There'll be other Stevens, other Sams, other Aarons. There'll be hundreds, if not thousands, of them across the country. Through me doing this film, we can try to make a difference."

He has certainly made a difference to Aaron's life. He said: "I was watching the documentary and I seen my younger self and I just thought he didn't deserve it. I just wanted to give him a big hug through the screen."

"When I look back, I really did not think I was gonna make it past 16. I thought I'd have been dead or in prison. I think I would have if it wasn't for Steven. He showed me what I can do with my life."

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time to shine



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your
best
life



explore



Thames traveller

See page 54&55

Inspiring carers
share their story

See pages 46&47



Health



unwind

All the latest
movie, music and
theatre reviews

See page 41

Inject a burst of colour
into a summer garden



dig in

See pages 58&59



talk money

Plan ahead now
so you can enjoy
your retirement

See page 45

Reader Offer in partnership with **Yimbly.com****MORPHY RICHARDS
ACCENTS PYRAMID KETTLE**

A good brew starts with a reliable kettle. And this one does more than look the part. The Morphy Richards Accents Pyramid Kettle is designed to be simple, fast and efficient, whilst looking good. With a generous 1.5 litre capacity, it's large enough to make six drinks at once. The rapid boil element brings water to the boil in no time, and a clear water window makes it easy to fill accurately, helping save energy. There's a removable limescale filter too, so every cup tastes clean and fresh. Finished in a classic pyramid shape with smart gold accents, this kettle pairs a bold look with everyday

function. Comfortable to lift and steady to pour, it suits kitchens where design matters – and so does the quality of a good cuppa.

Available in 2 colours:



Black Silver

✓ 1.5L capacity

✓ Rapid boil

✓ Removable limescale filter

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★★★★★

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Terms & Conditions: Online orders postage and packaging applies.

MUSIC with JAMES CABOOTER**ALICE COOPER** The Revenge of Alice Cooper ★★

A throwback to the bar-room rock 'n' roll of yester-century, the reunited band sound is dialled in and robust. The same can't be said of their frontman whose campy charm largely abandons him here. He's short on menace and humour, and the lyrics are dull. It's lacking the imagination of Cooper's pomp, particularly during unnecessary "suggestive" moments like Up All Night.

**MABEL** Mabel ★★★★★

This is the sound of an artist rediscovering herself. Mabel never seemed comfortable in mainstream pop but this resets her sonics, with tunes like January 19 blending introspection with dub and reggaeton flavours, whereas Turn Me Up offers a new brand of soul power. If Rihanna was fronting this, the acclaim would be endless. I hope Mabel gets her flowers.

**PAUL WELLER** Find El Dorado ★★★★★

Weller reinterprets stripped-back versions of songs by the likes of the Bee Gees, Richie Havens and Christy Moore. What's most startling is the quality and control of his vibrato, particularly when exposed on Small Town Talk and country flecked title track. Noel Gallagher and Robert Plant feature but Weller is the definitive star, powerfully moving on Never The Same.

**MADONNA** Veronica Electronica ★★

Intended as a companion to Ray Of Light, new edits will satisfy the hardcore. The demo of stuttering gem Gone, Gone, Gone is the most essential insight into sonic development, along with two fine Sasha mixes. The rest hasn't aged well – Fabien Waltmann's drum-machine adventures overpower The Power Of Good-Bye. Fascinating if a tad underwhelming.

STAGE with STEFAN KYRIAZIS**Burlesque** ★★
 Savoy Theatre to September 6
burlesqueonstage.com

Christina Aguilera and Todrick Hall bring her 'guilty pleasure' 2010 film musical to the stage. I wish they hadn't. The excellent cast of this frantic mess are an explosion of vocal and dance talent shafted by disastrous writing and directing, allegedly a mish-mash from Hall after many original creatives quit.

As Ali, the Iowa waitress who heads to New York to find her mum and be a singer, Jess Folley dazzles with an outrageous voice. Film numbers Show Me How You Burlesque and the roof-raising Bound To You outshine forgettable new schlock written by Hall who turns Stanley Tucci's original tenderly wry club manager into a spotlight-hogging diva. He also plays Ali's hometown choir mistress like a low-rent Black Mrs Doubtfire.

Neither role has any dimension beyond camp in a show that sacrifices emotional and dramatic beats, and the film's subversive feminist heart, for panto gags and glitz. The orchestrations are often tinny. Staging and choreography are slick but cramped. A pale imitation of other shows, it's all (faux) fur coat and no knickers.

SING STREET
 ★★★★★
 Lyric Hammersmith to
 August 23 lyric.co.uk

John Carney's exuberant 2016 coming-of-age cult film about troubled teens in


TALENT
 Cast let down
 by staging

1985 Dublin is brought to charming life by an electrifying young cast, many of them newcomers.

Conor (Sheridan Townsley) is moved to the rough Synge Street Catholic school by his broke, feuding parents and offers to put wannabee model Raphina (Grace Collender) in his (non-existent) band's new video.

His mad scramble to make that a

reality is a fun farce of motley new mates and disastrous dates that deftly layers in the darker aspects of failing families and economic crisis. The kids all play their instruments, the lovebirds and Conor's big brother Brendan (Adam Hunter) sing gorgeously across Carney and Gary Clarke's brilliantly Eighties-evoking soundtrack.

It's sweet and scrappy and put a big smile on my face.


CHARM
 Townsley
 as Conor

SUNDAY PUZZLES



Feet up... cup of tea... brain in gear

£250
to be won!

Quizword & Crossword

Two sets of clues, two different answers - all on the same grid. Choose one or the other.

Quizword

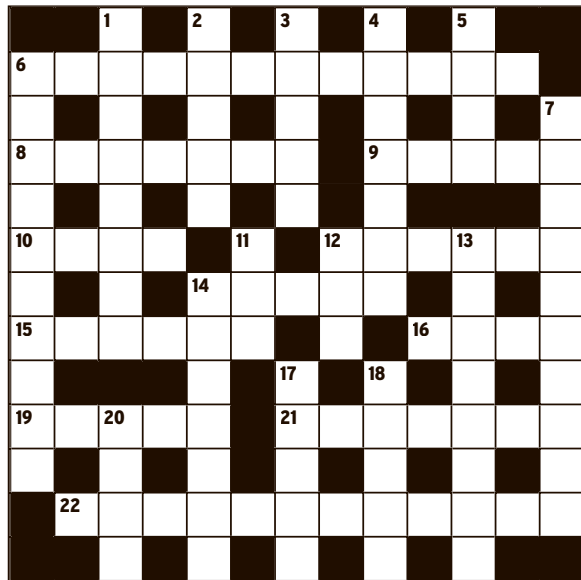
ACROSS

- 6 1992 film drama starring Mel Gibson and Jamie Lee Curtis (7,5)
- 8 Racecourse at which the Grand National is run (7)
- 9 Light fabric with a fine ridged or crinkled surface (5)
- 10 Paul -, Swiss artist whose works include 1928's Cat and Bird (4)
- 12 See 6 Down
- 14 SI unit of luminous flux (5)
- 15 Olaf -, East German cyclist; 1988 Olympic individual road race gold medalist (6)
- 16 Victor -, Chilean theatre director and singer-songwriter murdered in 1973 (4)
- 19 Peter -, Best Director Oscar nominee for Breaking Away and The Dresser (5)
- 21 - Sea, body of water between Australia and SW New Guinea (7)
- 22 1954 film Western starring Joan Crawford and featuring Sterling Hayden in the title role (6,6)

DOWN

- 1 Robert -, Austria-born sailplane designer; first pilot to fly a glider across the English Channel (8)
- 2 Chris -, winner of the US Open women's singles tennis championship from 1975-78 (5)

- 3 City in Bouches-du-Rhone, France, housing a Roman amphitheatre (5)
- 4 1996 Ben Elton stage play; 1998 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy winner (7)
- 5 2007 musical film drama starring Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova (4)
- 6 and 12 Across US architect whose designs include Fallingwater, Price Tower and Unity Temple (5,5,6)
- 7 2009 action-comedy film starring Donald Faison and Mike Epps (4,3,3)
- 11 Tributary of the Narew River forming part of Poland's border with Belarus and Ukraine (3)
- 12 John Wyndham novel published posthumously in 1979 (3)
- 13 The -, 1967 comedy-drama film starring Anne Bancroft and Dustin Hoffman (8)
- 14 Catlike mammal such as the banded - or spotted - (7)
- 17 2010 romcom starring Emma Stone and Penn Badgley (4,1)
- 18 River that flows to the Atlantic at Lisbon, Portugal (5)
- 20 Barry -, co-creator and co-writer of BBC Radio comedy show Round the Horne (4)



Crossword

ACROSS

- 6 Writing implement (9,3)
- 8 Sports match (7)
- 9 Follow (5)
- 10 Loose flowing garment (4)
- 12 Eight-legged predatory arachnid (6)
- 14 Unit of purity of gold (5)
- 15 Keep quiet or unseen (3,3)
- 16 Masculine (4)
- 19 At no time (5)
- 21 Method of restraining someone (7)
- 22 Motorway verge (4,8)

DOWN

- 1 Easily bent, pliable (8)
- 2 Nozzle (5)
- 3 Any animal with two feet (5)
- 4 Try (7)
- 5 Untidy state (4)
- 6 Soon (6,4)
- 7 Overly sentimental film or book (4-6)
- 11 Uncooked (3)
- 12 Feeling unhappy (3)
- 13 Card suit (8)
- 14 Companion (7)
- 17 Turning tool (5)
- 18 Love affair (5)
- 20 Calf meat (4)

Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

Two-speed coffeebreak

Two sets of clues - but the answers are the same.

Cryptic clues

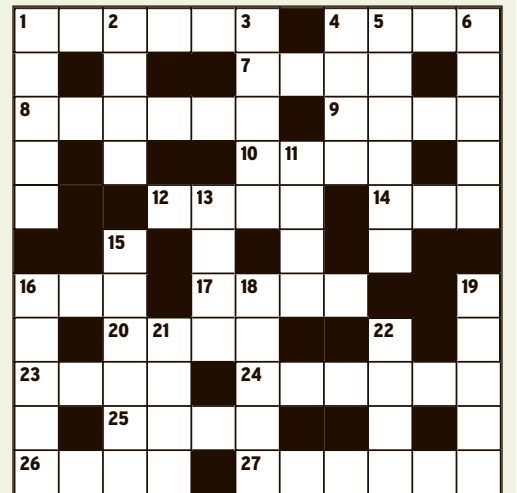
ACROSS

- 1 Pound for a flour mixture (6)
- 4 Most unexcited about song (4)
- 7 Picture one prisoner (4)
- 8 Brigade in lone arrangement with soldier (6)
- 9 Hand fits awkwardly (4)
- 10 Drunkard gets loud, then quiet (4)
- 12 Betting journalist was rushed (4)
- 14 Wander out of terror (3)
- 16 Partner's painting (3)
- 17 Got up like a flower (4)
- 20 Damn vermin (4)
- 23 Left atmosphere in burrow (4)
- 24 Purpose of camping? (6)
- 25 Yearn for a tree (4)
- 26 Bound to change diet (4)
- 27 Flexible game (6)

DOWN

- 1 Fashion a slab of wood (5)
- 2 Got a new dress (4)
- 3 Remove soap from broken siren (5)
- 4 Tenor leaving to peer (4)
- 5 Joined the team (6)
- 6 Come in from barren terrain (5)
- 11 Does translate some verse (4)
- 13 Left some wine (4)
- 15 Band unsettling priest (6)
- 16 Distribute a great deal, say (5)
- 18 Rosie damaged tree (5)
- 19 Croat turned performer (5)
- 21 Raid failed without water (4)
- 22 Overburdened with a word (4)

Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror



Quick clues

ACROSS

- 1 Strike repeatedly (6)
- 4 Melody (4)
- 7 Religious image (4)
- 8 Military division (6)
- 9 Clenched hand (4)
- 10 Mild (4)
- 12 Raced (4)
- 14 Stray (3)
- 16 Craft (3)
- 17 Romantic gift (4)
- 20 Rodents (4)
- 23 Den (4)
- 24 Determined (6)
- 25 Conifer (4)
- 26 Fastened (4)
- 27 Tree product (6)

DOWN

- 1 Type of wood (5)
- 2 Roman gown (4)
- 3 Wash out (5)
- 4 Aristocrat, informally (4)
- 5 Merged (6)
- 6 Go in (5)
- 11 Poems (4)
- 13 Harbour (4)
- 15 Line (6)
- 16 Apportion (5)
- 18 Willow (5)
- 19 Thespian (5)
- 21 Dry (4)
- 22 Action word (4)

Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

CHECK THE SOLUTIONS NOW!
TWO-SPEED COFFEEBREAK 0905 789 0003 (80p/min)

TERMS & CONDITIONS: Calls cost 80p/min plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1 + 1 standard network rate message. SP: Spoke Interactive Ltd. Helpdesk 0333 202 3390. Min age 18+. All lines close midnight tonight except where stated. Std Mirror Rules apply, see www.mirror.co.uk/rules.

The name game

Hidden in the grid is the name of a TV personality. Answer the questions, then rearrange the letters corresponding to your answers to fill in the name.



Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

BOX1: In food and drink, what is meringue?
An alcoholic beverage (K)
An Irish bread (L)
A type of noodle (T)

BOX4: Who was instructed to kill the Nemean Lion as a penance?
Hercules (Y)
Homer (W)
Hippocrates (V)

BOX7: Who wrote and starred in the sitcom dinnerladies?
Jennifer Saunders (J)
Caroline Aherne (I)
Victoria Wood (M)

BOX10: Himesh Patel (pictured) played Tamwar Masood on which TV soap?
Coronation Street (U)
EastEnders (R)
Hollyoaks (Y)

BOX2: In what year did the Glorious Revolution, which overthrew James II, begin?
1688 (E)
1777 (A)
1866 (N)

BOX5: What was Carl Fabergé famous for creating?
Animal brooches (W)
Jewelled eggs (L)
Watches (A)

BOX8: What, in the Harry Potter universe, is an object used to store part of a person's soul?
A horcrux (A)
A gobstone (S)
A remembrall (M)

BOX3: By what name is the historic figure Edward Teach better known?
Blackbeard (N)
Billy the Kid (E)
Genghis Khan (F)

BOX6: Which band had a 1977 hit with the song 2-4-6-8 Motorway?
Tom Robinson Band (L)
10cc (R)
The Clash (T)

BOX9: Normal People and Conversations with Friends are novels by which author?
Sally Rooney (I)
Cecelia Ahern (F)
Maive Binchy (K)



30-sec brain teaser

Boost your brain power with our 30-second test. Start with the number on the left and follow the instructions. Beginners should aim to complete the puzzle in 30 seconds. Intermediates should finish their own puzzle and the Beginner's Challenge. Genius players have 30 seconds to complete their own plus the Intermediate. Good luck! Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

BEGINNER	42	4/7 of this	+51	7/15 of this	+41	75% of this	-41	×5	+12	ANSWER
INTERMEDIATE	241	+42	Reverse the digits	-257	Increase by 40%	-94	7/9 of this	+272	60% of this	ANSWER
ADVANCED	72	×3	+51	2/3 of this	+571	6/7 of this	-577	Increase by 80%	+421	ANSWER

Mirrorgram

Solve our ten-letter anagram below



Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

If you like these...

...You'll love our jam-packed puzzle pullout every weekday in the Daily Mirror

SUNDAY PUZZLE



Check your puzzle solutions, Stars and more, in next week's

SUNDAY Mirror

Speedbreaker

Target time: **14:46 mins**

Test your codecracking skills against us! We took 14 minutes and 46 seconds to complete this puzzle – can you do better? We've taken a completed crossword puzzle and replaced each letter in the grid with the same number throughout. The completed grid will include all letters of the alphabet. If you find it hard to get going, call the Extra Letter line where you will also find a little bit of extra help. Remember, none of the answers are proper nouns.

Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

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
				F								
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
								A		R		

13	23	24	25	18	25		5	24	9	25	15	
22		22			18		24			3		
24		7		4	20	14	23	2	8	9	5	12
12		4			8		25			26		
	20	24	4	15	23		19	22	21	21	1	23
17			17		10				24			16
18		11	4	25	8	26	22	8	22	1		9
25			18				9		25			8
8	4	23	24	22	21		24	22	25	11	12	
		1			1		5	F		9		13
3	19	9	16	25	9	2	22	A	1		6	23
		8			26		24	R		18		26
8	23	16	11	8			23	10	11	23	24	8

Just a bit of fun

Which one of our three definitions is correct?

CERAMIC

- 1 Protuberance composed of horn
- 2 Wax covered
- 3 Of or pertaining to pottery

Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

Scribble space

£200 to be won!

Which letter is represented by the number '1' in today's Speedbreaker? Call 0904 161 1111 (£1.50/call) or text SPEED and your answer, name, house number (or name) and postcode to 88833 (£1.50/text).

Weekly winner printed in Saturday's Daily Mirror.

SOLUTIONS

Call 0905 789 0006 (80p/min) for 5 extra letters or the full solution, or text SPEEDCLUE to 64343 (£1/text) for 5 extra letters. Deduct one minute from the target time for each extra letter used.

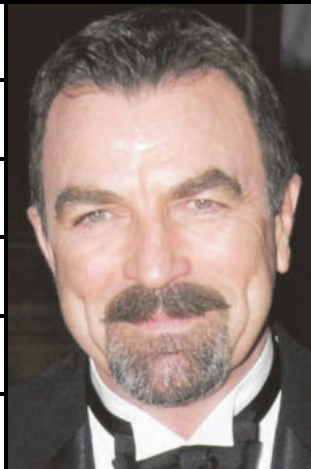
Calls to solutions line cost 80p/min + network access charge and texts cost £1 + 1 standard network rate message. Calls to the Speedbreaker competition line cost £1.50/call + network access charge and texts cost £1.50 + 1 standard network rate message. You may receive free promotional messages, to opt out send NOINFO to the shortcode (ie 88833 or 64343). Competition lines close midnight Friday. One winner will be randomly selected from all correct entries between Saturday and midnight Friday. Min age 18+. SP: Spoke Interactive Ltd. Helpdesk 0333 202 3390. Full T&C's at www.mirror.co.uk/rules.

Arrow Word

Arrow Words are like crosswords, but the clues are printed inside squares on the grid. Write your answers in the blank squares in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Solutions in next week's Sunday Mirror

Black police van	Rut Take	Damon US actor	Stipulation	Warns of danger	Space or diplomacy	Embrace closely	
		Funda-mental				Electronic messages	
			Count-down's Riley				
Regulate					Thurman starred in Pulp Fiction		
Sir Walter novelist							
			Staves (anag.)				
Night before			Atmosphere Tom pictured		Dirty place La Bonita, hit song		
Dowels				Nevertheless Nobility member			Edge along
Male swan	Regain					Asian country	Remains For each year (3,5)
	Accumulate						
	Very strong wind			Vigour	Computer symbols	Is England, film	Clumsy Billie US pop star
	Made less severe						Spherical green vegetable
	Land measure						
		Dier, footballer			Clinton, US politician		
		Frozen water			Pieces		
Nocturnal mammal				_ home or _ phone			Vegas, US city
Stylish							Food fish
			Household animal	Decree legal term		Pool of still water	Find and get rid of (4,3)
				Exceed			Colombo, city in Lanka
Severely damaged ship			Price			Rejects with disdain	
Before			Loo				
				Accounts inspection		Great respect	
					Expressing division	_ miss, narrowly avoided collision	_ Campbell, pictured Go wrong
			Ava Golden Age Of Hollywood actress	Destroyed			Mineral spring
			Genera-tion				Mimic
							Golf standard
						Block of detergent	
			Stringed instrument			Chrysalis	
			Trusted advisor				
						Afterwards	



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♈ Aries March 21-April 20

You have limited time to share with your partner and family. If you notice some tension in the atmosphere, then it might be a sign that someone needs a proper change of scenery. You have the skills to lead a new project and this will be both challenging and exciting for you.

For more call **0905 789 4171** (80p/min + network access charge)

♉ Taurus April 21 - May 21

Someone sees you as highly attractive. Escaping to a private retreat will provide a great opportunity to concentrate on each other's needs. Rely on your instincts to understand your partner's wishes and desires. You should be able to easily pick up on what they want.

For more call **0905 789 4172** (80p/min + network access charge)

♊ Gemini May 22 - June 21

Even if you enjoy your work it can still feel good to unwind with people who are entertaining. Taking a break from your job will leave you feeling revitalised and you will be more productive on your return. Your aim is to achieve a better balance between your personal and work life.

For more call **0905 789 4173** (80p/min + network access charge)

♋ Cancer June 22 - July 23

If you're single and looking for love, dreaming about it won't bring romance your way. Plan a fun outing with friends or sign up to an online dating service. Attending a workshop, lecture or seminar could be another path. Or spend more time with an attractive neighbour who has shown interest.

For more call **0905 789 4174** (80p/min + network access charge)

♌ Leo July 24 - August 23

If you sense a relationship is growing stale, there are several actions you can take. Choose to ignore this feeling in the hope you've got it wrong or proactively work towards rekindling the connection. If you're single and lonely, be your own best friend by picking activities that bring joy.

For more call **0905 789 4175** (80p/min + network access charge)

♍ Virgo Aug 24 - Sept 23

It hurts when your partner or a loved one seems unconcerned about your health issues. You're exhausted from hearing their unjust accusations. Regardless of whether you want to hear it, a well-intentioned in-law or older family member will offer some unsolicited advice.

For more call **0905 789 4176** (80p/min + network access charge)

♎ Libra Sept 24-Oct 23

The longer you allow a tense situation to continue without taking action, the more unbearable it will become. You can either set an ultimatum or choose to leave. It takes courage to make changes, but it's the only way to resolve it. Once you take the first step, you'll wonder why you waited so long.

For more call **0905 789 4177** (80p/min + network access charge)

♏ Scorpio Oct 24 - Nov 22

Someone you met some time ago is on your mind. You wonder whether you should have made more effort to get to know them. You are thinking about reaching out but the fear of being rejected holds you back. Why not send a text or call? Your anxiety will transform into excitement.

For more call **0905 789 4178** (80p/min + network access charge)

♐ Sagittarius Nov 23 - Dec 21

A housemate or relative will forget about a promise that they made to help you out today. Their lack of consideration for you is as disappointing as their failure to follow it through. It's at times like this that you question whether you are putting all your trust in the wrong people.

For more call **0905 789 4179** (80p/min + network access charge)

♑ Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 20

You must choose whether to focus on your family or your career, as you cannot be in two places simultaneously. If you are single and seeking a romance, it could be shyness that prevents you from pursuing a relationship. Accept invitations to get-togethers and make an effort to get out.

For more call **0905 789 4180** (80p/min + network access charge)

♒ Aquarius Jan 21 - Feb 19

A romantic or business partner's support helps keep you moving in the right direction. When times are tough, you can rely on them to keep you motivated. In exchange, you give them encouragement when they need it. This relationship enables you both to thrive.

For more call **0905 789 4181** (80p/min + network access charge)

♓ Pisces Feb 20 - Mar 20

Getting involved in a new sport will be a great source of enjoyment. Your mental and physical wellbeing are closely linked and as when you get active physically, your mind also expands. Many of your best thoughts will come to you while you are out and about too.

For more call **0905 789 4182** (80p/min + network access charge)

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Reader Offer in partnership with **Yimbly.com**

A SMART WAY TO KEEP CATS ACTIVE



Cats of all ages need regular exercise, but finding ways to keep indoor pets active can be a challenge. The PawHut Cat Wheel is specially designed to encourage healthy movement, giving your feline a safe and fun way to stretch their legs. With flexible rotation and a built-in brake, you can control the motion for added safety and peace of mind. The inner running surface is made

from corrugated paper, offering a satisfying texture for scratching while your cat moves. It's also replaceable for easy upkeep. Designed in a classic oak finish, the wheel complements any room and provides a daily routine your cat will look forward to.

Dimensions:
H94 x W91 x D33.5cm

yimbly.com/Offer44 Quote Offer44 Offer ends 4th August

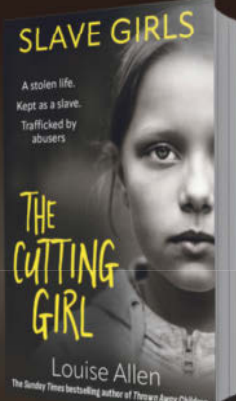
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time to UNWIND

with
DAMON SMITH

STAR RATINGS

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Good
★★★ Worth a look
★★ Poor ★ Don't bother

FILMS



MOTLEY CREW
Snake, Shark,
Wolf, Piranha
and Tarantula

Animal instincts

THE BAD GUYS 2

Cert PG ★★★
In cinemas now

This tail-wagging sequel to the 2022 computer-animated comedy based on Aaron Blabey's series of graphic novels shows it's still good to be bad for five scoundrels led by a debonair wolf, voiced by Sam Rockwell.

Master pickpocket Mr Wolf and his larcenous crew comprising Mr Piranha (Anthony Ramos), Mr Shark (Craig Robinson), Mr Snake (Marc Maron) and Ms Tarantula (Awkwafina) struggle to be accepted as the good guys after a lifetime of skulduggery on the wrong side of the law.

An all-female group of criminals led by vengeful snow leopard Kitty Kat (Danielle Brooks) blackmail the reformed quintet

into carrying out one final job to protect the shameful secret of Mr Wolf's sweetheart, governor Diane Foxington (Zazie Beetz).

The Bad Guys 2 is bolder and brasher than its predecessor but every bit as frenetically entertaining.

The original film's pleasing amalgamation of Zootropolis and Despicable Me is more pronounced, welcoming back Pierre Perifel to the director's chair for a breathlessly staged heist, co-directed by JP Sans.

Screenwriter Blabey tethers his outlandish plot on terra firma and in deep space to a rare metal called MacGuffinite – a tongue-in-cheek nod to an object or person used in cinematic storytelling to brazenly sustain

the narrative momentum. In this quick-witted caper, MacGuffinite's addition to the Periodic Table sets in motion a predictable redemption, so the eponymous scamps can snatch victory from the slaving jaws of "a 24-carat catastrophe".

“Queens of the jungle roar loud and sit prominently at the top of the food chain

Heavily stylised visuals once again meld hand-drawn artistry with digital wizardry to stunning effect.

Queens of the jungle roar loudest and sit more prominently at the top of the food chain, actively determining the outcome of outlandish action set-pieces.

Disappointingly, when characters head into space, a protracted fart gag delivers the only laugh outside the Earth's atmosphere.

THE FANTASTIC FOUR: FIRST STEPS

Cert 12A ★★★★★
In cinemas now

Matt Shakman's rip-roaring romp hits the reset button on the glitchy Marvel Cinematic Universe and confidently kick-starts phase six with a 1960s-inspired, retro-futuristic flourish.

In the Earth-828 timeline, scientist Reed Richards (Pedro Pascal), wife Sue (Vanessa Kirby), her coqsure brother Johnny (Joseph Quinn) and Reed's best friend Ben Grimm (Ebon Moss-Bachrach) are humanity's protectors.

Silver Surfer (Julia Garner) heralds the arrival of planet-devouring space god Galactus



TEAM
Moss-Bachrach,
Pascal, Kirby
and Quinn

(Ralph Ineson) and the plucky quartet rally to guarantee human survival.

The Fantastic Four: First Steps twists and shouts through two hours of interstellar exploration and pseudo-science with consummate ease.

By turns funny, thrilling and heartbreaking, this opening foray for Mister Fantastic,

Invisible Woman, Human Torch and The Thing is a giant leap forward for cinemaking from the 2005 and 2015 origin stories that failed to capture the spirit of the comics.



STANDOUT
Moss-Bachrach
as The Thing

Four scriptwriters strike a balance between humour, action and romance, gift-wrapped with splendid digital effects.

Pascal and Kirby are handsomely paired and their molten screen chemistry doesn't require any additional heat from Quinn's incendiary heartthrob. Action shots

marshal just enough dazzling digital trickery to quicken the pulse without losing sight of the family-orientated emotional drama.

Fantastic in name and execution.

ZERO

Cert 15 ★★★
In cinemas now,
on digital
platforms from
August 11

In the high-octane thriller Speed, a runaway Los Angeles bus is primed to explode if the vehicle slows below 50mph.

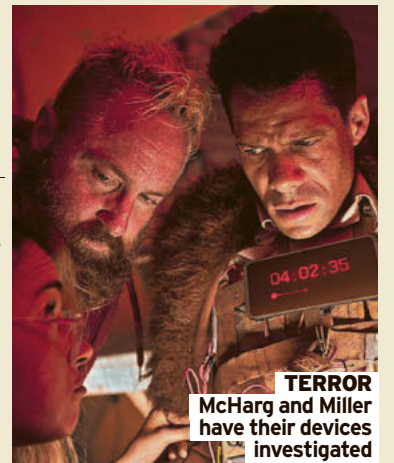
Here director Jean Luc

Herbulot's nerve-jangling thriller features another bomb on a bus, only this time, the device is strapped to the chest of a nameless American tourist known simply as #1 (Hus Miller), who wakes on stationary public transport in Senegal and must complete a series of tasks before the contraption's relentlessly ticking 10-hour timer reaches zero.

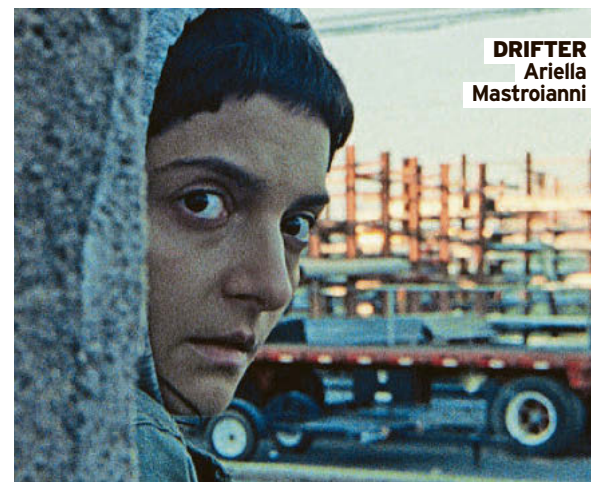
A menacing voice (Willem Dafoe) on the end of a Bluetooth earpiece keeps the central character and the film in perpetual motion, introducing a second tourist #2 (Cam McHarg) in similar dire straits as a potential ally. Tasks the stricken duo are ordered to complete are misinterpreted as terrorist acts and #1 and #2 must avoid police and riotous locals, who resent the western invaders in their midst.

Zero whitens knuckles in the opening hour but loosens its grasp as narrative threads are looped together into a neat statement about political dynamics between America and international partners.

Every second counts for the ill-fated tourists and Herbulot wrings maximum tension out of 88 minutes.



TERROR
McHarg and Miller
have their devices
investigated



DRIFTER
Ariella
Mastroianni

GAZER

Cert 15 ★★★★★
In cinemas now

Time flies but the heroine of first-time filmmaker Ryan J Sloan's paranoia-soaked thriller isn't having fun.

Young mother Frankie Rhodes (Ariella Mastroianni) suffers from dyschronometria, a rare neurological condition which prevents her from accurately perceiving time. Holding down a job is tricky when her mind drifts so she listens to self-made cassettes designed to root her in the moment.

At a suicide survivors' group, Frankie meets Paige (Renee Gagner) and she offers Frankie \$3,000 to help her wriggle free from her controlling brother. Disappear cleanly in exchange for cash. It sounds too good to be true.

Self-financed by Sloan and partner Mastroianni, who co-wrote the script and shot at weekends in New Jersey on 16mm film in between his callouts as an electrician, Gazer is an impressive demonstration of sleek style on a limited budget with echoes of Christopher Nolan's amnesiac mindbender, Memento.

Frankie's condition makes the simple act of quickly retrieving car keys from an apartment into a high-wire act where one second's loss in concentration can spell daydreaming disaster. Mastroianni's sympathetic lead performance feeds steadily rising tension and when police arrive, Frankie realises too late she may have been lured into the bear trap of a bigger mystery.

LIVE FOR TODAY

Running with terminal cancer
By Kevin Webber



WEATHERING THE STORM
Day one in the sun, below, rowing in the rain

Another oar-inspiring charity achievement

There are three things I love - creating memories with friends, doing something good for charity, and pushing myself to the extreme, so last week I was delighted to get to do all three simultaneously.

Eight friends and I set off on the River Thames near Oxford and spent two days rowing over 70 miles to Thames Ditton in a 32ft boat.

With an average age of 60, it was no mean task to row further than any of us had before, and it was a journey of two halves.

With the sun beating down, we made our way along the unspoilt parts of the Thames. Part of the aim was to raise awareness of prostate cancer, hopefully nudging those who saw us to consider visiting Prostate Cancer UK's online 30-second risk checker, and as we rowed people often applauded us as we carried on our journey.

Our overnight stop was at the National Sports centre at Bisham Abbey. And even though I was tired I felt inspired by the images of great athletes who had been there before us at various Olympics. Our boat was nothing like the one rowed by legends Redgrave, Pinsent and Cracknell, but the photo montages there reminded me of what can be achieved with desire and hard work.

Day two and woken by the sound of heavy rain, we all knew what was ahead, so our tired limbs, shoulders and sore backsides took on a second 10-hour day to get to our finish. During the row we passed through some 26 locks, and while some we had to do ourselves, many were staffed by lockkeepers who always met us with a cheery smile, reminding us we were making a difference.

On top of rowing for prostate cancer awareness, we also raised over £1,000 for the MS Society as a crew member's daughter has life-limiting multiple sclerosis, making the effort even more worthwhile.

We were all delighted to cross the finish line, forgetting the pain we had endured. We also felt lucky to be able to take on and succeed in such a challenge as we remembered our crewmate, Mark, who rowed with us last year and was cruelly taken from us and his family aged just 49.

As ever, we were only able to do this because others supported us in many ways for which we always remain grateful.

I hope that you, like us, never see age as a barrier to push yourself a little while helping others, so have a think about what you could do.

Until next week, Kev

“We were delighted to cross the line, forgetting the pain we'd all endured”

Rosie and Billy Gunn

talk about both the strains and pleasures of caring for a child with a rare genetic disease. And how charity Tree of Hope has supported them

When Rosie and Billy Gunn discovered their third baby was “small for her dates” in the womb, they weren't overly concerned. After all, they already had daughter Florrie, six, and son Billy Jnr, four, and neither had been big babies but developed normally. Then a late pregnancy scan picked up something more serious.

“I went on my own because I thought it was just routine, but when they told me they thought something was wrong with the baby's brain I was hysterical when I rang Billy,” explains Rosie. However it was to be many months after the birth of baby Dusty, now almost two, before the couple would get a proper diagnosis as to why their beloved daughter couldn't feed properly, suffered seizures, and wasn't developing as she should.

Misdiagnosis

Dusty has an ultra rare genetic condition, Stage 4 PDH1 deficiency, that prevents the body from converting food into usable energy. Instead, it builds up as lactic acid, slowly poisoning from within. It is believed only around 400 people worldwide are thought to be living with it.

Doctors where she was born at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, and then at Southend Hospital where her feeding tube was fitted, had no idea what they were dealing with because there was a 17 million to one chance of it happening.

It took a year of misdiagnosis after she was born in September 2023 before Dusty, from Rayleigh, Essex, was referred to London's Great Ormond Street children's hospital, which had only dealt with two previous cases.

Billy, 34, who runs Imperial Heating Services in Ingatestone, Essex, says: “It has been very isolating – there are only a couple of cases known to Great Ormond Street, one in Ireland and one up North. We would like



CARING
Florrie settles Dusty's feeding tube, right, making up a feed

We don't know how long we have but Dusty brings us such joy

to reach out to those families. We don't really know what the future holds but we do know we want Dusty to be as happy, independent and comfortable as she can be for as long as we're lucky enough to have her.”

Rosie is due to give birth to their fourth child any day now, who has been genetically tested in utero and doesn't have the disease. She is supported by the older children when Billy is at work.

One evening, after putting them to bed, Rosie was having a shower when Dusty was sick and started choking. Rosie says: “Florrie wanted Dusty in her bedroom and it gives us

peace of mind too knowing she's not alone. When I was in the shower it was Florrie who got Dusty up out of bed so she didn't choke while her brother was running around getting clean sheets.

“They are so good with her. We have not told them that their sister will have a shortened life. They know she is ill, though, and I think Florrie knows more than we think. She has grown up quickly with this.”

Available statistics show 40% of babies with the condition will not live beyond three months, 60% beyond a year and 90% beyond four years.

Every day Dusty has to be fed, via a tube, a strict ketogenic diet – an intake of high fats and low carbs, in order to regulate her lactic acid levels – and also requires constant physiotherapy.

Billy explains that the therapy available through the NHS is limited, so they had to turn to a private therapist to meet Dusty's needs, and have already spent thousands of pounds with each session costing £100.

“The therapy we're paying for is trying to straighten out her legs, but she is growing fast at her age, so we don't want to delay,” he says. “If we keep applying physical therapy,



LIVE WELL

Edited by
MATT NIXSON &
HANNA GEISSLER



RAISING AWARENESS
Rosie, Billy, Dusty, Billy Jr and Florrie



The Tree of Hope charity

Founded in 1992 by Corinne Gardener, originally to serve families in Bexhill, East Sussex, Tree of Hope has grown into a national charity, helping children and young people across the UK and Ireland access essential healthcare that isn't readily available via the NHS and social care.

Georgie Lowry, head of marketing and family support at the charity, says: "Every day in the UK families of seriously ill or disabled children face the harsh realities of an overstretched healthcare system. From the high cost of specialist treatments to waiting times for essential services, the barriers are many and the consequences for the child's health can be devastating."

Tree of Hope provides families with ongoing support, charitable benefits, and a package of support and resources to help families raise money for medical treatments and services associated with a child or young person's healthcare.

It is currently working to "bridge the gap" and expand its reach to help more parents in the UK caring for seriously ill or disabled children.

Patrons of the charity include Paralympic medal winner, swimmer and triathlete Claire Cashmore.

Claire, who was awarded an MBE for her services to swimming in 2017, says: "It is a huge honour to have been asked to be a patron of the Tree of Hope charity. I have been very lucky that my disability has not stopped me from living life to the full and I am really passionate about helping those with a disability or illness that can't get the support they need to live a life without boundaries."



PATRON
Paralympian
Claire
Cashmore

PICTURES: JOHN MCLELLAN

she can learn to roll over. At the moment, she can't roll if she is sick. With repetition, we hope she will learn, and that could save her life one day."

Again "big sis" Florrie steps in to help. "She's like another little mum," says Billy.

"She's taken on so much for someone so young - it's just instinctive. Incredible really. She'll help carry Dusty, do her physiotherapy stretches with her, and talk to her constantly."

Dusty weighs less than a typical almost two-year-old, but she is alert, smiley, and emotionally engaged - a miracle, say her parents, given that many children with the condition never show recognition or emotion.

"She locks eyes with Florrie and her four-year-old brother Billy Jr, she laughs, she responds to sounds. Her giggles mean the world to us," says Billy.

Earlier this month, Dusty's parents took her to meet up with medical pioneer Dr Aamer Khan, who runs the Harley Street Skin Clinic and Longevity Clinic in London's Devonshire Place. Dr Khan noted how well she connected and responded to him. He reassured them

that Dusty could make further progress and have a happy and comfortable life, bringing joy to the family despite her rare condition.

In sharing their story, Billy hopes it will not only raise awareness to help other families, but also encourage those with experience of dealing with PDH1 deficiency to reach out.

The Gunns, who were teenage sweethearts, are now working with children's charity Tree of Hope, which supports families of seriously ill children. They've set a fundraising goal of £30,000 to cover therapy, a wheelchair, home adaptations, and feeding equipment.

"But the emotional cost is impossible to overcome," says Billy.

"You live in alert mode. If Dusty stops moving, your heart stops. You can't plan anything."

Sometimes the loving couple let the emotion out in the quietest of places - parked in the car, away from the children. "We'll ask, 'Why us?'" he admits. "But we try to find meaning.

"Maybe our other kids will grow up more empathetic."

"Most people have never heard

of PDH1 deficiency," he adds. "But early diagnosis is vital.

"If sharing our story helps even one other family, it'll be worth it."

BY **KAREN ROCKETT**

■ Visit treeofhope.org.uk for further information or donate at justgiving.com/campaign/dustys-story

“She locks eyes with Florrie and she laughs, it means the world to us”



ATTENTIVE
Dusty with big sister Florrie

What is Stage 4 PDH1 deficiency?

Pyruvate dehydrogenase deficiency is characterised by the build-up of lactic acid presenting with neurological problems. Signs usually appear after birth, but they can vary widely among those affected.

The most common is lactic acidosis, which can cause nausea, vomiting, severe breathing problems, and an abnormal heartbeat. Babies usually have delayed development of mental abilities and motor skills, too, such as sitting and walking. Other problems include intellectual disability, seizures, weak muscle tone, poor coordination, and difficulty walking.

Some individuals may have abnormal brain structure, such as the underdevelopment of tissue connecting the left and right halves of the brain, or patches of damaged brain tissue. Most do not survive past childhood, although some live into their teens or adulthood.

(For privacy purposes we have used a model's photo for David)

DAVID PHILLIPS was enjoying retired life, spending time with friends and family and playing a lot more golf! However, a horribly embarrassing moment on the golf course left him feeling incredibly low and he lost all his confidence.

"I think we can all get caught out with the odd dribble now and then, but nothing compared to the day I really wet my trousers on the golf course!

"Thankfully it was the 18th hole! One of the guys was taking his shot when Ben came up and quietly said to me, 'Dave, I think you've been caught out.' I thought he was accusing me of cheating, but he then nodded down to my trousers. I couldn't believe it, I had a big wet patch. I was mortified."

"Don't worry Dave," he said, "why don't you head home and I'll tell the guys that you felt ill, but let's meet up soon."

"Cheers Ben." I said.

"I couldn't get back to the car fast enough. I didn't want to bump into anyone and I headed home. Carol, my wife, was out for the day, which made it easier for me to sort myself out."

I was so embarrassed

"I was so embarrassed I didn't really know what to do. I put it to the back of my mind and subconsciously made excuses to not play golf, but to be honest I didn't want anything so embarrassing to happen again, and I certainly didn't want to face Ben."

"Over the next few weeks I avoided going out and was feeling very low. It was so depressing to think that I wouldn't be able to get out and about for fear of wetting myself. At least only Ben noticed, but come to think of it maybe the others had too, but didn't mention it. The embarrassment and shame was really getting to me."

"It took an embarrassing accident on the 18th hole to discover the solution to my incontinence!"

I soaked the bed

"Then, one Sunday morning in bed, Carol gave me a cuddle then yelled out, 'Dave, the bed's wet!' I got out of bed, and needless to say, my pyjama bottoms were soaked."

"Was this really happening I thought. True to form, Carol jumped up, stripped the bed and said, 'Not to worry darling, accidents can happen.'"

"That's when I told her about the other little accidents I'd had and the mortifying experience on the golf course. It was such a relief to share my worries with her and loving as ever, she booked an appointment at the GP."

"To cut a long story short, after a few tests my GP told me that I was suffering with urinary urge incontinence. He told me to make some lifestyle changes and suggested I buy incontinence bed sheets and pads."

Pads were bulky and uncomfortable

"Carol had already bought pads, but they were bulky and uncomfortable and not very reliable. They would move about

and I would still have leaks coming through, sometimes they worked and sometimes they didn't and I felt like everyone could tell that I was wearing them."

"About three months later and with a lot of encouragement from Carol, I finally found the courage to go back to the golf club! Would you believe it, just as I was getting my clubs out of the car, Ben walked by! Top timing, I thought and a few other choice words!"

"Dave, I'm sorry but I'd been meaning to give you a call. I hope you don't mind me saying, but I know what you are going through. I had prostate surgery a few years ago and have suffered with terrible incontinence ever since." he told me.

"I was really sorry to hear what he had gone through and thought it was very good of him to confide in me. I told him what I had, and that my GP said I had to get some pads."

"Oh, don't use them mate, they are awful. That's what I wanted to call you about. My life only got back to normal when I found Securi-Briefs. They are just like normal pants, and I've never been caught out once whilst wearing them. They stop any

leaks no matter how bad, and you put them in the wash to use again and again. I tried lots of brands but believe me these are the best. I'll text you the details. I can't tell you how much of a difference they made to my life. Anyway, I'd better be off, have a good game."

"I was so relieved, he's a good bloke and to hear about these briefs lifted my spirits. I'd never have guessed that Ben had this problem too. And true to form he texted me the number so I called and ordered 3 pairs that evening."

Just like normal briefs

"Ben was right, they are like normal briefs. They fit really well, and make you feel confident and secure that you are not going to have any accidents. They come in different absorbency levels, so I use the Super ones at night and Standard ones during the day and thankfully I've had no more leaks!"

"Since then, I've discovered that so many men of a 'certain age' suffer with this problem. I'm no longer embarrassed and think more should be done to encourage people to be open about it, and that's why I am



David Phillips says Securi-Briefs keep him dry all day long and without odour problems

happy to share my story here. Remember, it isn't the end of the world, life can go on just as normal, and try Securi-Briefs to get your confidence back on track."

■ Securi-Briefs are available exclusively from Branshaws for £29.95 a pair. However, as part of a national promotional campaign, they are giving away two pairs when you order two! Customers can order on their freephone 0800 138 4900.

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time to TALK MONEY



The Smarter Spender £

How to get ahead financially means making smart money decisions. Here is a snapshot of the money information you need to know.

Market movements

Index	YTD (%)	10yr (%)
FTSE 100	12.80	7.12
S&P 500	8.06	13.55
MSCI World	8.36	11.29
MSCI Emerging Market	14.41	7.51
Gold Price	20.04	13.54
UK Property market proxy	3.06	2.40
Deposit Rate	1.15	0.20
RPI	3.16	4.56
CPI	2.43	3.32

Total return in pounds sterling. YTD is the year-to-date percentage total return. 10 yr(%) is the compound annualised growth rate over 10 years. The deposit rate reflects a typical savings account at £2,500. RPI and CPI are inflation measures.

Great savings rates

- Chase is offering a variable savings account of 5%pa
- AlRayan Bank is offering a 1-year fixed rate of 4.60%pa
- Birmingham Bank is offering a 3-year fixed rate of 4.44%pa
- Birmingham Bank is offering a 5-year fixed rate of 4.51%pa
- Please check the terms and conditions before depositing your money. If you hold money with a UK authorised bank or building society, you are covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) up to £85,000 per eligible person, per bank or building society.

Great mortgage deals if you're remortgaging:

- Barclays Bank is offering 3.78% fixed rate until 30/09/2027 at 60% LTV
- Monmouthshire Building Society is offering a 4.10% fixed for two years at 80% LTV

If you're moving home:

- Lloyds Bank is offering a 3.69% fixed until 30/11/2027 at 60% LTV
- Lloyds Bank is offering a 3.92% fixed until 30/11/2027 at 80% LTV

If you're a first-time buyer:

- Newbury Building Society is offering a 4.19% discounted rate for 3 years at 90% LTV
- Halifax is offering a 4.55% fixed rate until 30/11/2028 at 100% LTV
- Please check the fees and terms and conditions of the mortgage before arranging it. Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.

Forget copper and go for gold

Start planning now to ensure a happy retirement

Preparation is the secret to a happy retirement...

Not surprisingly, I'm a big believer in planning. That's especially true when it comes to the golden years of our retirement. But will those years really be golden, or more like copper?

It is during times like these that it is especially important we make time to think and plan our future finances.

I am in the fortunate position to have shared the retirement plans of many over my 30 years as a financial planner. I know, I don't look that old!

Meeting these people has shown me some patterns, things people have had in common to help them enjoy a successful, vibrant retirement.

You can benefit from that experience, and plan ahead to help make your retirement the best years of your life.

Know your number

How much will you need to have saved to enjoy a comfortable retirement?

I call this your number and it is unique to you because it depends entirely on your retirement plans.

You can calculate your number by writing down all the things you expect to spend in your retirement years. That may seem difficult but if you break it down into a plan it will become clearer.

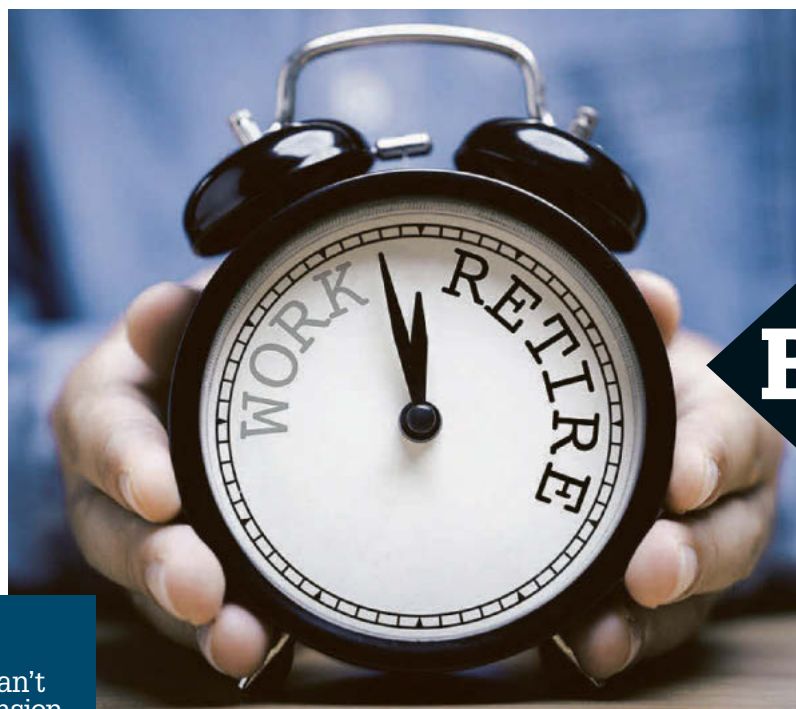
Some costs you'll know, like utilities. Others you'll need to estimate. And this is where those patterns come in.

Life's chapters

In my book *The Money Plan*, I refer to the three chapters of our retirement.

In your first chapter of around 10 years, you'll likely be more active and want to travel more often and further afield – play out your bucket list – so you'll spend more.

I enjoy receiving emails and postcards from my clients as they travel the world. I get to enjoy their retirement



“ If you can't find pension details, try government's free tracing service

with them. The second chapter often begins around 75 and typically sees less travel, or at least less long-haul, which reduces costs.

However many people take up new hobbies around this age. It may be caring for grandchildren, photography, learning a musical instrument or golf.

During the third chapter, around 85 onwards, expenditure is more about getting around and help within the home. Do we keep a car or not? Do we need a cleaner or gardener? Medical spending is often the overriding cost.

Once you've added up all your projected costs, you can plan your monthly budget. Use the free Cashflow App at WarrenShute.com or download a spreadsheet to help.

Do you have enough?

To cover these costs you will have a mixture of your state pension and any private pensions. Request updated

statements to see where you are now. If you remember having a pension but can't find the details, try the free pension tracing service – gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details.

If you have enough now, you could ask why do you continue to work?

If you're short, calculate how long would it take to meet the shortfall using the rule of 300: multiply how much you're short each month by 300 to see how much more you need to save. So if you need an extra £200pm, you need to target an additional £60,000 in your pension (£200x300).

For a more accurate picture, you can use my free cashflow app at WarrenShute.com.

Start planning your retirement now – not just by knowing your number and saving but by deciding how you will live the rest of your life. We only get one chance, so make it count.

■ For more retirement planning ideas visit LexingtonWealth.co.uk



Getting old? 5 things you need to know

Retirement planning isn't just about knowing your number and the rule of 300. You need to think about more than just your pension pot.

1 What exercise can you do to keep yourself physically fit and healthy, and what activities can you do to keep socially engaged?

Good mental health is just as important.

2 Is your home appropriate for your later years? Consider downsizing in your 60s-70s while you're still mobile and social, so you can potentially meet new friends.

3 Consider how you will get around when you have to stop driving.

4 Plan for the worst and expect the best. Arrange your lasting powers of attorney early.

5 Don't leave a liability to others: sort out your will without any excuses.

The **BIG** save

Q&A

I have pensions from many years ago. How do I track them down?

WARREN: For any pensions from previous employments, use the pension tracing service gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details. It won't give you the value or location of your pensions, but it will give you contact details for providers. You can also visit my website for tips.

How much can I safely draw down each year from my pension?

WARREN: It's often said that withdrawing 4% of your pension pot annually as an income will see you through over 30 years of retirement without running out of cash. But a set rule like this doesn't take into account your changing needs throughout retirement, and if you break the rule one year it can have big consequences. So tread carefully and plan ahead as advised.

No10 acts to drive up EV sales

The UK government has introduced a £650million initiative aimed at accelerating the shift from petrol to electric vehicles. Under the plan, the latest in a series of incentives designed to promote cleaner transport, buyers can receive grants of up to £3,750 towards qualifying new EVs under £37,000.



US firm Nvidia will restart sales of its H20 AI chips to China after the Trump administration confirmed the necessary licences would be approved. The company's CEO, Jensen Huang, had campaigned for the easing of trade restrictions. The news sparked a rise in Nvidia's share price.

GET in TOUCH

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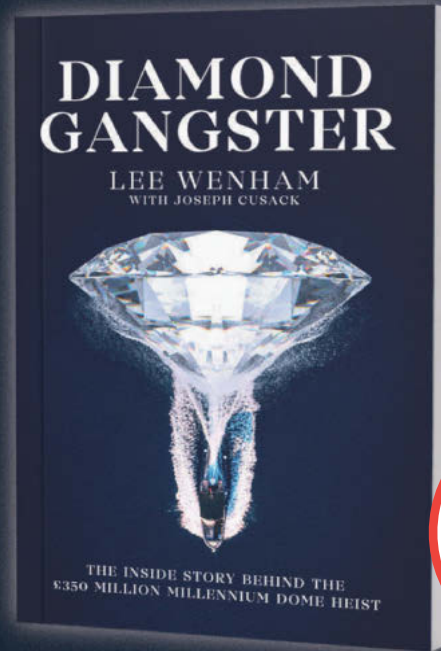
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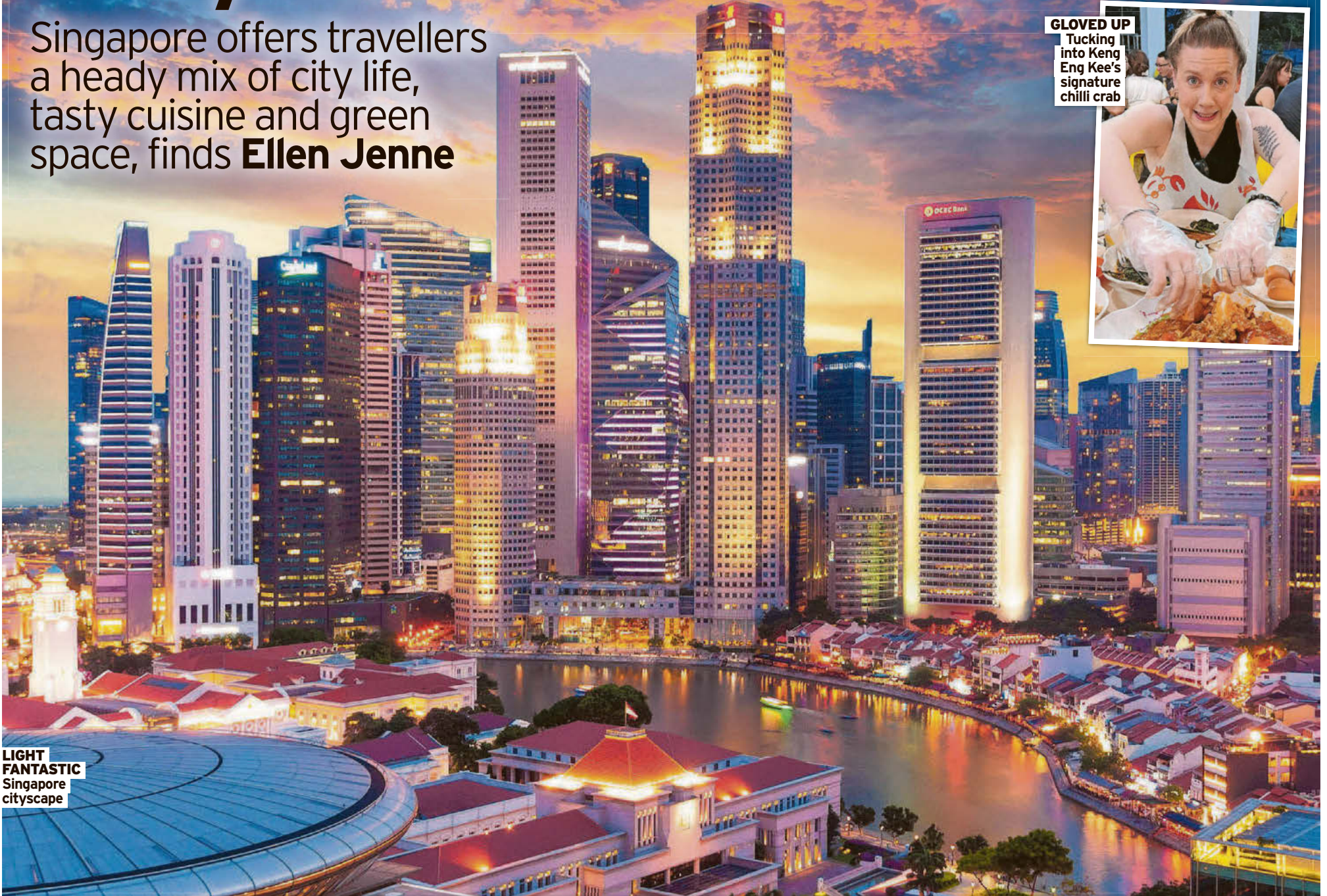
time to EXPLORE



Edited by
NIGEL THOMPSON

Skyline full of stars

Singapore offers travellers a heady mix of city life, tasty cuisine and green space, finds **Ellen Jenne**



GLOVED UP
Tucking into Keng Eng Kee's signature chilli crab



LIGHT FANTASTIC
Singapore cityscape

Dispel any preconceptions about Singapore – it's not what you think. Where "Aussies stop off to defrost" after escaping the cold of Europe for the warm shores of home? A popular layover spot? A concrete jungle filled with suits?

The only thing I knew about the country was its aversion for chewing gum and its penchant for cleanliness. Maybe so, but the

Singapore I found is full of colour and flora, with a climate that changes with the wind.

Some 47% of the island country is still designated as green space, and even though there are plans for development, you can't escape the marriage of nature and modernity.

A busy business district flanked by the harbour and the unmissable Gardens by the Bay and historic Chinatown marries the

cultures of Singapore's heritage perfectly. The Urban Redevelopment Authority carefully curated the country to make it fit for the future. Everything works seamlessly.

We spent the first day wandering through the Botanic Gardens' National Orchid Garden, getting up close and personal with flowers bred for visiting dignitaries. The Royal Family, several high-ranking

politicians, and others were given their own special breed.

A prime example of Singapore's vision is the Gardens by the Bay, where the shores light up under the Supertree Grove's Garden Rhapsody.

But for a real step into nature, Bollywood Farm in Kranji, led by a force of nature Ivy Singh, offers an education for any budding

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE

Get on track to save up to 25% on hand-picked hotels with Eurostar's rail and accommodation packages. The discount applies when buying return tickets to destinations including Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam for stays on selected dates through to October 31. eurostar.com/packages

Cruise news

BY **NIGEL THOMPSON**

A 'crime wave' will hit Virgin Voyages' Valiant Lady on a five-night autumn sailing in the Caribbean.

Departing from Miami on October 10 and with stops in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, and Virgin's private island in Bimini, The Bahamas, the line's first True Crime Voyage will offer "spine-tingling storytelling" in

partnership with iHeartPodcasts offering live tapings of cult-favourite shows such as Betrayal, Buried Bones and Stuff They Don't Want You To Know. Passengers can also enjoy workshops, meet-and-greets with hosts, giveaways and themed cocktails and bites. From £628.50 per person. virginvoyages.com/truocrime.

■ Caribbean culture, cuisine and adventures are showcased in an exclusive range of new shore experiences for Queen Elizabeth's

maiden winter season in Florida. The 2,081-passenger Cunard ship will homeport in Miami from October 16 and the curated collection of 32 trips caters for thrill-seekers, food lovers and nature enthusiasts. Highlights include a catamaran trip around Antigua's coast with sushi and barbecue treats prepared by a Michelin-star chef, a hands-on coffee experience in Dominica and an off-road 4x4 adventure in Barbados. Cruises start at £799 per person. cunard.com

More than 15.6 million seats on easyJet summer 2026 flights from 22 UK airports are now on sale with one-way fares starting at £22.99. Choose from 134 destinations across Europe and North Africa, with city and beach packages via easyjet.com/en/holidays

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If you've ever dreamed of a warmer climate during the festive season, join us on a yuletide break to Spain's east coast. With excursions and time to enjoy the all-inclusive festivities at the hotel, this is a delightful way to spend Christmas and the New Year.

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- Services of a resort representative on selected days

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CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR ON THE **COSTA BRAVA**

Departs 22nd December 2025

With its temperate climate and sea breeze, it's easy to see why the Costa Brava is a firm favourite during the festive season. With visits to picturesque towns along the coast as well as festive fun at the hotel, this is a wonderful way to spend Christmas.

So much included...



- Return coach travel* & ferry crossings
- First & last night on a bed & breakfast basis in France
- 10 nights all-inclusive at a selected 4★ hotel on the Costa Brava (includes a gala dinner on New Year's Eve):
 - Buffet-style breakfast, lunch & dinner
 - Selected local brand spirits, wine, beer, soft drinks, tea & coffee (10am-11pm)
 - Hot & cold snacks (10:30am-12:00pm & 3:30pm-6pm)
- Entertainment some evenings
- Excursions to Tossa de Mar, Girona, Besalú & Pals
- En-route visit to Paris
- Services of a resort representative on selected days

Optional excursion to Barcelona with guided city tour (£29pp)

Single supplement from £250

Please note: drinks are not included in the restaurant during meals.

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time to

Hotel of the week

BY SHARON McSEVNEY



The Resident Edinburgh

WHERE AND WHY

First opening its doors last September, this stylish four-star hotel is in the city's vibrant New Town and West End district.

This prime location places guests within walking distance of the Royal Mile, Edinburgh Castle and a variety of museums, galleries and boutique shops.

It offers 164 elegantly designed rooms, ranging from standard doubles to spacious junior suites. Each room has a thoughtfully equipped mini-kitchen featuring a Nespresso machine, fridge and microwave.

The rooms are tastefully decorated, incorporating subtle Scottish motifs such as woollen pinstripe bed throws and thistle-patterned cushions from Glasgow design company Timorous Beasties, adding charm and character. Guests can also enjoy premium amenities, including GHD hairdryers and luxurious Molton Brown toiletries.

Rooms offer neighbourhood views or fine panoramas of the city skyline including the castle. Edinburgh is an addition to the brand's four properties in London and one in Liverpool.

ON THE MENU

The Resident Edinburgh - a refurbished former city tax office "eyesore" - has no in-house restaurant or bar. Instead, the hotel encourages guests to explore the surrounding area, offering partnerships and discounts with local eateries.

The in-room mini-kitchens provide everything needed to whip up a quick meal or snack.

A standout feature is the hotel's evening gathering, hosted daily from 5pm to 6pm. Guests enjoy a complimentary glass of wine while mingling with fellow travellers and Resident Insiders, who are well-versed in Edinburgh's attractions and dining spots.

Its commitment to heartfelt hospitality shines throughout. Its strategic location, fabulously designed bijou rooms and emphasis on community interaction make it an excellent choice for travellers seeking an immersive and comfortable stay in Scotland's capital city.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

No visit is complete without taking in the castle, high above the city. Whisky lovers should head to the immersive Johnnie Walker Experience, while fans of the eerie and unusual will enjoy a spooky trip to the underground world of Mary King's Close. For a hoof and heaps of fresh air, Arthur's Seat beckons. Dean Village, an urban oasis by the Water of Leith, is a short stroll.

WAKE-UP CALL

A king double room with views of the castle from £175pn. residenthotels.com/edinburgh



LEGEND Original Raffles Hotel



AL FRESCO Flames roar on the grills at Satay Street



ZIPPY Cruising around with Singapore Sidecars

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

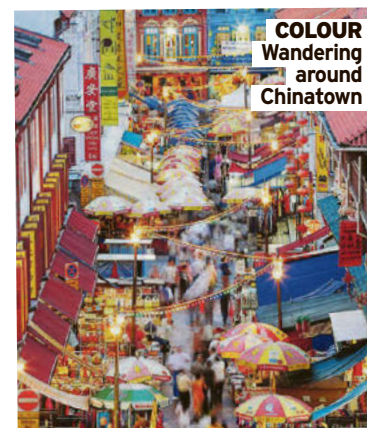
botanist under the tropical rain.

Although the country tries to disincentivise people from driving, offering efficient public transport, a great way to get a whistle-stop tour is by motorbike and sidecar.

Whizzing around the city centre on roads in the Singapore Grand Prix's Street circuit, even the rain could not dim the joy I experienced.

After a quick stop for an ube ice cream sandwich, we swung through into the entrance of the fabled Raffles hotel and explored the nooks and crannies of Haji Lane in the Malay-Muslim quarter Kampong Glam.

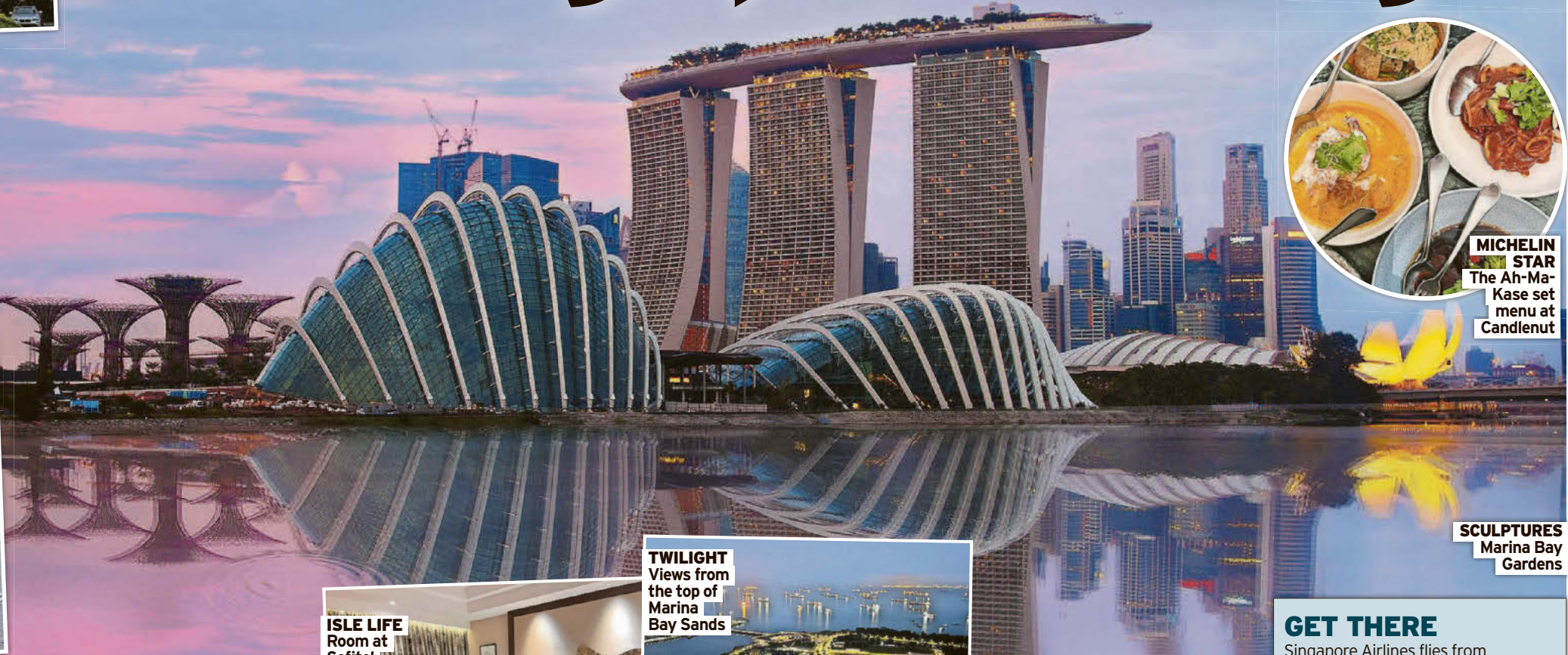
We spent the first few nights at the Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort on one of the country's 63 satellite islands, the home of many of the city's resorts plus amusement parks such as Universal Studios. You'll spot the towers of Shrek's castle on the journey from the main island.



COLOUR Wandering around Chinatown

EXPLORE

A Singapore fling



MICHELIN STAR
The Ah-Ma-Kase set menu at Candlenut

SCULPTURES
Marina Bay Gardens

Next we landed at the new Raffles Sentosa. It's all Singapore's been talking about.

Miles away from the original, Raffles 2.0 offers a stellar level of luxury and with a Sentosa Sling (it's a new thing) in hand, we ate like royalty at the Empire Grill, before venturing into some of the resort's exclusive villas.

It's a life I could get used to, even if my bank account would be screaming.

Leaving Sentosa behind, the remainder of our trip was spent at the Pan Pacific Orchard hotel, surrounded by the city's main shopping district. Orchard Road comes complete with every luxury designer under the sun. Or for a trek into the rainforest, the new Mandai Resort by Banyan Tree offers a serene escape from the crowds.

What's not to be missed is Singapore after dark – the city that never sleeps may have some competition on its hands.

Singapore's bar scene is one of the most underrated I've come across. Having drunk in several watering holes, Singapore knows how to serve up innovation while celebrating its native flavours – plants, and ants. Yes, ants.

Native, on Chinatown's Amoy Street, occupies a three-storey shophouse where ants are on the menu and a fermentation lab is on the top floor.

Over our short stay, we frequented four bars in Asia's 50 Best Bars list,



ISLE LIFE
Room at Sofitel Sentosa Resort

one of which, Jigger & Pony, made it into the world's top five. Alongside chowing ant-topped jellies at Native, we sipped our way through Fura, Nutmeg & Clove and Jigger.

If you think you know cocktails, think again.

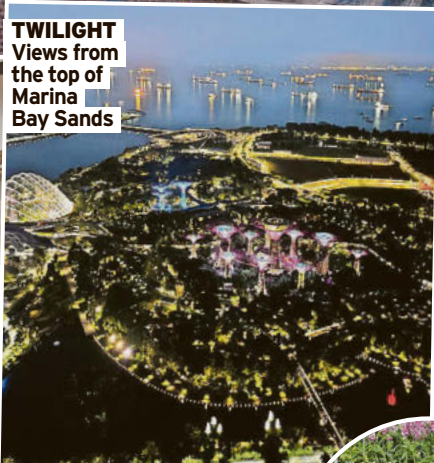
If you're after enviable views coupled with a drink, Wolfgang Puck's Spago Bar and Lounge at the top of Marina Bay Sands is unbeatable. Enjoy the signature Rough Love cocktail while taking in the lights of the Cloud Forest and Supertree Grove from above.

However, if you don't want to be cooped up in a dimly lit bar listening to the young "hip" crowd laugh over Singapore Slings and negronis, a hawker centre offers a humble, down-to-earth taste of Singapore.

Lau Pa Sat, the country's most famous hawker centre – and the only one to be housed in a national monument – serves up dishes from all corners. Save a visit to Lau Pa



UNUSUAL
Antz cocktail at Native bar



TWILIGHT
Views from the top of Marina Bay Sands

Sat until after the sun goes down when Satay Street opens. A regular road transforms into a hub of ravenous feasters sitting next to stalls fanning flames of their grills, eating skewers al fresco until 3am. For proper Singaporean street food, Satay Street offers the most authentic.

Other local dishes on your food bucket list should be the chicken rice (Hainanese poached chicken and seasoned rice) and hearty hokkien mee (egg and rice noodles stir-fried with egg, slices of pork, prawns and squid), all

washed down with a plastic cup of calamansi lime juice. Enjoy several plates for single digit prices.

Keng Eng Kee in Alexandra



BREED
Orchids at the Botanic Gardens

Village is the chef's haunt, hosting the likes of top UK chef Tom Kerridge and the late, great Anthony Bourdain over the years.

A place where family comes first – while sitting several hundred people at one time – we tucked into chilli crab with plastic gloves, cereal butter prawns, and coffee pork ribs. There'll always be room at the table at KEK.

Or for a taste closer to home, Summer Hill's French-Singaporean flavours felt more akin to what you'd experience in Europe than in the humidity of Singapore.

The beauty of Singaporean cuisine is that it's so eclectic you won't ever have to eat the same thing twice. We visited the gentrified Dempsey Hill area, where former British Army barracks have been made into upscale restaurants such as Air and chic shops.



FREEFLOW
Gardens By the Bay and the marina

GET THERE

Singapore Airlines flies from Heathrow to Singapore starting at £763 return; Business Class £4,048. singaporeair.com

BOOK IT

Rooms at the Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa start from £219 a night. sofitel.accor.com

Rooms at the Pan Pacific Orchard hotel in Singapore start at £338 a night. panpacific.com

MORE INFO

visitsingapore.com

Lunch at the only Michelin-star Peranakan restaurant, Candlenut, was unlike anything I've ever experienced. The Peranakan Chinese are an ethnic group that landed in the seaport of Singapore centuries ago, leaving behind a culinary legacy in the form of Candlenut's Ah-Ma-Kase menu, a play on the Japanese word omakase – 11 courses of flavour-packed dishes.

Standouts included udang nanas (wild-caught Angkar prawns cooked in aromatic lemak, ginger flower, coriander), and sambal telur (squid, deep fried free-range egg, cucumber, coriander, dried squid sambal).

I came with minor preconceptions but

Singapore was beyond anything I could've ever imagined.

Look beyond the skyscrapers and find a treasure trove full of unique cultural, natural and culinary gems.

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time to

Deals of the week

COMPILED BY NIGEL THOMPSON

STAYCATION

Somerset by coach from £339pp: join from pick-up points across the UK on October 6 or 20 for a five-day break with half-board hotel in Weston-super-Mare and excursions to the Mendip Hills, Wells, Cheddar, Cheddar Gorge, Taunton and Sheppy's Cider Farm. justgoholidays.com
Herefordshire from £851: save £247 on a week's self-catering in Frith Green converted cart shed (sleeps four, private patio garden, short walk from local pubs) near Bromyard. Arrive on August 8. sykescottages.co.uk

SHORT HAUL

Cape Verde from £907pp: save 41% on a seven-night all-inclusive holiday at the five-star TUI BLUE Cabo Verde resort in Sal island. Fly from Gatwick on September 18 with 25kg baggage and transfers. tui.co.uk

Morocco from £879pp: a seven-night B&B stay at three-star Hotel Argana in Agadir departs Bristol on August 14. With 22kg baggage and transfers. jet2holidays.com

Turkey from £1,124pp: fly from Gatwick on August 26 for a week with five nights on full-board and two nights on breakfast and lunch at the five-star Phokaia Beach Resort near Foça. With kids' clubs, sports, fitness class and activities, price based on a family of four sharing. Save 28%. markwarner.co.uk

LONG HAUL

Thailand from £1,365pp: save up to 35% on a seven-night B&B getaway at five-star Pimalai Resort and Spa in Koh Lanta. Book by July 31 for travel from Heathrow up to September 30. inspiringtravel.co.uk

Sri Lanka from £1,005pp: save 25% on a two-week stay at the Royal Palms Beach Resort in Kalutara. Depart from Gatwick on September 24 with 35kg baggage. All-inclusive for first week, second week free on room-only (upgrade to two-weeks' all-inclusive for £313pp). mercuryholidays.co.uk

Florida Gulf Coast from £869pp: save up to 20% on a seven-night room-only stay at the four-star RumFish Beach Resort in St Pete Beach. Price based on four sharing and flying from Heathrow on dates in August. Includes 23kg baggage, book by August 4. ocean-florida.co.uk

CRUISE

No-fly Northern France from £219pp: save £30pp on a two-night getaway on MSC Virtuosa, sailing a round trip from Southampton to Cherbourg, Normandy, on August 21. Includes gratuities. cruise.co.uk

SINGLES

Santorini from £1,060pp: a week with a double room for solo use at adults-only Villa Maistrali in Perissa comes with flights from Gatwick on September 23, 23kg baggage, transfers, breakfast and services of a tour leader. Manchester and Birmingham flights also available. soloholidays.com

STAR BUY

Cyprus from £813: save 55% on a self-catering week at Villa Pomelo (sleeps six, private pool), near Polis. Flights extra. solmarvillas.com

■ All prices correct at time of publication, based on two sharing, unless stated otherwise.

FUN AHOY
Boat was
nice and
easy to
steer



**ALL SHIP
SHAPE**
Beds so
comfy



But Denis Mann and his family soon get to grips with cruising the Thames

WE were a motley crew for our first Thames voyage – me, my wife in a wheelchair with a broken leg, her parents in their late 80s with walking sticks, and eight-year-old twin girls intent on falling in.

Oh, and cousin Bill, a veteran of chugging around the Norfolk Broads who we dragged along as skipper. Then he told us he was terrified of locks, of which there are none on the Broads and many on the Thames. Ah!

The first challenge was getting aboard our 42ft Classique Star vessel from Le Boat, moored at Benson in Oxfordshire. No problem carrying the wheelchair user while the unable seamen hopped and limped down the gunwales. But ship's dog Nellie, a Doberman-French shepherd, didn't like the four-inch gap from dock to boat and had to be dragged on in a seated position along the fibreglass. Talk about squeaky bum time...

Our new home for the next few days had double beds with en suites for the skipper and the senior service, a double bed for mum and dad and bunks for the kids, with a shared bathroom.

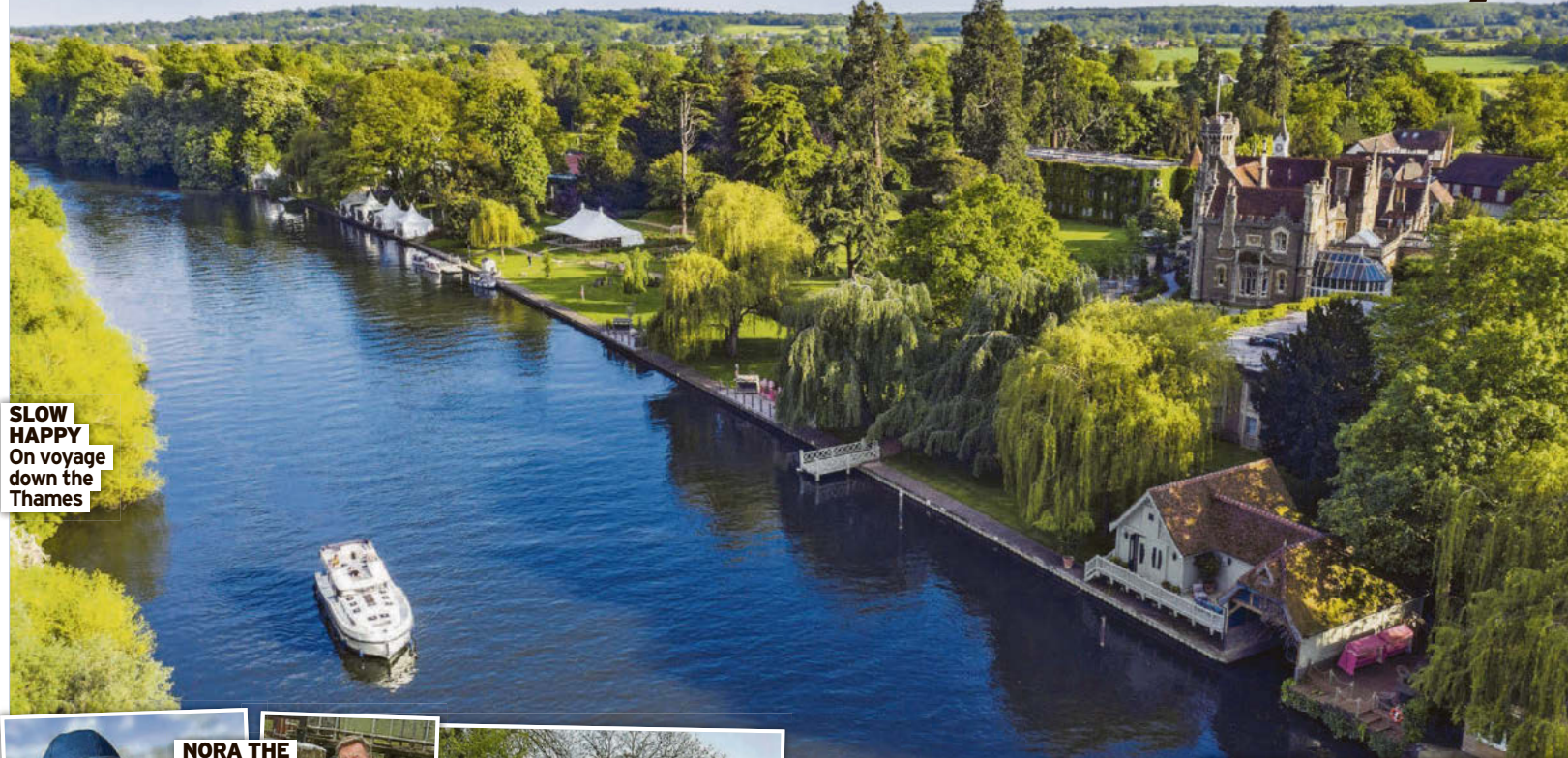
Everything ship-shape. And through big picture windows, the Thames lapping against our cabin walls.

It's daunting taking out a sizable craft like this for the first time. And exciting. A spot of good weather helps and we were blessed with a still, calm morning. Setting off is easy. Cast off the ropes, press the lever forward for a few revs and off you go. From Benson, you can go north towards Oxford or south for the Chilterns and Reading.

We went downstream and straight into the first of the dreaded locks. The theory is simple, going towards the sea

EXPLORE

Dread lock holiday



SLOW HAPPY
On voyage down the Thames



NORA THE EXPLORER
One of the twins at the helm, and right, Denis



MANN CLAN
Plain sailing for the motley crew

you occasionally have to drop down several feet. So you open one set of lock doors, making sure the other lock doors are closed. Then you're trapped in the lock. The downstream lock doors are then opened and the boat descends. Once the levels are equalised, the second lock doors are opened and off you pop.

It can go wrong though if you're not careful. The lock-keeper told us how some crews tie up their boats too tightly and, as it descends it ends up tilted and dangling.

Finally lock free, you chug along at a peaceful 6mph tops – and steady breathing comes naturally when the only excitement is a cup of tea being delivered from the galley.

Not that this stretch of the Thames is without its fascinations. There's beautiful countryside to port and starboard, birdlife at every point of the compass, with wildfowl seeming intent on being swallowed under the prow before popping up unconcerned for a bit of heads down, tails up dabbling. There are magnificent homes to gawp at. I swear you can smell the money some of the time. To emphasise the point, we were passed many times by rowing eights from Oxford colleges and riverside public schools. They didn't have those on the Leeds-Liverpool

Canal of my youth. We took all day to get from Benson to Goring-on-Thames and it's only eight miles by road. We were passed by enthusiastic walkers on the towpath, but the point of the journey is the journey itself.

The sun was out and we dragged the incapacitated up the steps to picnic on deck. Everyone had a turn at the wheel. It's easy. You just have to remember to plan ahead, turn slowly, straighten up gently and in advance – er, and don't fall asleep.

At this pace, you get in trouble very slowly and there is always time to think again. Even the girls relaxed to a state of controlled hysteria and got to steer in quiet stretches, of which there were many.

There were more locks to master and we survived. Le Boat insist on three relatively fit people to do this and we just about managed

the quota. Bill and I took the ropes fore and aft, my father-in-law Rod sat at the wheel to get us alongside and switch off the ignition when we came to a stop.

He became a master at turning that key. Then it was simply a matter of hitting buttons at each lock gate to open and close them and to let the water in or out. Job done.

At Goring, we moored for free alongside the river and got the sticks and wheelchair bound off the boat for a bit of an explore. Half found a lovely tearoom (Pierrepoints, near the bridge, geddit?), while a couple of us found a cracking pub (the Catherine Wheel with its secret gents, don't ask!) before going back to the boat to batten down hatches as the weather turned. It was a stormy night and the ropes creaked and groaned.

I got up in the small hours to make sure the patio furniture was safely stowed and noticed we were a good 5ft from the towpath. I left it for the morning, unwilling to make the leap in the dark to fix it.

I didn't realise that the others on board, woken by my galumphing over their heads, spent the night wide-eyed in terror, expecting to see Tower Bridge at first light.

But Goring was still there in the sunny morning. It was a simple task to tighten up the mooring, and there was time for a walk with the girls and the dog before breakfast and setting off the way we came for a glorious, memorable day.

It was Nanny's 87th birthday so wed

BOOK IT

Le Boat offers a seven-night self-catered River Thames trip on board a Classique Star boat (sleeps 10) from £1,239 for the 2025 season. Starts and ends at the base in Benson, Oxfordshire, five nights from £919. No experience necessary. leboat.com/en

MORE INFO

experienceoxfordshire.org

researched a suitable venue for a special celebration. Avast to The Beetle and Wedge, which is a bit posh but not at all snooty and, best of all, we could park the boat there.

Eventually. I think it took three passes before we cracked it, even with the help of the bow thrusters, skimming by some very expensive marine real estate, before coming alongside the gastro-pub's own mooring.

The pub features in The Wind In The Willows, Three Men In A Boat and The History Of Mr Polly, so it must be a bit special. It's a special feeling to swagger from boat to table before a super-special, wallet-busting repast. Worth every penny though.

We sailed on, as far north as Dorchester, where we collected some of the scenery attempting a U-turn, and back to Benson where we picked up the car for a bit of touring for a change of pace from Le Boat's HQ. The company, by the way, was top notch – finding the perfect balance between helpfulness and leaving us to our own devices.

It was pleasant to potter about the villages of the Thames Valley but we preferred the stateliness of the Thames itself and will forsake the Broads for a return trip: destination Oxford. Watch out, dreaming Spires!



GO WITH FLOW
On Classique Star

Day trips to magical Lapland featuring husky rides, snowmobiles and a private meeting with Santa for winter 2026 are now on sale with TUI. Flights are available from 11 regional airports across the UK, including Cardiff for the first time. From £750 per person. tui.co.uk

Vacation value

BUDGET-FRIENDLY TRAVEL NEWS BY NIGEL THOMPSON

Fancy some ferry good summer savings on sea crossings to France and Ireland? Irish Ferries is offering Dover to Calais day returns from £44 for a standard car and up to five passengers. Also, bookings on the Channel route for a departure by August 31 will get 25% off selected 2026 bookings to Ireland.

On the Irish Sea routes, day trip foot passengers can bag return fares from £10 on the Holyhead-Dublin and Pembroke-Rosslare sailings, with children travelling from £5. irishferries.com

■ This theme like a good idea – book by August 17 for Merlin Entertainments' Twice the Fun offer to visit two UK parks for the price of one, saving up to £41.

Choose from Alton Towers, Thorpe Park, Chessington World of Adventures Resort, or Legoland Windsor and buy tickets online for free entry to a second day out, with the flexibility of visiting the second park until September 30.

See altontowers.com, thorpepark.com, chessington.com and legoland.co.uk

■ Grab a group discount for parties of four to six adults or children visiting Disneyland Paris up to October 16.

AttractionTickets.com's new Friends & Family offer saves up to £18 per person and applies to dated one-day visits only, with prices now starting at £56.80 each. The ticket guarantees entry to both Disneyland and Walt Disney Studios parks on the date specified.

Buy of the week

BY NIGEL THOMPSON

Play your cards right and keep cloners at bay with this RFID-safe, aluminium pocket-sized travel wallet from Dutch brand Secrid.

A patented mechanism allows you to slide out your cards with one motion and it holds four embossed or six flat cards with a wide range of colours and capacities available.

■ Secrid card protector, from £34.95, secriid.com



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PASSIFLORA LAVENDER LADY

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Arrives potted

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For gardeners seeking colour, structure and wildlife appeal, Passiflora 'Lavender Lady' makes a bold statement. This vigorous climber produces exotic violet blooms with a fine fragrance and intricate filaments. Flowering from mid-summer into autumn, it's a magnet for bees and butterflies. Its lush growth quickly covers walls, fences or pergolas, while the small fruits that follow are purely ornamental. It prefers well-drained soil and a sheltered, sunny position to perform at its best.

- ✓ Plant type: Climber
- ✓ Flowering period: July - October
- ✓ Position: Full sun, sheltered
- ✓ Height/Spread in maturity: 3m/2m
- ✓ Temperatures: 0°C to -5°C
- ✓ Good for: Trellises, walls, fences, wildlife gardens

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time to

A Dam good move...



AIM
To get more
passengers to
Amsterdam

Eurostar unveils plans to up its rail services to the Netherlands' capital

BY MILO BOYD

Eurostar is hugely increasing the capacity on the train services it runs between London and Amsterdam. From December 15, the firm will operate five direct trains per day in each direction, something made possible by the opening of the brand-new cross-Channel terminal in Amsterdam in February 2025.

This has allowed Eurostar to triple its capacity on the route from 275 passengers per day in each direction to more than 650 passengers per train now, up more than 18% year-on-year.

Eurostar chief Gwendoline Cazenave said: "London to Amsterdam is one of the busiest routes by plane in Europe. With five daily returns, and 3,000-plus seats per day, we are offering a sustainable alternative.

"Since February, we've seen exceptional demand on our Amsterdam route, and the addition of a fifth daily service gives customers more choice and flexibility.

"It's our ambition to offer a sustainable alternative and grow international high-speed rail as customers' first choice across Europe."

In 2024, Eurostar transported 4.3 million passengers to and from the Netherlands. Eurostar now has a target to carry 30 million passengers overall annually, which it aims to do with a new fleet of trains and additional destinations out of Amsterdam such as Geneva.

Earlier this year, Eurostar announced that it would be running direct train services from the UK to Germany and Switzerland, linking London St Pancras directly with Frankfurt and Geneva starting in the "early 2030s".

Around £1.7 billion will be invested in a fleet of up to 50 cutting-edge trains to operate these routes.

Travellers could zip from London to Frankfurt in around five hours or reach Swiss gem Geneva in just five hours and 20 minutes.

Details such as potential stops along the way – Cologne on the Frankfurt route, for instance – and whether passengers can board or disembark mid-journey are still under discussion.

Cazenave admitted that launching new international train routes demands "time, investments, expertise, a huge amount of energy, and partnerships", but she is confident that the new direct services will materialise due to the "willingness" of Eurostar, passengers and governments.

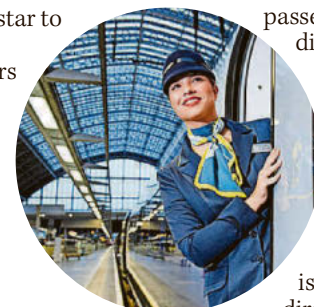
Eurostar's London trains currently serve Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, as well as the French Alps during ski season. It also operates services within Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Last year, the firm transported 19.5 million passengers, a 5% rise from 18.6 million in 2023. The London-Paris route was its top performer in 2024, carrying 280,000 passengers, followed by London-Brussels at 250,000.

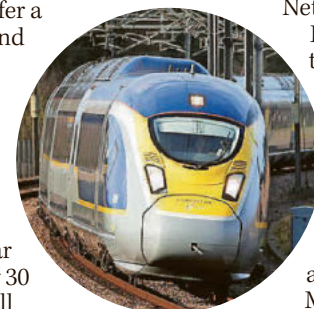
Meanwhile, competition looms for Eurostar as several firms eye up an end to its exclusive rights to the Channel Tunnel.

Virgin Group, led by Sir Richard Branson, Italy's state railway FS Italiane Group, and Gemini Trains, overseen by Labour peer Lord Berkeley, are all on board with plans to challenge Eurostar's current dominance.

eurostar.com



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part of plan
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All part of the Manston plan

BY MILO BOYD

An abandoned airport could soon be back in business, offering budget flights to some of Europe's top destinations.

Manston Airport in Kent is set to roar back into life a decade after it closed its doors. The former RAF base, which played a crucial role in both world wars, is undergoing a major refurbishment and is slated to reopen in 2028.

Initially, the focus will be on cargo. However, plans are afoot to introduce passenger services. Tony Freudmann, main board director at controlling company RiverOak Strategic Partners, said he is hopeful passenger services will return and said they have plans to attract short-haul carriers to popular destinations.

The revamp is expected to cost £500million, encompassing new terminals and upgraded runways. The airport has a single runway that is 9,016ft long. It is notably wide, at 197ft, and was designed to handle emergency landings for Concorde and the Space Shuttle.

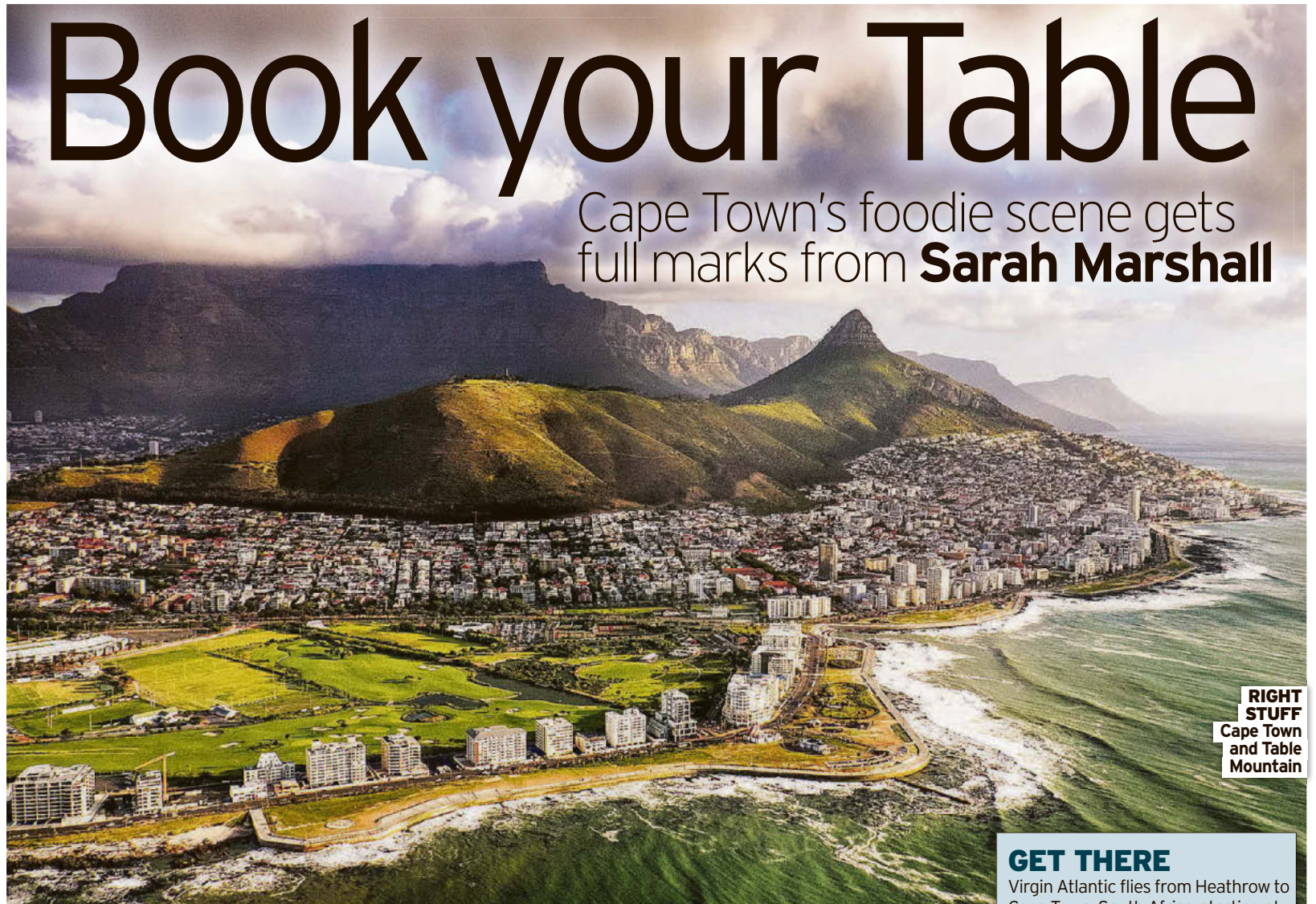
If the cargo operation succeeds, passenger routes to countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, Cyprus, and Malta could be introduced. It was reported three years ago that the airport's owners were in discussions with budget airlines including Ryanair, easyJet and Wizz Air.

The thriving activity at Luton, Stansted and Southend suggests there could be sufficient demand.

Earlier this year the RiverOak website posted that this year and next, survey work will be carried out, with the aim of finalising "the airport master plan" - a process expected to end in early 2026.

A public consultation into possible routes will be launched but opposition is strong with local groups claiming that the travel hub previously failed commercially before and arguing that it will do again and the environmental impact.

Travelodge query? Then ask new AI assistant Ara, the hotel chain's new 24/7 online tool aimed at helping guests with questions about upcoming stays at its 591 UK properties, with topics covering parking, breakfast, nearby attractions and more. travelodge.co.uk



Book your Table

Cape Town's foodie scene gets full marks from **Sarah Marshall**

RIGHT STUFF
Cape Town and Table Mountain

The sight ahead of me is daunting. Trickier to tackle than mighty Table Mountain - and equally as iconic - it's beyond anything I can handle alone.

But the mammoth submarine sandwich sitting on my plate is easy work for hungry Capetonians.

Borrowing its name from F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel, The Gatsby was invented in the mid-1970s when a fish and chip shop owner in the Cape Flats (an area where many townships developed) created a sandwich of leftovers to feed his workers.

Beyond being a budget feast - often feeding multiple mouths - the sandwich has a cultural significance. It represents the resourcefulness and community spirit of Cape Town's working-class neighbourhoods during apartheid.

Stuffed with chips, meat, gherkins and a rainbow array of unhealthy sauces, it's a monster of a meal. Costing half the price of a fancy coffee in British cities, it's also incredibly cheap. At the time of my visit, the exchange rate sits at approximately 24 South African rand to the pound, but rates have been consistently good for some time. So even though the price of a 11-hour return flight might cost from around £430 to as much as £1,000-plus, your pounds will stretch much further after touchdown. While you'd struggle to find a decent hotel room in London or Manchester for under £150 per night,

boutique guesthouses in Cape Town's trendy neighbourhoods can cost as little as £35-50 per night - some even with mountain views.

A three-course meal at one of Cape Town's award-winning restaurants will set you back £12-20 and a bottle of decent local wine can be less than £10.

Transportation is budget-friendly too. Uber rides across the city centre rarely exceed £2-3, making it cheaper than a single zone bus fare in London.

Continuing my urban food and drink safari, I find myself in one of the city's most saintly coffee shops, where a caffeine fix is near nirvanic.

Far cheaper than a Starbucks, Heaven Coffee has become an invaluable part of the community for many more reasons.

Tucked inside a Methodist church on Greenmarket Square in the central business district, the enterprise was set up by entrepreneur Mondli Mahamba who first turned up as a homeless person seeking help. "I asked the minister if I could rent a space," he explains, as a coffee machine whirrs and splutters. "It was a way for me to do something. I enjoy hosting people. I wanted to create an open space for everyone - from high-flying lawyers to homeless people and tourists from Europe."

Along with serving

locally roasted coffee and providing a peaceful and accessible haven in a busy city, Mondli trains and upsills those who've been down on their luck. But he stresses Heaven isn't a charity. "Coffee builds community and brings people together," he says.

Celebrating grassroots traditions is at the core of the Seven Colours Eatery in the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront development.

Chef and founder Nolu Dube-Cele nostalgically recalls dishes made by her grandmother in Eastern Cape village Tsengiwe and highlights the diversity of South Africa's culinary heritage through her creative menu.

"I want to celebrate the country I love so much," she enthuses, serving umngqusho, also known as samp (dried corn) and beans, a staple dish cherished by Nelson Mandela. I eat it with

GET THERE

Virgin Atlantic flies from Heathrow to Cape Town, South Africa, starting at £854 return. virginatlantic.com

MORE INFO

For tourism and accommodation ideas see capetown.travel

chakalaka (a spicy vegetable relish) and drink wine made by the HER group of all-black, all-female winemakers.

"Seven colours is the nickname for a dish often served at family gatherings," says Nolu. "My grandma would serve it on Sundays using everything and anything she had."

"Some of the ingredients don't even get along on the plate, but when you eat it you feel loved."

Costing less than £10 for a main meal big enough for two, Nolu's dishes create a warm, glowing feeling all round.

More than being affordable, Cape Town offers luxury experiences at high-street prices, five-star adventures on a three-star budget, and memories that are absolutely priceless.



FILLING
Gatsby sarnie



TASTE
Chef Nolu and the V&A Waterfront



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WOODEN GARDEN STORAGE BENCH

A tidy garden brings peace of mind, especially when everything has its place. This wooden garden bench offers built-in storage for outdoor essentials while also providing a comfortable spot to sit. The bench is crafted from natural fir wood with a protective varnish for added durability. With an ergonomic shape and a wide backrest, it's designed for comfort. The seat lifts to reveal hidden storage beneath - ideal

for tools, cushions or gardening bits. With a strong frame and a 250kg weight capacity, it comfortably fits two people. This practical bench helps you make the most of your outdoor space without compromising on comfort or style.

- ✓ Made from: Fir wood
- ✓ Dimensions: H75 x W115 x D45cm

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Lightweight and easy to use, it has a wide cleaning head, a long cable and a roomy dust container so you can clean quickly and easily.

- ✓ Ideal for: Bedding, upholstery, pet beds, toys
- ✓ Features: UV-C lamp and dual filter to trap mould spores and allergens and kill bacteria

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Relaxation is elevated with integrated massage points

targeting the seat, upper, and lower back, complemented by a warming heat function in the lumbar area. Upholstered in durable bonded leather with faux leather in low-stress areas, it blends luxury with practicality.

To ensure a seamless experience, the suite is delivered to your room of choice and professionally assembled. The Brooklyn Reclining Suite is the perfect choice for comfort and style.

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MORPHY RICHARDS MIXSTAR STAND MIXER

Whether it's a crusty loaf, light Victoria sponge or quick biscuit batch, the Mixstar Compact Stand Mixer supports every kind of bake. Its compact design fits neatly on the counter, with all accessories stored inside the 4-litre stainless steel bowl to keep your kitchen clutter-free. Dual-rotating beaters, whisks and dough hooks deliver smooth, consistent results. The open top makes it easy to add ingredients mid-mix without stopping, while the clear splash guard and liquid inlet help avoid spills. With a

650 watt motor and six speeds, it handles all your baking tasks effortlessly. Once finished, the stainless steel bowl and tools go straight in the dishwasher.

- ✓ 6 speed settings
- ✓ Count-up timer
- ✓ 4-litre stainless steel bowl
- ✓ Dual-rotational beaters, whisks and dough hooks
- ✓ H24.5 x W37 x D23cm

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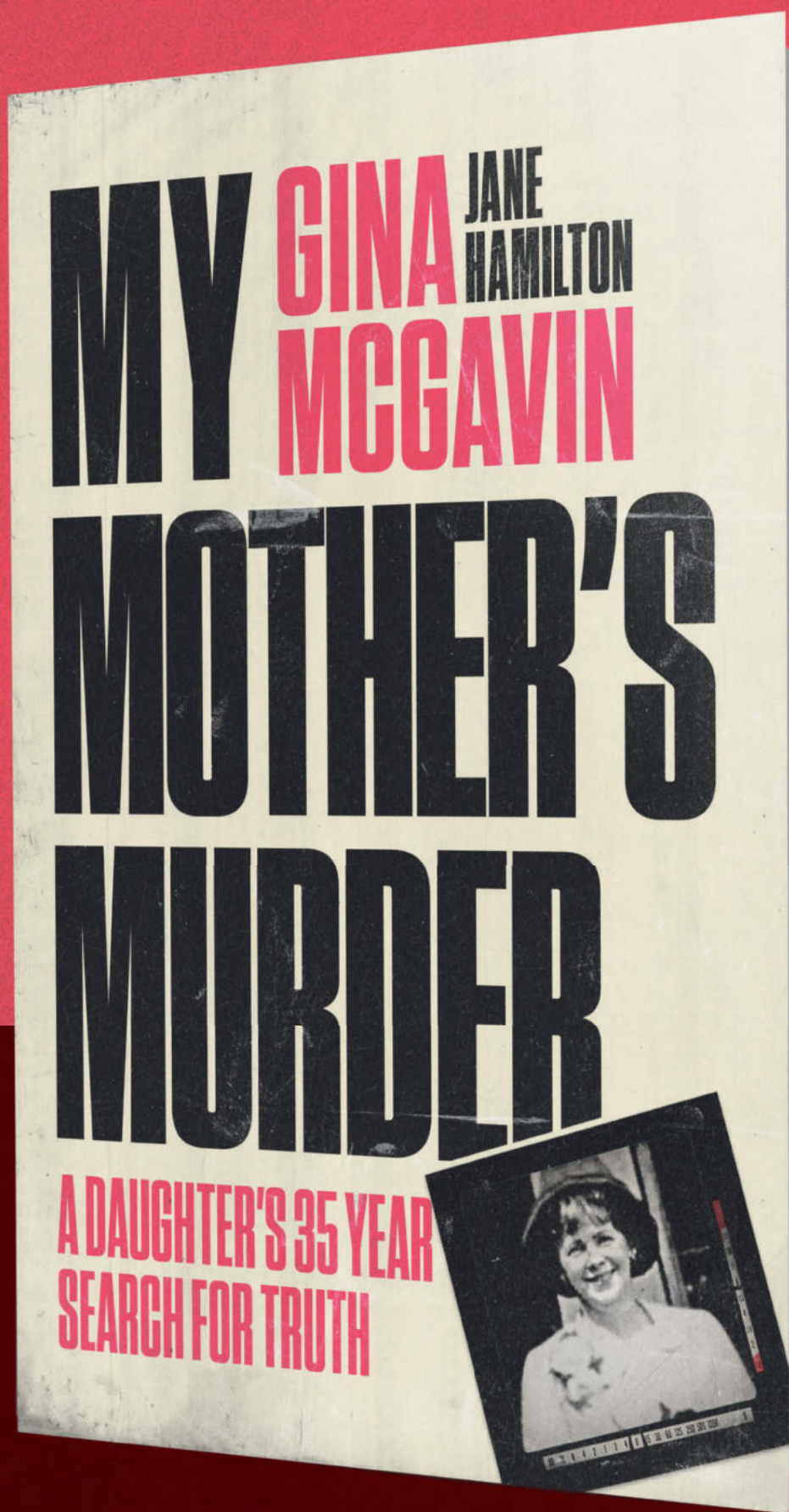
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Agapanthus 'Silver Moon' stands out for its broad, creamy-edged foliage and elegant, lavender-blue flower heads that bloom in summer. Each upright stem rises above the leafy base, adding height and lightness to garden beds, borders or containers. A hardy, compact variety, 'Silver Moon' is drought-tolerant once established, making it ideal for low-maintenance gardening. The striking leaves bring visual interest through the seasons, even when the plant isn't in bloom. It grows best in full sun to part shade, in well-drained soil. Suitable for planting in early autumn, it provides a long-lasting and rewarding display. This perennial also supports pollinators like bees and butterflies, helping encourage

biodiversity in your garden. Whether you're a novice or experienced gardener, it's a graceful and dependable addition to outdoor spaces.

- ✓ Plant type: Perennial
- ✓ Flowering period: July - August
- ✓ Position: Full sun - part shade
- ✓ Height / Spread in maturity: 60cm/50cm
- ✓ Temperatures: Hardy to -10°C
- ✓ Good for: Borders, containers, pollinators, low-maintenance gardens

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WINTER'S WILDLIFE

with STUART WINTER



GLORIOUS Rolling trills of common sandpiper



Pipers piping so Goodie to hear

Visions of the quick-quick-slow march of the dowdy common sandpiper are hard to reconcile with the grandeur of the British Army's senior infantry regiment.

Little larger than a starling - and with a camouflaged plumage evolved for patrolling muddy waters - this most unassuming of waders rarely stands out from the late summer shorebird flocks who are heading for southern climes.

Yet hear the sandpiper's distinctive flight call delivered on whirring wings and there is an instant hint why it can certainly be mentioned in the same breath as the glorious Grenadier Guards with their scarlet tunics and bearskins.

To help join the dots between birds and busbies you had best read one of the funniest and most insightful dips into all things ornithological ever written - Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book.

Not just a famous member of comedy trio The Goodies but also an exceedingly good birder, Bill's hilarious treatise was written back in the early 1980s but still stands the test of time.

One of my favourite chapters sees him penning a birder's songbook with famous pieces of music, such as Fifties show tune Seventy-Six Trombones and George Formby's Thirties hit When I'm Cleaning Windows,

beautifully reworked to appeal to the twitching masses.

His eulogy to the common sandpiper never fails to get me singing along whenever I see one bobbing its tail while tip-toeing along a stretch of reservoir shingle or in the sluggish waters of a shallow brook.

Written to the tune of British Grenadiers, the ditty lauds the vocalisations of capercaillies and quails, wheatears and nightingales - before declaring that of all the British birds no flight call can compare to the wonderful squeaky, rolling trills of the common sandpiper.

Twenty species of sandpiper occur at varying levels of regularity in Britain but our commonest, with its scientific name of *Actitis hypoleucos*, has the distinction of being the original "sand-coloured bird with a piping call".

Little wonder why so many of the old country names - kittie needie, dickie-di-dee and willy wicket, to name a few - also allude to the distinctive "swee-swee-swee" declaration cried out whenever it flits low over the water on bowed wings.

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time to



CHEERFUL Gerba Garvinea daisy will last for months



FIREWORKS Midnight Star is a stunning Deep Blue



AWARD WINNER Purrsian blue is ideal as a filler

It's time to spruce up your plot with striking midsummer wonders

After very hot weather, the rain has arrived and replenished our thirsty plants. In the gardening calendar we are at the height of summer and enjoying the kaleidoscope of flowers that blossom in these months. Here are some top plants for this time of year to spruce up your plot - easy to grow and with colourful flowers that will keep going until summer's end.

Nepeta 'Purrsian Blue'
Nepeta is an undemanding perennial and quickly rewards with lots of flowers and scented foliage. It's ideal as a filler plant and looks lovely tumbling over the edge of a path. 'Purrsian Blue' is a cultivar that has the RHS Award of Garden Merit - it's compact and very floriferous. Its witty name refers to this plant's common moniker, 'catmint', because the

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with DIARMUID GAVIN



ELEGANT
'Honka
Fragile' is
popular star-
shaped Dahlia



GORGEOUS Purple-blue
Scabiosa has a sweet scent

SUMMER STARS
And dahlias will
keep on flowering
until October

See new colours shining through

aromatic foliage is said to be loved by them. But if you want to give your feline friend a real treat, plant *Nepeta cataria*, also known as catnip.

This is a white flowering nepeta and will have your cats rolling for joy in it. A good chopping back when the flowers start to brown often results in a later fresh flush of flowers. Best grown in full sunshine in free draining soil.

Scabiosa is the pincushion flower which describes its cushiony petals studded with white pin-like stamens.

'Butterfly Blue' is a gorgeous variety with purple-blue flowers from July to September. And it's a pollinator magnet, with the sweet scent and nectar rich blooms attracting butterflies and bees.

Grow in full sunshine in well drained soil. 'Summer Nights' is an usual wine-red variety to look out for. It's drought tolerant and a good cut flower.

Gerbera Garvinea 'Sweet Memories' is one of the hardier gerberas but will still need protection in colder areas over winter. Too much water will rot it so plant in well drained soil in a sunny spot.

It's a semi-evergreen perennial so will likely lose leaves in winter but will be reinvigorated in spring. Around a foot in height, it's ideal for a patio or balcony garden and the big cheerful salmon pink daisies will delight for many months.

Agapanthus will burst into flower from July onwards. Known as the African lily deciduous varieties are hardier here but we can also grow the evergreens with some winter protection. Their beautiful spherical flower heads emerge like fireworks exploding. There are gorgeous blues from light to violet to dark to

choose from – 'Midnight Star' is an award-winning deep blue. They do well in coastal gardens, their sturdy stems swaying gently in the breeze.

Dahlias are one of the biggest stars of the garden come August and September. If you haven't any growing, I'd recommend buying some plants now. Look for ones that are yet to bloom and have plenty of buds – and plant up a large pot with several varieties.

They will stay in flower until early October and then you can protect with mulch over winter or dig up the tubers and store in a frost free area until next spring.

Current favourites include 'Cafe au Lait', a big blowsy decorative dahlia with creamy white blossoms and 'Honka Fragile' an elegant white star-shaped variety with a violet edge.

“
Agapanthus
will burst
into flower,
exploding
just like
fireworks
”

JOBS for the week

■ Raspberries and other summer fruiting berries can be cut out and new shoots tied in for next year.

■ Dahlias and lilies may need staking as they achieve full height this month.

■ Lawn chafers or leatherjackets a problem? Now's a good time to treat the soil with nematodes.

And keep an eye for scarlet lily beetle – remove by hand.

■ Make sure azaleas and camellias don't dry out as they are forming buds for next spring.

■ Encourage another flush of flowering in perennials with a fortnightly dose of high potash such as a tomato feed.

■ Bulb catalogues are out so it's



time to think about what you will be planting for spring next year. Early spring bulbs will provide interest and colour in your garden in some of the toughest gardening months,

■ Glasshouses need



damping down in hot weather and plants will get scorched if it's very sunny, so remember to shade where appropriate. Keep an eye out for pests such as red spider mite and order biological controls where necessary.

PLANT of the week

Phygelius 'Candy Drops Tangerine'

Phygelius is an eye catching shrub from South Africa. Also known as the Cape fuchsia, it's grown for its striking pendant tubular flowers – these are very long lasting from spring to late summer.

The Candy Drop series are compact and suitable for growing in containers or pots. In colder areas they may die back, like a perennial, but resprout in spring. In warmer areas, it's an evergreen shrub but still may need tidy up in spring. 'Tangerine' has warm orange flowers, 'Deep Rose' rich pink and 'Moonraker' creamy yellow. Deadhead after flowering to encourage more blossoms.



YOU ASK

Hi Diarmuid

I've taken some nepeta cuttings and they are rooting but also starting to flower. Should I remove the flowers?

Kevin

Yes definitely – always make sure you remove flowers from cuttings and very young seedlings. This will help the plant's energy go into the root and will result in it becoming much stronger.

It's always hard taking off perfectly good flowers, but ultimately, you'll have a stronger, better plant.

Diarmuid



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UTTOXETER

GOING: GOOD WEATHER: PARTLY CLOUDY NEWSBOY'S TIPS: 1.37 DIGNAM, 2.07 QUEENS WISH, 2.37 VOCITO, 3.07 VILLAGE MASTER, 3.37 KEEL STRAND, 4.07 MIDNIGHT JEWEL, 4.37 GOLD LINK, 5.07 SIXTY PLUS

- 1.37 JUVENILE HURDLE (4) (3-Y-O) 2m Winner £4,193 (14 run)
1 DIGNAM (7) J P O'Brien (IRE) 11-7
2 14P SPLIT (27) D McCain 11-7 (BF)
3 BATTLE STRIDE R Armonson 11-0
4 GENBU E Lavelle 11-0
5 4 GEORGINO (14) A Watson 11-0
6 GLENRIDDING D & C Kubler 11-0
7 3 JUNKYARD DOG (24) J Pargue 11-0 (BF)
8 MISTER KNOCKOUT G Brown 11-0
9 5 RIVER MOON (33) R L Llewellyn 11-0
10 THE DARK BARON W G M Turner 11-0
11 IT'S LIFE (7) W G M Turner 10-7
12 JESTER QUEEN D J Jeffreys 10-7
13 MANYANA BLUE (7) Dr R Newland & J Insole 10-7
14 ZARAQUELLE James Owen 10-7

- 2.07 ROYS ICES MARES' HCAP HURDLE (5) 2m Winner £3,248 (15 run)
1-33 QUEENS WISH (37) C & A Pogoson 6 12-0
116 AUNTIE MAGGIE (20) A Ralph 6 11-11 (BF, CD)
3 GETMETOTHEMOON (167) A Honeyball 6 11-10 (D2), C Bament (7)
6-1 QUICK OF THE NIGHT (20) Dave Roberts 8 11-8 (D2)
5-37 GRANNY HAWKINS (48) A King 6 11-2
23 MILAJESS (52) M Hammond 8 11-2
P44 PURE GOLD (14) Miss L Harrison 5 11-2
73- BELLE MONTROSE (10) S Drinkwater 6 11-1 (BF), S Twiston-Davies
9 334 JLOW (8) R Potter 4 11-0
10 400 REMEMBER MOI (20) G Nicholls 5 10-11, Miss Olive Nicholls (7)
11 631 PACIFIC (20) M Keighley 6 10-10
12 U22 LADYBELLA (20) S Drinkwater 7 10-6 (D)
13-35 LADY BUTTERCUP (23) D McCain 5 10-6 (D)
9-7 VIOLETA (62) B Haslam 5 10-2
15 P-5 PROPHET SQUEEZE (14) Mrs A Thorpe 7 10-2

- 2.37 HANDICAP HURDLE (4) 2m Winner £4,066 (11 run)
1 71- LEOLOPA (127) F O'Brien 5 12-0 (D3)
2-36 ENTHUSED (8) James Owen 8 12-0 (CD3)
3-33 VOCITO (39) O Murphy 7 11-13 (D3)
4 112 TIME INTERVAL (28) David Dennis 7 11-11 (D2)
5 710 TARA ITI (8) James Owen 7 11-9 (CD)
6 875 LUNAR SOVEREIGN (28) Mrs S Leech 9 11-7 (D)
7 21 STROLL ON BY (21) C Longsdon 8 11-4
8-1 BREAKING COVER (13) A Honeyball 7 11-1 (D)
9-21 REALISTIC OPTIMISM (26) J Snowden 8 10-13 (D)
10 233 LINDEN LANE (23) E Williams 5 10-12
11 242 GAVIN (8) M Bowen 7 10-9 (CD)
15 P-5 BETTING: 5 Pacific, 11-2 Getmetothemoon, 6 Quick Of The Night, 7 Others.

- 3.07 QUINNET HURDLE CHASE (2) 3m 2f Winner £11,759 (11 run)
1-6 MANOTHEPEOPLE (28) F O'Brien 10 12-0 (D3)
2 71- YOUNG BUSTER (117) F O'Brien 9 11-11
3-13 SHANAGH BOB (44) Henry Oliver 7 11-4
4 P-0 LORD ACCORD (28) N Mulholland 10 11-2 (C2)
5 211 ART OF DIPLOMACY (19) M Bowen 9 11-2 (CD)
6-74 OLIVERS TRAVELS (28) M Bowen 7 11-1
7-11 VILLAGE MASTER (25) W Greatrex 6 10-13 (D2)
8 P-2 PIMLICO POINT (45) Kerry Lee 8 10-12
9 822 WASDELL DUNDALK (14) Miss L Harrison 10 10-10 (BF)
10-5P ASHTOWN LAP (28) D O'Meara 11 10-8 (C, D)
11 212 HARRYS HOPE (52) B Pauling 7 10-4 (BF)
15 P-5 BETTING: 3 Art of Diplomacy, 5 Village Master, 11-2 Young Buster, 8 Others.

ONE A DAY By David Yates
LOUIE THE LEGEND Today
JONQUIL 2.30 Goodwood, Tuesday
FROSTMAGIC 9.00 Southwell, Tomorrow
LADY IMAN 2.30 Goodwood, Wednesday

PONTEFRACT

GOING: GOOD, GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES WEATHER: PARTLY CLOUDY NEWSBOY'S TIPS: 1.55 CHAIRMANFOURTIMES, 2.25 LOUIE THE LEGEND (NAP), 2.55 POINT LYNAS, 3.25 TIME TELLS ALL (NB), 3.55 CHARMING PRINCESS, 4.25 VENTURA EXPRESS, 4.55 RAIN CAP

- 1.55 MAIDEN STAKES (4) (2-Y-O) 5f Winner £7,328 (11 run)
(10)223 CHAIRMANFOURTIMES (21) A Keatley 9-7 (BF)
(9) 65 ENJOY THE NIGHT (32) J & S Quinn 9-7
(2) 426 OUR HERO MATTY (36) B Ellison 9-7
(4) 33 VALOR SPIRIT (92) R Fahey 9-7
(1) 048 WHISKEY NEAT (22) P Owens 9-7
(4) 043 CLOUDBUSTER (9) Dr R Newland & J Insole 9-2
(7) 5 DABBLING (75) O Pears 9-2
(8) 3 EMPRESS OLIVIA M Walford 9-2
(9) 1 PULL THE RUG (24) E Bethell 9-2
(10) 8 RESDEV KISSES (31) M & D Easterby 9-2
(11) 6 RESDEV TIME M & D Easterby 9-2
BETTING: 2 Chairmanfourtimes, 4 Cloudbuster, 7 Others.

- 2.25 NICK & LIZ 40TH ANNIVERSARY HCAP (5) 1m Winner £4,187 (11 run)
(10)468 PROJECT GEOFIN (44) G Oldroyd 4 10-2
(8) 7-0 SHE'S GOT BOTTLE (22) Lizzie Quinlan 6 10-0 (CD2)
(3) 004 SUPER HIT (12) Darryll Holland 4 9-13 (D)
(6) 151 EETEE (7) J Wainwright 7 9-13 (D2)
(5) 505 ANJO BONITA (22) Sara Ender 5 9-12
(1) 447 ARKENSTAR (20) M Dods 5 9-9 (D3)
(5) 551 LOVETTE (20) J Jardine 3 9-8 (D)
(9) 041 LOUIE THE LEGEND (12) D Cunha 3 9-7
(4) 27 TESTIMONIAL (20) T Easterby 3 9-2
(10)2 312 KEATS HOUSE (15) M & D Easterby 3 9-1 (D)
(7) 607 BAZBALL (12) J Parkinson & S Smith 4 8-13
BETTING: 3 Eetee, 7-2 Louie The Legend, 6 Keats House, 7 Lovette, 8 Others.

- 2.55 SKY BET POMFRET STAKES (LISTED) (1) 1m Winner £28,010 (6 run)
(2) 4-5 BOILING POINT (31) K R Burke 4 9-7
(3) 594 CHECKANDCHALLENGE (23) W Knight 6 9-7 (D2)
(3) 163 CICERO'S GIFT (59) C Hills 5 9-7 (D3)
(5) 336 MAKE ME KING (42) H Al Jehani (UAE) 5 9-7 (D2)
(4) 842 POINT LYNAS (15) E Bethell 6 9-7 (CD)
(6) 54 PRAGUE (15) D Cunha 5 9-7 (D)
BETTING: 7-4 Point Lynas, 5-2 Prague, 5 Make Me King, 7 Others.

- 3.37 MEMORIAL HANDICAP HURDLE (2) 2m 7f Winner £9,823 (9 run)
1 -12 MINELLA RESCUE (28) G Hamner 7 12-0 (CD)
2 378 WBE (8) G Hamner 10 11-1
3 111 SAINT BIBIANA (28) G Nicholls 8 10-12 (CD)
4 -11 EARTH KING (19) N Mulholland 9 10-9 (CD)
5 -12 DOC MCCOY (26) J Snowden 7 10-8 (BF)
6 /50 JAYTEE (28) I Williams 10 10-6 (D)
7 -38 POUNDING POET (28) T Lacey 9 10-6 (CD)
8 111 KEEL STRAND (23) P Nicholls 5 10-2
9 -42 PARTY BUSINESS (52) I Williams 9 10-2
BETTING: 9-4 Keel Strand, 4 Saint Bibiana, 5 Earth King, 11-2 Others.

- 4.07 HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE) (4) 2m 4f Winner £4,700 (9 run)
1 -33 PRESENTACOUNTING (23) D McCain 11 12-0 (CD)
2 -83 ASLUKWOODHAUT (13) M Bowen 9 11-2
3 1P4 THE GYPSY DAVEY (13) E Williams 7 11-10
4 145 COLLINGHAM (20) J Coulson 7 11-8
5 -5P MOODOFTHEMOMENT (57) D Thompson 8 11-7 (D)
6 521 MIDNIGHT JEWEL (26) C Longsdon 9 11-6 (D4)
7 433 GOLDEN AMBITION (26) B Pauling 6 11-2
8 -68 KILMURRY JJ (11) Henry Oliver 8 10-11
9 312 RABY MERE (24) O Murphy 6 10-8 (CD)
BETTING: 9-4 Midnight Jewel, 3 Raby Mere, 5 Golden Ambition, 7 Others.

- 4.37 HANDICAP HURDLE (DIV 1) (5) 2m 4f Winner £3,248 (13 run)
1 P/F ESTEBAN (39) H Dickinson 5 12-0
2 201 PRESENT FAIR (23) D McCain 8 11-13 (C, D)
3 -62 GOLD LINK (47) E Lavelle 9 11-10 (D)
4 -65 WILD NEPHIN (20) R Potter 6 11-9
5 -2P CHILLI James Owen 5 11-8 (BF)
6 613 DALLEO (14) Miss L Harrison 10 11-7 (D2)
7 5-7 DAME SARRA (37) Noel Williams 5 11-5
8 233 JACK'S JURY (33) Mrs A Thorpe 5 11-5
9 70- JEEPYDOFF MEEL (344) Miss L Harrison 7 11-4
10 8PU LEADING LION Tracey Leeson 5 11-3 (D)
11 -45 BEAU GOLD (33) J & A O'Neill 5 10-12
12 -6P FENNA'S LOSS (25) Stephen Allen 8 10-2 (CD)
13 8-0 INOUE (49) J Jardine 5 10-2
BETTING: 9-4 Chilli, 4 Present Fair, 9-2 Gold Link, 8 Beau Gold, 10 Others.

- 5.07 HANDICAP HURDLE (DIV 2) (5) 2m 4f Winner £3,248 (12 run)
1 5/3 NOTTODAYBOBO (21) M Hammond 7 12-0
2 44- OUR LAURA B (37) B Haslam 7 11-12 (D2)
3 -12 CRYSTAL MER (19) H Morrison 6 11-10 (BF, C)
4 211 SIXTY PLUS (3) James Owen 5 11-9 (D2)
5 -PP SPURTING JUPITER (21) M Walford 7 11-8
6 23 SPARTAN WARRIOR (36) R Menzies 4 11-7
7 261 GRILLON DE MONTY (10) Stephen Allen 10 11-6
8 644 OLD BRIDGE (13) D Pipe 4 11-6
9 8P- LAZY BONES (82) J Norton 6 11-5
10 351 MALANGEN (21) Miss L Harrison 10 11-3 (D4)
11 321 LA QUARITE (7) M Bowen 5 10-13
12 -P0 KING OF THE HILL (25) S Allwood 7 10-2
BETTING: 9-4 Sixty Plus, 4 La Quarite, 5 Crystal Mer, 7 Malangen, 8 Others.



LOUIE THE LEGEND is fancied to notch a third career success by beating 10 opponents at Pontefract today. Dylan Cunha's three-year-old was back in business with a length-and-three-quarter margin at Nottingham 12 days ago and a 4lb rise in the weights may not be enough to prevent him from going in again.

- 3.25 HANDICAP (GBBPLUS RACE) (4) 1m 2f Winner £5,234 (9 run)
(4) 197 DAWN OF LIBERATION (8) R Carr 6 10-3 (D3)
(2) 9-1 DESERT EMPEROR (191) M & D Easterby 8 10-2
(3) 05/ SAYF AL DAWLA (59) J Parkinson & S Smith 7 10-2 (D2)
(8) 727 UP THE JAZZ (16) R Fahey 4 9-11 (D)
(1) 308 POL ROGER (21) M Dods 5 9-10 (D2)
(2) 344 RAULIN (25) D O'Meara 3 9-9 (D)
(6) 541 TIME TELLS ALL (2) T Carroll 5 9-6 (D)
(7) 740 MASEKLA (22) T Easterby 6 9-4
(5) 483 LOOKS FANTASTIC (30) E Bethell 3 9-0
BETTING: 7-4 Time Tells All, 6 Raulin, Looks Fantastic, 8 Others.

- 3.55 MAIDEN STAKES (GBB RACE) (5) 1m Winner £4,320 (8 run)
(4) TIMELY APPROACH T Waggon 5 10-1
(7) 09 ETTORE (18) R Varian 3 9-7
(3) 3 GOLDEN HORSE W Haggas 3 9-7
(5) 0-4 GOODWOOD MOGUL (7) M Trengoning 3 9-7
(1) 0 OMON VASE (99) K Frost 3 9-7
(6) THE NORTHERN LORD H Palmer 3 9-7
(8) 32 CHARMING PRINCESS (18) R Beckett 3 9-2
(2) 42 HOPEFUL JOY (20) M Walford 3 9-2
BETTING: 4-5 Charming Princess, 4 Golden Horse, 7 Hopeful Joy, 8 Others.

- 4.25 HANDICAP (4) 5f Winner £5,234 (7 run)
(3) 004 BOSH (27) M Dods 6 10-1
(6) 227 ELEGANT ERIN (30) P Midgley 8 9-13 (CD)
(4) 148 BRUMMELL (31) J Camacho 4 9-13 (D3)
(5) 002 VENTURA EXPRESS (23) P Midgley 8 9-12 (CD4)
(7) 770 FUJI MOUNTAIN (29) D Carroll 3 9-8 (D2)
(2) 50 THE ACTOR (134) J Camacho 3 9-7 (D)
(1) 330 SPIRIT OF APPLAUSE (15) T Easterby 5 9-4
BETTING: 9-4 Ventura Express, 7-2 Bosh, 4 Elegant Erin, 5 Others.

BY DAVID YATES CALANDAGAN ran true in the heat of battle to give trainer Francis Graffard back-to-back triumphs in Ascot's King George VI And Queen Elizabeth Stakes.

A defeat by Jan Brueghel in the Coronation Cup at Epsom caused some onlookers to question the four-year-old's stomach for the fight.

The loss had been Calandagan's fourth in a row at the highest level, a sequence that ended with a Group 1 success in the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud four weeks ago.

When sent in pursuit of Kalpana, who had burst two lengths clear of her four opponents entering the final two furlongs of the mile-and-a-half Group 1 prize, 11-10 favourite Calandagan didn't flinch.

"I never had any doubts about his will to win," smiled Chantilly-based Graffard (right) - victorious with Goliath in 2024 - after watching Mickael Barzalona, carrying the colours of the gelding's owner-breeder, the late Aga Khan, to the front 100

RESULTS

ASCOT: Good-good to firm in places

1.10: WORDS OF TRUTH (W Buick 13-8f); NEW MONARCH (11-4); WECHAAD (17-2); 3.7 ran. 1/2, nk. (C Appleby). Tote: £2.63; £1.25, £1.30, £2.25. Tote Exacta: £8.50. Trifecta: £39.30. CSF: £6.40.

1.40: FITZELLA (O Murphy 9-4f); STAYVA (7-2); BELLA LYRA (14-1); 3.10 ran. 1/2, hd. (H Palmer). Tote: £3.25; £1.40, £1.75, £2.70. Tote Exacta: £13.00. Trifecta: £90.30. CSF: £9.71. NR: Dance To The Music.

2.20: CHESHIRE DANCER (B Loughnane 22-1); AMERICAN GAL (5-2); CHANTILLY LACE (11-4); 3.9 ran. nk, hd. (H Palmer). Tote: £30.65; £5.50, £2.90, £1.40. Tote Exacta: £274.90. Trifecta: £610.43. CSF: £179.48. NRS: Pina Sonata, Sunfall.

3.00: TWO TRIBES (David Egan) 25-1; CLASSIC (10-1); SWORD (8-1); GOLDEN MIND (28-1); 4.21 ran. 11-4f Akkadian Thunder, nk. 1/2, 1/4. (R Spencer). Tote: £38.95; £7.45, £2.65, £3.65, £8.70. Tote Exacta: £475.60. Trifecta: £4711.58. Trifecta: £8562.00. CSF: £258.67. NR: Oliver Show.

3.35: FEARNOT (D Probert) 10-1; BULLET POINT (5-2); HICKORY (12-1); COSI BELLO (13-2); 4.17 ran. 1/2, nk. 3/4. (C Cox). Tote: £11.00; £2.50, £1.85, £4.95. Tote Exacta: £48.00. Trifecta: £342.36. Trifecta: £1221.00. CSF: £35.66.

4.10: CALANDAGAN (M Barzalona 11-10f); KALPANA (15-2); REBEL'S ROMANCE (5-1); 3.5 ran. 1/2, 2/3. (F Graffard (FR)). Tote: £2.10; £1.25, £3.05. Tote Exacta: £17.70. Trifecta: £15.00. CSF: £9.24.

4.45: TENABILITY (T Marquand 11-10f); CRIMINAL (11-2); BOHEMIAN BREEZE (25-1); 3.7 ran. 2/3, 1/4. (W Haggas). Tote: £2.10; £1.20, £1.55, £3.50. Tote Exacta: £8.80. Trifecta: £89.82. Trifecta: £86.60. CSF: £7.36. NR: Buxted Too.

5.15: COVER UP (W Buick 7-2); RHYTHM N HOOVES (16-1); KING OF STARS (50-1); 3.14 ran. 9-4f Aramaram, 3/4, 1/4. (S & Cristoforo). Tote: £5.30; £2.55, £5.00, £17.50. Tote Exacta: £54.00. Trifecta: £1747.78. Trifecta: £1213.40. CSF: £61.92.

Jackpot: Not won, pool of £14,038.67 carried over. Placepot: £116.10. Quadpot: £54.10.

CHESTER: Good-good to soft in places

1.30: TEAM PLAYER (F Marsh 13-2); KOKINELLI (15-2); KARTHON (15-8); 3.10 ran. shd, 2/3. (G Tutty). Tote: £7.90; £2.60, £2.20, £1.20. Tote Exacta: £60.90. Trifecta: £128.52. Trifecta: £301.10. CSF: £55.90. NRS: Lunar Jet, Princess Nylfa.

2.10: BERKSHIRE BOOM (Jason Watson 100-30); THE RESDEV SCHOLAR (17-2); ORATORICAL (7-2); 3.8 ran. 2-1f Suspended Sentence, 1/4, 1/4. (A Balding). Tote: £4.34; £1.40, £1.40, £1.60. Tote Exacta: £32.70. Trifecta: £129.60. CSF: £31.86.

2.45: LUNARIO (Jack Dace 8-1); VIXEY (9-2); BE FRANK (7-2); 3.13 ran. 1/2, hd. (L Dace). Tote: £9.00; £3.30, £1.10, £2.20. Tote Exacta: £48.20. Trifecta: £154.77. Trifecta: £200.40. CSF: £44.92. NR: Imperial Trooper.

3.15: SHOWERING (A Farragher 5-1); MILFORD (12-1); ARABIAN COBRA (4-1); 3.2 ran. 4-1/2f Diligently, nk, nk. (W Haggas). Tote: £6.00; £2.40, £2.70, £1.60. Tote Exacta: £65.10. Trifecta: £344.60. CSF: £63.63. NRS: Miraculous, Rare Change.

3.45: ACES WILD (F Marsh 7-2); KNICKS (11-4); SECRET MISTRAL (2-1); 3.7 ran. hd, 1/4. (A Wintle). Tote: £4.50; £1.70, £2.50. Tote Exacta: £14.20. Trifecta: £23.43. Trifecta: £32.70. CSF: £13.69. NRS: Night On Earth, Rock N Roll Rocket, Street Life.



THE BEST BAR NONE Barzalona on Calandagan (Green) head for the line

yards from the winning post for a one-length margin, with Rebel's Romance repeating his third place of 12 months earlier.

"At Epsom, after the race I couldn't say it was because he doesn't want to try - and the jockey never reported that to me, either."

The 75th King George unfolded to the consternation of those who believed Aidan O'Brien's

Continuous was there to make the pace for stablemate Jan Brueghel.

Wayne Lordan was content to ride shotgun aboard Continuous as Ryan Moore cut out a funeral cortege gallop on last year's St Leger winner, who found a change of gear beyond him when Oisín Murphy committed Kalpana for home.

Barzalona, who had anchored Calandagan at the back before switching wide, admitted: "I was waiting to see what happened - and when I saw Oisín making the move, I followed."

4.55: ROSENPUR (G Wood 9-2); KODIAC THRILLER (5-2); BRAVE NATION (15-2); 3.8 ran. 1/4, 1/2. (J Candlish). Tote: £5.50; £1.50, £1.20, £2.60. Tote Exacta: £15.70. Trifecta: £83.76. Trifecta: £99.20. CSF: £16.67. NRS: Curious Rover, Grandlad.

5.30: MEBLESH (Alec Volkhansky 11-2); EY UP ITS THE BOSS (13-2); LET'S DREAM (15-8); 3.9 ran. 4/1, 1/4. (R Hammon). Tote: £6.50; £2.30, £1.90, £1.30. Tote Exacta: £41.80. Trifecta: £91.39. Trifecta: £126.10. CSF: £41.15.

Placepot: £65.20. Quadpot: £21.30.

NEWCASTLE: Standard to slow 1.52: ETRÉTAG (Archie Young 100-30); FALCON NINE (4-1); MR WITTINGTON (14-1); 3.8 ran. 13-8f Berkshire Phantom, 1/4, 3/4. (C Johnston). Tote: £4.34; £1.60, £2.50, £1.40. Tote Exacta: £17.10. Trifecta: £162.92. Trifecta: £172.70. CSF: £17.32. NR: Fazan.

2.30: LA PULGA (J Hart 7-4f); MOLINARI (5-1); RIBBLE VIBE (12-1); 3.8 ran. 6/1, 1/2. (C Johnston). Tote: £2.75; £1.20, £1.50, £2.90. Tote Exacta: £9.90. Trifecta: £79.08. Trifecta: £60.30. CSF: £11.00. NR: Fast Fred.

3.08: SUDBURY HILL (A Mullen 14-1); BENE NAHAR (7-1); SAXOPHONIST (11-1); 3.10 ran. evensf Zoiros, 1/2, 2/3. (Alice Haynes). Tote: £15.00; £3.00, £2.20, £2.50. Tote Exacta: £122.00. Trifecta: £962.80. CSF: £111.33.

3.40: CALLIANASSA (B Robinson 4-1); ROGUE ENCORE (9-2); SHERIFF'S COURT (9-4); 3.10 ran. shd, 6/1. (B Ellison). Tote: £5.30; £1.60, £1.70, £1.50. Tote Exacta: £30.30. Trifecta: £51.87. Trifecta: £96.20. CSF: £22.11. NRS: Borgi, Dutch Duke.

4.15: HENRY HAWK (C Bennett 100-30); ARAIFAN (10-1); NEWYORKSTAEF-MIND (7-2); 3.14 ran. shd, 1/2. (Miss L Perratt). Tote: £4.80; £1.70, £3.60, £2.00. Tote Exacta: £46.90. Trifecta: £130.18. Trifecta: £215.80. CSF: £37.61.

4.50: EVA ROSIE (J Hart 7-1); MR HEINZ (100-30); CALCUTA DREAM (14-1); 3.12 ran. 3/4, 1/4. (Mrs Stella Barclay). Tote: £8.60; £2.40, £1.40, £4.40. Tote Exacta: £44.00. Trifecta: £333.43. Trifecta: £517.90. CSF: £31.34.

5.25: ELETTERIA (H Russell 7-2); SUPERIOR COURIER (7-1); BROTHER DAVE (11-1); 3.9 ran. 100-30f Darja's Secret, 1/4, nk. (J Wainwright). Tote: £4.50; £1.60, £2.30, £3.20. Tote Exacta: £26.60. Trifecta: £306.90. CSF: £29.05. NR: Rebel Redemption.

5.55: STARSHOT (B Sanderson 9-2); POET (13-2); OSELTON (8-1); 3.9 ran. 11-4f Martin's Brig, 1/4, 1/4. (M Lullane). Tote: £5.50; £2.00, £2.00, £2.70. Tote Exacta: £45.00. Trifecta: £251.00. CSF: £34.60.

Placepot: £194.30. Quadpot: £62.00.

YORK: Good-good to soft in places 1.25: GOLDEN PALACE (Oisín Orr 11-8f); CALLING A STAR (7-1); GOLDIE BEAR (14-1); 3.8 ran. 1/4, 3/4. (R Fahey). Tote: £2.45; £1.40, £1.80, £2.45. Tote Exacta: £11.90. Trifecta: £159.10. CSF: £11.91.

2.00: ELMONJED (J Crowley 9-2f); JUBILEE WALK (13-2); ROCK OPERA (18-1); ROUSING ENCORE (15-2); 4.19 ran. nk, shd. (W Haggas). Tote: £5.50; £2.15, £1.60, £2.55, £4.95. Tote Exacta: £42.70. Trifecta: £523.75. Trifecta: £1312.70. CSF: £32.09. NRS: Brooklyn Nine Nine, Jungle Drums, Toyotomi.

2.40: ROYAL CHAMPION (C Lee 8-1); ALMAQAM (6-4); ECUREUIL SECRET (50-1); 3.7 ran. 2/3, 2/1. (K R Burke). Tote: £9.00; £2.10, £1.15, £6.00. Tote Exacta: £24.90. Trifecta: £387.10. CSF: £19.55.

3.20: AIR FORCE ONE (D McMenamin 15-2); BONA FORTUNA (8-1); BAYRAAT (10-1); COPPER KNIGHT (4-1); 4.19 ran. 1/4, nk, 1/2. (G Oldroyd). Tote: £9.65; £4.45, £1.85, £2.65, £3.00. Tote Exacta: £119.00. Trifecta: £649.10. Trifecta: £2219.80. CSF: £63.68. NRS: Moon Flight, Rosenpur.

3.50: BEYLERBEYI (C Lee 16-1); ALBANY (11-4); PER CONTRA (9-1); 3.9 ran. 9-4f Kildare Legend, hd, 1/4. (I Williams). Tote: £19.50; £3.95, £2.40, £2.50. Tote Exacta: £149.90. Trifecta: £1001.23. Trifecta: £1093.00. CSF: £114.37.

4.25: BILLYB (S James 10-1); ATA RANGI (9-1); MR KING (6-1); YAASER (10-1); 4.19 ran. 11-4f Tel Red, 1/2, 1/2, nk. (Craig Lidster). Tote: £11.10; £2.95, £2.85, £2.40, £2.90. Tote Exacta: £139.20. Trifecta: £439.92. Trifecta: £732.80. CSF: £95.88. NR: Northbound.

5.00: CHESNEYS CHARM (O Stammers 33-1); PIETRO (18-1); GOLDEN REDEMPTION (10-1); MYSTICAL STORM (13-2); 4.16 ran. 4-1f Kisskodi, 3/4, nk, hd. (G Tuer). Tote: £39.75; £6.00, £4.00, £2.25, £2.30. Tote Exacta: £784.20. Trifecta: £3539.33. Trifecta: £3136.10. CSF: £540.36. NR: Naina.

Placepot: £116.50. Quadpot: £43.80.

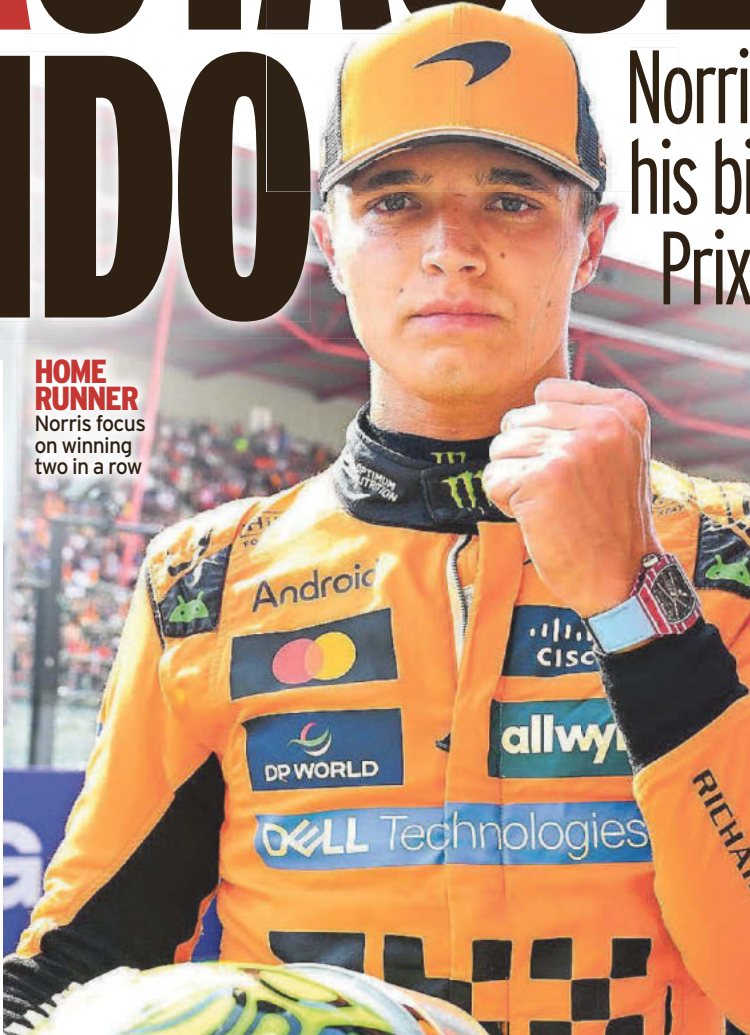
GWORN PARK: Good 1.45: ALIBAH (D McMonagle 13-2); SANC-TIJDIE (5-1); THARAKA (50

FORMULA ONE

ROUND 13: BELGIUM GRAND PRIX
TODAY, START 2PM, LIVE ON SKY SPORTS

SPAC TACULAR LANDO

Norris on pole in his bid for Grand Prix win double



By **DANIEL MOXON**
F1 Reporter

LANDO NORRIS is eyeing back-to-back 'home' race wins today after the perfect qualifying follow-up to his British Grand Prix triumph.

The Brit's first career win at Silverstone last time out saw him celebrate wildly with his family.

And he hopes to do so again in the homeland of his mother, Cisca, who watched as her half-Belgian son, 25, took pole position in the Ardennes Forest.

He was more than half a second slower in Sprint qualifying than team-mate and title rival Oscar Piastri on Friday, but got the better of the Aussie for the one that mattered.

Norris said: "I did not have to change much, I just had to drive a little bit better and that was it."

"I just drove a tiny bit better and I just had a bit of a slipstream. [On Friday] I did not have a slipstream and it cost me three-and-a-half tenths, so it makes a big difference."

Norris had started and finished third in that Sprint earlier in the day, and so knows full well that pole isn't always the best place to start at Spa.

The long flat-out section after the first corner gives a huge slipstream, as Piastri found out

HOME RUNNER
Norris focus on winning two in a row

when Max Verstappen stole the lead on lap one.

The Dutchman had enough pace in his Red Bull to beat the McLarens over the 15-lap dash.

But the Grand Prix is nearly three-times longer and Norris refuses to believe that starting at the front is a disadvantage.

He said: "I would be stupid and there is no point in me being here if I did not think that I could win. I am here to win and,

whatever the conditions are, that is my target."

Piastri, nine points ahead in the title race, felt he should have made it two poles in the same weekend but "a pretty big mistake" cost him.

He said: "I felt like the potential was there and it is frustrating when you feel like you can do it and you don't. That is how it goes sometimes."

"I feel like I have done a good

job, just unfortunately not when it mattered today.

"But I feel like the pace has been really strong all weekend, so I am confident for tomorrow."

Verstappen's Sprint win for Red Bull was the perfect start for new boss Laurent Mekies.

Starting from fourth today will be more difficult. He said: "I think it will be tough. I hope we can fight back to the podium, but we need to be realistic."

QUALIFYING RESULT

1	Norris (Gbr)	1:40.562
2	Piastri (Aus)	1:40.647
3	Leclerc (Mon)	1:40.900
4	Verstappen (Ned)	1:40.903
5	Albon (Tha)	1:41.201
6	Russell (Gbr)	1:41.260
7	Tsunoda (Jpn)	1:41.284
8	Hadjar (Fra)	1:41.310
9	Lawson (Nzl)	1:41.328
10	Bortoleto (Bra)	1:42.387
11	Ocon (Fra)	1:41.525
12	Bearman (Gbr)	1:41.617
13	Gasly (Fra)	1:41.633
14	Hulkenberg (Ger)	1:41.707
15	Sainz Jr. (Spa)	1:41.758

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1	Piastri (Aus)	241pts
2	Norris (Gbr)	232
3	Verstappen (Ned)	173
4	Russell (Gbr)	147
5	Leclerc (Mon)	124
6	Hamilton (Gbr)	103

CONSTRUCTORS

1	McLaren	473pts
2	Ferrari	227
3	Mercedes GP	210
4	Red Bull	180
5	Williams	62

GOLF

NIEMANN STAMPS HIS AUTHORITY

BY **NEIL SQUIRES**

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP bad boy Joaquin Niemann put his Portrush tantrum behind him to take charge of the UK's LIV Golf leg in spectacular fashion yesterday.

The Chilean (above) was roundly criticised after stamping angrily on his golf bag at the end of his second round as he missed the cut by a shot last week.

He then sacked his caddie of five years, Gary Matthews, and his swing coach Eduardo Miquel, who he had worked with since turning pro at 18.

But the turmoil appears to have done Niemann no harm, with the 26-year-old shooting an eight-under-par 63 at the JCB Club in Staffordshire to take a commanding six-shot lead over his nearest pursuer Bubba Watson into today's third and final round.

"I was feeling a little bit weird after a bad week at The Open. Obviously the expectations were pretty high and the way I played wasn't my best," said Niemann.

"But with positive talk from the nice team around me, I was able to go out and play golf freely and play the game of Seve [Ballesteros]."

That is a big comparison, but some of Niemann's play - notably

his magician's chip when short-sided at the 13th to set up one of nine birdies - was of the highest calibre.

Niemann is on course to claim his fifth win on the LIV circuit this year and the £2.95million first prize in the individual event - as well as cementing his lead in the season's standings.

Lee Westwood briefly headed the leaderboard after a blazing start which saw him produce two birdies and an eagle pitch-in in his first three holes. But the 52-year-old fell away thereafter to post a 72 to the disappointment of the big crowd.

The leading Englishman is Paul Casey who shot a 68 to move into a share of third place. Casey (left), 48, who last won four years ago at the Dubai Desert Classic, is seven strokes off the pace.

LIV's expansion will continue next season, with Steyn City, near Johannesburg, to host a new South African event next March.

The circuit's slogan 'Golf Only Louder' has now been replaced by 'Long LIV Golf', underlining that the league intends to be a permanent part of the golf landscape even after the long-awaited-for peace deal with the PGA Tour is finally struck.



Mirror

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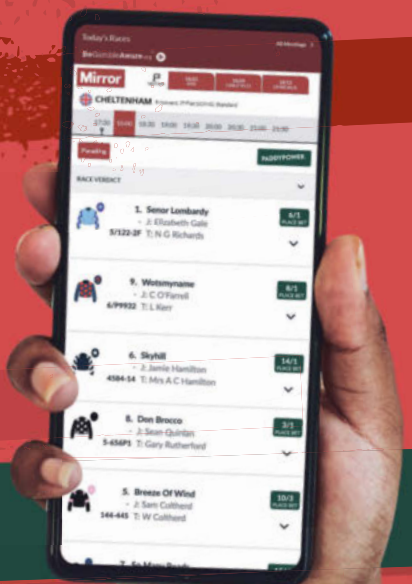
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DEJECTED LEWIS 'SORRY' FOR POOR PERFORMANCE

BY **DANIEL MOXON**

LEWIS HAMILTON could blame nobody but himself after an "unacceptable" qualifying shocker.

The Brit saw his best lap at Spa deleted and will start just 16th for today's Belgium race.

It was Ferrari's first Q1 exit in qualifying for a Grand Prix since Carlos Sainz in 2023 at Abu Dhabi.

But it was Hamilton's second bottom-five qualifying effort this weekend after he went just 18th fastest while setting the grid for yesterday's Sprint.

He said: "From my side, another mistake, so I've really got to look internally and apologise to the team. "It's unacceptable to be out in both

Q1s. It's a very, very poor performance from myself."

Hamilton tested Ferrari's new upgrades in Italy last week and was frustrated his work went to waste.

He added: "We're doing all the hard work, all the preparation. It's incredibly painful and definitely a weekend to forget."

Hamilton (above) also said Ferrari have no more upgrades planned, grumbling that "this is probably it for the rest of the year".

But team-mate Charles Leclerc will not mind, having qualified third ahead of Max Verstappen. He said: "I'm very happy. I loved how the car felt."



TOUR DE FRANCE

MANTES-LA-VILLE > PARIS
FINAL STAGE, 82MILES, TODAY

TADEJ POGACAR came through the penultimate day of the Tour de France unscathed to ensure that he will wear yellow into Paris today.

Alpecin-Deceuninck's Kaden Groves completed a trilogy with wins in all three Grand Tours by clinching victory on stage 20 from a breakaway in Pontarlier, leaving Frank van den Broek and Briton Jake Stewart behind with 16 kilometres of the 184km stage from Nantua remaining.

Behind, the peloton rolled in some seven minutes down, happy to survive a damp day that saw several riders crash as UAE Team Emirates-XRG rider Pogacar retained his four-minute 24-second lead over rival Jonas Vingegaard on the last day before Paris.

The addition of three ascents of the Montmartre climb to today's finale could rule out the usual Champs-Elysees sprint and keep the racing on for one more day. But

Pogacar can almost start celebrating his fourth Tour title and begin plotting a record-equaling fifth.

Speaking after his win, Australian sprinter Groves (below) said: "There's so much pressure at the Tour."

"Having won in the Giro and won in the Vuelta all I ever get asked is if I am good enough to win in the Tour - and now I've shown them."

Pogacar secured the King of the Mountains' polka dot jersey early on this stage, with yellow surely set to follow today for the 26-year-old Slovenian.

Oscar Onley's hopes of a first podium are almost certainly over as the Scot (right), 22, riding in only his second Tour, trails third-placed Florian Lipowitz by more than a minute.



POGACAR SET FOUR TRIUMPH



STAGE 20 RESULT

1 Groves (Aus)	04:06.09
2 Van den Broek (Ned)	+54s
3 Eenkhoorn (Ned)	+59s

GENERAL CLASSIFICATION

1 Pogacar (Slo)	73:54.59
2 Vingegaard (Den)	+4m 24s
3 Lipowitz (Ger)	+11m 09s

TADEJ NO SLO COACH
Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar celebrates on the podium in the yellow jersey

SPORTS SHORTS



Lottie on course for maiden glory

GOLF

LOTTIE WOAD will take a two-stroke lead into today's final round of the Women's Scottish Open as she seeks to clinch her first professional win on debut.

The 21-year-old former world No.1 amateur from Surrey (top) kept her cushion at the top of the leaderboard after a third-round five-under 67.

A fourth birdie in her first 10 holes at Dundonald Links briefly extended the advantage to three, and despite picking up further shots at the 14th and 17th, a bogey at the short 15th left her 17 under.

That was two better than Denmark's Nanna Koerstz Madsen and South Korean Sei Young Kim.

World No.1 Nelly Korda is five shots adrift on 12 under after a bogey-free 70, her highest round of the week.

RUGBY

NEL METCALFE scored two tries as Wales earned a 21-12 victory over Australia in their first Test in Brisbane.

The hard-earned win comes after Wales failed to win a game during this year's Six Nations and marked their first success under head coach Sean Lynn.

Wales face Australia in Sydney on Friday in their final warm-up game ahead of the World Cup in England, which is just four weeks away.

FORMULA E BY AARON FLANAGAN

NICK CASSIDY delivered the perfect goodbye present to Jaguar with victory in London.

The Kiwi, who will leave the team after today's second race, drove a tactical masterclass and overtook Nyck de Vries under his attack mode for the win, Jaguar's third in a row.

Cassidy said: "It is unbelievable to win the home race for Jaguar.

"I knew we had potential and to be able to produce that is pretty cool."

Brad has home comfort at last

SUPERBIKES BY ZOE BURN

BRAD RAY powered to his 10th win of the Bennetts British Superbike season at Brands Hatch.

The Raceways Yamaha rider (above) shot off the line from pole into the lead and took control on his home track yesterday, building a comfortable gap at the front.

With two laps left, Scott Redding got to within a second of the 2022 champ but Ray responded and made a final push to win by 1.085sec over Redding, with Kyle Ryde third.

"There was a lot of talk coming into this weekend that I'd not won or had a podium here so I felt a bit of pressure," said Ray. "It's special to win at my home round."



LEGEND RAY DIES AGED 85

BY DAVE CRAVEN
RUGBY LEAGUE great Ray French has died at the age of 85.

The former St Helens, Widnes and Great Britain forward earned acclaim not only for his feats on the pitch, but also off it.

After a brilliant playing career, where he earned four caps for England's rugby union side before switching codes in 1961 to join Saints, French (above) became the much-loved voice of the BBC's rugby league coverage.

He began his TV work with the Beeb in 1981 and broadcast on TV and radio until his retirement in 2019.

French was awarded an MBE two years later for his services to rugby league.

He played more than 200 games for Saints, helping them to the league and Challenge Cup double in 1965-66, and was in the Great Britain World Cup squad two years later.

HULLAVA LOSS

Hull FC 14 Huddersfield 30

By DAVE CRAVEN

BOSS John Cartwright blasted his misfiring Hull side for quickly falling back into bad old ways.

Just a week after a stunning season-best win at champions Wigan, they slumped to yet another dismal home loss against lowly Huddersfield.

Hull's last MKM Stadium outing against Wakefield saw them finally pick up a first victory there in 12 months with fans hoping to have turned a corner.

But, despite a brilliant hat-trick from young winger Lewis Martin, they endured more home discomfort yesterday as Huddersfield ripped them to pieces.

It was only the Giants' fourth win of the year - but two have come against Hull after they also beat FC at Magic Weekend.

Head coach Cartwright (above), whose side went into their free week having missed the chance to edge Wakefield out of sixth spot, admitted: "It's a rollercoaster isn't it?"

"I've still got to work out how this type of thing happens. We tried hard but it was back to the bad old days of too many errors and too

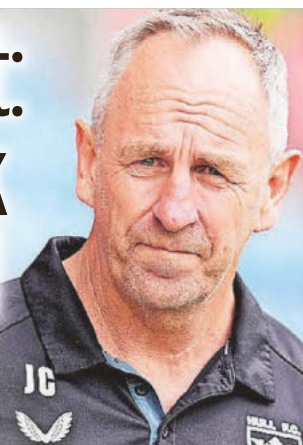
Cartwright: We're back to our bad old ways

many soft tries on our try-line. We just look like we need a break. I was happy with how we prepared but credit to Huddersfield, they played a good brand of football.

"We were waiting for them to make errors - and they didn't. We've got no excuses."

Huddersfield built up an 18-4 interval lead and never

SUPER LEAGUE						
	P	W	D	L	F	A Pts
Hull KR	19	16	0	3	590	180 32
Wigan	20	15	0	5	578	283 30
Leigh	19	13	1	5	397	346 27
Leeds	20	13	0	7	422	246 26
St Helens	19	12	0	7	487	214 24
Wakefield	20	11	0	9	484	324 22
Hull	20	10	1	9	371	347 21
Warrington	19	9	0	10	360	431 18
Catalans	20	6	0	14	296	514 12
Castleford	19	5	0	14	318	481 10
Hudd'field	20	4	0	16	262	558 8
Salford	19	2	0	17	145	786 4



looked like letting it slip. Adam Swift opened the scoring against his former club in the 14th minute.

Martin replied for Hull following a fine assist from centre Davy Litten, the pair combining superbly all afternoon. But Joe Greenwood extended the visitors' lead after latching on to Matt Frawley's clever grubber.

And when Hull's Jordan Rapana failed to take an Aidan Sezer pass, Jake Bibby raced in from 50m.

FC winger Harvey Barron controversially had a try chalked off by the video referee early in the second period. So when George Flanagan dummied over after a soft Amir Bourouh handling

error and slotted the fourth of his five goals, Huddersfield were in charge.

Martin scored his second after Litten's excellent tip-on pass. But Hull forward Jack Ashworth spilled in the next set to immediately gift Giants another chance, Tui Lolohea beautifully stepping through for their fifth try.

The hosts did finish with Martin's glorious third after he collected Sezer's chip on halfway and grubbered ahead for Litten, who once more provided the final pass.

But after being hammered by Wakefield last week, it was Giants boss Luke Robinson left celebrating.

He turned 41 on Friday so had a belated birthday present even if Lolohea (quad) and Swift (groin) picked up injuries.

And Robinson said: "Life's nice when you get a win.

"I've said before how my wife gets an extra kiss and my kids get an extra ice cream when it happens!"

"I said all along when we get the right bodies on the field we can be consistent. I'm really proud of the lads."

HULL: Tries: Martin (3)
Goal: Charles
HUDDERSFIELD: Tries: Swift, Greenwood, Bibby, Flanagan, Lolohea. Goals: Flanagan (5)

LIONS TOUR 2025



AUSTRALIA 26

RATINGS by Adam Hathaway

BRITISH & IRISH LIONS

- HUGO KEENAN** 7
Has not convinced all tour but last-gasp try made him a Lions legend
- TOMMY FREEMAN** 6
First-half yellow card cost two tries but he took one for the team there
- HUW JONES** 6
Not picked originally for this game but popped up with a try
- BUNDEE AKI** 5
Not the huge carrier he is with Ireland and largely ineffective
- JAMES LOWE** 6
Out of sorts all tour but supplied neat pass for Beirne to score
- FINN RUSSELL** 6
Took until 45 minutes to make first error of tour and missed kicks
- JAMISON GIBSON-PARK** 6
Lively and good around park, one howler with up-and-under
- ANDREW PORTER** 6
Got no change out of the Aussie front row or the referee at scrum
- DAN SHEEHAN** 8
Quick thinking for Lions first try and solid at lineout - world class
- TADHG FURLONG** 6
Struggled with loose head James Slipper who did not want to scrum
- MARO ITOJE (CAPT)** 7
More than 20 tackles in heroic effort and menace at breakdown
- OLLIE CHESSUM** 6
First Lions start and continued decent form before being replaced
- TADHG BEIRNE** 8
Willing carrier, good lineout presence and great finish for try
- TOM CURRY** 7
Provided spark and hit-of-the-tour on Joseph Sua'ali'i to stop try
- JACK CONAN** 7
Bounced off by a scrum-half but put in a tackle count of 20-plus
- REPLACEMENTS:**
Roman Kelleher (for Sheehan after 64 minutes) 5,
Ellis Genge (Porter 54) 7,
Will Stuart (Furlong 64) 6,
James Ryan (Chessum 54) 5,
Jac Morgan (Curry 54) 7,
Owen Farrell (Jones 60) 6,
Blair Kinghorn (Lowe 60) 6

MAN OF THE MATCH



TADHG BEIRNE

AUSTRALIA

- Tom Wright 6
- Max Jorgensen 7
- Joseph-Aukuso Sua'alii 7
- Len Ikitau 8
- Harry Potter 5
- Tom Lynagh 7
- Jake Gordon 7
- James Slipper 7
- David Porecki 6
- Allan Alaalatoa 7
- Nick Frost 6
- Will Skelton 7
- Rob Valetini 7
- Fraser McReight 7
- Harry Wilson (capt) 6
- REPLACEMENTS:**
Tate McDermott (Potter 19mins) 6,
Angus Bell (Slipper 40) 5,
Tom Robertson (Alaalatoa 40) 5,
Langi Gleeson (Valetini 40) 5,
Jeremy Williams (Skelton 47) 4,
Billy Pollard (Porecki 56) 5,
Carlo Tizzano (McReight 60) 6

HU LITTLE BEAUTY!

Keenan miracle sets up a whitewash bid

FROM ADAM HATHAWAY in Melbourne

HUGO KEENAN wrote his name into British & Irish Lions folklore as Maro Itoje's men took the series with a game to play.

The Ireland full-back scored in the final minute at the MCG as the Lions won a dramatic game worthy of one of sport's greatest venues.

But there was drama even after Keenan had gone over with under 30 seconds left.

The Wallabies claimed that Jac Morgan had cleared out Carlo Tizzano illegally, but referee Andrea Piardi was having none of it.

Keenan's score gave the Lions the lead for the first time in a match which tested the nerves of their travelling fans but who can now head to Sydney knowing the main job is done.

In a magnificent Test match that showed the Aussie public that rugby union is not dying in this country, the Wallabies really turned it on - but the Lions got over the line in the end.

With the MCG rocking, Lions coach Andy Farrell (right) saw the Australians lead 23-5 with

the game looking dead and buried after just 30 minutes. The Lions were playing like they'd never seen a rugby ball.

The Aussies had managed to arrive 25 minutes late but the crowd of 90,307 - a record for the Lions down here - were treated to a game a million times better than the Brisbane bore last weekend.

The Wallabies might have been late, but unlike last week, they turned up on the pitch right from the word go.

It is not rocket science. When you add 23-odd stone of Will Skelton to your pack, and a huge ball-carrier like Rob Valetini, you get to be a very different proposition.

Former Saracens lock Skelton was putting it about from the off and he had a ruck with Itoje after cheap-shooting Tadhg Furlong.

Skelton was brought in to add bulk and niggler and did both - he and local boy Valetini got the hosts on the front foot.

It was 23-17 at half-time after the Lions had fought back with



COMEBACK KID Keenan gets Lions' last-gasp winner

tries from Tom Curry and Huw Jones. For most of the half it was one-way traffic.

Fly-half Tom Lynagh had kicked a couple of early penalties before Dan Sheehan's tap to himself and dive over made it a one-point game.

Then the Aussies cut loose scoring three tries in the blink of an eye.

Lions wing Tommy Freeman was carded for infringing when James Slipper scored the first - then, down to 14 men, the tourists checked out.

The forwards were sluggish, and gaps opened up allowing the Australians to run riot with scrum-half Jake Gordon walking through an AWOL defence.

Then full-back Tom Wright finished off a move started in their own 22 by Max Jorgensen and carried on by Joseph Suaalii.

The Lions started punching finally when Curry and Jones went over.

Skelton and Valetini - just back from injury - were hauled off early in the second half.

Lynagh added his third penalty as the Aussies dug in but Tadhg Beirne pulled off a magnificent finish off James Lowe's pass and Finn Russell's touchline conversion made it a two-point game.

Farrell threw son Owen on off the bench on the hour to predictable jeers and cheers from the crowd - but the biggest noise was yet to come.

Keenan crashed over, the TMO did his bit and the heartbroken Wallabies were done - though they had played their part in an epic.

AUSTRALIA: Tries: Slipper, Gordon, Wright; Pens: Lynagh (3); Con: Lynagh
BRITISH & IRISH LIONS: Tries: Sheehan, T Curry, H Jones, Beirne, Keenan; Cons: Russell (2)



SIGN OF THE TIMES
Lions fans caught in the act



FROM ADAM HATHAWAY in Melbourne

BRITISH & IRISH LIONS skipper Maro Itoje insisted the job is not done despite clinching the Test series here - while angry Australia have found a new grudge to settle.

Itoje and his team-mates will make history at the third and final Test in Sydney next Saturday if they can land a ninth win of this tour to be the first Lions side since 1927 to deliver a campaign clean sweep.

Aussie hearts were broken at the MCG - a traditional graveyard

MARO EYES SWEEP..

for England's Ashes hopes - and their series dreams are over.

But Itoje had already warned the Lions wanted to win every game when they came Down Under and that is still the plan.

He said: "When we met for the first time in London or Dublin, Andy Farrell made the call. He wants us to go out here and win.

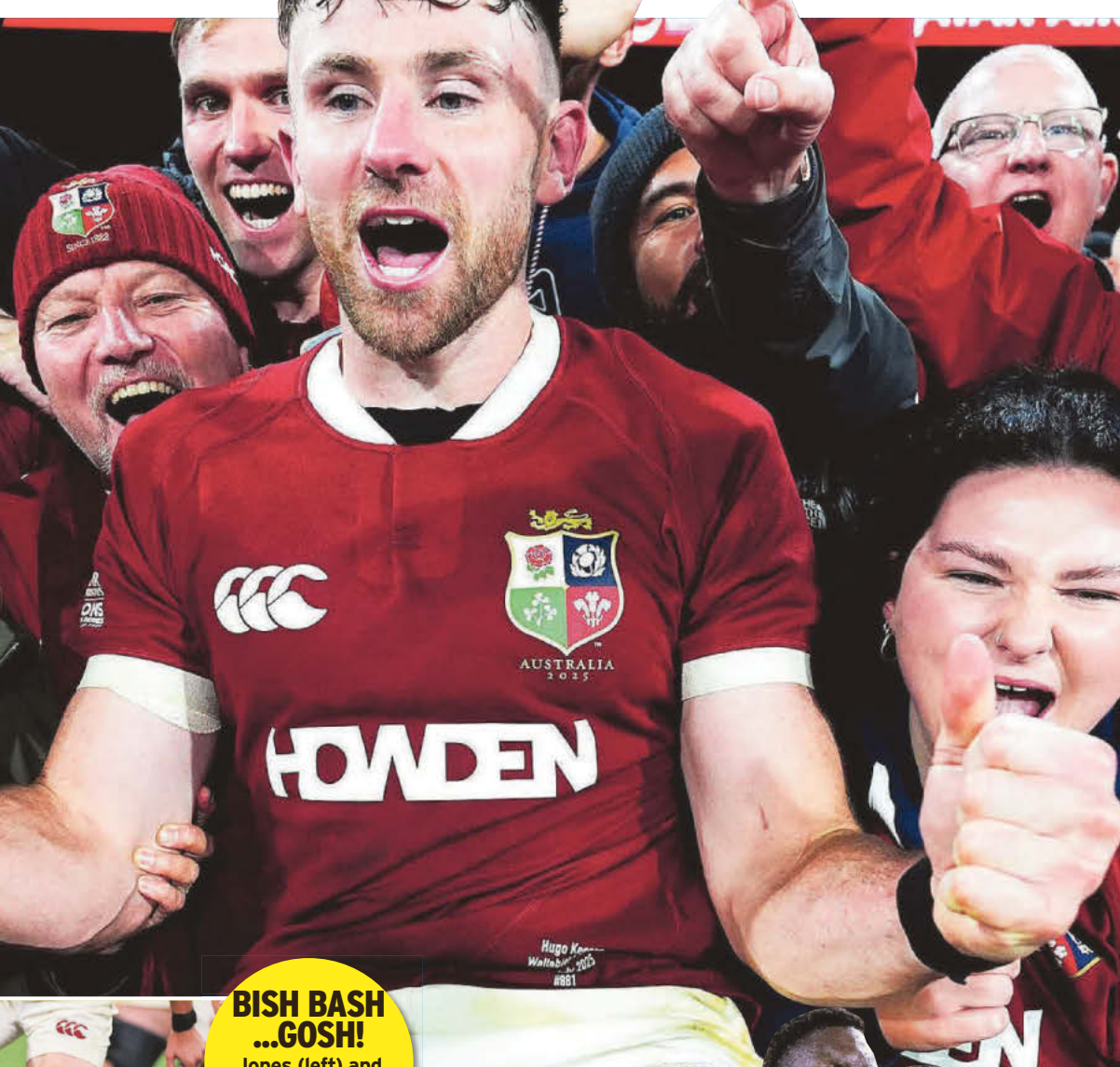
"He wants us to win everything so don't get me wrong, absolutely

delighted with the result tonight but we want to go again."

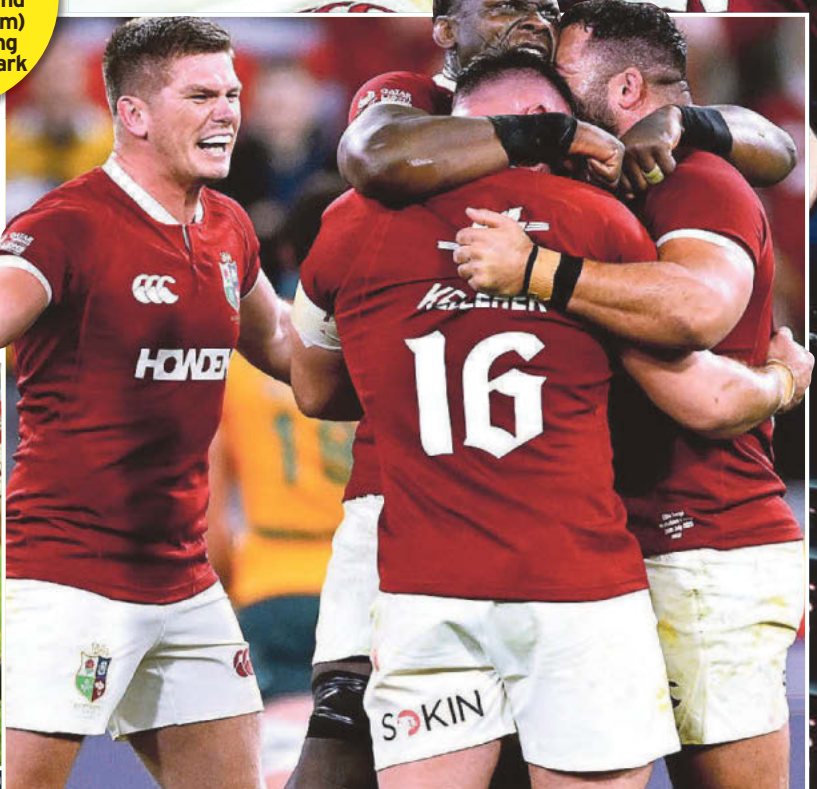
Australia boss Joe Schmidt, was spitting after the game, accusing the match officials of failing to protect players.

He reckoned Welsh flanker Jac Morgan hit Aussie replacement Carlo Tizzano with an illegal and dangerous clear out in the lead-up to Hugo Keenan's clinching try and the score should have been chalked

BRITISH & IRISH LIONS 29



BISH BASH ...GOSH!
Jones (left) and Beirne (bottom) scored, cueing Keenan to spark Lions joy



FINAL TEST: SATURDAY
SYDNEY, 11AM SERIES: LIONS 2-0



DON'T PITY THE AUSSIE CHOKERS

JEREMY CROSS



Lions Verdict

IN ONE of the great stadiums, the British & Irish Lions produced one of the greatest ever performances.

A Test match for the ages. One which saw history made - and will refuse to get old in time.

Lions captain Maro Itoje (above, in action and, below, celebrating) said the winning feeling struck him as "surreal", which was understandable considering his team had just climbed off the canvas to knock Australia out with the last punch of the game.

The biggest-ever comeback in Lions history - 18 points - saw the tourists take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series, with the first time they have secured back-to-back Test wins in the same country in the professional era.

Whatever happens in Saturday's final Test now, nothing can change or dilute what this group of players has achieved.

But some perspective needs addressing. Because on the subject of history, this Aussie team will go down as one of the most bang-average ever.

Down Under, Union is under threat from Rugby League and Aussie Rules like never before.

So spare a thought for the poor Aussies.

Well, don't actually. Great teams find ways to win, but all Joe Schmidt's men could do was find a way to lose.

At one stage before half-time, the Aussies had a 23-5 lead. The iconic MCG was rocking, while the Lions were creaking.

But then the world belonging to those in green and gold imploded all around them.

Humbled and humiliated in their own house, the home of Australian sport no less.

This was the Aussie Mecca. A record crowd of 90,037 had crammed in to create one of the most iconic atmospheres.

A place steeped in sporting history, where statues of legends surround the perimeter.

But these modern Aussies don't get the stars of old, players like David Campese, John Eales, Tim Horan and Jason Little. World Cup winners one and all.

The hosts even managed to turn up late at the stadium due to bus issues, which felt mind-blowing

considering it was their biggest game since the 2015 World Cup Final.

This tour comes around once every dozen years, and they still couldn't get to the stadium on time.

The Wallabies had ripped into the Lions from the start.

But then they choked.

And with 40 seconds left on the clock, Hugo Keenan crashed over to win the match, the series and etch his name into Lions folklore.

He joins the likes of Martin Johnson, Willie-John McBride, Matt Dawson and Jeremy Guscott by adding another iconic moment to the history of this unique team.

It's just a shame the 2025 Wallabies will only be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

SAILING



2027 VISION Ainslie

Cup's still Sir Ben's holy grail

BY NEIL SQUIRES

SIR BEN AINSLIE won't let go of his dream of sailing to America's Cup glory.

He is the man supplying the energy behind Britain's next Cup challenge - but even at 48 his passion for competing on the water in person burns bright.

Ainslie said: "I don't know with the America's Cup. It's clear where the trajectory might head... but never say never."

Since winning his fourth Olympic gold at London 2012, the Cup has become Ainslie's obsession.

After helping Oracle Team USA to their 2013 triumph, his three bids for British glory have failed.

The most recent saw Ineos Britannia beaten in the final. Ainslie's split with Sir Jim Ratcliffe, the main sponsor, was messy, with Ineos and Ainslie's Athena Racing both claiming to be the official challenger for Naples 2027.

Ineos walked away. The men have not spoken since.

Ainslie is positive about negotiations over new financial backing for Naples but wants to make sure the spend doesn't get near the estimated £200million Ineos put into its two campaigns.

"Cost caps are critical," he said. "I'm very positive about the future of the Cup, having a British team in there and one day winning it."

He's also chief executive of the British team in SailGP - the 50mph catamaran series billed as 'F1 on water'.

SailGP has attracted A-list fans - Hugh Jackman and Ryan Reynolds are now co-owners of the Australian team, Anne Hathaway has bought into the Red Bull Italian team and Kylian Mbappe has a share in the French outfit.

A crowd of 20,000 came to watch the British leg in Portsmouth last weekend.

Ainslie rated it the best event he'd ever taken part in, even if old Cup colleague Dylan Fletcher was doing the driving, and added: "There's still always an element of wanting to be out on the water, racing."

AS ANGRY HOSTS GROW GRUDGE

off. Wallaby skipper Harry Wilson was steaming with referee Andrea Piardi but the Italian allowed the try to leave Schmidt raging.

Schmidt said: "They are human, players make mistakes, officials make mistakes.

"From our perspective we felt it was a decision that doesn't really live up to the big player safety push that they are talking about. "You cannot hit someone above

the levels of the shoulders and there's no bind with the left arm, his hand is on the ground.

"We have watched a number of replays from different angles so it is what it is. We just have to accept it.

"You only have to look at law 9.20. It's what the officials are there to enforce.

"A player who dives off his feet and is clearly beaten to the position over the ball, makes neck

contact...it was tough to take." But Lions boss Farrell countered: "I thought it was a brilliant clear out. I can understand people's opinions. But I thought Jac was brilliant when he came on."

Farrell revealed he would not be changing the schedule with the series in the bag, as his team headed for a night on the tiles.

He added: "The plan stays the same. Win or lose, trust the plan."



Woakes could taste hat-trick .. but Gill defies

SIMON MULLOCK

Verdict from Old Trafford



WHEN Chris Woakes found himself on a hat-trick after bowling the first two deliveries of India's second innings, there might have been a temptation to cancel the final-day catering.

The tourists had even left Rishabh Pant back at the team hotel after deciding it was probably wise for him to stay off the foot he broke on Wednesday afternoon, rather than asking him to go through the pain barrier again.

But any thoughts that Shubman Gill was about to wave the white flag were dispelled in the next 62 overs and four balls as the Indian skipper combined with obdurate opener KL Rahul to make sure that there's still jeopardy going into the final day of the fourth Test at Old Trafford.

The pair guided India to within 137 runs of forcing England to bat again.

Whether Pant will still be watching on TV and helping himself to a bit of Sunday morning Radisson room service is another matter.

If his country needs him to hobble back to the middle to frustrate England further, there's no doubt that he'll be more than willing.

Gill led brilliantly from the front once more to give his team a fighting chance of avoiding defeat and going to The Oval next week with hope of saving the series.

Having spent 157 overs in the field trying to squeeze more effort from his fatigued team - while his England counterpart

Ben Stokes played his attack for 141 - the Indian captain might have fancied a bit of R&R.

But when Woakes (above) had Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sai Sudharsan both caught in the slips, he was back in the middle in the blink of an eye.

No one has scored more runs than Gill in this series.

Despite failing at Lord's and in the first innings in Manchester, he has still amassed 694 runs at an average of 99.

He is 22 runs away from adding another century to scores of 269, 161 and 147.

By the end, Stokes turned to bouncer barrage of Archer & Carse

Another daunting statistic is that Rahul is next in the run chart with 501.

And he needs just 13 more to claim his third ton of the summer.

It was thought that the bone-hard track in Manchester would start to crack. Apart from the odd threat of uneven bounce, the expected demons didn't materialise.

The home side's task was made even tougher when Stokes appeared to tweak his left hamstring and was unable to bowl during England's bid to dismiss India for a second time.

By the end, Stokes had turned to a bouncer barrage from Jofra Archer and Brydon Carse before going with the spin of Liam Dawson and Joe Root.

It was plodding and predictable, but at least there was a Michael van Gerwen look-a-like keeping the punters amused in the party stand. Many of them were heading for the exits well before the close.

CRICKET ENGLAND v INDIA

Big Ben is striking once again

STOKES' TON ADDS TO AWESOME ROOT KNOCK TO GIVE A COMMANDING LEAD



DYNAMIC DUO
KL Rahul and Shubman Gill gave India hope with their partnership



SKIPPER MAY BE TOO

BY **SIMON MULLOCK**
MARCUS TRESCOTHICK admitted England are sweating on the fitness of captain Ben Stokes.

Stokes (left) smashed a brilliant 141 as his team posted a mammoth first-innings total of 669 to leave India staring down the barrel of a huge fourth Test defeat at Old Trafford.

But he was powerless as the tourists fought back in the afternoon after being unable to bowl due to a hamstring issue.

And assistant coach Trescottick revealed that the all-rounder's chances of returning to the attack on the final day hinge on him responding to rest and treatment.

Trescottick said: "We're hoping Ben will bowl. He's a bit stiff and sore. He's had quite a big workload in the last few weeks and, obviously, he was getting cramp when he batted.

"We're hoping that with another night's rest and a bit more physio work



FOURTH TEST, OLD TRAFFORD
TODAY: DAY 5 OF 5, 11AM SERIES: ENG 2-1

RESULTS

FOOTBALL
PREMIER SPORTS CUP—GROUP A: Falkirk 4 Spartans 0, Queen's Park 2 Cove Rangers 1. **GROUP B:** Ross County 1 Partick 3, Stranraer 1 Queen of South 0. **GROUP C:** Airdrieonians 2 Alloa 3, Dundee 5 Montrose 0. **GROUP D:** Forfar 1 Arbroath 0. **GROUP E:** Dunfermline 2 Stirling 0, Hamilton 0 Dumbarton 1. **GROUP F:** Raith 5 Inverness CT 1, St Johnstone 8 Elgin 0. **GROUP G:** Morton 3 Clyde 0, Stenhousemuir 1 Peterhead 0. **GROUP H:** Kilmarnock 4 East Fife 0, Livingston 6 Kelly Hearts 0.
FRIENDLIES: Bromley 1 Millwall 2, Exeter 1 Swansea 0, Liverpool 2 AC Milan 4, Port Vale 0 Birmingham 2, Rangers 2 Middlesbrough 2, Stockport County 0 Hull 1, Stoke 1 Wolverhampton 1, Espanyol 2 Southampton 1, Oldham 0 Bradford 1, Southend 1 AFC Wimbledon 0, Dartford 0 Gillingham 2, Southport 2 Crewe 1, AFC Fylde 0 Morecambe 0, Eastleigh 2 Swindon 3, Reading 0 Portsmouth 4, Cambridge City 1 Charlton 1, Harrogate Town 0 Carlisle 2, Huddersfield 0 Burnley 2, Stevenage 2 Milton Keynes Dons 1, Tranmere 0 Wigan 1, Bolton 2 Preston North End 0, Chesterfield 1 Sheff Utd 4, Burton Albion 2 Derby 1, Forest Green 0 Walsall 3, Oxford Utd 0 Bristol Rovers 1, QPR 2 Heerenveen 2, Plymouth 0 Bristol City 2, Doncaster 1 Blackpool 1, Notts County 2 Cardiff 2, Sheff Wed 2 Mansfield 0.

GOLF
USPGA TOUR 3M OPEN (Blaine, Minnesota)—2nd rnd (USA unless stated, Par 71): **128** T Olesen (Den) 62 66, **129** J Knapp 64 65, **130** P Coady 65 65, S Stevens 62 68, **131** T Kanaya (Jpn) 67 64, C Kirk 64 67, M Schmid (Ger) 63 68, **132** A Bhatia 66 66, L Clanton 66 66, W Clark 67 65, J Dahmen 67 65, C Gotterup 63 69, E Grillo (Arg) 65 67, W Mouw 66 66, A Noren (Swe) 70 62, C Ramey 63 69, M Wallace (Eng) 65 67, **133** R Hoey (Phi) 68 65, N Lashley 67 66, M Meissner 66 67, T Moore 66 67, H Norlander (Swe) 67 66, S Power (Irl) 67 66.

RUGBY LEAGUE
Betfred Super League
HULL **14 HUDDERSFIELD**... **30**
Hull—T: Martin (3). G: Charles.
Huddersfield—T: Swift, Greenwood, J. Bibby, Flanagan, Lolohea. G: Flanagan (5).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hull KR	19	16	0	3	590	180	32
Wigan	20	15	0	5	578	283	30
Leigh	19	13	1	5	397	346	27
Leeds	20	13	0	7	422	246	26
St Helens	19	12	0	7	487	214	24
Wakefield	20	11	0	9	484	324	22
Hull	20	10	1	9	371	347	21
Warrington	19	9	0	10	360	431	18
Catalans D	20	6	0	14	296	514	12
Castleford	19	5	0	14	318	481	10
Huddersfield	20	4	0	16	262	558	8
Salford	19	2	0	17	145	786	4

RUGBY UNION
British & Irish Lions Tour
AUSTRALIA **26 BRIT & I LIONS**... **29**
Australia—T: Slipper, J. Gordon, T. Wright, C. Lynagh. P: Lynagh (3).
British & Irish Lions—T: Sheehan, Curry, Jones, Beirne, Keenan. C: Russell (2).

TODAY'S DIARY

(3pm unless stated)
UEFA Women's European Championship Final
England v Spain (5pm).....
(Live on BBC 1)
Premier Sports Cup Group D: St Mirren v Ayr (Live on Premier Sports).
Friendly Match: Arsenal v Newcastle (12.30).
CRICKET
Fourth Test Match—day 5 of 5: England v India (Old Trafford, 11am).
GOLF
USPGA Tour 3M Open (Blaine, Minnesota).
LIV Golf United Kingdom (JCB Golf & Country Club, United Kingdom).
Ladies European Tour ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open (Dundonald Links, Gables, Scotland).
ISPS HANDA Senior Open (Sunningdale Golf Club, Sunningdale, Berkshire, England).
ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open (Dundonald Links, Gables, Ayrshire, Scotland).

MOTOR RACING
FIA Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix (Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, Spa Francorchamps, Belgium).

RUGBY LEAGUE
Betfred Championship (3pm): Doncaster v Batley, Featherstone v London Broncos, Oldham v Hunslet, Widnes v Bradford.
Betfred League 1 (3pm): Goole Vikings v Rochdale, Keighley v Whitehaven, Newcastle v North Wales Crusaders, Swinton v Midlands Hurricanes (2pm).
Betfred Women's Super League (2pm): Barrow Raiders Women v Leigh Leopards Women, Warrington Wolves Women v St Helens Women (12pm), Wigan Warriors Women v Leeds Rhinos Women, York Valkyrie v Huddersfield Giants Women (3pm).



BY MIKE WALTERS
at Old Trafford
BEN STOKES' happy hour with the bat landed Captain Fantastic another bunch of records on his ascent to cricket's pantheon.

But unless he can throw on his superhero's cape and bowl today, England's chances of forcing a victory

against India at Old Trafford will be seriously diminished.

Stokes retired hurt with cramp when he had scored 66 on Friday and turned his second coming at the crease into his first Test century for more than two years.

Then came the magician's disappearing act.

Needing 311 to stave off an innings defeat, India churned out 174-2 in the fourth Test, but England's best bowler this series was absent from the attack.

Stokes remained on parade, directing operations in the field, but he was clearly feeling the effects of bowling 24 overs in the first innings and his 141 in five-and-a-half hours with the bat.

And, suddenly, England's path to an unassailable 3-1 lead in the series looks gridlocked.

This pitch now has less life in it than the deceased parrot in a famous Monty Python sketch, and unbroken third-wicket allies Shubman Gill and KL Rahul are both within sight of India's first Test hundred at Manchester since 17-year-old Sachin Tendulkar's match-saving 119 here in 1990.

Stokes' encore as a born-again front-line bowler to balance the attack has been England's greatest bonus this summer.

But unless he rejoins the party today, it is hard to envisage them turning supremacy over four days into a party.

England's 669 all out was their fifth-highest total in Test history.

Notably, three of the top five scores have come in the Bazball era, although this one was well short of the 823-7 declared against Pakistan in Multan last year and the all-time high of 903-7



WILD WOAKES
England's bowler celebrates after dismissing Sai Sudharsan

against Australia at The Oval in 1938.

Remarkably, Indian warhead Jasprit Bumrah shipped his first 'gallon' (100 runs or more) – playing in his 48th Test – as Stokes went on another rampage through the record books.

A 14th Test century was his first since the Ashes meltdown at Lord's in 2023, when Jonny Bairstow's controversial stumping brought the red mist down and he teed off in a huff.

In the course of his rebooted romp here, Stokes became only the third player to complete the double of 7,000 runs and 200 wickets in Tests, Sir Garfield Sobers and Jacques Kallis being the others.

And only three men besides Big Ben have scored a century and taken five wickets in an innings in the same Test for England – Tony Greig (against West Indies in Bridgetown in 1974), Gus Atkinson (against Sri Lanka at Lord's last year) and Lord Ian Botham, who achieved the feat five times.

When his ninth boundary took him to three figures, Stokes removed his helmet, gazed skywards and gestured to his late father in the celestial pavilion.

Then he unleashed the tiger within, smearing three sixes

including one missile over extra cover off Ravindra Jadeja which had the trajectory of a crossbow bolt.

Brydon Carse, whose maiden Test 50 at Lord's was a critical contribution in a tight match, also swung merrily like an end-of-term partygoer from the chandeliers for his 47 from 54 balls.

When England's 157 overs of ritual plunder had finally expired, India – realistically needing to bat five sessions to save the game – were left a thankless 15 minutes to negotiate before lunch.

They lost two wickets in the first five balls.

Joe Root juggled Yashasvi Jaiswal's edge at slip, but clung on one-handed.

Then Chris Woakes was on a hat-trick when Sai Sudharsan's indecision presented Harry Brook with another casualty in the spider's web of close catchers.

But, for those hoping the pre-lunch drama would pave the way for an innings win inside four days, it was a false dawn.

Indian captain Gill and Rahul dug in like miners at the coalface and, with Stokes out of commission, the tourists now sense an escape from what had looked like inevitable defeat.

Apart from being dropped by the diving Liam Dawson off Carse when he was on 46, Gill – 697 runs in the series and counting – looked safe as houses yet again.

His 174-run stand with Rahul was only the third time a team has recovered from being 0-2 by posting a hundred-plus alliance for the third wicket.

ENGLAND'S FIVE BIGGEST TEST TOTALS

- 903-7 v Australia, The Oval, 1938
- 849 v West Indies, Kingston, 1930
- 823-7 v Pakistan, Multan, 2024
- 710-7 v India Edgbaston, 2011
- 669 v India, Old Trafford, 2025



SORE TO LEAD TODAY'S RENEWED ATTACK

overnight that he'll be back doing a bit. It's been such a heavy workload from where he's been to what he's now doing and we are trying to monitor it.

"But, obviously, the cramp he was getting yesterday gives you that little bit of worry because of what's happened to him previously."

Chris Woakes took two wickets in two deliveries in the first over of India's second innings.

But England were then frustrated by

a brilliant unbeaten third-wicket partnership of 174 between skipper Shubman Gill and KL Rahul.

India still need another 137 runs to make England bat again – but Stokes' health could be a big factor as the hosts go looking for a victory that would give them an unassailable 3-1 lead in the series.

Trescothick admitted that other players will have to step up if Stokes is unable to bowl after taking five wickets

for the first time in eight years during the tourists' first innings.

He is the leading wicket-taker in the series with 16.

Trescothick said: "You take anyone out of your attack, it creates a hole – especially when you're trying to push for victory on a pitch that is quite tricky.

"It's never great when a bowler goes down, but it's then up to others to pick up the pieces and do the extra

workload. We've got 10 other guys in the team who are also capable of doing special things."

He added: "It was a very frustrating afternoon.

"We expected to get a few more wickets after the first over of the third innings.

"But I thought India batted really well. They stuck at it and once the ball gets to 25 or 30 overs old, it becomes more of a challenge for us."



THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE IS BACK

Ainsworth: Gills in for some rock and goals!



GAFFER'S HOT GIG
Ainsworth will shake, rattle and roll it in Kent

LEAGUE ONE

Friday
Luton Town 8.00 Wimbledon

Saturday
Cardiff City 12.30 Peterboro
Blackpool 3.00 Stevenage
Bradford 3.00 Wycombe
Burton 3.00 Mansfield
Doncaster 3.00 Exeter City
Huddersfield 3.00 L.Orient
Lincoln City 3.00 Reading
Plymouth 3.00 Barnsley
Rotherham 3.00 Port Vale
Wigan 3.00 N'thampton

LEAGUE TWO

Saturday
Accrington 3.00 Gillingham
Barnet 3.00 Fleetwood
Bristol Rvrs 3.00 Harrogate
Cambridge 3.00 Cheltenham
Chesterfield 3.00 Barrow
Colchester 3.00 Tranmere
Grimsby 3.00 Crawley
MK Dons 3.00 Oldham
Newport Co 3.00 Notts Co
Salford 3.00 Crewe
Shrewsbury 3.00 Bromley
Walsall 3.00 Swindon

FINAL TABLE

2024/25	P	W	D	L	F	A	Gd	Pts
Birmingham	46	34	9	3	84	31	53	111
Wrexham	46	27	11	8	67	34	33	92
Stockport	46	25	12	9	72	42	30	87
Charlton	46	25	10	11	67	43	24	85
Wycombe	46	24	12	10	70	45	25	84
Leyton Orient	46	24	6	16	72	48	24	78
Reading	46	21	12	13	68	57	11	75
Bolton	46	20	8	18	67	70	-3	68
Blackpool	46	17	16	13	72	60	12	67
Huddersfield	46	19	7	20	58	55	3	64
Lincoln City	46	16	13	17	64	56	8	61
Barnsley	46	17	10	19	69	73	-4	61
Rotherham	46	16	11	19	54	59	-5	59
Stevenage	46	15	12	19	42	50	-8	57
Wigan	46	13	17	16	40	42	-2	56
Exeter City	46	15	11	20	49	65	-16	56
Mansfield	46	15	9	22	60	73	-13	54
Peterborough	46	13	12	21	68	81	-13	51
Northampton	46	12	15	19	48	66	-18	51
Burton	46	11	14	21	49	66	-17	47
Crawley	46	12	10	24	57	83	-26	46
Bristol Rovers	46	12	7	27	44	76	-32	43
Cambridge	46	9	11	26	45	73	-28	38
Shrewsbury	46	8	9	29	41	79	-38	33

FINAL TABLE

2024/25	P	W	D	L	F	A	Gd	Pts
Doncaster	46	24	12	10	73	50	23	84
Port Vale	46	22	14	10	65	46	19	80
Bradford City	46	22	12	12	64	45	19	78
Walsall	46	21	14	11	75	54	21	77
AFC Wim'don	46	20	13	13	56	35	21	73
Notts County	46	20	12	14	68	49	19	72
Chesterfield	46	19	13	14	73	54	19	70
Salford City	46	18	15	13	64	54	10	69
Grimsby	46	20	8	16	16	7	-6	68
Colchester	46	16	19	11	52	47	5	67
Bromley	46	17	15	14	64	59	5	66
Swindon	46	15	17	14	71	63	8	62
Crewe	46	15	17	14	49	48	1	62
Fleetwood	46	15	15	16	60	60	0	60
Cheltenham	46	16	12	18	60	70	-10	60
Barrow	46	15	14	17	52	50	2	59
Gillingham	46	14	16	16	41	46	-5	58
Harrogate	46	14	11	21	43	61	-18	53
MK Dons	46	14	10	22	52	66	-14	52
Tranmere	46	12	15	19	45	65	-20	51
Acc Stanley	46	12	14	20	53	69	-16	50
Newport	46	13	10	23	52	76	-24	49
Carlisle	46	10	12	24	44	71	-27	42
Morecambe	46	10	6	30	40	72	-32	36

LEAGUE TWO EXCLUSIVE BY RYAN TAYLOR

GARETH AINSWORTH has long been at peace with his shock departure from Shrewsbury.

And now he is ready to rock Gillingham's world.

The 'Wild Thing' - lead vocalist of The Cold Blooded Hearts - requires no introduction in EFL managerial circles.

During more than 10 years at Wycombe Wanderers, his heavy-metal football yielded exceptional results, propelling Wanderers from the fourth tier into the Championship.

And, following two short-lived spells in west London - with QPR - and Shropshire, he wants to run it back.

Ahead of next week's League Two opening match at Accrington Stanley, Ainsworth said: "I just want my players

to feel like they belong to something. When we look at football, we're in a privileged position compared to other walks of life.

"Gillingham's identity was getting a little bit muddled up with the different changes of personnel, both players and managers.

"We want to bring that identity back, this summer has been a big mental shift of the whole place."

Former Shrewsbury midfielder Jamie Tolley accused Ainsworth of "promising the world, but delivering nothing" when the 52-year-old left the New Meadow for Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium back in March.

But the long-haired gaffer makes no secret of the fact that an ambitious managerial job pitch from Gillingham's

American owners Brad and Shannon Galinson ignited the fire within him.

Ainsworth certainly has plenty of experience in how to get a place bouncing - his band's latest gig was just a few weeks ago in London's Soho - and he plans to front an electric Kentish revolution.

When asked if he now feels pressure to vindicate his Shrewsbury departure, he said: "No, not at all. Managers are restricted in what they can say with their contracts, I wish I could have said a lot more.

"My justification for coming to Gillingham sits well with me, no problem at all.

"I'm on a journey and I bought into the journey at Shrewsbury.

"People will laugh and say I'm not

loyal, but you've got the wrong guy. I don't need to prove anything to anyone."

Ainsworth was such a coup for the Gills that the bookies have them among the favourites for promotion.

But he isn't buying that.

He said: "It's flattering, but I don't know where the substance in that has come from.

"We haven't made £1million signings, we've signed three players.

"Thank you, but we're focusing on the journey - it's a two-year project centred around improving, the next level is way down the line for me."

Ainsworth's ranks have been bolstered by the capture of former Burnley striker Sam Vokes (above) and

he's also optimistic he will get Bradley Dack fit and firing.

He added: "We should be seen as underdogs, just like we were at Wycombe. Age is irrelevant to me, if you are good enough, you're good enough.

"If you look at the history of my success, it's come with experience.

"Adebayo Akinfenwa, the partnership we had at Wycombe, Craig Mackail-Smith, Nathan Tyson, Marcus Bean, Sam Saunders, Joe Jacobson, Matt Bloomfield, the list is endless.

"The owners have brought me in and told me to manage how I want.

"They just want success, they enjoy winning and the thrill of it - so that's what we're going to do."



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NAHKI: HATS OFF & RUNNING

LEAGUE ONE BY SIMON CASS

NAHKI WELLS insists Luton can live up to their favourites tag as they bid to return to the Championship at the first time of asking.

The Hatters suffered their second-successive relegation last season, sliding from the Premier League back down to League One in two seasons.

But they already have a target on their back in the third tier given they are the bookies' choice to be top of the pile come the end of the new campaign.

And veteran striker Wells (above), who has swapped Bristol City for Luton after five-and-a-half years with the Robins, said: "There's no denying that there's some disappointment that's hanging over the club because of the

huge success they had a few years ago, for it to then turn into real tough times with the back-to-back relegations.

"Since coming into the football club there's still a real element of excitement to maybe have a different perspective going into the season as favourites.

"Last season they had that as well but, in more historical cases, the club hasn't had that demand that they should go on to get promotion.

"This season I can feel that's our collective benchmark to go on and have success."

On his switch to Kenilworth Road, the 35-year-old admitted it was a "big change", but added: "It's familiar territory in terms of preparing for a new chapter, a new start. I'm excited."



SIMON MULLOCK

He doesn't sit on the fence... even on Sundays



Mullock's on his box

LIVERPOOL were not expected to win the Premier League last season - but anything less than back-to-back titles would now be seen as failure.

Kop boss Arne Slot (above right, with captain Virgil van Dijk) showed that the praise lavished on Jurgen Klopp this time last year might have been dipped in sentimentality - by turning the team he inherited into runaway champions.

Liverpool have since splashed almost £300million on four top-quality signings, with the club's American owners deciding to make a statement of intent from a position of strength.

The bookies have made them clear favourites to retain the title - and rightly so. But Slot will now come under the kind of pressure he didn't experience during his first season in charge.

The expectation when he arrived from Feyenoord was to qualify for the Champions League.

But he made the most of Manchester City's dip and Arsenal's habit of folding under pressure by turning the race into a procession.

After breaking the British transfer record to beat City to the signature of £116m Florian Wirtz, the Merseyside have invested heavily to land Hugo Ekitike, Milos Kerkez and Jeremie Frimpong.

And word is that the spending will continue.

Newcastle's Alexander Isak is still in their sights - and has asked to leave St James' Park. So is Crystal Palace captain Marc Guehi.

No wonder Van Dijk and Mohamed Salah decided to stay.

SURELY it's only a matter of time before Joe Root becomes Sir Joe?

The Yorkshireman (below) - already England's greatest Test batsman - is now the second-best run-getter in the longest format of the game.

He eclipsed Australian great Ricky Ponting on Friday.

Sachin Tendulkar still leads on 15,921 runs, but he played in 200 Tests during his career.

This Test is Root's 157th and the 34-year-old continues to get better and better.

Root has already been awarded an MBE - but a knighthood seems inevitable.



Mbeumo & Cunha are good, but Isak is a beast... c'mon, Jim, make United great again!

A SWEDISH SENSATION
Ratcliffe must seriously think of signing Isak

MANCHESTER UNITED need to start acting like Manchester United again - and that means spending whatever it takes to sign Newcastle United's Alexander Isak.

The news from St James' Park that the Sweden striker fancies a fresh challenge should have had the nation's seventh richest man asking for the dialling code for Saudi Arabia.

And if United co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe (right) has to break the British transfer record just a few weeks after Liverpool paid £116million for Florian Wirtz, then he should reach for the chequebook and get on with it.

Ratcliffe loves to boast that he has bought into the biggest club in the country and, arguably, the world.

And the fact that he thinks United can start charging four grand a pop for season tickets at the new Old Trafford stadium he's proposing suggests he believes his own hype.

But now he's got to stop

talking the talk and put his walking boots on.

Isak is the best all-round No.9 in the Premier League.

Goals, assists, team play, pace, power, intelligence. The Swede is the full package.

Liverpool have already spent almost £300m improving the squad that lifted the title last season - and the word is that they would still sign Isak if Newcastle relent in their stance that he is not for sale.

It was bad enough for any Stratford Ender to see the Anfield club equal United's record of 20 title triumphs.

To watch their biggest rivals adding stellar names to Arne Slot's armoury is just as soul-

destroying. United have been forced to take plenty of pain in the transfer market already.

They had to cough up £62.5m for Matheus Cunha after accepting a payment structure Wolves had inserted alongside the Brazilian's buy-out clause.

And, after offering £55m for Bryan Mbeumo, they only got the Cameroon striker when they met Brentford's £71m asking price.

On top of that, they have seen Marcus Rashford move to Barcelona in a loan deal that will have the Catalans laughing all the way to the

bank. And they have still got another four members of Ruben Amorim's bomb squad to move on - no doubt for a fraction of the cash that took them to Manchester initially.

As talented as Cunha and Mbeumo are, Isak is a completely different beast. Signing him would be a true game-changer, a statement of intent that United really are on the way back.

Sir Alex Ferguson was a master of knowing when to inflict shock and awe on the transfer market.

Think of Eric Cantona, Roy Keane, Ruud van Nistelrooy,

Rio Ferdinand, Wayne Rooney and Carlos Tevez.

In his final season, Fergie raided Arsenal for Robin van Persie - and the Dutchman scored 26 times to take the title back to Old Trafford.

Signing Isak wouldn't immediately transform United into title contenders.

But their fans are desperate to see the thrills return - as much as the trophies.

The club's reputation was built on a commitment to be great entertainers.

Last season, the Old Trafford faithful saw United win just seven games in the Premier League, celebrating only 23 goals.

Only the bottom three scored fewer times at home.

A front three of Cunha, Isak and Mbeumo would solve that embarrassment.

Ratcliffe arrived with big ideas when he paid £1.25billion for a 27.7 percent stake in the club he supported growing up in Oldham with Law, Best and Charlton in their pomp.

Now he has the chance to bring together another trinity.

Lionesses are pride of nation



GOOD luck to the Lionesses in their bid to retain their European crown against Spain this evening.

One thing boss Sarina Wiegman (left, taking a selfie with a fan) and her side have in common with their male counterparts is an unbending spirit never to take defeat.

England's journey to another final has been a roller-coaster ride built on grit, determination and bags of skill. Football at the highest level is often a battle of wills - and when it comes to that vital side of the game, England's women are second to no one.

Gunners hang on Karl bid



ARSENAL are waiting for Sevilla to formalise their interest in Emirates goalkeeper Karl Hein.

The 23-year-old Estonia star signed a new Gunners deal last summer before heading out on loan for a season in La Liga with Real Valladolid.

He impressed, having made the last-minute decision to snub an approach from Charlton.

This time around, Arsenal are prioritising permanent bids and want to push through a sale to avoid losing Hein (above) on a free transfer in 2026.

Sevilla are interested but they are short of cash and are keen to explore a loan swoop for Newcastle United keeper Odysseas Vlachodimos.

Arsenal already enjoy a strong relationship with Sevilla after loaning them midfielder Albert Sambi Lokonga last season.

ODOI'S DEAL IS PRIORITY

BY RYAN TAYLOR

NOTTINGHAM FOREST are continuing to work on a new contract for winger Callum Hudson-Odoi.

The former Chelsea star's representatives remain in ongoing dialogue with Forest, who are determined to tie down the 24-year-old to fresh terms.



Hudson-Odoi recently entered the final 12 months of his Forest deal and resolving his future is among the club's top priorities.

Italian side Roma are on a list of teams watching developments closely but there is also interest from within the Premier League.

Roma have shortlisted Brentford's Kevin Schade as a potential alternative to Hudson-Odoi, who scored five goals in 36 appearances last season.

Meanwhile, Forest winger Jota Silva is being tracked by Portuguese champions Sporting CP.

Juve got the urge for Berge



BY RYAN TAYLOR

JUVENTUS are showing interest in Fulham midfielder Sander Berge.

The Cottagers have overseen a frustrating transfer window and are yet to make a senior outfield signing.

Montpellier goalkeeper and captain Benjamin Lecomte, 34, is Marco Silva's only recruit so far.

But that has not stopped other clubs showing interest in Fulham's stars and Berge (above) is on the radar of Juve, who are ready to part company with ex-Aston Villa maestro Douglas Luiz.

The west Londoners have no intention of entertaining bids for Norway star Berge - a £25million arrival from Burnley last summer.

Juve have looked at other midfield options from the Premier League, including Tottenham's Yves Bissouma.

PREMIER LEAGUE ON TOUR

RAY OF HOPE



Arsenal's man with the Golden Gloves in fight again to be No.1 in Arteta's eyes

BY NICK CALLOW in Singapore

DAVID RAYA does not know if he is going to be Arsenal's No.1 despite going into the new season as a back-to-back Golden Glove winner.

That is the message to him from Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta.

The Spanish keeper, who displaced Aaron Ramsdale two seasons ago, was ever-present in Arsenal's Premier League title chase last term as the Gunners also reached the Champions League semi-finals.

But after the shock summer signing of Kepa Arrizabalaga, still the world's most expensive goalkeeper after he joined Chelsea for £71.6million in 2018, Raya finds himself in familiar territory: facing another battle for the gloves.

Asked whether manager Arteta had spoken to him about where he now stands in the pecking order, Raya gave a blunt reply.

"Nothing," he said. "He just came in as a new teammate, to add another goalie

to the group. The manager hasn't said anything, so we'll see what happens.

"There's only one goalkeeper who can play and the boss will decide," he said. "We both understand how tough this position is. I'll raise my level, he'll raise his, and that can only benefit the team.

"It helps to have been through this

before," he said. "Competing raises standards. That's how the boss wants it; two top players in every position. That's what we've got now."

While Arsenal paid just £5m to bring in Kepa from Chelsea, the 29-year-old still has a huge reputation.

And he made an immediate impact here in Singapore, saving three penalties in a post-match shootout following Arsenal's pre-season clash with AC Milan.

Despite the pressure, Raya insists he welcomes the competition.

"It's normal to have competition in every single position," he said. "That's good for me, good for him, and good for the team. We've got a strong, healthy relationship. I know him from the national team and we're very good friends."

That friendship, though, will not soften the contest. With just one spot available between the posts, Raya knows the stakes are high.

Raya's ability to handle pressure has already been proven. He joined from

Brentford in 2023 and promptly took over from Ramsdale, a move that many saw coming, but few expected to be so swift.

Now, despite being statistically the best-performing keeper in the league last season, he is back in a fight.

With the World Cup on the horizon too, Raya admits the timing raises the stakes even further, but he is not getting carried away.

"Every year is big, but we haven't even started this one yet," he added. "Let's focus on pre-season, the game against Newcastle in Singapore on Sunday night and then go step by step."

"The aim is to carry on the way I've played for each of the last three seasons, improve on every aspect and collect silverware - that's the main point."

After facing Newcastle, Raya and his team-mates go to Hong Kong on Monday to prepare for Tottenham.

They are hoping to have Sporting striker Viktor Gyokeres with their squad by then, and the keepers will be even busier in training.



GLOVES ARE ON...
Arsenal's new boy Kepa in competition with Raya

Isak Edds towards Toon exit

BY NICK CALLOW

EDDIE HOWE looked resigned to losing Alexander Isak as he revealed his star striker's future is out of his hands.

With Newcastle United in Singapore for a pre-season clash against Arsenal, Howe fronted up for the first time since Isak sparked a storm by admitting he wants to explore his options away from Tyneside.

And Toon boss Howe admitted: "There is a whole football club that has to make the decision.

"The ownership, the board of directors will, especially with the money involved with modern day transfers. The manager of course has an opinion but the decision ultimately will rest with the board."

Isak is currently recovering from a thigh injury and did not travel with the squad to Asia. Howe (above) added: "Conversations that happen with Alex and the club or Alex and myself will stay private."

"We do share a good relationship. He has been magnificent for us for as long as he has joined. We would love him to continue his journey at Newcastle."

"Whatever happens has to be right for Newcastle. "We are in a very strong position financially."

"We are determined to be successful, be ambitious, we have got a great season ahead of us."

STAR PUPIL Isak visits a school in Eritrea last week



TEEN STAR Mikel Arteta talks to Marli Salmon on his senior debut in Singapore





Wirtz shows class as Slot drops Diaz

Liverpool 2 AC Milan 4

By **Scott Trotter**

LUIS DIAZ could be heading for the exit door after Liverpool boss Arne Slot dropped the Colombian winger amid ongoing speculation about a move to Bayern Munich.

Both Diaz and Darwin Nunez were not included in Liverpool's squad for yesterday's pre-season friendly defeat to AC Milan in Hong Kong.

And discussing the Bayern target after the game, Slot (below) revealed: "In Lucho's situation it was, yeah [the reason why he was left out]. There's a lot of rumours around him lately and I cannot go into that. He's training really well with us but we have decided for now not to play him yet. I cannot comment much more."



Bayern are ready to launch a second bid after seeing an opening offer of £58.6million rejected.

Slot could be tempted to cash in on Diaz and Nunez, who missed the Milan game due to injury, to fund a move for Newcastle striker Alexander Isak.

Despite the defeat there were positives for Slot as £116m club record signing Florian Wirtz caught the eye in his first outing for Liverpool. And 16-year-old winger Rio Ngunmoha also impressed, laying on the equaliser for Dominik Szoboszlai after Rafael Leao had put the Italians ahead.

Ruben Loftus-Cheek restored Milan's lead and Noah Okafor extended their advantage. Cody Gakpo nodded home in the second minute of stoppage time before Okafor immediately responded.

Ahead of kick-off, Sir Kenny Dalglish laid a wreath in memory of Diogo Jota and Andre Silva in front of the fans.



GO WITH THE FLO
AC Milan's Samuele Ricci can't catch Liverpool's Florian Wirtz



SWEET 16
Rio Ngunmoha



TRIBUTE TO DIOGO Captain Virgil van Dijk wearing his No.20 shirt

Waiting game for Federico

BY **RYAN TAYLOR**

LIVERPOOL winger Federico Chiesa is wanted by Italian club Atalanta - If Ademola Lookman's exit happens.

The Serie A side are trying to finalise the departure of ex-Charlton and Everton star Lookman, the subject of talks with Inter Milan.

Should the Nigerian quit Bergamo, Atalanta would be ready to consider a formal approach for Chiesa (above), one of their top attacking targets.

The 27-year-old, who only joined Liverpool from Juventus last summer, recently netted in the Reds pre-season demolition of Stoke, but he was then left behind for the tour of Asia due to a muscle issue.

He is available as he wants to play regular football and Arne Slot cannot guarantee minutes. Liverpool, who will want a profit, paid £10million for Chiesa plus around £2.5m in add-ons, though not all have been achieved.

DAN IS MAN FOR FOREST

BY **RYAN TAYLOR**

NOTTINGHAM FOREST are pressing to close a deal for Bologna winger Dan Ndoye.

The Switzerland international (below) has been identified as the perfect replacement for Anthony Elanga following the Swede's recent switch to Newcastle.

Forest have already seen one bid worth just over £26million rejected but they remain in the hunt and are determined to beat off interest from Serie A champions Napoli.

Personal terms are in place and Forest plan to up their offer imminently.

Napoli's proposal is complex and centres around an initial loan worth £7.9m that would become permanent for £23m next summer - then there are £4m in bonuses on top.



AMOR CALLING 999

BY **DAVID McDONNELL**
in Chicago

RUBEN AMORIM is wasting no time in ensuring last season's worst-ever Premier League campaign for Manchester United was a one-off.

Amorim has been getting up by 6am on United's pre-season tour of the US and using every minute to plan with his coaching staff ahead of the new campaign.

The United head coach is relishing a first full pre-season with his squad, having wanted to wait until this summer to take over, but being forced to step in midway through last term.

Taking the reins midway through a season is never ideal, not least when Amorim changed United's system from 4-2-3-1 to 3-4-3, a radical departure from what the players were used to.

United's players struggled to get to grips with the new formation, the upshot being a 15th-placed finish, the club's worst position for 51 years, while they also missed out on Europe after losing the Europa League final to Tottenham.

But the doom and gloom of last season has been replaced by a tangible

United boss continues striker hunt as £133m buys settle in

air of optimism and excitement among the United squad and management during the first week of their three-game US tour.

Amorim has left behind players who want out of United for fear they might bring a negative vibe to the tour party, namely Alejandro Garnacho, Jadon Sancho, Antony and Tyrrell Malacia.

Marcus Rashford, who fell out with Amorim within weeks of the manager's arrival, has begun a new chapter at Barcelona, and only

players fully committed to the team are present in the US. Amorim underlined that message ahead of United's tour opener against West Ham in New Jersey's MetLife Stadium, where next year's World Cup final will be held.

The United boss stressed the importance of his first pre-season in terms of bonding with his players, and them taking the opportunity to build their relationship with new arrivals Matheus Cunha, Bryan Mbeumo and Diego Leon.

The connection between £133.5million duo Cunha and Mbeumo will be crucial as Amorim looks to solve

United's goalscoring problems, his side having found the net only 44 times in the league last season.

Amorim still wants to recruit a new No.9 to lead United's attack, but knows that in Cunha and Mbeumo he has two players with a proven ability to score, the pair netting 15 and 20 goals respectively in the Premier League last season.

"They can both play as a striker," said Amorim. "But we also have Josh [Zirkzee], we have Rasmus [Hojlund], so our focus is to improve the connection between them.

"I don't know if the position is there for them. They have to work and they have other players who are fighting for that position. I'm really pleased, because they proved that the qualities that they have, they are really humble, which is really important, and the best thing is that they chose to be here.

"In our club at the moment, we need to be really careful when we sign a player. So if we have to start the season with this squad, I'm happy, because all the players who are here want to be here - that for me is the most important thing.

"With Matheus and Brian, also with Diego, we are clearly a better team."



UNITED FRONT Amorim greets Bruno Fernandes in Chicago

Frank is ready to get a Pal

BY **RYAN TAYLOR**

TOTTENHAM are keen on signing Bayern Munich's defensive midfielder Joao Palhinha.

Thomas Frank wants to bolster his midfield and, while Bayern outcast Palhinha fits the bill, a deal could yet depend on possible departures.

Spurs are already well-stocked in the middle of the park, with Rodrigo Bentancur, James Maddison, Yves Bissouma, Pape Matar Sarr and Archie Gray.

Bentancur and Bissouma are into the final 12 months of their contracts, but Tottenham have discussed an extension for the former.

Any move would also see Bayern take a hit on the £42million they paid Fulham for the Portugal star (above).

Rival north London side Arsenal had looked at the 30-year-old before moving for Christian Norgaard.

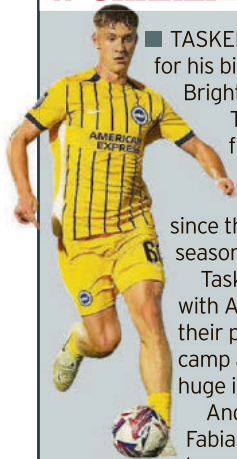


THE SCOUT

BY RYAN TAYLOR

Who is the next big thing? The next Jobe Bellingham, Lamine Yamal or Desire Doue? Every Sunday, we look at the best stars in the world under 22... and why they will - and should - be on the radar of top clubs.

» CHARLIE TASKER



TASKER could be in line for his big breakthrough at Brighton this term.

The 19-year-old full-back has been a regular in first-team training since the end of last season.

Tasker has been away with Albion in Spain for their pre-season training camp and has made a huge impression.

And Seagulls boss Fabian Hürzeler says he has all the tools to star in the Premier League.

AGE: 19

HEIGHT: 6ft 1in (1.85m)

NATIONALITY: English

CLUB: Brighton

CONTRACT EXPIRES: Unknown

POSITION: Right-back

FOOT: Right

STYLE: Strong and athletic

TRACKED BY: Unknown

MARKET VALUE: £3million

WHY BUY HIM? Tasker would be a great coup for any Championship side looking for a full-back on loan. He's physically strong, aggressive and can get across the ground - he has a huge future at the Amex Stadium.

» MARLI SALMON

ONE of two 15-year-olds - along with Max Downman - in Arsenal's squad on their Asian pre-season tour.

The defender is part of Arsenal's U18 side. Strengths include tackling and heading and he's not scared to step out of the backline with the ball.

Salmon is rated highly by the Gunners, who believe he possesses first-team credentials.

AGE: 15 HEIGHT: 5ft 9in (1.70m)

NATIONALITY: English

CLUB: Arsenal

CONTRACT EXPIRES: June 2027

POSITION: Centre-back

FOOT: Right

STYLE: Aggressive defender

TRACKED BY: Unknown

MARKET VALUE: £1million

WHY BUY HIM? Signing academy players is not straightforward nowadays. But Salmon is a prospect that could represent a fine pick-up if things do not work out at Arsenal.



ENGLAND v SPAIN



THE FINAL

TRUMP CARD KELLY



ON A HIGH
Chloe Kelly (top) and Alex Greenwood after semi-final

Super-sub Chloe is the match-winning ace in Wiegman's England pack... and says: Chill out, everyone, I've got this!

BY TOM VICTOR in Basel

CHLOE KELLY goes into today's final as England's proven match-winner - yet hasn't started a single game at these Euros.

That could change this evening, with an injury worry over Lauren James potentially giving Kelly a chance to show what she can do from the start.

Back in January, before a loan move to Arsenal revived her club and international careers, she'd been starting to wonder whether it was all worth it.

But Kelly's character has since shone through on and off the pitch - and when asked where she gets that level of confidence and positivity from, her answer was, "Myself".

After England's semi-final defeat of Italy, Kelly said: "Those moments in January when I felt like giving up football, makes you so grateful for these moments here now - makes you enjoy every minute of that."

"Confidence comes from within, but from around you as well. The players I stand side-by-side with breed



REBOUND Ice-cool Chloe Kelly taps it in

confidence in each other. But I think a lot of 'self-taught' definitely happens.

"The people you surround yourself with, like my family, breed a lot of confidence within me as well."

That measured analysis came just moments after the final whistle blew in Geneva, where Kelly had tucked away the rebound after seeing her extra-time penalty saved by Italy keeper Laura Giuliani.

On her palms-down 'calm down' celebration, Kelly said: "It was, 'Chill out, I was going to score!'"

Not starting is clearly not stopping her self-belief. She played 85 minutes across

three group matches, but Lionesses manager Sarina Wiegman doesn't like to mess with a winning formula at major tournaments.

England used the same starting XI throughout their run to Euro 2022 glory, and only made one enforced change during the knockout rounds of the 2023 World Cup en route to final defeat against Spain.

Kelly scored the winner off the bench in the 2022 final and even before her decisive strike against Italy here, she helped create two crucial moments against Sweden.

England trailed 2-0 when Kelly came on for the final

13 minutes. She quickly had a hand in the goals from Lucy Bronze and Michelle Agyemang which took the game to extra-time - and then she put away a pressure penalty to keep her team alive in the shoot-out.

Kelly's optimism feels infectious for this squad.

"Chloe's just attitude, sass, confidence," Bronze said.

"She's one of those players who, when she's on the pitch, no matter what the moment of the game is - or how she's feeling herself about how the crowd is - she's going to push her shoulders back, big up her chest.

"She's going to go for it."

MATCH OF THE DAY

Keira Walsh v Aitana Bonmati

KEIRA WALSH will be tasked with nullifying her former Barcelona team-mate Aitana Bonmati.

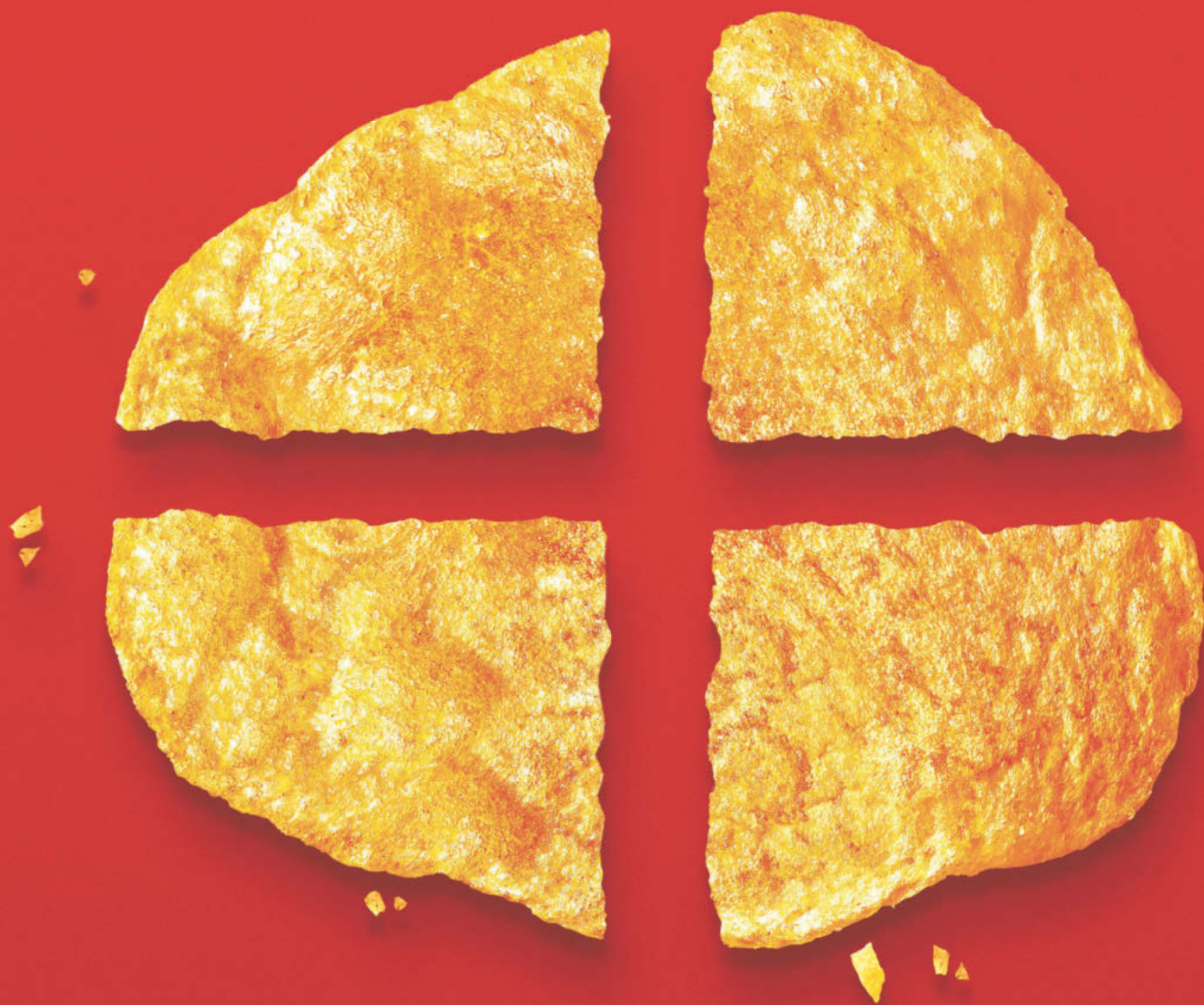
No means an easy task as the midfield maestro has the ability to dictate the tempo of matches.

Walsh has 92 caps and her experience, quality, character and leadership will prove vital in getting England over the line.

The Chelsea midfielder (below) is a big-game player and she will have a key role to play for her side in today's final.

She will need to be assured in possession, while also winning her physical battles.





IT'S CRUNCH TIME



Euro
Rewind

2025 WOMEN'S EURO FINAL



WORLD OF SPAIN Carmona & trophy

TIME FOR
WIEGMAN
REVENGE

Spain 1 England 0

Carmona 29

World Cup Final, August 20, 2023

Att in Sydney: 75,784

BY RYAN TAYLOR

ENGLAND are out for revenge today when they take on Spain in this evening's Euro 2025 Final.

Sarina Wiegman's side are the defending champions, but also want to erase the pain of losing the World Cup Final to Spain.

Two years ago next month, Olga Carmona hit the all-important winner for La Roja in Sydney, driving low into keeper Mary Earps' net.

But it was Earps - now retired from international football - who then kept England in the game, producing a string of huge saves.

Spain were even awarded a second-half penalty when Keira Walsh handled in the box, but Earps was equal to Jenni Hermoso's spot-kick to deliver yet another lifeline.

But they were unable to level the score and Spain were crowned world champions for the first time.

England had topped their Group D, winning all three matches while conceding just one goal.

Spain actually finished second in Group C after being blitzed 4-0 by Japan in their final fixture.

La Rosa would make a statement in the last-16, however, rattling five past Switzerland to once again show their goalscoring prowess.

England had pipped Nigeria on penalties before battling past Colombia in the quarter-finals.

Spain then edged Holland 2-1 after extra-time before beating Sweden 2-1 in the semi-finals.

England conquered hosts Australia 3-1 in the last four.

But this time around, England can also take great confidence from the fact that six members of their squad were in the Arsenal side that edged Barcelona in the Women's Champions League Final in Lisbon.

The two national teams also went head-to-head twice in this year's Women's Nations League.

England were 1-0 victors at Wembley back in February, before suffering a 2-1 defeat in Barcelona last month.



MARY, QUEEN OF STOPS Earps saves Hermoso's penalty

I want to win so badly... it is my chance to end two years of hurt

SAYS CAPTAIN LEAH WILLIAMSON



IT'S GUNN Williamson's ACL snapped while playing for Arsenal in 2023



AGONY Williamson was watching in the stands as England lost the World Cup Final

LA ROJA GOING PARE SHAPED!

BY TOM VICTOR IN BASEL

IRENE PAREDES insists Spain aren't feeling the pressure ahead of today's Euro 2025 Final against England.

Instead, the La Roja skipper is relishing the opportunity for her and her team-mates to write a new chapter by following their 2023 World Cup win with another major title.

Paredes said: "We have a team that has played important games and tournaments.

"We know how to manage that, and all those emotions that sometimes arise.

"We are a team who don't see this game as a pressure but as an opportunity to continue

writing history, to show ourselves, do something big and let people enjoy."

Spain beat England in that 2023 World Cup Final. The two teams took a win each from their two Nations League clashes earlier this year.

Manager Montse Tome was in the dugout for those two matches, and she shares skipper Paredes' feelings about the opportunity this team has in Basel.

"I don't think about pressure," Tome said. "I think during the whole tournament we have been writing history - getting to the semis and the final for the first time at the Euros.

"We have been accomplishing objectives and

that's the reason we're here. Our first objective was to play six games and that's the case.

"England are defending the title, they are the current champions, we will compete and we will enjoy the game. Of course we want to win."

Paredes (right) added: "England are one of the best national teams in the world.

They deserve to be in the final,

"We played against them several times. They made us suffer, and we did the same to them so it will be a balanced game. I have huge respect for them."



ENGLAND v SPAIN



ST JAKOB-PARK, BASEL
TODAY, 5PM LIVE ON BBC & ITV



FINAL COUNTDOWN Sarina Wiegman

NO FEAR FOR MY LIONESSES

FROM BACK PAGE

"That's the main thing. If you're fearful of losing, even if you win, do you enjoy that experience, do you fully take it in?"

"Do you give everything you have? Or are you expending energy the wrong way?"

"I think this team is so task-focused that whatever is in our way, we will try to overcome that together."

"I don't think we're a team fearful of losing. Anything can happen in football - there is so much out of your control."

"We focus on being the best people we can to each other, performing the best that we can, and hopefully that gives you the result you want."

"But definitely not fearful of losing - because then you do expend energy in ways you don't want to."

England already know they can beat Spain, having won 1-0 at Wembley earlier in the year before suffering a narrow 2-1 defeat by La Roja last month.

The teams also met in the 2023 World Cup Final, with Spain winning 1-0, and Lionesses manager Sarina Wiegman said: "We've played each other a lot over the last couple of years."

"You always have learnings. They will have learned from us in the games we've played as well."

"But the final is a new situation so hopefully we can exploit some of the weaknesses they have too."

It's a third straight major tournament final for England. There has been an expectation that the Lionesses will be there or thereabouts, but that doesn't make this year's run any less of an achievement in Wiegman's eyes.

She added: "I think every tournament, of course, you want to perform, and there's expectations, but you also have expectations for yourself."

"I just know that going into a final is already very, very special. Making the final, there's only two teams that can reach a final."

"So if you talk about pressure, that's not really a pressure, it's very special. And when you go to a final, you really want to win it, too."

"So that's how I mean this - we're happy that we're in the final, and really want to win it. And we will do everything we can to make that happen."



BY **TOM VICTOR**
in Basel

LEAH WILLIAMSON still feels the pain of having to watch the 2023 World Cup Final from the stands, but can put that all behind her today.

Williamson captained England to Euros glory in 2022 but suffered an ACL injury the following spring, preventing her from playing a part in Australia and New Zealand.

The Lionesses lost to Spain in that World Cup finale, but can take revenge on the same opponents in Basel - with Williamson once again wearing the armband.

"It was awful," Williamson said of her World Cup heartbreak. "Once you're part of a team, being left on the outside."

"I know how tired you are when you get to that stage and how much a tournament takes out of you - and to be completely useless, that probably bothered me the most of all."

She added: "That feels like a really long time ago now, which is probably a benefit to the whole squad, but anybody would give anything to be a part of their team when they're going through moments like that."

"It was tough. The only plus was sitting next to Jill Scott and sharing it with somebody who knew what it felt like."

Williamson watched that 2023 final with her team-mates' loved ones, and admitted the Lionesses "haven't been very kind" to their friends and families in their run to tonight's Euros showpiece, putting them through the added stress of extra-time against Italy after the penalties against Sweden.

She was substituted in both of those games, and being forced to watch from the bench brought back that familiar feeling of helplessness... with a few key differences.

"Obviously, your role then becomes slightly redundant but there are still ways you can affect the team," Williamson added.

"We have a good process in those moments - even if you are off the pitch you have a role to play, so it's maybe easier than being in the stands. Also it means

you get to run on and celebrate with the team if they do well.

"But I think we have so many leaders in so many different ways."

"You have your conventional ways of leadership that people would recognise."

"People that offer certain things in certain moments, and they know that's their bag, so to speak, and they really step up."

"I think we have a lot of those characters and maybe we've created a good environment for those people to feel comfortable enough to do it."

"But I do feel everybody really knows when they can step up and contribute - and they have done."

While opponents Spain have trailed for just four minutes in this whole tournament, England's route has been far less smooth.

Ella Toone joked that the team had "nearly killed" England boss Sarina Wiegman by putting her through so many dramatic

comebacks.

Wiegman explained her calm exterior, and said: "I'm having a heart attack too, I just don't show it!"

"We try to prepare for the game and what we might need in certain circumstances if we want to change things. It's what we talk about all the time."

"We have spoken about all the scenarios but during the game it's what we feel is necessary."

"What we want is when we need to change we can do it quickly."

For Williamson, there's also a chance to make more history after winning the Champions League with Arsenal - though she's not thinking in individual terms.

"I think for all of us, all 23, you share it. You feel like you share those things," she said.

"Somebody has to wear an armband, somebody has to do that role, but we all just feel it together and it's less of an 'I won this' and more 'we', always."

"So of course they would be lovely things to talk about later down the line."

"But success to me is happiness in your circumstances and the company you are in. That's more important to me."



ALL SMILES AGAIN Williamson

WIN WOULD BE ICING ON AGGIE'S BIRTHDAY CAKE

ENGLAND star Aggie Beever-Jones could have two reasons to celebrate tonight. The young striker turns 22 today - and could land a spot in the Euro 2025 final in Basel.

But the Chelsea player (right) admits competition for places is tough. She said: "Each part of the England squad from defence to attack is filled with talent and experience."

"I look around at the forward line, I look at Alessia, LJ [Lauren James] who can play in the 10, Beth [Mead], Hempo [Lauren Hemp], the lot of them, and I do sometimes pinch myself to be amongst these players who I've idolised growing up, kind of being a part of it now."

"But I get to learn off the best of them. I feel extremely lucky to be able to be in such a high, intense environment."



BY **RYAN TAYLOR**

MILLIE BRIGHT believes that the Lionesses will need to stick the boot in if they are to keep their Euros crown out of Spain's clutches.

Chelsea defender Bright (right), ruled out of these Euros, was speaking at the launch of TikTok's five-week #SummerSkills programme.

She said: "Everyone knows that Spain like to keep the ball. They like possession and want to dominate, so you've got to put some 50-50s in, and put them on the ground!"

"They don't like defending, they don't want you in their faces. And as

Millie: Go give pain to Spain



proper England players - which we have shown throughout the tournament so far - I don't think they will enjoy facing us. Any team should fear us."

SummerSkills, a new in-app programme designed to support parents and empower teens to learn new skills with famous faces during the summer break.

Viktory at last

FROM BACK PAGE

like a long time ago. I've improved a lot since - now I want to prove myself for real."

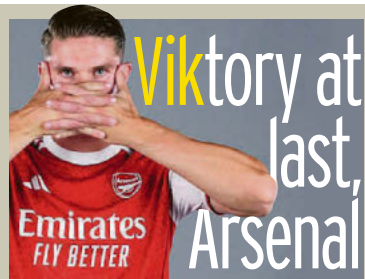
"To come here to a club on Arsenal's level, it's going to help me perform even better with all the amazing players in this team. I'm really excited to get going."

Gunners boss Mikel Arteta said: "We're delighted to welcome Viktor. He brings clinical edge, a high conversion rate and intelligent movement - a constant threat."

Gyokeres will take the iconic No.14 shirt - Thierry Henry's old number - and is set to immediately join the Arsenal tour in Asia, with Thursday's match in Hong Kong against Tottenham now a possible debut.



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Viktory at last, Arsenal

BY **NICK CALLOW** In Singapore ARSENAL have finally got their man with Swedish goal machine Viktor Gyokeres signing last night for £55million from Sporting Lisbon.

After weeks of negotiations, the north London club have sealed a five-year deal that will rise to £63m with performance-related add-ons.

A delighted Gyokeres (above) said: "To be a part of this club and to score in this kit and with this badge in front of all the supporters, I can't wait. It will be an amazing feeling.

"I started here [in England], it feels

TURN TO PAGE 75

Howe: I've no say in Isak's exit



BY **NICK CALLOW** in Singapore NEWCASTLE boss Eddie Howe has admitted he is powerless to stop Alexander Isak leaving if the club's owners decide to cash in.

The Toon's star striker (above) wants out of St James' Park with Liverpool ready to smash the British transfer record to land him. And Howe conceded the final decision on Isak's future does not rest with him.

Howe admitted: "The manager, of course, has an opinion, but the decision ultimately will rest with the board here."

FULL STORY: PAGE 70



ANFIELD STATUE TO HONOUR JOTA

LIVERPOOL are creating a permanent tribute to remember Diogo Jota and Andre Silva.

The 28-year-old Reds forward (inset) died in a car crash, along with his brother Silva, in Spain on July 3.

Flowers, scarves, cards and jerseys, laid around Anfield, have been stored, while floral tributes have been used in flower beds at the stadium. The remaining items will be used to create a sculpture there.

Legend Kenny Dalglish (above) laid a wreath before yesterday's game.

LIVERPOOL TOUR: PAGE 71

THE LION KING
Hugo Keenan celebrates after his incredible last-gasp try helped beat Australia



THERE HUGO... SERIES IS OVER

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY** in Melbourne HUGO KEENAN'S last-gasp try sealed a first series win in 12 years as Andy Farrell's comeback kings stunned the Wallabies in Melbourne.

Farrell's squad were 23-5 down after half an hour, but reeled in the Wallabies before Keenan's final-minute clincher.

The Lions now head to the Sydney Test next Saturday looking to seal a whitewash.

Keenan said: "It's a bit surreal. A class moment.

"It meant the world to me and everybody out there, the 23, the lads who weren't playing, the backroom staff, the 50,000 Lions supporters out there and everyone at home. A special moment."

LIONS SPECIAL: PAGES 64&65

» EURO 2025 FINAL: ENGLAND v SPAIN



NO FEAR LEAH

BY **TOM VICTOR** in Basel

ENGLAND captain Leah Williamson insists the Lionesses must show no fear in today's Euro 2025 final clash against Spain.

And they're using a famous quote as their inspiration in a bid to retain their title.

Speaking after an 8-0 win over Norway in the 2022 Euros, Williamson said: "There's a lovely quote, 'Nobody wins afraid of losing'."

It inspired England all the way to the final at Wembley where they beat Germany. Williamson says the mentality hasn't changed. She said:

TURN TO PAGE 75

Captain: Lionesses ready to win again

WE'RE ON A SWISS ROLL
Captain Leah Williamson is ready to lead her Lionesses to victory in Basel tonight

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