Botanic gardens bloom again

Plants growing at the 4,800-sq-metre Temperate House in Kew Gardens, London, being watered yesterday by horticultural apprentice Emma Love. The world’s largest Victorian glasshouse nurtures 10,000 plants, including rare and threatened species, and is reopening on Saturday after a five-year £41m restoration scheme.
Williamson 'will be pressed to back May's customs plan'

Heather Stewart
Political editor

Leave-backing ministers fear Downing Street will try to pick off the defence secretary, Gavin Williamson, in the coming days to break the cabinet deadlock and secure a majority for Theresa May’s favoured customs plan.

A meeting of the prime minister’s Brexit subcommittee ended without agreement on Wednesday when the new home secretary, Sajid Javid, sided with hardline Brexiteers to reject a customs partnership, which is favoured by Downing Street.

Williamson, who secured a rapid promotion from chief whip to defence secretary, was the least vocal of those expressing doubts about the plan at the two and a half hour meeting.

“They’ll call him in and try to persuade him something, they’ll ask him what his price is,” said one Whitehall source.

The customs partnership would involve Britain collecting tariffs on the EU’s behalf. Brexiteers fear it would be bureaucratic for businesses and could limit Britain’s capacity to diverge from EU rules in future.

But its backers, who include the chancellor, Philip Hammond, and the business secretary, Greg Clark, believe it is the only plan that has a chance of avoiding a hard border in Ireland.

Pro-Brexit ministers prefer the alternative of maximum facilitation, or a “max-fac”, using technology to minimise cumbersome border checks. Both plans have been rejected by Brussels as unworkable in their present form.

No vote was taken on Wednesday, but insiders said six of the 11 members spoke against the customs partnership plan.

Jacob Rees-Mogg’s European Research Group, which sent the prime minister a 30-page report this week opposing her preferred plan, believes it has Williamson’s support. Rees-Mogg has called the customs partnership proposal “crountous”.

The defence secretary used a speech at the Churchill War Rooms this week to argue that “in a post-Brexit world, our only limit will be our imagination”.

Home Office drops visa fees for Afghan interpreters

Ewen MacAskill
Defence correspondent

The government has backed down over the fate of more than 150 Afghan interpreters who worked alongside British troops during their hard-fought deployment in Helmand province.

The Home Office bowed to pressure after the interpreters sent a letter of protest when they were told they would have to pay £2,389 each to apply for indefinite leave to remain. They had been allowed into the UK initially on a five-year relocation scheme.

In their letter of protest, the interpreters had written: “We took great risk because we believed in the integrity of the British army, only to be let down by politicians who see us as a number and not as people who have sacrificed more for this country than many of its citizens.”

“We implore you to end your shameful and indefensible policy towards interpreters like us who risked everything.”

They said the £2,389 fee was unaffordable for many of them, and that some had been denied the right to have their wives and children join them in the UK.

Other were struggling to find funds for a possible fee of £1,200 to secure the documentation that was necessary to obtain ¿

Referring to a meeting of the prime minister’s spokesman sought to play down the significance of Wednesday’s deadlock. “There’s an ongoing process of putting together the plans that will allow us to leave the EU in the smoothest possible way,” he said.

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The Brexit secretary, David Davis, told MPs yesterday that both the government’s options remained on the table. “Both of these approaches have merits and virtues, both have some drawbacks,” he said before taking our time over the discussion on this.”

He told allies he hoped to “find a way through” the impasse in the next week, although he does not yet know how.

The chancellor and business secretary have urged their colleagues to reach a resolution as soon as possible or risk businesses losing confidence in being able to trade freely with the EU after Brexit.

Downing Street sources acknowledged the “urgency” of reaching a conclusion about which approach the government would seek to negotiate with Brussels.

Answering questions from MPs, Davis refused to set a deadline. “It’s frankly incredibly important that we get the right, not just for trade but for the extremely sensitive issue of maintaining the peace process in Northern Ireland, I don’t undertake to put an artificial deadline on something as important as that,” he told the Commons.

Privately, Davis backs the max-fac option, though he has loyally kept both plans alive in public. He told MPs the customs partnership was a “brand new idea. It’s never been tested anywhere in the world.”

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It's a right royal invitation, but bring your own picnic

Robert Booth

The wedding invitation is meant to build bridges between the royal family and some of the most deprived parts of British society.

Twelve hundred chosen members of the public – including inner-city youth workers from Coventry and community leaders from Bolton – will crowd inside the grounds of Windsor Castle to be among the first to see Prince Harry and Meghan Markle emerge as a married couple on Saturday May 19.

But it seems the hospitality will not involve planning. This is not the pleasures of outdoor life. All food and drink on site.

The news that the 1,200 members of the public from a range of backgrounds to Windsor Castle to reflect the diversity of the nation is no surprise to see the corporation following suit with a change in its lineup for the occasion.

The Countryfile host Anita Rani, a presenter at William and Kate’s wedding, will this time be joined by the Strictly Come Dancing winner Ore Oduba and the Radio 1 journalist Tina Daheley.

Missing this time are Peanne Cotton, Edith Bowman, Sophie Raworth and Fiona Bruce.

ITV is repeating its 2011 lineup, with coverage fronted by Julie Etchingham and Philip Schofield.

Felicity Cloake

The news that the 1,200 members of the public whose good deeds have secured them an invitation to the royal wedding will bring their own picnics should come as a relief to those worthy folk. After all, as the American gastronome James Beard put it, if the rain holds off, picnics are “one of the supreme pleasures of outdoor life”. All food tastes better seasoned with fresh air.

The best picnics may be casual but there are a few simple rules for success and, as usual, mostly involve planning. This is not the time to do a smash and grab at M&S Windsor – you’ll inevitably end up with too much mismatched food to lug home afterwards. Instead, choose a centrepiece, such as a pie, ham or cheese, and work from there; contrary to popular belief, not all such occasions require a sharing bag of crisps and a dip selection.

Be practical: go for foods that travel well. Crusty rolls rather than floppy sandwiches, robust pork pies instead of flimsy quiches, and coleslaw or potato salad in place of delicate leaves prone to wilting.

Soft fruits such as strawberries always seem like a good idea but bruise easily and then bleed over the rug. I would go for naturally packaged citrus fruit instead, though you might prefer to be like the happy couple and have it in cake form (a lemon drizzle is easy to carry).

Favour foods that sit happily out of the fridge: washed rind cheeses such as Brie improve as they warm up, while harder cheeses begin to sweat. And ditch the butter for mayonnaise or cream cheese.

Cured and smoked meats and fish cope with sitting in the sun better than poached salmon or roast chicken, and baked goods are a wiser option than creamy puddings.

Remember the unglamorous stuff, too. No one ever regretted bringing rubbish bags alongside the chilled fizz and plastic flutes.

Finally, bear in mind that at the last such bash, guests were served “finger food”. Compared with that, even a packet of Pringles may feel like a banquet.
Trump admits hush money was paid to Stormy Daniels

David Smith
Washington

Donald Trump has admitted that $130,000 (£96,000) of hush money was paid to the pornographic actor Stormy Daniels to stop her going public about an alleged affair with him, despite the US president previously denying knowledge of a deal.

The revelation threatens to engulf Trump in one of the most tawdry and legally damaging scandals of his presidency and has provoked astonished reactions from ethics experts.

Daniels' lawyer called the admission "stunning" and said: "This is not about sex ... this is about a cover-up."

At 6.46am yesterday, Trump tweeted, in uncharacteristically legalistic language, that Cohen had received a monthly retainer. "Not from the campaign and having nothing to do with the campaign, from which he entered into, through reimbursement ... a non-disclosure agreement with Daniels," he claimed. "These agreements are ... very common among celebrities and people of wealth."

Trump described the allegations of an affair as "false and extortionist", adding: "Money from the campaign, or campaign contributions, played no role [sic] in this transaction."

But watchdogs and experts argued that, despite his contention that no money from his campaign was used to pay off Daniels, Trump still broke campaign finance laws by failing to declare the secret payment to the Federal Election Commission. 

Federal investigators wiretapped Cohen's phone lines before a raid on his offices, hotel room and home last month as part of a federal criminal investigation in New York, NBC News reported yesterday, citing sources familiar with the legal proceedings.

The New York investigation is an offshoot of the ongoing inquiry by the US special counsel, Robert Mueller, into Russian meddling in the 2016 election and whether the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow.

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But watchdogs and experts argued that, despite his contention that no money from his campaign was used to pay off Daniels, Trump still broke campaign finance laws by failing to declare the secret payment to the Federal Election Commission. No debt to the campaign was listed on Trump's personal financial disclosure form, which was certified on 16 June 2017.

Walter Shaub, the former director of the Office of Government Ethics, tweeted: "AMAZING! In trying to talk his way out of a campaign finance violation, Trump has inadvertently admitted to filing a false financial disclosure in 2017. He personally certified that his disclosure was 'complete and correct.' This seems like as strong a circumstantial case for a violation as one is going to see. It is absolutely stunning that we've reached the point where the president of the United States appears to have lied to US Office of Government Ethics about a payoff to a porn star."

Norm Eisen, who chairs Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics, which has already filed a criminal complaint, tweeted: "This do & evidently his lawyers do not - despite everything - understand how campaign finance law works. Whole point is that money came from outside the campaign & benefitted it. That is the illegal 'roll' under review. No one saying it was campaign money."

There can be criminal or civil penalties for violating campaign finance laws, although it is unclear what fresh information, if any, could be prompted by the latest developments.

Trump's tweets outlining the arrangement came after the bombshell interview by Giuliani, who was presumably seeking to reduce the president's legal exposure – a plan that may have backfired.

Giuliani told Fox host Sean Hannity: "They funneled through a law firm, and the president repaid it... That was money that was paid by his lawyer. The president reimbursed that over the period of several months."

As the New York Times reported, the arrangement became public after the raid in April on Cohen's home, "the president reimbursed that over the period of several months."

"People look at the changes that have gone on in the economy and blame free trade for, say, the decline in manufacturing when in fact the changes have more to do with automation," he said.

He insisted the pressure to impose tariffs was not coming from voters: "If you look at opinion polls, the imposition of tariffs is not being driven by public opinion. This is not a grassroots movement against imports or NAFTA. This is being driven from the top."

If Trump's rhetoric translated into a full trade war, the consequence would be dire because "we rely more on international trade than at any point in world history."

Nobel economists warn Trump: don't return US to 1930s

Delivered 90 years ago: "In 1930, 1,028 economists urged Congress to reject the protectionist Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act. Many economists believe that act – which, like Trump’s tariffs, was designed to protect US industry – was one of the triggers for the Great Depression."

The 1930 letter predicted higher prices for consumers, damage to domestic industries that relied on trade, an impact on farmers and retaliation from countries targeted for tariffs.

Yesterday's letter says: "Congress did not take economists' advice in 1930, and Americans across the country paid the price. It urges Trump "not to repeat that mistake."

On the campaign trail and since taking office, Trump has threatened to dismantle decades of trade deals, including the North American Free Trade Agreement. The president has blamed Nafta for hollowing out the US manufacturing base.

The economists and academics say: "Much has changed since 1930 - for example, trade is now significantly more important to our economy - but the fundamental economic principles as explained at the time have not."

"Today, Americans face a host of new protectionist activity, including threats to withdraw from trade agreements, misguided calls for new tariffs in response to trade imbalances, and the imposition of tariffs on washing machines, solar components, and even steel and aluminum used by US manufacturers."

They say workers in construction, hotels, retail, banks and other businesses would "clearly lose" in a trade war, the letter, organised by the conservative National Taxpayers' Union, is signed by Nobel laureates including Alvin Roth, Richard Thaler, Oliver Hart, James Heckman as well as Jason Furman, ex-chair of the Council of Economic Advisers to Barack Obama, and James McKelvey, budget director to Ronald Reagan.

Bryan Riley, director of the NTU’s Free Trade Initiative, who coordinated the letter, said: "We hope President Trump and the former Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders had both ratcheted up the argument against free trade ahead of the election. He said many of the arguments against free trade were "flat earth economics" that threaten the balance of the global economy."

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Teenagers who hated school planned to re-enact Columbine massacre, court told

Josh Halliday
North of England correspondent

Two teenagers, aged 14, planned to kill pupils and teachers at their North Yorkshire school after developing an “obsessive interest” in the Columbine massacre, a court has heard.

A jury at Leeds crown court was told the boys “hero worshipped” the Columbine high-school killers in Colorado, US, and planned a “re-enactment” in Northallerton.

Paul Greaney QC, prosecuting, told jurors: “They intended to shoot and kill other pupils and teachers at their North Yorkshire school after developing an ‘obsessive interest’ in the Columbine massacre, a court has heard.

The younger boy drew up a hitlist of pupils and teachers to kill, the court heard. In a text, he told his co-accused: “I can’t be bothered any more.” The other replied: “Why not take some others out as well? If you’re gonna kill yourself, shoot up the school.”

The alleged plot began to unravel in September when the younger boy told classmates what they were planning, the jury heard. A friend alerted her teacher to a text the boy had sent her saying he was serious about the plan but that “no one innocent will die.”

The court was told the boy confessed to the deputy headteacher and police the same day, admitting that they had planned to kill pupils who bullied them. The older boy denied everything and they were not arrested.

A month later police seized the elder boy’s diary and found a rucksack full of ignitable fluids and screws, allegedly for a nail bomb.

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The court was told the boy confessed to the deputy headteacher and police the same day, admitting that they had planned to kill pupils who bullied them. The older boy denied everything and they were not arrested.

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Police sack undercover officer who had sex with campaigner

Rob Evans

An undercover officer who had an unauthorised sexual relationship with an environmental campaigner has been dismissed from the police after a disciplinary hearing.

Jim Boyling, who infiltrated leftwing groups for five years, was found guilty of gross misconduct. He is the first undercover officer sent to spy on political groups who is known to have been dismissed by the police for sexual misconduct. The campaigner, who wishes to remain anonymous and is known as Laura, said: “This is an important verdict today, not only to protect the public from Boyling taking such roles in future but also to send a message out far and wide to other officers that such conduct is totally unacceptable.”

Yesterday, the Metropolitan police said Boyling’s conduct had been “unacceptable”, following the fourth disciplinary hearing, which was held in private.

Boyling, who did not attend the hearing and has denied wrongdoing, previously criticised the Metropolitan police for picking on him and seeking to justify the large amount of taxpayers’ money spent on investigating the covert infiltration of political groups.

The undercover officer, who had been a detective constable in the Met’s counter-terrorism command, is also facing a legal attempt to get him prosecuted for deceiving another woman into a sexual relationship during his covert deployment.

Police chiefs have claimed that undercover officers were not permitted to form relationships with campaignersthey were assigned to spy on. However, the police spies did so frequently. Some have left the police and are not subject to disciplinary proceedings, while the Met refused to say if others have been disciplined.

The misconduct panel was held seven years after Boyling was exposed as an undercover officer when Laura disclosed details of their relationship to the Guardian.

Boyling’s lawyers said he had been told that he had been dismissed and did not wish to comment.

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Immigration official tells man: ‘I’ve done my job if you’re pissed off’

Diane Taylor

The Home Office is investigating undercover footage filmed at one of its reporting centres showing an official telling a man facing deportation that his job is to “piss him off” as part of what he calls a “challenging environment”.

The 39-year-old man who secretly filmed the Home Office official last year has now voluntarily gone to Pakistan, a country where he has only spent one month of his life, saying he was driven out by the controversial regime.

The man was required to report weekly to Becket House, a Home Office reporting centre at London Bridge. He had served a 13-month prison term and although the Home Office had signed a deportation order it had failed to remove him to Pakistan, instead requiring him to report weekly to Becket House while depriving him of the right to work, rent housing, drive a car or access NHS treatment.

In the clip the man tells the Home Office official that having to report weekly is worse than his time in prison. The official tells the man he’s going to “talk to him “ on the level”. The official then says: “What you got to understand, yeah, you take the piss out of the system, the system is going to take the piss out of you. We are not here to make life easy for you. It’s a challenging environment we have got to make for people. It’s working because it’s pissing you off. Am I right? There you go. That’s my aim at the end of the day, to make it a challenging environment for you. It’s pissing you off. You’re telling me it’s pissing you off. There you go, I’ve done my job.”

When the Guardian asked the Home Office if it was instructing its staff to make the environment challenging for migrants by “pissing them off”, a spokesman said: “The views expressed in this video do not represent Home Office policy.”

The man’s solicitor, Fahad Ansari from Duncan Lewis Solicitors, said: “The challenging environment mentioned by the immigration officer appears to be a reference to Theresa May’s ‘hostile environment’ policy.”

When Sajid Javid was appointed home secretary this week after Amber Rudd resigned following the Guardian’s reporting on the Windrush scandal and an ensuing row over targets, he said the phrase “hostile environment” was unhelpful. “The phrase ‘hostile’ is a phrase I’m not going to use,” he said. “It’s a compliant environment ... it doesn’t represent our values as a country to use that phrase.”

The man who recorded the video, who has mental health problems and has been self-harming, was jailed for criminal damage and blackmail. He faced deportation because he had committed a crime. Although he had lived in the UK since the age of 18 with indefinite leave to remain, he had not naturalised as a British citizen, which would have prevented him being deported after finishing his sentence.

He is appealing against the deportation order signed by the Home Office from Pakistan. He has lived in Britain since the age of 18 with indefinite leave to remain, and leaves behind his elderly parents and three brothers, all of whom are British citizens. As a child he lived in the US and Saudi Arabia.

A Home Office spokesman said: “We are investigating the footage.”
Violence flares at funeral of Hither Green intruder

Damien Gayle

A teenager has been arrested on suspicion of assault after violent scenes at the funeral of Henry Vincent, the intruder stabbed in a struggle with a screwdriver.

Hundreds of mourners gathered at St Mary’s church in St Mary Cray, south-east London, for the service yesterday morning. Vincent was stabbed with a screwdriver by Richard Osborn-Brooks, whose home in Hither Green, elsewhere.

The Metropolitan police said yesterday about them, when urged to do so by Maria Miller, chair of the women and equalities select committee.

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He has faced fresh allegations of bullying and harassment, and has faced a number of complaints from colleagues.

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‘Breathtaking’ Temperate House sheds its chrysalis after £41m refurb

Feral goats are the biggest threat to the rare cabbage tree, says a sign in Kew Gardens’ newly restored Temperate House, the largest Victorian glasshouse in the world, which reopens this week after a £41m, five-year renovation. Goats were never much of a threat at Kew, where the endangered tree has been carefully cultivated since a specimen was found on Robinson Crusoe Island near Chile. But rusting iron columns and creaky windows had posed a significant danger, to plants and humans alike.

A government report concluded in 2010 that “urgent restoration is essential if closure is to be avoided”. Windows had been sealed shut in a 1970s refurbishment and chunks of masonry cladding were crumbling off. The past five years have seen 69,000 elements removed and repaired, with 15,000 panes of glass replaced, all under a tent big enough to hold three Boeing 747s. The result is suitably breathtaking.

Those who remember being surrounded on all sides by dense forest might be shocked by the pruning. For the first time since it opened in 1862, the entire contents of the beds have been removed, soil and all, and the layout made more akin to the Victorian original. Ten thousand plants have been replaced with younger specimens, while some famous residents have been carefully returned after spending the last few years in a temporary nursery. Kew’s rarest (and loneliest) plant, a male Wood’s cycad, is back, still awaiting the discovery of a female of the species in an untrodden corner of the planet.

Compared with the previous overgrown riot, it now feels more as if the architecture, rather than the plants, is the star of the show. “It was heartbreaking to see some of the trees go,” says Kew’s aptly named Greg Redwood, head of glasshouses. “But some of them were hitting the roof, and it was very difficult to raise new specimens under the thick canopy.” In addition, after years of pruning, many of the plants were in effect bonsai, he said. The cull means that Decimus Burton’s triumph of iron and glass is fully visible for the first time in a generation. Cast-iron columns support great arcing ribs of wrought iron that leap across the space, their detail visible up close from the upper-level walkway that rings the main pavilion, providing precipitous views down to the canopy.

The ironwork has been repaired and recast in places, the decades of paintwork scrubbed off and repainted with five coats of the hardwearing stuff used on oil rigs. Outside, the plasterwork details, previously obliterated by years of gloopy paint, are visible once again: cornucopias heave with pomegranates, pineapples and soursops, while terracotta baskets (which disguise historic chimney flues) brim with moulded flowers.

Begun in 1859, the same year that Darwin’s On the Origin of Species was published, the Temperate House was to be the crowning glory of Kew, a five-pavilion complex stretching almost 200 metres atop a raised berm, like a fleet of crystal tankers processing across the lawn. It was planned to be the first thing visitors would see as they entered the gardens, standing at the end of the avenue from the station as a stately beacon. “It was Burton’s tomb to himself, twice the size of his Palm House,” says Amy Felton,
Sex remains a key part of life for people over 55, study says

Nicola Davis

Sex is not only a pursuit of the young and carefree but also a key part of life for adults in their later years, research has revealed.

In a survey of Americans aged 65 to 80, 40% reported being sexually active, with more than half of those who had a partner saying they still engage in steamy moments.

Erica Solway, a public health expert from Michigan University who was involved in the study, said: “Sex is something that is very important to the health and wellbeing of people but is not something that gets a lot of attention.” That, said Solway, could be because either individuals or medical professionals do not raise the issue.

The findings, part of the university’s National Poll on Healthy Aging, are based on online answers from about 1,000 participants aged 65 to 80, and are nationally representative. The study was funded by AARP, a lobby group for older people.

The results reveal that 84% of men and 69% of women between 65 and 80 believe sex is important to a relationship at any age, with just over half of men and just under a third of women reporting that they were sexually active – although the researchers did not spell out what that involved.

“We wanted it to be how that person defined it,” said Solway.

One in eight of the women reported a strong interest in sex, and more than half of men said the same. Fewer men than women were “extremely or very” happy with their sex life. Age was another key factor: only a quarter of those aged 76-80 reported being sexually active, compared with 46% of those aged 65-70.

The authors say the report shows that although sex is important for many older adults, the topic is rarely discussed with either their partners or doctors – just 17% of participants said they had talked about it with a health provider in the past two years, despite almost two-thirds saying they would be happy to do so.

Solway said the lack of discussion was important, not least because such conversations could increase testing and awareness of sexually transmitted infections. According to UK figures, diagnoses of infections such as chlamydia are rising among older adults.

What’s more, 14% of men and 3% of women in the 55-80 age group reported taking medications or supplements to improve their sexual function. “It is possible that there could be interactions with other medications they are taking,” Solway warned. Another issue is that although sex appears to protect women’s cardiovascular system, the opposite is true for men.

Lesley Carter, of Age UK, said the report chimed with findings from Britain and that it was time to get rid of misconceptions about sex in older age.

It was important that medics broached the topic with patients, she said. “We know as younger people if you don’t get [sex] enough then you are quite miserable, but that is the same thing in older people.

“We as a society have to agree that older people have a right to good sexual health too because every message is always about younger people.”
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**Finland contests claims over Scotland baby box after expert’s warning**

**Severin Carroll**  
Scotland editor

The Finnish benefits agency that pioneered the use of baby boxes has challenged claims in Scotland that the cribs can reduce infant mortality.

The agency, Kela, supported warnings by an expert on infant health, Dr Pete Blair, that it was wrong to say Finland’s scheme had been proven to prevent or reduce infant mortality.

Blair said baby boxes should only be used as a bed for babies in an emergency or when no cot was available.

His warnings, reported by the Guardian on Wednesday, prompted a furious outburst by Nicola Sturgeon’s official spokesman. He denounced reports of the criticism as “absolutely ludicrous” and “nonsense”.

Sturgeon unveiled the baby-box scheme two years ago, saying they would cut infant mortality – a claim that has been repeated by other Scottish National party (SNP) leaders.

At the height of the 2016 Scottish parliament elections, the first minister told the SNP’s spring conference: “This simple but powerful idea originated in Finland. It provides practical help for parents and has reduced infant mortality and improved child health.”

But Kela, the Finnish welfare and benefits agency, told the Guardian they had never made that claim and there was no evidence to support it.

“We don’t want to promote the idea that there is evidence the baby box as such has decreased infant mortality in Finland or that Finland has made such claims. Rather, it has been the improving of our healthcare system, which the baby box is a part of, that our low infant mortality can be attributed to,” a Kela spokesperson said.

“Empirical data on the effect of the maternity package on infant mortality does not exist.”

The first minister said the Tories “should be deeply ashamed of themselves for needlessly trying to frighten parents”. She said the boxes met all relevant safety standards, including for fire safety and mattress quality.

Asked about the Finnish agency’s remarks, Sturgeon’s spokesman refused to discuss the basis of her claims in 2016 or to disclose the evidence that led her to make them.

The Scottish government said: “The babybox is accompanied by other improvements to the support available to new and expecting parents and offers health professionals the opportunity to engage with parents at timely intervals throughout pregnancy.”

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**Clothes on spin** Performers from the Lost in Translation Circus rehearse for Wandsworth Arts Fringe, which starts today and runs until 20 May in the south London borough.
Only a fifth of tampon tax funds given to women's charities

**Damien Gayle**

Only two in 10 charities awarded funding from the government’s tampon tax are women’s organisations, despite a pledge to dedicate £15m a year raised from the levy to “women’s health and support charities”.

Rape Crisis and Women’s Aid were the only two organisations specifically serving women to be funded from the annual tampon tax disbursement, receiving less than £3m between them. Other groups funded included UK Community Foundations, the mental health charity Mind, Brook Young People and two housing associations.

The situation was repeated in the distribution last month of £600,000 to celebrate the centenary of the first women winning the vote, when just two of the eight organisations funded focused solely on women’s needs.

Vivienne Hayes, chief executive of the Women’s Resource Centre, said the government had political reasons for overlooking women’s charities. “They know we are the ones that will critique them and hold them to account,” she said. “I think it’s not surprising that the women’s sector has been sidelined and the mainstream organisations that say ‘we work with women’ have been given the money.”

The government promised to use the money raised from the 5% VAT on tampons and sanitary towels to fund the women’s sector after activists led a campaign against the levy in 2015. In response to demands for its abolition, George Osborne, then chancellor, pledged impotence against EU regulations. He pledged the government would try to change the rules, and said: “Until that happens, I’m going to use the £15m a year to fund women’s health and support charities.”

Hayes said the women’s sector was starved of resources and generalist charities offering services that targeted women could not replace specialist providers.

Tracey Crouch, minister for sport and civil society, said: “The money generated from sanitary products is being invested in good causes that tackle the serious issues that women of all ages face.”

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**Delivery firm accused of pushing managers to mislead tax inspectors**

**Robert Booth**

HM Revenue and Customs is considering allegations that the parcel delivery company Hermes “coerced” managers into misleading an official investigation into whether the company had paid some of its self-employed couriers below the “national living wage”.

The tax authority ensures employers pay at least the minimum and launched an investigation into Hermes in 2016 after the Guardian revealed some couriers were earning less than £6 an hour, below the £7.20 minimum at the time.

Hermes delivers for Marks & Spencer and John Lewis, and relies on about 15,000 “lifestyle couriers” who are paid per delivery and are categorised as self-employed, but many believe they should be classed as workers and earn the national minimum.

A manager at the company has claimed that before a tax inspectors’ visit last year senior Hermes managers coached staff who were about to be interviewed.

“If we gave an answer to the manager we were corrected and told not to say that but to say something more positive,” the anonymous whistle-blower said in a letter to Frank Field MP, the chair of the Commons work and pensions select committee, which has also investigated Hermes.

“We were coerced into saying something which wasn’t true. Most of which related to self-employed couriers and how they were treated.”

The manager claims Hermes “went out of their way” to bring in senior staff “to purposely tell us what to say”.

Hermes is contesting the claim, its chief executive of HMRC, Jon Thompson, replied: “We value receiving the kind of information you have given us. Clamping down on those who try to cheat the system through evading taxes is a key priority for us ... We assess all the information we receive before making a decision on the most appropriate course of action.”

One of the tax implications of self-employment in this case is that Hermes does not have to pay employers’ national insurance contributions of 13.8% on a worker’s earnings above £162 a week.

Hermes said: “All employees were asked to cooperate fully with HMRC as we are confident in our operating model.”

It added that “HMRC is highly skilled at recognising if ‘coaching’ has taken place” and said that it urged managers to tell staff “to be open and honest with HMRC”.

Hermes is facing an employment tribunal claim this week from a group of couriers who say they should be classified as workers, and that as a consequence of this they should be entitled to holiday pay and to receive the national living wage.

Last month the rival delivery firm DPD offered all its drivers sick and holiday pay. The move was part of wholesale reforms to its gig working model, following the death of a driver it charged for attending a medical appointment to treat his diabetes and who later collapsed and died.

The Hermes claim mirrors several other similar tribunal hearings – including verdicts in cases brought against Uber, Addison Lee, CitySprint, Excel and eCourier – where judges have ruled that staff should be given the legal classification as “workers”, thereby receiving the minimum wage and holiday pay rights.

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£6 Hourly rate some Hermes couriers fell below, according to a Guardian investigation in 2016

15,000 The number of “lifestyle couriers” used by Hermes. They are classed as self-employed and paid per delivery

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Polling stations reject voters during trial of ID scheme

Peter Walker
Matthew Weaver

A trial of voter ID has led to people in England being turned away from polling booths for the first time for not carrying the necessary documents. Other issues reported included abuse of voting staff and some confusion over what evidence needed to be shown.

The trial took place in five boroughs yesterday in the local elections as part of an attempt to crack down on voter impersonation. It could be extended nationwide in future elections.

The main issues appeared to be in Bromley and Woking where - along with Gosport in Hampshire - people had to show one piece of photo ID or two from a list of other documents. In the other test areas, Swindon and Waltham Forest, only a polling card was required.

In Bromley, south-east London, tallies by the opposition Labour group found at least 13 people turned away in just one ward, Crystal Palace. There were also reports of some voters being angry and abusive to polling station workers when asked to show ID.

In one reported case, a voting clerk had to turn away a man without the necessary documents even though he knew him personally.

In Woking in Surrey there was some confusion reported as to what ID could be shown, with one man saying he was initially told a photo rail pass was not allowed, even though it was listed among the accepted documents.

In Bradford - which is not part of the trial scheme - the council apologised to a couple who were asked for ID, saying a clerk had become confused.

The scheme has prompted concerns that it could disenfranchise more vulnerable voters who are less likely to have access to the necessary ID, for example, older people and those who are homeless.

Angela Wilkins, leader of the Labour group on Bromley council, said she was concerned that most reports about people being turned away seemed to be from Crystal Palace, the most deprived and diverse part of the borough.

“We assume tallies are being taken about how many people are refused at each polling station, and if it turns out there is a particular problem in places like Crystal Palace it bears out some of the concerns we have raised,” she said.

However, Stuart Wilks-Heeg, an expert on electoral integrity at the University of Manchester, said his observations at three polling stations in Woking, where two people were turned away, seemed to show the pilot was running fairly smoothly.

“Polling station staff were really well briefed and voters clearly knew about the requirements,” he said.

He later went to Swindon, where tallying staff scanned a barcode on voters’ polling cards, and also saw few problems, though police were reportedly called when one man became irate at being asked to show his card.

In Bromley, most voters said they had few problems with the idea. A 92-year-old woman at a polling station in Pengo, who gave her name only as Florence, said it had been no concern to show photo ID for the first time in more than 70 years of voting. “I don’t care,” she said. “If you’ve got nothing to hide it shouldn’t be a problem.”

The Cabinet Office argues that voter ID is necessary to prevent impersonation and has been recommended by the Electoral Commission.

But critics have said it is an overreaction to a marginal problem, with none of the five trial boroughs having reported a single incident of voter impersonation - known technically as impersonation - over the past decade.

A spokesman for the prime minister, asked about reports of some voters being turned away, said: “The overwhelming number of people are casting their vote without a problem. A great deal of work has been done in these pilot areas to prepare the public there. In places like Bromley, people will have had six pieces of direct mail about the pilot, and there has been a widespread poster campaign.”

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Staff at a museum in Bath have spoken of their heartbreak at the theft of priceless jade and gold artefacts as they prepare to open again with a bitter reflection on health and wellbeing.

Detectives are still hunting a well organised gang of raiders who broke into the Museum of East Asian Art, a hidden jewel in one of Bath’s Georgian terraces, last month.

The thieves entered through a first-floor window and broke into seven display cases containing “culturally significant” objects including jade figures. They ignored other items, suggesting the burglary was carefully planned and pieces may have been taken to order.

Nicole Chiang, the museum’s curator, said: “Obviously it’s very upsetting especially as our founder [the former lawyer and longtime resident of Hong Kong Brian McElney] lives in this area. It’s very personal for him.”

The museum upgraded its security in 2016 so that it could borrow objects from the British Museum but is having to review its arrangements again.

The gallery will re-open to the public tomorrow in time to celebrate its 25th anniversary, though the room that was burgled will be closed and the shattered display cabinets remain empty. Visitors will instead be treated to an exhibition by the Chinese artist Zhang Yanz. It called The Quest for Wellness – an appropriate subject for Bath, which thanks to its hot springs has been an attraction to people seeking good health for many centuries.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is a silk robe that is brightly decorated with lots of small museums, “They help our city thrive.”

Steven Morris

Matthew Weaver

A great deal of work has been done in these pilot areas to prepare the public there. In places like Bromley, people will have had six pieces of direct mail about the pilot, and there has been a widespread poster campaign.

Matthew Weaver

Peter Walker

A trial of voter ID has led to people in England being turned away from polling booths for the first time for not carrying the necessary documents. Other issues reported included abuse of voting staff and some confusion over what evidence needed to be shown.

The trial took place in five boroughs yesterday in the local elections as part of an attempt to crack down on voter impersonation. It could be extended nationwide in future elections.

The main issues appeared to be in Bromley and Woking where - along with Gosport in Hampshire - people had to show one piece of photo ID or two from a list of other documents. In the other test areas, Swindon and Waltham Forest, only a polling card was required.

In Bromley, south-east London, tallies by the opposition Labour group found at least 13 people turned away in just one ward, Crystal Palace. There were also reports of some voters being angry and abusive to polling station workers when asked to show ID.

In one reported case, a voting clerk had to turn away a man without the necessary documents even though he knew him personally.

In Woking in Surrey there was some confusion reported as to what ID could be shown, with one man saying he was initially told a photo rail pass was not allowed, even though it was listed among the accepted documents.

In Bradford - which is not part of the trial scheme - the council apologised to a couple who were asked for ID, saying a clerk had become confused.

The scheme has prompted concerns that it could disenfranchise more vulnerable voters who are less likely to have access to the necessary ID, for example, older people and those who are homeless.

Angela Wilkins, leader of the Labour group on Bromley council, said she was concerned that most reports about people being turned away seemed to be from Crystal Palace, the most deprived and diverse part of the borough.

“We assume tallies are being taken about how many people are refused at each polling station, and if it turns out there is a particular problem in places like Crystal Palace it bears out some of the concerns we have raised,” she said.

However, Stuart Wilks-Heeg, an expert on electoral integrity at the University of Manchester, said his observations at three polling stations in Woking, where two people were turned away, seemed to show the pilot was running fairly smoothly.

“Polling station staff were really well briefed and voters clearly knew about the requirements,” he said.

He later went to Swindon, where tallying staff scanned a barcode on voters’ polling cards, and also saw few problems, though police were reportedly called when one man became irate at being asked to show his card.

In Bromley, most voters said they had few problems with the idea. A 92-year-old woman at a polling station in Pengo, who gave her name only as Florence, said it had been no concern to show photo ID for the first time in more than 70 years of voting. “I don’t care,” she said. “If you’ve got nothing to hide it shouldn’t be a problem.”

The Cabinet Office argues that voter ID is necessary to prevent impersonation and has been recommended by the Electoral Commission.

But critics have said it is an overreaction to a marginal problem, with none of the five trial boroughs having reported a single incident of voter impersonation - known technically as impersonation - over the past decade.

A spokesman for the prime minister, asked about reports of some voters being turned away, said: “The overwhelming number of people are casting their vote without a problem. A great deal of work has been done in these pilot areas to prepare the public there. In places like Bromley, people will have had six pieces of direct mail about the pilot, and there has been a widespread poster campaign.”

Matthew Weaver

Peter Walker

A great deal of work has been done in these pilot areas to prepare the public there. In places like Bromley, people will have had six pieces of direct mail about the pilot, and there has been a widespread poster campaign.
Breast cancer helplines flooded with anxious calls

Sarah Boseley
Health editor

Thousands of people flooded a breast cancer screening helpline with calls yesterday as experts warned that Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, had made women unnecessarily anxious with his announcement that a computer failure had led to up to 270 avoidable deaths.

As the helpline set up by Public Health England dealt with more than 5,000 calls by midday, the charity Breast Cancer Care said it had also experienced a surge in calls to its own helpline, describing those getting in touch as confused and angry.

But amid confusion over the scale of the problem, it emerged that one of the country’s leading statisticians had advised PHE after the issue surfaced in January that there was no need to apologise or recall women for mammograms that may or may not have been of benefit to them.

A “key need” in any statements from PHE, wrote Sir Richard Peto, professor of statistical medicine at Oxford University, in an email seen by the Guardian, was “to convey effectively any worry for those women who may not have received a breast screening invitation, said Paul Pharoah, professor of Cancer Epidemiology at the University of Cambridge.

“Breast cancer screening has both harms and benefits and so, if some people have not been invited for screening they will have avoided the harms as well as missing out on any benefits. There has been no mention of this at all in the coverage to date.”

An independent UK panel on breast screening said in 2012 that for every death prevented, three breast cancers will have been over-diagnosed. “Detecting these very small early tumours might actually do more harm than good,” Pharoah said.

“Some women with screen-diagnosed breast cancer will have unnecessary mastectomies, and some will have unnecessary radiotherapy.”

Sara Hiom of Cancer Research UK told the Guardian that although screening enables cancers to be caught and treated very early, they can be detected in other ways. Women go to see their GP if they feel a lump in their breast. “Women need to be reassured that the mortality risk from this failure is lower than is perhaps being discussed,” she said.

Peto says there is no good evidence yet for the benefits of breast screening over the age of 70. A trial called AgeX has begun, based at Oxford University, recruiting women aged 71 to 73, to test whether lives would be saved or not.

But screening women in their late 60s has never been trialled. Hunt said compensation would be paid to women or families where it could be shown that the screening failure had resulted in damage to their health or death.

Dr Emma Pennery, clinical director at Breast Cancer Care, said: “After this appalling blunder, Breast Cancer Care’s helpline is set to receive four times its usual number of calls by the end of the day. The women contacting us want answers. Many are playing a waiting game until the letters arrive, not knowing if they’ve been affected.”

An inquiry chaired by Lynda Thomas, chief executive of Macmillan Cancer Research, and Martin Gore, professor of cancer medicine at the Royal Marsden, will investigate whether women have been harmed.

‘The women who are contacting us want answers. Many are playing a waiting game, not knowing if they’ve been affected’

Dr Emma Pennery
Breast Cancer Care

Analysis Why do experts say Hunt’s statistics don’t add up?

Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, described in apocalyptic terms the failure of the breast screening programme to invite some older women for a mammogram, warning of a possible 270 deaths and causing huge alarm among women and their families. He blamed those who have “oversight” of the NHS screening programme – now Public Health England – for what was described as a disastrous computer error that meant 450,000 women did not get vital letters calling them in.

But the numbers do not stack up, say some experts with inside knowledge. Both the mortality figures and the number of those affected are in dispute and Hunt’s rhetoric is beginning to look overplayed in the light of an issue that officials have been wrangling over and trying to understand since January.

There isn’t a scandal, those experts say. There is confusion.

Hunt said the issue goes back to 2009 but was detected in January, thanks to a new IT system introduced by Public Health England. That picked up that some women over the age of 68 had not been sent a letter inviting them for a last mammogram before their 71st birthday.

It would not have been noticed if it had not been for a trial, called AgeX, which was enrolling women to see whether screening should be extended from the current 50-70 years to include women who were both younger and older than that.

AgeX, based at Oxford University, is the first trial of breast screening in the UK. The evidence that exists for its effectiveness in picking up cancers and reducing deaths comes from Scandinavia. Nobody in the world has run trials on women in either their late 60s or 70s until now.

Women of 71 to 73 enrolled on AgeX are randomly assigned to more screening or not. The new IT system spotted that those women in the control arm (no screening) had been flagged in the NHS screening system not to receive any more routine mammograms. Some of them had their last one before they turned 68.

According to Sir Richard Peto, professor of medical statistics at Oxford University, and the statistician on AgeX, there were 80,000 women recruited in the pilot phase between 2009 and 2015, and 80,000
Individual women who have not been screened for a while, for instance because they have moved house and changed their GP practice. So invitations can be sent to those who have a screening gap.

But even if you include all of those women invited to a last mammogram before they were 68 - who were not missed by computer error but by the normal workings of the screening programme - the numbers do not reach 450,000, says Peto. Two million women reach the age of 70 in England each year. About one sixth of those called for final screening were not missed by computer error - Pick up suspect cells in the breast that are either benign growths or are slow-growing that they will not cause harm in the woman's lifetime.

That was the point of setting up AgeX - to find out whether it was better to screen or not screen. That question was never asked before screening was rolled out beyond the current cut-off of 64. "There isn't a scandal," said Peto. "At what age should screening stop? We don't know."

The number of deaths which the health secretary warned could have occurred due to the screening error.
SYRIA CRISIS
SAVING LIVES IN THE RUBBLE

Dr Javid Abdelmoneim recently returned from the Syrian city of Raqqa, which was taken from the Islamic State group in October 2017.

“I’m an A&E specialist in London and I’m used to dealing with major trauma cases. But in just one month in Raqqa, I treated more severely wounded people than I’ve seen in the past ten years in A&E.

Raqqa has been mostly destroyed. The streets are littered with improvised explosive devices and residents trying to rebuild their city are being wounded and killed.

MSF opened an emergency room in Raqqa within three weeks of the end of the offensive. It’s just an ordinary house with a few rooms, but we’ve been inundated with patients. The blast victims ranged from people with shredded wounds to people whose arms or lower limbs had been blown off. Our job was to stabilise the patients with the aim of transferring them for surgery.

One man was brought to us whose leg had been blown off at thigh level, while the other one was attached just by skin and muscle. We couldn’t even feel a pulse, there was so little blood. But we managed to save him. We got his blood pressure back to the point where he was agitated and fighting us, and stabilised him so we could transfer him for surgery.

“There were usually six of us in the room – two doctors and four nurses – working on patients in three beds. We were a mixture of Syrian doctors and nurses and international staff, all working together as a team.”

In all my years with MSF, I’ve seen nothing more impressive than the work of that clinic in Raqqa. It’s the right work in the right place at the right time. The people of Raqqa – and of Syria as a whole – have been through so much, and it’s not over yet. We’re one of the only medical organisations working in that area, and I’m proud that we’re there, playing a part.”

£48 can provide metal splints to treat 6 patients with broken bones in their legs.

90,000 people have returned to Raqqa so far. In a city with no functioning public hospital, MSF’s emergency room is often the difference between life and death for patients.

365 victims of improvised explosive devices and homemade bombs received emergency care from MSF in Raqqa between November 2017 and January 2018.

What is MSF doing in Syria?
MSF operates four health facilities in Syria and has partnerships with five other facilities in the country. In areas where MSF cannot be physically present due to security concerns, we provide support and supplies to approximately 70 health facilities.

At the MSF-supported hospital in Tal Abyad close to Raqqa, MSF has two trauma teams and two surgical teams, as well as a paediatric ward and a maternity unit. Teams at the hospital also run mobile medical and vaccination clinics throughout the surrounding region.

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☐ Phone Occasionally we will contact you by telephone to say thank you or to update you on our work.
UK’s longest serving prisoner celebrates release after 43 years

John Massey with his sister Jane, left, and niece Michele McVey after his release from HMP Warren Hill in Suffolk. Photograph: Dan Carrier

Dan Carrier

Britain’s longest serving prisoner, John Massey, who has seen the inside of nearly every jail in the country, has been freed after almost 43 years.

The 69-year-old was convicted of the 1975 murder of Charlie Higgins, a pub doorman, and handed a mandatory 20-year life sentence, but he spent twice as long in jail after escaping on two occasions to say goodbye to dying members of his family in Kentish Town, north London.

Massey’s extraordinary story includes breaking out of Pentonville Prison in London in 2012 in an attempt to see his mother, May, on her deathbed. He had been denied compassionate leave.

He had served a sentence almost two decades longer than any other prisoner in the UK convicted of the same crime when he left HMP Warren Hill in Suffolk on Wednesday.

Since his 2012 escape, he has had three pleas for freedom rejected by the Parole Board and served time in Belmarsh, one of the UK’s highest security prisons. Last week, a panel decided he should be given his freedom.

Massey first escaped in 1994 by climbing out of a pub window while on an escorted home visit to see his parents in Kentish Town. He made his way to Spain, where he stayed for three years before being extradited and sent back to prison.

Later, he broke parole conditions to sit by his father Jack’s deathbed in 2007. On another occasion, he walked out of an open prison to see his sister, Carol, who had a terminal illness, after again being denied compassionate leave.

Massey said on his release: “I have always deeply regretted the crime I committed and am aware of the consequences and the suffering it caused. It happened in a moment of madness. I have served my sentence with remorse and am thankful the Parole Board have come to the decision I should now be released.”

His solicitor, John Turner, who has fought to secure his freedom for a decade, said: “John’s release is long overdue and I am absolutely thrilled for John and his relatives, whom I have worked closely with for a number of years. John comes from an extremely tight-knit family who have supported him throughout his many years in prison.”

He said his client could not be seen as a danger to the public and the escape attempts had been linked to Massey’s sense of loyalty towards a family who had stood by him.

I wasn’t expecting it. I didn’t want to feel hope. I know the system and I did not want to think about waiting another year.”

“John is a proud man - some may even say stubborn - and having acted for him for many years, he has been candid in explaining that he would have acted in the same way again if he was ever put in a similar position,” Turner said.

He added: “The test for release focuses, in traditional terms, on the risk to life and limb. I have always argued that John does not pose such a risk. I hope that lessons have been learned from what is indisputably a very sad case.

“Had the system shown some more compassion towards a loving son and brother then I am quite sure that he could have been safely released years ago.

“However, today should be a day to focus on the positives and I am thrilled that he has been allowed to return home to spend time with those that mean the most to him.”

Massey, an accomplished self-taught blues guitarist, has to fulfil strict parole conditions, including a spell at a halfway house. “I’d be happy to get a sleeping bag and kip under the railway arches if it meant I could leave this place,” said Massey.

He said the Parole Board decision came as a surprise. “I really wasn’t expecting it. I didn’t want to feel hope,” he said. “I know the system and I did not want to think about going through the parole process yet again and having to wait another year.”

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Northern Irish police release Troubles-era report on informants

Owen Bowcott
Legal affairs correspondent

Police in Northern Ireland have agreed to release a secret special branch report on agent handling during the Troubles that allegedly protected paramilitary informants from arrest.

The 1980 report, by the senior MI5 officer Sir Patrick Walker, is believed to have established agent-handling practices that have since been criticised as prioritising intelligence-gathering over other concerns. The document was commissioned by the then-chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Sir John Hermon.

The report will be given to the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) next week. It follows an appeal to the information commissioner and a freedom of information tribunal hearing. The agreement between the CAJ, a Belfast-based human rights organisation, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which replaced the RUC, says a redacted copy may be published at a forthcoming inquest or, at the latest, within three months.

Daniel Holder, CAJ’s deputy director, said: “The Walker report will assist in understanding just how the RUC special branch was tasked to operate in the 1980s at a time there were serious concerns regarding the use of informants outside the law. It is an historic policy document that should not have been withheld for so long.

“In terms of rights to access public documents, human rights law no longer permits absolute ‘national security’-type exemptions. We therefore contested the use of what is a blanket power under the current Freedom of Information Act to withhold information that ‘relates to’ MI5.”

The Walker report was commissioned to improve intelligence penetration of paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland when IRA activity was high. Walker subsequently became director general of MI5 from 1988 to 1992.

The report is believed to recommend that RUC special branch give priority to informants over solving crimes. The report’s existence was revealed in 2001 by the UTV Insight programme.

Man who murdered boss and wrote ‘bully’ on her head jailed for 28 years

A university worker has been jailed for a minimum of 28 years after stabbing his boss to death and scrawling “bully” across her forehead.

David Browning left Jillian Howell covered in blood on the floor of her living room after attacking her with a knife in the chest, neck and abdomen, before writing the word across her head with a black marker pen. Police found the Samaritans volunteer at her Brighton home on 26 October with 15 stab and slash wounds.

A jury convicted Browning on Wednesday of murder after deliberating for two hours and 20 minutes. Handing the 52-year-old a life sentence at Hove crown court yesterday, the judge, Christine Laing QC, said the way in which Browning murdered Howell was savage.

“This was a sustained attack and the terror and trauma for her in the final few minutes of her life is unimaginable,” she said. “You then defiled her body by writing the word ‘bully’ across her forehead.” Laing said the slavering could not have been further from the truth, with Howell’s compassion costing the 46-year-old her life.

Browning, who was Howell’s deputy in the University of Brighton’s payroll department, was a spurned admirer who was deeply self-centred with a selfish and vindictive streak, the trial heard.

Laing said Browning’s “utterly callous actions” caused trauma to Howell’s family and his own.

Browning, a father of two from East Sussex, sat with a pile of papers and took notes during the proceedings, but stared at the floor when he was sentenced.

Nicknamed Spock by his wife after the Star Trek character’s methodical manner, Browning was described as the “epitome of urban normality”. He was said to have led a stable life until it was jolted by the sudden death of his father in October 2016.

Browning claimed he and Howell clashed when they started working together in 2015 but later became friends. He said he decided to kill her after he became depressed following the bereavement. Howell, whose parents had both died, told friends she wanted to help him. Laing said: “I am also quite satisfied from the evidence that you were exaggerating how low you were feeling to maintain Jillian’s attention.”

Browning bought Howell gifts and sent her texts in which he claimed he adored her and said “every Jill needs a Dave”. Howell told friends she felt manipulated when Browning demanded she must never leave the university or get a boyfriend and should be concentrating on him. In the months before Howell’s death, Browning applied for a firearms licence, bought a shotgun and knife, hired a van, deleted swathes of messages and data on his phone, and took a change of clothes to the crime scene.

Jurors seeped as Browning described the moment a “whoosh” came over him after he shared a curry with Howell before stabbing her in the back. He said she screamed “You bastard”, to which he replied: “I’m sorry, Jilly, this is what mental health does to you.”

He stayed in the house for hours, posting a cartoon on Facebook with the slogan “Stand up to bullies then kill them” and phoning Samaritans, the very charity Howell had volunteered for, to seek advice. He handed himself into police but denied murder, claiming the act was manslaughter by diminished responsibility.

Graham Trembath QC, defending, said Browning showed no mercy when he killed Howell but asked for there to be “some light at the end of the tunnel”. Browning will not be eligible to be considered for parole until he is in his 70s.
Candid camera
McCartney images donated to V&A

Maev Kennedy

Dozens of intimate family photographs and celebrity rock music portraits taken by Linda McCartney have been given to the V&A Museum, for its new photographic galleries, by Sir Paul McCartney and his family.

The London museum is almost doubling its space devoted to photography to store and display an expanded collection, holding not just the McCartney gift but more than 270,000 images and objects from the Royal Photographic Society. It follows a controversial transfer of the RPS items to the V&A from the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, West Yorkshire, a move that was dubbed by one local politician as "an act of cultural rape".

Linda McCartney, who was married to Paul McCartney, died in 1998, aged 56. The 63 images from the family archive include original Polaroids of her husband and young children, which will go on display for the first time, as well as portraits of rock stars including the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix, and her photographic experiments including lithographs, cyanotypes, platinum and hand-painted prints.

Although she also became known as a musician after her marriage, being part of the post-Beatles band Wings, McCartney, under the name Linda Eastman, had worked as a professional photographer since the 1960s.

In 1968 she became the first woman to shoot a Rolling Stone magazine cover, with a portrait of the musician Eric Clapton.

Martin Barnes, senior curator of photography at the V&A, said he visited the McCartney home to help select the images. "I was trying not to think of the family connection, just to look at the work. I think she had a real eye for capturing the unguarded and unstaged moment."

A selection of the McCartney images goes on display when the V&A’s new photography centre opens to the public on 12 October.

The RPS’s huge collection, dating back to the earliest experiments called “painting with light”, was taken to Bradford in 2003 and regarded as a cornerstone of the National Media Museum. There was a public outcry when, in 2016, it was announced that the entire collection was going to London, to reside at the V&A. Critics thought the transfer would threaten the viability of the media museum, which had already had funding and staff cuts. Barnes said however that the V&A would be discussing loans to Bradford and sending touring exhibitions there.

The RPS collection, of 6,000 cameras and pieces of equipment, a mile of books and journals, and 270,000 photographs, all being catalogued and digitised, dovetailed well with the V&A, Barnes said. In some cases, negatives, prints and cameras were being reunited – including equipment with images shot by the pioneer photographer William Henry Fox Talbot.

Tristram Hunt, director of the V&A, said the new collection could tell the story of photography, from daguerreotype to digital. The RPS items had been the catalyst for creating the new spaces, in three restored 19th century galleries.

The galleries, he said, would have display cases holding 140 cameras, a handling collection and a “dark tent”, composed of a projection and lecture space modelled on the travelling darkrooms used by the 19th century photographers.

I think she had a real eye for capturing the unguarded and unstaged moment

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Senior curator
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A woman accused of murdering her former partner by throwing acid over him has told a jury that she did not mean to hurt “her boy” and felt “so sad” at the terrible injuries he suffered.

Berlinah Wallace, a former fashion student, said she thought she was throwing a glass of water rather than sulphuric acid over Mark van Dongen at her Bristol flat.

Giving evidence at Bristol crown court for a second day, she claimed on the night of the alleged attack that Van Dongen had told her to drink the acid, which she said she had bought to clean smelly drains.

Wallace, 48, is charged with murder of Van Dongen, an engineer, by leaving him with such catastrophic injuries that he sought euthanasia at a clinic in Belgium. She threw acid over him in September 2015 and he died in January 2017, the jury heard.

Before he died, Van Dongen, who had a new girlfriend, told police he woke at 3am to hear Wallace laugh and tell him before the acid was thrown: “If I can’t have you, no one else can.”

Wallace told the court she picked up a glass and hurled its contents at Van Dongen, 29, after he pulled her underwear during an argument.

“I thought it was water,” Wallace said. “I just wanted him to stop. He was hurting me. The contents went on him. I was trying to run away then he said: ‘Ooh, you threw acid at me.’

“I just turned around and I think I saw smoke or something. The only way I can describe it is black. I was so shocked. I was thinking: ‘Oh my God, Mark, Mark’. My legs couldn’t carry me properly, [they were] like jelly.”

When asked how she felt about what happened to Van Dongen, Wallace wept in court. “Bad,” she eventually replied. “I feel so sad. So sorry. He was my best friend. He was my family.”

Wallace said she collected Van Dongen from work on 22 September 2015. During that night, she said, they argued and he became physically abusive to her after she insulted him.

“My head was hurting,” she said. “Everything just seemed to be like a nightmare - what’s going on with my life, what has my life come to?”

Van Dongen usually prepared a glass of warm water for Wallace to take medication, the court heard.

“He said, ‘I have water for your medication, come to bed’, Wallace claimed. She said she did not take her medication and went to call her ex-boyfriend, who suggested she went to his home. She threw the liquid in the glass at Van Dongen when he prevented her from leaving, she said.

Wallace denies charges of murder and throwing a corrosive substance with intent. Her trial continues.
EU dashes hopes of Brexitters by keeping its London office

High-profile Brexitters had called last year for the EU to hand back the eight-storey red-brick building, which was Margaret Thatcher's headquarters and the scene of her election victories. The European commission and European parliament jointly bought the Westminster building for £20m in 2010 after 50 years of Tory ownership, and renamed it Europe House. Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, the chairman of the European Research Group, had suggested it would be a "wonderful" gesture of goodwill if, during the negotiations over Britain's £39bn divorce bill, the building were returned. But a leaked note on the administrative consequences of Brexit, seen by the Guardian, makes it clear the EU is keen to keep the building, near the Houses of Parliament. Klaus Welle, the European parliament's secretary general, said the EU needed a position from which to champion the interests of its citizens in Britain and to communicate its messages to the British. "In the UK, parliament has established offices in London [the 'Europe House' shared with the European commission] and Edinburgh," Welle wrote, "to the chamber's political leadership."

The EU's office in Scotland was set up close to Edinburgh Castle in 1975, the year of the UK's Common Market referendum, for Brussels to build contacts with local politicians. Although the UK is set to become a third country, as a former member state with many links to the EU, it nonetheless - and whatever the outcome of the negotiations - will remain a special and essential partner of the union. Most notably, as of now, more than 3 million non-British EU citizens reside in the United Kingdom," Welle wrote. He added that the cost of the office was "within the normal range of EP liaison offices in larger member states. In the light of the above, it is therefore proposed to continue parliament's presence in the UK following the example of parliament's Washington office."

The Guardian

Border health checks could curb fresh food imports, say freight experts

Lisa O'Carroll
Brexit correspondent

Everyday food staples including lettuce, tomatoes and beef could be in short supply or even disappear from supermarket shelves after Brexit because of disruptive checks that will need to be conducted at ports, Eurotunnel and freight industry chiefs say.

Scores of continental favourites that cross the French border - including oranges, lemons and avocados from Spain and fresh flowers from Holland - will be subject to phytosanitary checks in addition to customs checks after Brexit.

"Controls can take a few minutes to 48 hours if a laboratory test needs to be done," John Keefe, the director of public affairs at Getlink, the annual multimodal logistics conference in Birmingham.

"Coming in through the Channel tunnel on an everyday basis are food, flowers … If the government turn round at the end of Brexit negotiations and say: 'Sorry consumers, you will no longer be able to have fresh strawberries or fresh lettuce or fruits de mer from France, there is likely to be a strong reaction from consumers."

"If we go backwards from frictionless border, then we really have lost from Brexit."

There will also have to be checks at continental ports for British exports, meaning French diners may have to do without Scottish langoustines or salmon. Supplies of such foods from Scotland rotted on the roadside in 2015, the last time there were big delays in the ports.

Keefe said the phytosanitary checks legally required on both sides of the border were a bigger challenge than the high-profile issue of customs checks that is dividing the cabinet.

"If we are all happy eating frozen meat then it's an easy win, but if we want fresh food and having it on our shelves 365 days a year then it's a big problem," he said.

"We export about £8bn of fresh produce a year and import £12-13bn. That amount of fresh produce going back and forwards is far more of a risk for the government than is anything of customs or duty."

Keefe said there were no existing border inspection posts to serve Folkestone and Dover. It is estimated it could take between five and 10 years to put enough posts in place to deal with the volume of freight requiring phytosanitary inspection.

"We have the cabinet talking about different customs partnerships, but what we haven't seen yet," he said, "is any kind of progress out of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in particular to provide us with some clear guidelines about how [border inspection posts] might develop."

Keefe called on the government to urgently draw up a plan of action. Representatives from the Dover Port and the Freight Transport Association had the same message.

"It is the non-tariff barriers that could cause the bulk of delay," said James Hookham, the deputy chief executive of the FTA.

Keefe said 20% of Eurotunnel's freight was perishable food, and after Brexit, trucks coming through the Channel tunnel would have to divert their content to Heathrow or Southampton for inspection, cutting into the shelf life of fresh food and flowers. Britain is not self-sufficient in food and relies on imports, an issue that farmers and food producers have said could lead to shortages of staples after Brexit.
Ministers deadlocked over rival customs proposals

David Davis, the Brexit secretary, has said the government’s two options for the UK’s future customs relationship with the EU remain alive, after ministers failed to reach agreement.

Sajid Javid, the home secretary, sided with hardline Brexiteers to reject Theresa May’s favoured option of a customs partnership, in which Britain would collect tariffs on the EU’s behalf. Sources have said that option could not command a majority among senior ministers during discussions on Wednesday. However, Downing Street has refused to take it off the table formally.

Pro-Brexit ministers prefer the alternative of maximum facilitation, or “maxfac”, in which technology would be used to minimise customs border checks. Both plans have been rejected by Brussels as unworkable in their present form.

Davis told MPs yesterday: “Both of these approaches have merits and virtues, both have some drawbacks and that’s why we’re taking our time over the discussion on this.”

The chancellor, Philip Hammond, and the business secretary, Greg Clark, have urged their colleagues to reach a resolution as soon as possible, or risk businesses losing confidence in being able to trade freely with the EU after Brexit. Hammond and Clark believe the customs partnership approach is the only one that could potentially avoid a hard border in Ireland.

Davis acknowledged the urgency of the issue. “It’s frankly incredibly important that we get this right, not just for trade but for the extremely sensitive issue of maintaining the peace process in Northern Ireland. I don’t undertake to put an artificial deadline on something as important as that,” he said.

Allies of Davis say he backs the maxfac option, but has kept both plans alive in public out of loyalty.

The prime minister’s spokesman sought to play down the deadlock. “There’s an ongoing process of putting together the plans that will allow us to leave the EU in the smoothest possible way,” he said.

Sketch
John Crace

Interplanetary trade offers new hope on another confusing day in Davis’s looking-glass world

David Davis isn’t noted for his grasp of detail. Or for his grasp of anything very much. But at Brexit questions in the Commons, he took his lack of awareness to new heights by seeming to forget there had been a meeting of the inner cabinet the previous day. He’s going to get a hell of a shock when someone gently informs him that not only was he there but he voted against the PM’s preferred customs partnership option.

Brexit questions used to guarantee a nearly full house, but the number of MPs has dwindled to a mere handful. Most have long since decided there’s only a certain number of times they can slip through Davis’s looking-glass world before they don’t return.

Of those unhappy few who did decide to take one for the team, almost all wanted an urgent update on the customs union—a meeting running out to reach an agreement by October.

“The customs union is a very complex issue,” said Davis, confidently channelling his inner Alice. “So it should be no surprise that it is taking a long time.” A few MPs began reaching for their language anyone but he and Davis understands. Walker was then asked what steps had been taken to find a technological solution to the Irish border. “None whatsoever,” he said proudly. Davis put Davis on the back. That’s my boy.

Walker was made to look an intellectual giant by the arrival to the dispatch box of the department’s most recent ministerial recruit. Having dismissed the government’s own research into the economic impact of leaving the customs union as rubbish, Suelia Braverman then made her big pitch for the future. Outer space. Britain would conquer the universe and be a world leader in trade with Venus and Neptune.

To infinity and beyond. Just another day in Brexit in Wonderland.
King James Bible's classic text needed a little help from France

Alison Flood

A scholar has discovered that the King James Bible includes work by a previously unsuspected French translator, whose contribution to the quintessentially English work has been undetected for 400 years.

The landmark work, first published in 1601, was drafted by more than 40 translators. But according to Nicholas Hardy, of Birmingham University, very few documents survive from the drafting and revision stages and little is known about how the translators worked together.

Hardy was consulting a printed copy of the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, held in Oxford's Bodleian Library, when he noticed that the thousands of handwritten annotations in its margins were in the hand of John Bois, one of the translators. The annotations' author had previously been unknown.

At the British Library in London he found correspondence between Bois and the renowned French scholar Isaac Casaubon. The unpublished letters revealed that Bois had asked Casaubon for help translating passages he and his colleagues were struggling with.

Hardy studied Casaubon's notebooks, held in the Bodleian since the 1670s, finding records of the conversations Casaubon had with the translator Andrew Downes about other complications in the text.

“The work of the King James Bible as a quintessentially English cultural product, but as the most famous scholar of ancient Greek literature of the period, Casaubon was far more celebrated and pre-eminent than any of the translators who worked on the translation, and [his contributions] increased the prestige of the translation from their point of view.”

Casaubon was visiting London at the time of the translation and could barely speak or write English, according to Hardy, so he corresponded with the other translators in Latin.

“These new sources show us how complex [the] problems were, and how strongly the translators could disagree with each other about how to solve them.”

England’s mortality rate for under-fives 50% higher than in Sweden

Nicola Davis

Deaths in children under five occur one-and-a-half times more often in England than in Sweden, a study has found. If the child mortality rate had been the same in England as in Sweden during the 10-year period analysed, more than 600 fewer children would have died a year, researchers said.

The UK has one of the highest child mortality rates in western Europe, because although it has a similar level of economic development and healthcare to Sweden, the UK’s more unequal wealth distribution leads to poorer maternal health during pregnancy.

This causes more babies to be born prematurely and with a low birth weight, said researchers from the UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health. Children born in England also tend to have more birth anomalies such as congenital heart defects - than those in Sweden.

The study, published in the Lancet, used medical data from the NHS and the Swedish health service to compare births from 2003 to 2012 and track the children’s health and death records up to their fifth birthday.

This included information on the mother’s age, the family’s socioeconomic position, the length of pregnancy, the child’s birth weight and gender, and whether the child had any birth anomalies.

Overall, the study included more than 3.9m English births, with 11,392 deaths, and more than a million Swedish births and 1,927 deaths.

Between two days and four years old, the child mortality rate for England was one-and-a-half times higher than for Sweden (29 deaths per 10,000 children in England, compared with 19 in Sweden). If the child mortality rate had been the same, there would have been 607 fewer children a year in England, equivalent to 6,073 in total over the period.

The differing figures were driven mainly by differences in mortality among children under one.

Dr Ania Zylbersztejn of UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, the lead author, said: “While child deaths are still rare, the UK has one of the highest child mortality rates in western Europe. Babies born prematurely or with low birth weight have an increased risk of early death, and those who survive are more likely to have chronic ill-health or disability.”

The higher frequency of adverse birth characteristics such as low birth weight, pre-term birth or congenital anomalies in England were the main reasons for the excess risk of death compared with Sweden, accounting for 77% of the excess risk for newborns and 68% for those under the age of one.

Socioeconomic factors explained a further 3% of excess risk in newborns, and 11% in those under one. Combined, they said, these factors fully explained the difference in survival for under-fives in England and Sweden.

Good maternal health - including maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding chronic illnesses such as diabetes and avoiding high blood pressure, psychological stress and infections - and healthy behaviours such as eating a balanced diet and avoiding smoking, drugs and alcohol are associated with healthy foetal development.

The UK has one of the most unequal distributions of wealth of all western countries. From 2003 to 2005, the most deprived 20% of the UK’s population had a sevenfold lower income than the least deprived 20%, while the gap in Sweden was only four times. This suggests many more people in England are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Survival statistics

600
Fewer infants would have died over 10 years if England’s mortality rates were the same as Sweden’s.

11,392
The number of deaths of children under five years old in England during the study, out of 3.9m births.

77%
The proportion of deaths affected by adverse birth characteristics, such as abnormalities, among newborns.
Theatre review

Evocative song of woe about pain of creativity

Joe Penhall is very good at showing how a crisis can be exacerbated by the intervention of experts. In Blue/Orange (2000) a black mental patient became a ping-pong ball batted back and forth by white doctors. In this fascinating and highly topical new play, a conflict over ownership of a song escalates once the legal and psychiatric parasites enter the arena.

Switching between consulting rooms and a recording studio and moving around in time, Penhall doesn't just give us a contest: he demonstrates the illusion that any piece of art has untainted solo authorship. Cat is a Dublin-born singer-songwriter who has had a big hit that led to a US tour. Bernard is the artist-producer who put an album together with songs by the pair of them. Battle is joined over Bernard's claim of sole credit for the hit single, but we see how the conflict is intensified as both parties resort to lawyers and seek to sort out their problems through psychotherapy.

Dramatically, the danger is that the issue seems one-sided. Bernard is a bully with a palpable contempt not just for musicians but for singers, whom he equates with actors and politicians as people who "breathe life into words they didn't necessarily write". Cat is vulnerable, inexperienced and subject to all the pressures women face in the record industry. It even emerges that, on tour in the US, she was lugged from one date to the next by a male crew who treated her as little more than a drugged-up rag doll.

While the play makes the point that the music business treats women badly, it is infinitesimally more than a loaded conflict over intellectual property. For a start, Penhall has the courage to show the couple at work, where we see how a song is often developed through argumentative give-and-take. Everything is made worse by willy-waving lawyers and musically ignorant therapists who try to provide tidy solutions to intractable problems.

As I see it, the music business is simply a metaphor: what Penhall is really writing about is the way art is often the product of damaged individuals who depend on a degree of collaboration. The play itself helps to dent the myth of the solo creator. Penhall wrote it but Roger Michell has given it physical life by staging it with a beautiful fluidity that allows the arguments between the six characters to flow back and forth. Disproving Bernard's thesis that actors are just mouthpieces, Ben Chaplin endows the character with a sadness that offsets his inbuilt arrogance: he may be a vampire but when he expresses to his therapist incredulity that he could ever know his wife's feelings, you feel that he is trapped inside his own chauvinism.

Seána Kerslake also brings light and shade to the exploited Cat by showing that she is seeking vindictive triumph to compensate for her inability to satisfy her father's dreams. Niel Stuke and Kurt Egyiawan, as the lawyers, buzz around like flies, and Jemma Redgrave and Pip Carter, as the therapists, remind us of the perils of trying to stabilise creative talent.

I would have liked to have seen even more of Cat and Bernard making music together, but this is a fine play that raises a host of issues without ever trying to resolve them.

Until 16 June
Box office: 0844-871 7628

Mood Music
Old Vic, London

★★★★☆

Michael Billington

It is infinitesimally more than a loaded conflict over intellectual property. The music business is simply a metaphor

Seána Kerslake brings light and shade to the character of Cat

We charge less.

Introducing the new Bosch Unlimited cordless vacuum. With two batteries and quick charger, you have continuous run-time in the palm of your hand.

Cordless. Charge less.
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*Under 60 minute charge time with quick charger (EH7UC181GB). Compared to other manufacturers' communicated charge times of cordless sticks in the UK market.
McAllen, Texas
A border agent restrains two people at the Mexican border after they were caught crossing into the US illegally.

PHOTOGRAPH: ADREES LATIF/REUTERS
sanctions linked to human rights give
the UK greater moral credibility.

James Nixey, the head of the Russia
programme at the thinktank Chatham
House, said: “It’s hard to persuade
even your closest allies to take tangi-
ble measures with impact if we’re not
prepared to sacrifice some of the Rus-
ian investment in our own country
and stick to a point of principle. Gov-
ernment statements on this have been
either ambiguous or all over the place.”

The UK says Russian denials over
Salisbury and Douma reveal a state
uninterested in cooperating to reach
a common understanding of the truth.

Alicia Kearns, who ran the Foreign
Office’s strategic counter-terrorism
communications in Syria and Iraq,
says Russia is seen as nearly unique
in its willingness to conceal the truth.

“When we are dealing with most
malign states or even terror groups,
an element of truth is expected to
increase the efficiency of their dis-in-
formation, but with Russia there is
no commitment, or adherence, to the
truth,” she said. “For instance for the
first 10 days that Russia was inside
Syria, it insisted through a large prop-
aganda campaign that its planes were
only bombing Islamic States positions,
and it was categorically not true.”

Russia’s critics say in case after
case – the downing of Malaysia Air-
lines flight MH17, the role of Russian
forces in Ukraine, the Litvinenko mur-
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der, Syria’s use of chemical weapons,
Road to nowhere? Wheels come off Paris bike hire scheme

Badge of honour US teacher of the year stages silent protest

Friday 4 May 2018 The Guardian

"We monitored all the lies the Russian media were pushing. Their modus operandi is to deny, distract and blame," Popovych said. These tactics may have limited impact internationally, but are pretty effective inside Russia, she said. Even Putin's critics seem unconvincing of Moscow's guilt.

"It's about broadcasting thoroughly tailored narratives, which are not even based on the news. This happens on purpose on major TV channels controlled by the Kremlin," Popovych said.

Russian broadsides waged a relentless campaign against Europe, she said, with an average of 18 negative references a day. Europe is depicted as dangerous, decadent, immoral, and home to fascism and revisionism. The EU is failing apart. Germans and Scandinavians routinely take children away from Russian families, and give them to "gays", state TV claims.

The depiction of Britain inside Russia is worse, analysis of more than three years of content suggests. The UK is portrayed as Europe's most Russophile country and an insidious and unreliable partner. A report by the Rossiyoidal channel referred to May's "pale, tired flesh" and hinted that she had a drinking problem. Only Belarus and Switzerland get positive coverage.

So far, the Foreign Office has taken baby steps to fight back. It has released a mini-film setting out how Moscow spreads fictitious stories. The video identified three "tried and tested" steps. These were "inventing multiple theories to mask the truth", getting officials to endorse them as credible, and "using bots and fake accounts to amplify false information".

None of this, the government says, changes the facts. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed novichok was used in Salisbury. Russia's identification of BZ was false - a "malign" and "crazed" attempt to shift the blame elsewhere, according to the EU and OPCW delegates.

Mark Sedwill, the UK's national security adviser, took the unusual step of releasing classified intelligence. In a letter to Jens Stoltenberg, the Nato secretary general, Sedwill said Skripal's former spy agency, the GRU, had targeted Yulia's email account. Over the past decade, Russia had produced small amounts of novichok, he said, and used special units to test the poison on door handles.

In spite of this openness, critics say Downing Street has been slow to respond to cynical Russian attacks. "They haven't been proactive," said Clark of the Foreign Office and politicians. "Despite everything, the British elite is still conflicted about how to deal with Russia. War has been declared, but we're not fighting a war back."

The government should enlighten Russian citizens about the Kremlin's multiple abuses at home, he said.

"People judge RT by its television output, which is completely the wrong way to judge it as the viewing figures are not very impressive," said Prof Stephen Hutchings, of the University of Manchester, who is conducting a research project on the channel. "Their success is down to their online output."

Crucial to this success is the tone, exemplified by ICymi and other parts of RT's online operation, which combines tabloid desire for headlines with the snark and memes of internet culture. "The irreverence is very much part of their strategy," explained Hutchings. "They work with the grain of online culture."

The approach seems to be working. Posts on RT's English-language feed have attracted twice as many likes and shares in the past three months as those on the Sun's page, according to data provided by the audience-measuring business EzyInsights.

This has been achieved by focusing on extreme topics and conspiracy theories, with headlines that are unlikely to appear in more traditional media, such as: "Syrians support Assad but BBC won't report it. British barons tells RT." What's less clear is how much thought goes into this approach.

Former employees of the site describe a chaotic workplace staffed largely by inexperienced journalists, where a bias towards informing fringe political views is often supplemented by a more powerful desire to write anything that would bring in viral traffic. This means a focus on stories guaranteed to fire up a particular demographic, from attacks on the BBC to criticism of safe spaces on university campuses.

Most staffers said that with the exception of stories on issues such as the war in Syria, RT's management were usually more interested in chasing traffic than pushing a centrally agreed line from Moscow.

According to Hutchings, RT's future in the UK could be as an unregulated online-only publisher. Boiko, the ICYM host, said RT's audience could understand perfectly well the "concept and the intent" of the channel's videos, which she said offered a "sharp, satirical take on the biggest headlines" and were meant to challenge viewers "to think critically and get them talking - and perhaps smiling - along with us".

Asked whether she had ever received instructions from RT's management on how to cover a story, she replied: "No."
‘Devastating’ dust storms in India kill more than 100 people

Michael Safi
Delhi

Severe dust storms across northern India have killed more than 100 people, destroyed homes and left hundreds without electricity.

Clouds of thick dust and sand frequently blow across the region during the dry season, but the death toll from this week’s storms has been unusually high. The dust has been followed by lightning storms and rains.

At least 64 people died in Uttar Pradesh, most in Agra district where the Taj Mahal is located. Another 35 are confirmed to have died in Rajasthan and two each in Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh. The death toll in all four states could still rise.

The destruction has extended to Punjab and Haryana, where trees were uprooted and power supplies cut. Less intense storms in Delhi caused traffic diversions. Andhra Pradesh was hit by more than 41,000 lightning strikes in a matter of hours, disaster officials said.

Shivam Lohia, who owns a resort hotel in Rajasthan, said he abandoned his car and ran for his life after it was almost blown away. “I haven’t seen such a devastating storm in at least 25 years. Everyone was scared and running for cover as trees and homes were getting blown away,” Lohia told AFP.

Dust storms are created by a rapid ascent of warm air which creates a vacuum that air closer to the ground rushes to fill, taking sand and dust with it. Meteorologists said abnormally high temperatures had contributed to the disaster.

Most of the deaths occurred when houses people were sleeping in collapsed overnight, disaster management officials said. Falling pylons and trees also contributed to the death toll.

The dust storms are expected to continue over the weekend. Most of the deaths occurred when houses people were sleeping in collapsed overnight, disaster management officials said. Falling pylons and trees also contributed to the death toll.

Memphis Barker
Islamabad

Pakistan’s most populous province has ordered energy drink manufacturers including Red Bull to remove the word “energy” from their labels, saying it is misleading and encourages people to consume them in potentially dangerous quantities.

The order comes amid increasing international regulatory curbs on the highly caffeinated fizzy drinks market and is believed to be the first in the world to censor the term “energy” – a key part of the drinks’ appeal.

The scientific advisory panel of the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) said the drinks did not provide nutritional energy. Instead, the large quantities of caffeine, taurine and guarana in energy drinks simply stimulated the swift release of existing reserves.

“In TV commercials [drinkers] throw huge tyres, they keep running and running,” Noorul Amin Mengal, PFA director, told the Guardian. “These adverts are misleading our illiterate population.”

Following an aggressive marketing campaign in Pakistan, people seeking to become bodybuilders, for example, have been known to drink several cans at once, added a PFA spokesman. Some end up in hospital, he said.

The PFA has given makers of energy drinks until the end of the year to replace the word “energy” with “stimulant” on their labels, and add warnings in Urdu against consumption by pregnant women and children under the age of 12.

The PFA has demanded that energy drink firms, which sell about 312m cans a year in Pakistan, must limit caffeine to 200 parts per million (ppm) – about half the amount Red Bull contains.

Pakistan has a particular incentive to curb the industry, Mengal said. A 2017 study showed energy drinks increase blood pressure five times more than an equivalent amount of caffeine in coffee, and Pakistan has one of the highest rates of heart disease.

After “marathon” consultation with the industry, most manufacturers had agreed to comply with the new regulations, the PFA said.

Last year Turkey limited soft drink caffeine levels to 150ppm and UK supermarkets, including Waitrose, Tesco and Aldi, no longer sell energy drinks to those under the age of 16.
On yer bike!

Paris cycle-share under pressure as wheels fall off hi-tech upgrade plan

Once it was the pride of Paris. The French capital’s self-service bike-share scheme, Vélib, was copied from London to Seattle and seen as proof that big cities could revolutionise green transport.

But the famous chunky grey bicycles have now virtually ground to a standstill amid the chaotic rollout of a new generation of hi-tech models under a new operator, the French-Spanish consortium Smovengo. Blighted by glitches, delays and a dwindling number of users, the bike scheme has become a public relations disaster for the French capital and could even threaten the political future of the left at Paris city hall.

The mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, along with politicians from the city’s outskirts, held crisis talks this week and demanded new emergency measures to get the scheme working.

"Parisians, who are very attached to their bikes, consider that the system they loved has been ruined," Hidalgo said. "We must have a service that works, as fast as possible, to regain users’ trust."

Hidalgo is seen as a key Socialist opposition leader under the presidency of the centrist Emmanuel Macron, but she is under increasing pressure from the right and the hard left over the Vélib trouble.

Smovengo unveiled an emergency plan yesterday, vowing to streamline the operation, open more docking stations linked to the electricity grid and set up about 400 more cycle docks by late June. It also vowed to improve communication with users.

When the Vélib “freedom bikes” were launched in 2007, Paris was not the first city to introduce a municipal bike-share scheme, but it was the largest. The scheme was run for a decade by the outdoor advertising company JCDecaux but last year it was put out to tender.

Smovengo won a €700m (£620m) deal to run the system for 15 years, promising to introduce higher-tech, connected bikes, with one third of them electric. Old bikes were removed and docking stations dug up in order to be replaced in January.

Four months on, less than half of the 1,400 planned docking stations have been created and the company is having to pay millions of euros in penalties. Crucially, of those that do exist, many have been beset by computer glitches and a lack of access to the electricity grid.

The number of Vélib subscribers has dropped from 290,000 last year to 219,000. A public-sector worker who had used Vélib for a decade said: “I’ve basically given up. It has become impossible to get a bike.”

Simon Labouret, of the cyclists’ group Paris en Selle (Paris in the Saddle), said: “The Vélib fiasco is a complete odds with Paris’s objective to get more people cycling.”

Sweden admits its national dish is culinary import from Turkey

TRT World, Turkey’s publicly funded international television news channel.

“Swedish meatballs originally Turkish dish: Swedish government,” said the headline in Hurriyet Daily News, after Sweden’s official national Twitter account, @swedense, came clean last weekend.

“Swedish meatballs are actually based on a recipe King Charles XII brought home from Turkey in the early 18th century,” the Swedish account revealed abruptly and for no immediately apparent reason. “Let’s stick to the facts!”

Turkey’s Anadolu agency seized the chance to speak to Annie Mattsson, of the literature department at Uppsala University, who confirmed that, after losing a crucial battle against Russia in 1709, Charles and the remnants of his army took refuge in what is now Moloda, then part of the Ottoman empire. Charles spent six years in exile and around present-day Turkey. Having acquired a taste for the local cuisine, he returned to Sweden in 1714 with the recipe for köfte, the spiced lamb and beef meatballs that in time became the Swedish staple köttbullar, and for the popular stuffed cabbage dish known in Sweden as kåldolmar.

In Turkey’s meatball capital, İnegöl, this week, a local chef, Ibrahim Veyael, told the Doğan news agency it was an honour that the Turkish dish should have become “an example to different cuisines all over the world.”

Others were less happy. Serdar Çam, the president of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, complained that the news was still being sold in a day in its restaurants, should not be selling the dish as though it were Swedish.

Orjan, the forlorn – though presumably tongue-in-cheek – Swede curating the country’s Swedish tourism account on Twitter lamented that the news had shaken him. “My whole life has been a lie,” he tweeted.

Malaysian opposition leader an early target of fake news law

Hannah Ellis-Petersen
South-east Asia correspondent

The opposition leader in the upcoming Malaysian elections is being investigated under the country’s new fake news laws, police have confirmed.

Mahathir Mohamad, who was prime minister of Malaysia for two decades and is running again aged 92, claimed last weekend that people working for the government were responsible for the “sabotage” of his plane, to stop him registering as an election candidate.

On Wednesday, Malaysian police said Mahathir was being investigated under the fake news legislation, which was rushed through parliament by the prime minister, Najib Razak last month, amid fears from human rights groups it could be used by the government against its opponents.

The complaint against Mahathir was filed by members of the ruling party, UMNO – which Mahathir used to lead – claiming that his allegations of sabotage fuelled an incorrect and damaging perception of the ruling coalition government, and therefore should be investigated under the legislation.

In an open letter published last Saturday, Mahathir detailed how a chartered plane due to take him to the island of Langkawi – where he is running as a parliamentary candidate for the elections on 9 May – suffered suspicious damage to the tyre, which he said was logical to believe that the plane was deliberately tampered with.

The allegations were dismissed by the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia and the aircraft company, Vista Jet, who both said it was a technical fault.

The decision to investigate Mahathir will fuel concern that the law was designed to silence Najib’s critics before the election. Under the law, the government decides what constitutes fake news. The police can carry a jail sentence of up to six years and a fine of 500,000 ringgit (€93,000) for anyone who “maliciously” creates and distributes false information.
**United States**

**Teacher's badge protest as she meets Trump**

A teacher of teenage refugees staged a silent protest by wearing several overtly political badges while receiving an award from Donald Trump this week.

Mandy Manning works at the newcomer centre at Joel E Ferris high school in Spokane, Washington, which specialises in English lessons for new refugees and immigrant students.

Trump presented her with the national teacher of the year award in the White House and praised her “incredible devotion”. The US president said: “Teachers like Mandy play a vital role in the wellbeing of our children, the strength of our communities and the success of our nation.”

Manning wore six badges. Reports said that they included one with a poster for the Women’s March that followed Trump’s inauguration, one that said “Trans Equality Now” and one in the shape of an apple with a rainbow. Trump did not appear to notice the badges. Manning later said her students “make the US the beautiful place it is”.

David Smith  Washington

**Switzerland**

**Lidl stores sell cannabis as tobacco alternative**

You may have heard about its cut-price stollen. But you probably will not have sampled the latest range offered by the supermarket chain Lidl: locally grown cannabis.

Two products derived from hemp flowers are for sale in Swiss stores as an alternative to rolling tobacco.

A 1.5g box, from plants grown indoors, costs 17.99 Swiss francs (£13.20). A 3g bag of flowers grown in greenhouses is 19.99 Swiss francs.

Switzerland changed the law in 2011 to allow people over 18 to buy and use cannabis with no more than 1% of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the plant’s main psychoactive constituent. The products on sale in Lidl are designed to provide a relaxing and anti-inflammatory effect, but not to be intoxicating.

“The legally cultivable varieties contain only very small amounts of THC and a high proportion of CBD [cannabidiol],” Lidl said.

The German supermarket said its supplier – The Botanicals – relied on sustainable agriculture and did not use chemical, synthetic or genetically modified substances.

Daniel Boffey

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**Making a splash** Héctor Velázquez, a pitcher for the Boston Red Sox baseball team, douses his team-mate Mookie Betts with sports drink as Betts is interviewed after a 5-4 defeat of the Kansas City Royals. Betts hit three solo home runs, setting a record for the most ‘three-homer’ games by a Red Sox player.

PHOTOGRAPH: TIM BRADBURY/GETTY

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**The Guardian** Friday 4 May 2018
Turkey’s iron lady
‘Now it’s time for them, the men in power, to feel fear’

Standing near a statue of the Turkish republic’s founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in the Black Sea town of Giresun earlier this year, Meral Akşener lambasted and mocked the ruling party of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. His apparatchiks had hurt their hands, she told the farmers in the crowd, counting the millions of euros with which they had enriched themselves while in office. Across the square a giant banner implored: “Save us, iron lady.”

Whatever the president touched turned to dust, she said. He had once dubbed Bashar al-Assad, Syria’s dictator and an ally turned foe, “Brother Assad.”

“I hope he never calls me Brother Mera,” she said to roaring laughter. The 61-year-old Akşener, nicknamed Asena (She-wolf) by her admirers, has emerged as the only credible challenger to the incumbent president - the dominant figure in Turkish politics for the past 16 years - since last month when he called snap elections for 24 June, a year and a half ahead of schedule.

The winner of the poll will assume an executive presidency with sweeping powers that voters narrowly approved in a referendum last year. Polls show an easy victory for Erdoğan in the first round but a much tighter race, within the margin of error, in the second if he is pitted against Akşener.

“Back when everything was up in the air, I was the first person to declare my candidacy against Erdoğan,” Akşener, leader of the İyi (Good) party, told the Guardian. “I have said this since the beginning of the process: in the first round, everyone should simply vote for their own candidate; in the second round, for the sake of our democracy, for our country, the opposition should leave aside its bickering and support the opposition candidate, whoever it is.”

“This election is one of the most important elections of our country’s history.”

The ascendency of Erdoğan’s ruling and Islamist-oriented Justice and Development (AK) party has been a fact of Turkish political life for a decade and a half. It dominates the conservative and nationalist right after an alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) of Devlet Bahçeli, with whose help it was able to win in the referendum.

Akşener, the granddaughter of immigrants who arrived from Greece in the 1920s, was a veteran of Bahçeli’s party, serving as interior minister in the 90s, until an insurgent challenge to his leadership forced her to leave.

She hopes her presidential campaign will attract both defectors from the AKP’s camp and opposition members who are fed up with their political bloc’s failure to defeat Erdoğan in any election since 2002. Akşener has pledged to roll back the presidential system, put the country’s relations with the EU back on track and restore the rule of law in Turkey, where freedoms have been curtailed under a state of emergency that has been in place since a failed coup attempt in July 2016.

“Having one person in charge will cost Turkey a lot in the middle and long term. Democracy is malfunctioning in Turkey and we need to re-establish it,” Akşener said. “I am a practising Muslim ... but the mind that governs us must rely on laws. The state’s secularism makes it possible to change laws that are made for people and to change them according to the needs of citizens over time.”

Akşener emerged as the almost default candidate for the opposition after the former president Abdullah Gül - a founding member of the AKP who fell out with Erdoğan - decided not to run. The pro-Kurdish People’s Democratic party (HDP) nominated its leader, Selahattin Demirtaş, who has been in prison since November 2016. The Republican People’s party (CHP), a hardline secularist party that has not won an election since 2002, will probably back Akşener as a candidate who can reach across the aisle.

“Turkey is mainly a rightwing country,” said Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish research programme at the Washington Institute and the author of a biography of Erdoğan. “Her party will be a serious challenge, at least a major headache to him from his soft flank, the right.”

However, that rightwing appeal means Akşener must also contend with the ultranationalist and racist history of her political forebears, a legacy that means İyi has been compared to Europe’s populist, anti-immigrant parties. It is a charge Akşener vehemently denies.

Kurdish voters in Turkey’s south-east have always been wary of nationalist politicians, and Akşener’s tenure as interior minister occurred during one of the worst periods of human rights violations by the state against Kurds in the region. She will face an uphill battle in convincing them to back her in a possible second round, and she has said little on efforts to resolve the Kurdish issue, speaking in more general terms about preserving the nation’s identity while respecting the rights of minority groups.

Akşener has said her party, headed by the granddaughter of immigrants, is open to all identities. In a male-dominated political culture, she has another message: “Now it is time for them, the men in power, to feel fear.”
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UK growth forecasts slashed after first-quarter standstill

Economy now expected to increase by 1.4%, down from 1.9%, says leading thinktank

Larry Elliott and Phillip Inman

One of Britain’s leading economic thinktanks has slashed its forecasts for 2018 following evidence that growth almost came to a halt in the first three months of the year.

The National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) said it now expected expansion of 1.4% in 2018 – down from the 1.9% it had been forecasting three months ago. The brightest news was a stronger recovery after the cold snap in March, its second weakest quarter since the 2008 financial crisis.

Demand has fallen 7% on a year ago, the World Gold Council said.

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Demand has fallen 7% on a year ago, the World Gold Council said.
Jobs at risk as Virgin shuts call centre and fashion group falters

Zoe Wood and Sarah Butler

More than 1,500 jobs are at risk after Virgin Media announced plans to shut a Swansea call centre, and as the company behind the fashion brands Jacques Vert and Windsor teeters on the edge of collapse.

More than 1,000 jobs are on the line at Calvetron. Administrators are expected to be formally appointed at the parent group, Calvertone Style Holdings, today for what will be the second time in a year.

Virgin Media confirmed it was cutting jobs as part of a shake-up that will involve the closure of its call centre in Swansea and another site in Nottingham over the next two years. The Swansea centre employs 792 staff. Some roles are being switched to Manchester.

The telecoms company said the decision was part of a £40m plan to create “fewer, higher-quality workplaces”. Virgin Media, which has 14,000 employees across more than 100 sites, is reducing the number of customer operations centres from eight to four, creating larger regional hubs in Wythenshawe in Greater Manchester, Belshill near Glasgow, Gateshead, Teesside and Reading.

The Swansea West MP, Geraint Davies, described the job cuts as “catastrophe for our city”.

“I’m stunned by the Virgin job losses, which is a traumatic shock for every family concerned and a body blow for Swansea,” he said. Carolyn Harris, the Swansea East MP, said Virgin Media had handled the situation very badly and had “questions to answer” about the job losses.

Virgin Media’s chief executive, Tom Mockridge, said: “We have proposed the closure of a small number of our offices over the next two years, including our call centre in Swansea and our current site in Nottingham.

“These changes will help deliver a more agile, digitally oriented experience, which our customers increasingly expect as standard.”

Last summer, Calverton was restructured in a rescue deal that resulted in several hundred job losses. It was acquired by a group of retail investors, which at the time included the former Jaeger owner Harold Tillman and the businessmen Sandeep Vyas and Haseeb Aziz.

The business secured a £12.5m loan from Secure Trust Bank to fund its turnaround. But since then, fashion retailers have faced a tough market. The weather – an unusually warm autumn last year and miserable spring this year – has combined with the squeeze on consumers, the rising cost of labour and imported goods, a continuing switch to online shopping and a trend for shoppers to spend more on leisure than fashion, to create the harsh retail environment.

Store closures are planned at New Look and Carpetright, while Toys R Us and Maplin have collapsed. Mynah and Homebase are also expected to close stores as they struggle to find new funding.

Calverton’s problems have been magnified by difficulties at Debenhams and House of Fraser, two of its biggest retail partners.

At the time of the 2017 rescue, Calverton had more than 1,200 UK staff working in shops and department stores. Calverton was not available to comment.

Television’s prime mover

Amazon’s Prime Video became the fastest-growing video-on-demand service in Britain last year. Series such as the Marvelous Mrs Maisel, right, helped fuel a 41% year-on-year increase in subscribers to 4.3 million.

Watchdog to review proposed merger of Sainsbury’s and Asda

Sarah Butler

MPs from two parliamentary committees have asked the competition regulator to examine how the merger of Sainsbury’s and Asda – the UK’s second and third-largest supermarket chains - might affect suppliers.

The merger of the chains could give them control of about 30% of grocery sales, a similar share to Tesco, and the two businesses would account for 60% of the market.

“The cost savings being promised through this merger must not come through squeezing those further down the supply chain,” said the Tory MP Neil Parish, chair of the environment, food and rural affairs committee.

Parish said such power could make suppliers more reluctant to complain about unfair practices for fear of losing business.

Rachel Reeves, a Labour MP and chair of the business, energy and industrial strategy committee, also called for examination by the Competition and Markets Authority: “This merger threatens customer choice, hands yet more power to mighty supermarket players and heaps more pressure on [smaller] suppliers.”

The grocery code adjudicator, Christine Tacon, who regulates supermarkets’ relationships with direct suppliers, was questioned in parliament on Wednesday. She said her remit did not cover prices agreed between the chains and their suppliers.

Parish suggested in the meeting that the government was “not concerned at all by the scale of these two major retailers that will be totally dominant in the marketplace”, and said “Tesco and Sainsbury’s might decide to get together, as the government didn’t turn a hair.”

George Eustice, the farming minister, said it was up to the CMA to examine the implications of the merger for consumers and the wider market methodically, and take any action necessary.

The CMA is expected to announce in the next few weeks whether it will carry out a broad brush “phase 1” review, which would last up to 40 days, or go straight to a more detailed “phase 2” process, in which it would examine competition concerns at a local level around the UK, action that would take up to 24 weeks.

House of Fraser may be forced to set aside millions to cut pensions deficit

Sarah Butler

House of Fraser’s rescue restructuring faces a hurdle after it emerged that the department store chain may have to fund a multimillion-pound injection into its pension schemes.

The firm faces a hurdle after it emerged that the department store chain may have to fund a multimillion-pound injection into its pension schemes.

The Pensions Regulator said it would not comment on the circumstances of “ongoing companies”. It will be a narrow band of trouble, he said.

The PPF forced Toys R Us, the now collapsed toy retailer, to pledge £9m of new funds  be diverted to the pension schemes.

The firm runs two defined benefit schemes, which together are in surplus by just under £600m on an accounting basis in the latest calculations. But the insolvency process automatically triggers the involvement of the PPF. It will be counted as a creditor in the CVA, partly because House of Fraser’s pension schemes are understood to be of millions in deficit on a buyout basis, a more stringent analysis, which considers the cost of passing on the liabilities to an insurance firm.

John Raffe, an independent pensions expert, said the schemes were likely to be significantly in deficit. “Scoring out House of Fraser’s two pension schemes – with total liabilities of more than £600m in March 2018 – makes it significantly more difficult,” he said.

The PPF forced Toys R Us, the now collapsed toy retailer, to pledge £9m of new funds to fund a multi million-pound rescue of its scheme before agreeing to back a CVA in December last year.

It does not always demand cash. The PPF backed the recent CVA of Carpetright after being satisfied that the company’s existing plan to cut the £8.5m deficit over a number of years was sufficient. The PPF said it would not comment on the circumstances of “ongoing companies”.

House of Fraser is also in talks with the Pension Regulator over the impact of the CVA of the CVA of the CVA. The watchdog, which can demand that companies take action to protect pensions, said: “We are in discussions with the company and the trustee of the pension scheme and will continue to monitor the situation.”
The shareholders' revolt should be a warning - Unilever has really annoyed a lot of people

That's the starter out of the way, and Unilever's board will not have enjoyed it. Wednesday's 36% shareholder rebellion against a pay policy that could hand bigger bonuses to Paul Polman, the chief executive, and his senior colleagues was an embarrassment for a firm that likes to think of itself as being on the side of the angels in matters of governance.

Unilever got the simple majority it required, but the main course - the autumn vote on the proposal to become a purely Dutch company - is when the fun begins. Polman & Co need 75% of the PLC shareholders, or a single HQ in Rotterdam and a single class of share that would have its main listing in Amsterdam. Some UK fund managers hate the idea.

The main problem is that Unilever shares, as things stand, would disappear from the FTSE-100 index - indeed, all FTSE indices. That would make it impossible for UK tracker funds and those with strict British investment mandates to own Unilever stock. A secondary listing in London is not useful if FTSE inclusion isn't part of the package. Fund managers, who see the FTSE as an indicator they will be forced to ditch their holdings at depressed prices, Unilever hasn't helped itself with its snifty attitude. Columbia Threadneedle - which complained in March about a "lack of engagement with shareholders" - is the only public objector so far but other members of London's big long-only club are privately seething. If the Investor Forum, the new lobbying group - which has not already taken up the cause, it should to do so. This is exactly the type of situation it was created to address. Tracker fund managers should be up in arms. Their job is to protect end-investors and being a semi-forced seller of a leading FTSE-100 company would be a terrible outcome.

There are signs that Unilever's board realises the vote may not be the walkover it assumed. Its chairman, Marijn Dekkers, told the meeting the company was talking to the FTSE index-compilers "to see if there is a possibility of inclusion". Meanwhile, some UK fund managers hate the idea.

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Tesla's shares fall as Musk holds bizarre results call on record loss

Adam Vaughan

Tesla shares fell more than 7% yesterday after the firm posted a record $710m loss and Elon Musk dismissed Wall Street analysts for asking "boring bonehead questions" on the company's ride-sharing platform, self-driving cars and charging network. After half an hour of being questioned on the company's prospects for the rest of the year, and efforts to ramp up its car factory in Fremont, California, Musk appeared to lose patience. “Next, next. Boring bonehead questions are not cool. Next,” he said, cutting off one question.

He was then asked what percentage of customers had chosen to personally configure their Model 3, an indicator of potential future revenues as the car’s $35,000 starting price can rise to $50,000 with options.

"Next, next. Boring bonehead questions are not cool. Next.

Elon Musk

Tesla CEO, in a call with analysts

"Next, next. Boring bonehead questions are not cool. Next."

But instead of answering, Musk said: “We’re going to go to YouTube. Sorry, these questions are so dry, they’re killing me.”

The chief executive then answered numerous questions from the YouTube channel HyperChange. Musk proceeded to take questions from the channel's host on Tesla’s ride-sharing platform, self-driving cars and charging network.

While losses deepened from $675m for the final quarter of 2017 to $710m in the first quarter of 2018, the company brought in more revenue than expected. Revenue grew by 26% from a year ago to a record $3.4bn, up on analysts’ estimate of $3.28bn.

But Tesla, which has suffered production problems with the Model 3 and recently shut the Fremont plant briefly because "it didn’t go very well", while RBC Capital Markets said that Musk “lacked answers to questions on investors’ minds.”

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IRWIN STELZER

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Weather

Friday 4 May 2018

UK and Ireland

Sunny

Sunny mostly

Mostly cloudy

Overcast/all

Sunny showers

Sunny and heavy showers

Light showers

Rain

Snow

Thundery showers

Superstorm

Temperature:

ºC

Wind speed,

mph

General:

Sunny and heavy showers

Sunny转移

Oscillated

Cold front

Warm front

Occluded front

Jet stream

The jet stream will move across most of Scotland and much of Denmark today.

Average speed: 25,000 km

Direction of jet stream

Atlantic Ocean

Spacewatch

Blue Origin, the aerospace company owned by Jeff Bezos, Amazon’s chief executive, has made the eighth test flight of its New Shepard reusable rocket and unmanned crew capsule, blasting off from Texas on 29 April. After a 10-minute flight, during which the hydrogen-fuelled vehicle reached a velocity of 2,199 miles per hour and altitude of 66 miles, the rocket made a controlled touch down on Earth and the ejected crew capsule parachuted back down too.

Onboard too was a dummy astronaut, nicknamed ‘Mannequin’ (the German space agency) and experiments arranged by DLR (the German space agency) for the flight but the capsule carried sensors to show what stresses the flight may impose on human bodies.

With the success of this mission, the company plan to arrange flights for the first people by the end of the year – then, in 2019, open the service up to paying space tourists.

Stuart Clarke @DrStuClark

Around the world

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Forecast

Low

High

Tomorrow

Manchester

Birmingham

Leeds

Newcastle

Bristol

Cardiff

Edinburgh

Sunny and mild conditions are expected across England and Wales tomorrow and on Sunday.

Around the UK

London

Manchester

Birmingham

Leeds

Newcastle

Bristol

Cardiff

Edinburgh

Sunny and heavy showers.

Journal Country diary

Rotovations work starts in the forest as the wild boars wield their snouts like blades, yet woodland plants survive the mashing.

Wild boars wield their snouts like blades, yet woodland plants survive the mashing, wild boars wield their snouts like blades, yet woodland plants survive the mashing. Wild boars wield their snouts like blades, yet woodland plants survive the mashing. Wild boars wield their snouts like blades, yet woodland plants survive the mashing.
Learning to fly
Mourinho is the maestro when it comes to managing expectations

As an aspiring coach I have a firm handle on how I want my team to play and I admire and wonder at the way the likes of Guardiola, Klopp and Mauricio Pochettino have gone about their work. At the same time, I look at Mourinho and what he has won in his career by adopting a less evangelical approach to the game we all love. He has still managed to achieve great success regardless.

Howard Wilkinson has been one of our tutors on the pro licence course and he is adamant that you have to survive your first 70 games as a manager if you are to succeed and the shadow of Sir Alex Ferguson have set a high bar for him but ask fans if they prefer winning to losing and I know the answer you will get.

You may remember that it was Mourinho's Real Madrid side who won La Liga in 2011-12 against arguably the greatest club side of all time in Guardiola's Barcelona. Real did not beat or even challenge Barça at their own game because Mourinho believed he knew how to get the better of them and they achieved that courtesy of his forensic attention to detail in preparations for a match. The modus operandi is to ensure the players are ready for the battle with their direct opponent and that they are drilled to react to any scenario - from conceding a goal to finding your team reduced to 10 men.

Players who have won major trophies in Mourinho teams, such as Frank Lampard at Chelsea or Internazionale's Marco Materazzi, have spoken about his attention to detail and how that inspires confidence in his players and while Mourinho may have a mixed persona in public, one certainty is that the majority of his players love him and would run through brick walls for him.

However, it’s not that simple. Arsène Wenger has correctly been praised for revolutionising English football in the late 90s with his introduction of sports science and diet changes, among other things, at Arsenal. It seems as if he could not or would not evolve with other changes in the game, though, and that’s where the chameleon-like Mourinho may have the edge as he has incorporated the best of the rest into the running of the teams he has managed and then added his skill-set to succeed.

Every coach will have his own beliefs about how the game should be played and that philosophy will be borne out by the way his team carry out instructions, but it is a very narrow mind which contests that one way is definitively better than another. Like everything else in the world, football undergoes cycles and you cannot tell me the high-scoring, attacking football of this season’s Champions League is not an antidote or a reaction to the more defensive and cautious football which had been prevalent in the past 10 years or so.

The foundation for change in the game is a difference in style of coaches. Mourinho is unlike Pep Guardiola or Klopp in his philosophy, but his adaptability and core values are proven to achieve success against the very best.

According to José Mourinho, it took him “20 years to become an overnight success”. Having spent a few days this week on the final part of my Uefa pro licence coaching course, I am beginning to appreciate what he meant when he said that. Hours in the classroom and on the pitch, as well as giving presentations to fellow students, has made me more appreciative of the hard work that goes into qualifying to be able to do a job that I don’t even know if I will one day be lucky enough to get.

Studying also gives an insight into the commitment, passion and application which someone like Mourinho has had to put into football in order to achieve the level of success he has. In a week when the world has been praising the courageous and attacking football which has taken Liverpool to the Champions League final, I have to say that I have just as much admiration and respect for the Manchester United manager as I have for Jürgen Klopp.

Mourinho brings his team to the Amex Stadium this evening for a match which is significant for both sides as we aim to secure our Premier League status and United attempt to finish the season in second place, with the added incentive of preparing for an FA Cup final against Chelsea just a couple of weeks away. Mourinho has proved himself a master of winning games in cup competitions and it’s no wonder, given his pragmatic approach to preparing for every game in a specific way.

There have been a few times this season when he has been hammered for playing so-called negative football - his tactics at Liverpool were a case in point - but criticising a coach for selecting a team and forming a gameplan to counter an opponent’s strengths is like using a mallet to crack an egg.

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The foundation for change in the game is a difference in style of coaches. Mourinho is unlike Pep Guardiola or Klopp in his philosophy, but his adaptability and core values are proven to achieve success against the very best.
Team Sky are accused of being economical with the truth over Froome’s status

Martha Kelner
Jerusalem

Team Sky have been accused of deceiving the organisers of the Giro d’Italia into handing over a reported £1.4m in appearance fees by not disclosing that their star rider Chris Froome had already failed a drug test.

According to the Giro race director, Mauro Vegni, Dave Brailsford’s team entered into negotiations over Froome’s appearance in the Giro knowing the rider had returned an adverse finding from a urine test on his way to winning the Vuelta a España in September last year.

Sky secured a hefty fee for the four-times Tour de France winner and a support team to contest the Giro, which begins today in Jerusalem, the first time the race has travelled outside Europe. But on the eve of the event, Vegni made the remarkable claim that he felt let down by Brailsford after Vegni made the remarkable claim that he felt let down by Brailsford after Brailsford flew to Italy to explain the situation. “It did express my thinking on the phone to Dave, he came immediately to Italy to meet with me,” Vegni said. “Dave himself was not pleased and he told me that in fact he did not receive the information until the end of September. But he also said to me that he was confident that this whole issue will find a solution.”

The launch of the 101st edition of the Giro took place last November, with Froome confirming his participation via a video message. The 32-year-old arrived in Israel this week confident of clinching triple crown of grand tour wins: the Tour de France, Vuelta a España, and now Giro, all in a row. But there is every chance his title could be taken away if he receives an anti-doping rule violation.

Froome is attempting to explain why a urine test submitted after the 18th stage of the Vuelta on 27 September indicated twice the permitted level of the asthma drug salbutamol. Cycling’s world governing body, the UCI, sent a letter to Team Sky and British Cycling to inform them of the failed test on 20 September. It is understood talks with Giro organisers began in the following weeks.

Vegni expressed his frustration that it had taken so long to reach a verdict. “I feel bad because of the extremely long times of the justice procedure. With the current means that are available to not have a decision made after eight months, something needs to change. We don’t even know when a decision will finally arrive.”

In a statement, Team Sky said: “The UCI process regarding Chris would normally have remained confidential. The team wanted to fully respect this outcome for the Giro. “The extent to which Froome’s participation has dominated the buildup to this race was enforced in the pre-race press conference. It took 33 minutes before any rider other than Froome or any of the other 21 teams competing here was discussed.”

“Thank you for someone who recognised that it is not just Chris Froome at the Giro,” an exasperated Vegni said. Froome’s principal rival in the next few weeks is likely to be Tom Dumoulin. The Dutch defending champion has had a tumultuous start to the season but Vegni intimated that a victory for Dumoulin would be better than if Froome triumphed in Rome on 27 May. “As organiser, I don’t really support any rider specifically, but let me add that Tom is a nice character,” Vegni said. “It’s good for cycling as a whole. Let’s say that it would be really a good outcome for the Giro.”

The mounting tensions over Froome’s presence are not the only contentious issue to plague the Giro this year. The decision to hold the opening three stages of the race in Israel has also led to the organisers being accused of “sport-washing”, using the event to distract from the rising heat of the Palestine conflict.

The team presentation yesterday evening took place on a giant pink stage in Jerusalem’s Safra Square, with smoke cannons and disco lights, introduced by the supermodel Bar Refaeli. But today, less than 100km from here, the protests on the Gaza strip which have taken place every week since 30 March will continue unabated. The Israeli military has reportedly killed 35 Palestinians and injured...
History repeats for Wild but Tanfield pulls out opening home shock

**William Fotheringham**

**Doncaster**

While Kirsten Wild of the Netherlands produced a carbon copy of her victory here two years ago in the mass finish that decided the women's race, the men's event veered a long way from the script with the shock winner, Harry Tanfield, producing headshakes in the peloton as he gave Great Britain its first stage win in four editions.

After using her experience to avoid related issues, Wild ended up in the blue Yorkshire leader's jersey but she is adamant that the uphill finish on the Cow and Calf climb above Ilkley today will not suit her and that she is only a temporary race leader: Tanfield is not a noted climber either and would probably say the same.

Wild's memories of her win in this event two years ago stood her in good stead when several frontrunners followed a motorbike when it turned left into the race vehicle diversion instead of going right at the final roundabout with 800m to go. As others dodged through cones to get back on course, Wild's team went to the front earlier than they expected, but she still sat pretty until the final crucial moment with all the sang-froid to be expected of a woman in her 15th racing season, heading for her 73rd race win.

The key instant came as South Parade veered gently right in the final 200m past the Town Fields. Here, the 2016 world champion, Amalie Dideriksen - the rider who deprived Wild of the gold medal in that year's title in Qatar - was poised to lunge through a gap to Wild's right, only to have her and that she is only a temporary race leader or her and that she is only a temporary race leader; Tanfield is not a noted climber either and would probably say the same.

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Bellevue expects Haye ‘to go down swinging’ in rematch

Jay from The Inbetweeners lightens the build-up but return to the O. Arena could be hellish for both fighters

Kevin Mitchell

Away from their ritual pre-fight show for the TV cameras at a London hotel yesterday, a more considered Tony Bellew paused to observe that, for all the insults and mind games, he expects David Haye to “go down swinging” when they meet again tomorrow night.

Bellew, a slight favourite, does not like the one-time playboy, of whom he says: “I just don’t like the look of him. I just want to punch him in the face and he wants to punch every single tooth out of my head.”

He also reckons beating Haye again will be every bit as tough as it was in March last year, “because he’s fighter at heart”.

That may have been the extent of the public respect between the Lucan lads, with Bellew, who is happy to lampoon himself as “the big, fat Scouser”, and the unusually subdued Haye as they know their return to the O. Arena could be hellish for both of them.

Bellew, two years younger at 35, capitalised on Haye’s snatched Achilles in the first fight, leaving him tangled and incapacitated on the bottom rung in the 11th round, a sight disturbing enough for Shane McGuigan, his trainer of only three fights, to throw in the towel.

Haye and McGuigan split soon afterwards and he has been training for several months with the revered Coventry thruster Salas, who guided Felix Savin Jr to the pinnacle of the amateur game.

As for their post-interview spat, when Bellew shoved Haye in the face-off – and the promoter, Eddie Hearn, had been as surprised as anyone to get involved – Haye said: “I’ve looked at the video of it and he’s got his head in my face and then he pushed me in the neck.”

“The pressure has got to him. He won’t get what he wanted from his verbal assaults, arguing over the most trivial things that have got no bearing on a boxing match. He was just saying stuff to try to wind me up. He’s a strange fella.”

Bellew, an artfully argumentative character, saw the handbaggery differently. “He just got too close to me,” he said. “He put his forehead on me and, if I had used every single tooth in the face and he in the face and he pushed me in the neck.”

Once I felt his breath on me, I had to remove him from the area. Listen, it was a shove. Don’t make a big deal out of it. The only thing he will have learned from that is, don’t get too close to me.”

They will get uncomfortably close in the ring, with a lot of unfinished business to attend to. They should have met in December but Haye fell down some stairs and injured himself for the unpromising time away from the ring in a career bedevilled by such incidents.

Bellew, whose brother-in-law had died shortly beforehand, described the year as “the worst of my life.”

So each arrives with baggage and

I want to punch him in the face and he wants to punch every single tooth out of my head.”

Cricket

Surrey snap up Kohl as he bids to tune up for Test series

All Martin

Surrey have pulled off a coup by signing Virat Kohl, the India captain and cricket’s premier all-format batsman, for the whole of June.

Kohl had originally declared some weeks ago that his interest in playing county cricket before India’s Test series in England this summer the 12 months ago will now get his wish with a four-week spell during which he will grace the likes of Beckenham, Middlesex and Sussex.

Described as “the biggest name in world cricket” by Surrey’s director of cricket, Alec Stewart, upon pronouncing of the deal yesterday, Kohi will be available to play in the club’s Royal London Cup matches during that month and three County Championship fixtures.

It is the latter, of course, that interest him most as he looks to prevent a repeat of this last outing against the Red Rocks but when, in 2014, he averaged 13.14 over five Tests as India lost 3-1 against England under the captaincy of MS Dhoni, Kohi, who will now skip India’s one-off Test versus Afghanistan in mid June, said: “It has been long a benign of mine to play county cricket. I am thankful to Alec Stewart and Surrey for allowing me the opportunity.”

Surrey have just one match at the Oval during Kohi’s stay, with a 50-over fixture at home against Glamorgan on 6 June preceded by games against Kent at Beckenham and Middlesex at Lord’s. His championship appearances will then see him versus Hampshire at the Ageas Bowl, Somerset at Guildford and Yorkshire at Scarborough.

The England head coach, Trevor Bayliss, has previously bemoaned a lack of overseas opportunities for his players in first-class cricket and will doubtless have had a wry smile upon learning that Kohi will join the likes of Sam Billings (Sussex) and Cheteshwar Pujara (Yorkshire) in getting an early tune-up for the Test series that begins in August.

Jonathan Trott, the Warwickshire and former England batsman, will remain with the county at the end of the county season. The 37-year-old was a key member of the England side who won the Ashes in Australia in 2009, and then rode to No 1 in the world the following year. He made nine Test centuries – including one on debut – and averaged 46.6 from his 52 games.

Racing

Uncharted waters with Tip Two Win have Teal all at sea

Chris Cook

Roger Teal is looking forward to the 2,000 Guineas tomorrow so much he cannot wait for it to be over.

“It’ll be nice to get the day out the way, for sure,” says the trainer, whose nerves have been untravelling since he committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win, a David among the committed to taking a shot at the race with Tip Two Win. He is still brand new to us.”

Teal’s most notable success in
Kiprop claims drug testers tampered with sample

Asbel Kiprop has suggested he tested positive for EPO because drug control officers tampered with his sample, having also demanded money from the Kenyan 1500m runner during the test.

Kiprop, a three-times world champion and 2008 Olympic gold medallist, said he would be "the last person to admit such a monstrous un-sports-like thing" as doping.

He also claimed he was told that if he confessed to taking drugs he would be "the last person to commit such an atrocious un-sports-like thing" as doping.

Referee, Alex Corbisiero, is interested in signing him.

Baseball

Red Sox and Yankees to play at London Stadium

Major League Baseball intends to announce next week the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox will play two games at the London Stadium on 29 and 30 June next year, a source told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no public announcement has been authorised.

Boston will be the home team for both of MLB's first regular-season games in Europe. The London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, scheduled a news conference for Tuesday with baseball commissioner Rob Manfred but did not announce the subject matter.

"I've never been to London, so I'm looking forward to that," the Yankees manager, Aaron Boone, said yesterday. AP

Rugby union

Foden seeks new chapter after ending Saints story

Ben Foden is to bring down the curtain on his decade-long association with Northampton to commence a "new chapter" abroad. The former England full-back, 32, is set to sign off tomorrow by making his 250th appearance for the Saints when they play Worcester at Franklin's Gardens.

Having started in professional rugby as a scrum-half at Sale, Foden developed into an attacking full-back good enough to win 44 England caps between 2009 and 2013. He scored seven Test tries, won league titles with Sale in 2006 and Northampton in 2014 and also scored a try in the 2011 European Cup final when the Saints were spectacularly overturned by Leinster in Cardiff.

His innate understanding with his former team-mate Chris Ashton was particularly fruitful and in 2014 Foden became the second player to score tries in consecutive Premiership finals.

Foden's 22 games at full back during that double-winning season as Northampton won the Challenge Cup and Premiership.

"Fodes has been a remarkable player for both Northampton Saints and England," the interim head coach, Alan Dickens, said. "We'll miss having him around Franklin's Gardens, both of MLB's first regular-season games in Europe. The London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, scheduled a news conference for Tuesday with baseball commissioner Rob Manfred but did not announce the subject matter.

I'm sure they will repay him with a huge ovation on Saturday. He has the respect of everyone here and we wish him all the best for his next step."

Foden will lead the Saints against Worcester but will not be walking away from the sport. His next move is not yet finalised but a prominent Major League Rugby franchise in the United States is understood to be interested in signing him.

One of his 250th Northampton team-mates, Alex Corbisiero, is working as a rugby analyst for the North American broadcaster NBC but Foden is not tempted to join him and hang up his boots just yet.

"I still feel fit and hungry for competitive rugby and, while now is the time to move on, I am really excited for what the next chapter holds in store for me," he said.
Klopp’s thrash-metal style hits a chord with English ideal of pace and power

According to Benjamin Disraeli Rome symbolises the ideal of conquest. Not quite yet, it doesn’t. Liverpool may have earned their moments of unbound joy inside the Stadio Olimpico on Wednesday, capped by a lovely interlude as Jürgen Klopp went bowling through the security lines to exchange a little joyful energy with the Liverpool fans, waving his arms like a drunken dad at Christmas, all goofy warmth and unaffected pleasure in a shared achievement.

But as Klopp pointed out, nothing has been settled. The run to the final has had its memorable subplots. From James Milner’s elevation to the status, on the season’s stats, of most creative player in the history of modern European football. To the sustained excellence of Andy Robertson. To the spectacle of players as diverse as Loris Karius and Ragnar Klavan blocking it out en route to a Champions League final.

Still, no permanent mark has been made and certainly Real Madrid will present a different kind of obstacle. For the first time this season Liverpool face a meeting with European aristocracy. Deep down Real will see them as extras in this show, a disposable piece of ballast, there to provide a backdrop to the imperial parade.

Yet for all that it is perhaps time to park thoughts of Kiev and wallow just a little in the moment, because Klopp is wrong in one sense. Something significant has been achieved. First for Klopp himself; and second for English football, so angst-ridden in its endless search for things such as identity and purpose, for the right DNA, the right borrowed suit of clothes.

Yes, it’s time to talk about Jürgen and about us. Man is never so manly as when he feels deeply and acts boldly. That was also Disraeli but it could at a pinch be a Klopp-ism, just without the guffaws and the swearing and the slang, a Victorian translation of one of those asides tossed into his rambling late-night press conferences.

Liverpool have been down this road but the boldness, the deep feeling of this team, is Klopp’s own work. This is a manager who has done that rare thing of rebuilding a team entirely in his own image in the space of two years and eight months. Klopp signed eight of the Liverpool players on the pitch in Rome and gave another his professional debut. There is nothing in this team that isn’t basted in his juices. Liverpool lost their best (inherited) player in January and still got better on the back of it - got a new best player, a better best player.

Klopp has always been a systems manager. He remains wedded to his founding revelation at Mainz that the right tactics implemented correctly can beat better players.

This is the other big thing about this Liverpool team in a Champions League final. As Emlyn Hughes once said: “The greatest good you can do for another is not to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.” Actually that was also Disraeli but it

Creating a German and led by an Egyptian genius, Liverpool are oddly indigenous in their style

Barney Ronay

Road to Kiev
How Liverpool and Real Madrid reached the final

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Created by a German
and led by an Egyptian
 genius, Liverpool are oddly
 indigenous in their style

Barney Ronay

According to Benjamin
Disraeli Rome symbolises the ideal
of conquest. Not quite yet, it doesn’t.

A
Only one thing is assured for the final in Kiev — it will be chaos

Real Madrid may be cruising for a bruising but Liverpool cannot be trusted either

Jonathan Wilson

There was a point on Tuesday night when the thought occurred that this Real Madrid are like Brazil at the 2014 World Cup, a gifted but complacent side who could be sleepwalking towards a hammering.

Marcelo’s “We are Real Madrid” comment, and the sense of entitlement it implied, suggested he had learned nothing from the humiliation of Belo Horizonte. But then came Liverpool’s anxiety-ridden progress on Wednesday and the realisation that even after the improvements of the past four months, they still cannot be trusted. Either side could score six in Kiev; both may. Nobody can control games any more.

It remains possible that Liverpool will simply overwhelm Real. An ageing Bayern Munich seemed to have a physical edge over them and Juventus certainly did; Juventus were outmatched by Tottenham in the last 16 and Liverpool are at least their equals in terms of pace, power and aggression. Premier League teams have underperformed yet again in Europe this season but there has been a distinct sense that their football is played at a higher tempo than elsewhere.

The thought of Sadio Mané running at Lucas Vázquez (if Dani Carvajal fails at right-back) may have crossed the mind of mining that source, of exploring the possibilities. That is has been a distinct sense that their front line is a battle that could go either way. Both late on at Anfield, after the reversion to 4-3-3, and throughout Wednesday’s second leg, Real caused problems by getting in behind the full-backs, Trent Alexander-Arnold in particular. The 19-year-old had an uncomfortable night at the Stadio Olimpico but that was in part a result of him being left isolated by the lack of support he received from Salah, itself presumably a deliberate ploy to have the Egyptian stay high up the pitch to try to exploit the space left when Aleksandar Kolarov advanced.

A similar calculation is likely in the final. Even Marcelo is such an in-match full-back; Jürgen Klopp may decide to try to exploit the space left when he does the same thing good and there is not negativity.

We honestly believe we can beat Real, says Mané

Andy Hunter

Sadio Mané and Dejan Lovren have encapsulated the belief soaring through Liverpool by insisting Real Madrid hold no fear in the Champions League final. And the 12-times winners should be the team approaching the Kiev final with trepidation.

“Why should we fear them?” asked Lovren. “They should fear us. They are quite confident but we don’t care for that – we are focused on our job.”

Mané expanded on the confidence that Liverpool possess under Klopp. “We honestly believe we can beat them,” the Senegal striker, said.

Mané can say at this moment we do have a lot of respect for Madrid, they are one of the best teams in the world, but we are Liverpool – we are strong and we can beat any team in the world. We believe that... So we believe we can go there and beat them. We are going to go there and fight for the fans, for the club, fight without fear and win the final. We have the players. We can score goals, we have shown that and there is nothing to be afraid of for us.”

Mané led the celebrations in front of Liverpool’s 5,000 supporters following a tense finale in which Roma came within a goal of taking the semi-final to extra time. The 26-year-old said: “This is one of my greatest moments. I am very proud of what this team has achieved. Everybody was dancing like crazy. Everybody was so happy, dancing together, we enjoyed the moment together. It was special to be in that dressing room, such an incredible moment.”

Liverpool have reached three finals since Klopp replaced Brendan Rodgers as manager in October 2015: the League Cup and Europa League in his first campaign and now Europe’s elite competition in his third. Having lost the first two, and his past five finals in total, the Liverpool manager has backed his players to break that sequence against Zinédine Zidane’s reigning champions.

Lovren insists the team have also regained their pride under the German, irrespective of the outcome in Kiev. “He has changed the mentality, how we are playing, things are more positive now. Even when we sometimes don’t play good he always finds something good and there is not negativity.

“It is not accidental that he already reached the final of the Champions League in 2012 against Dortmund. He has given the club pride back. Everyone feels that. Everyone should be proud we have a manager like him.”

Liverpool fans had five English players to cheer at various times against Roma at the Stadio Olimpico

Friday 4 May 2018 The Guardian

Captures Klopp’s potential to affect English football more widely.

Real are the opponents in this sense. Liverpool’s 4-0 defeat of pre-Ronaldo Madrid in March 2009 is an overhead staging point in the modern history of European club football. It was after seeing their team physically overpowered by Gerrard and Mascherano, Xavi and Carragher (and also Babel, Spearing and Dosena) that Real made a slight change in their mental style, and are working hard to match the power of the Premier League. That summer 13 players left. Overlooked were the central midfield of Xabi Alonso and Álvaro Arbeloa.

That hat Premier League intensity had revealed something to Real. The hoper is that Klopp’s example may do something similar for English football. Like it or not Liverpool are deeply Premier League, oddly indigenous in their style, not recognisable by their judgment. For all the brilliance of Manchester City, the Pep Guardiola syndrome is somehow less or no more valid, but with its own fascinations and contrasts.

Whereas Liverpool’s hard-pressing, chronic physicality just feels like a good fit with the strangely persistent tonality of the game in this country, the way qualities such as pace and power still emerge even through the prism of Premier League cosmopolitanism.

Perhaps this idea of shared identity should not matter: football is a global, borderless entity now, existing only in that square of green. But the notion of different footballing cultures, of an English way to Klopp, who has spoken in these pages of the benefits of mining that source, of exploring its deep roots. In Rome there were five English players on the pitch at various times and at its most intense the Klopp-thick-metal-style just feels like it should be English.

Before the quarter-final knock-out Liverpool had called on their stopping problems and the kudos of 4-1-3-2, which clearly is a long-ball team, which clearly is not only would it not put direct pressure on the full-backs, focusing, them. At least, to engage in a game of chicken every time they ventured forward, it would cease control of midfield to Liverpool, who would have three men in the middle against two.

Zinédine Zidane may opt for the 4-3-3 he deployed in the Champions League this season at Borussia Dortmund in the group stage and Bayern in the semi-final, but although Real won both fixtures they were defensively convincing in neither. It may be, then, that Zidane prefers 4-3-2-1 probably with Isco operating behind Cristiano Ronaldo, who could pull left to press against Alexander-Arnold, and Karim Benzema.

That would, admittedly, give Andy Robben a certain freedom on the left, a particular issue if Carvajal is not back or if he is not fully fit, but it would threaten Liverpool in another area where they have looked vulnerable – at the back of midfield. The problem of their highly mobile and aggressive their counter attacks, usually so fluent, begin to look dour and indecisive in the edge of the box.

Ronaldo and Benzema will do much with the pace and conviction they showed in the first half of the first leg against Manchester City or the final 15 minutes of the first half against Roma at Anfield, they could blow Real Madrid away. But they do have defensive vulnerabilities and Real, as Marcelo noted, have a habit of winning games they have in no way controlled. Depending on the progress of Carvalhal’s injury, Real may have a weakness at right-back.

Liverpool should offer more of a threat on the flanks. They certainly have a physical advantage. If they can play with the pace and conviction they showed they should have everything their way.

We are focused on our job. “Why should we fear them?” asked Mané. “They should fear us. They are quite confident but we don’t care for that – we are focused on our job.”
Cooper’s under-17s ready for Europe after 2017 vintage ruled the world

Jamie Jackson

Steve Cooper, the England Under-17 coach who masterminded the World Cup triumph in October, believes his team’s European Championship favourites tag should be embraced.

England’s campaign starts today against Israel at Chesterfield’s Proact Stadium, with Switzerland and Italy the other Group A sides.

Cooper’s side joined Paul Simpson’s under-20s by becoming world champions last year, with a 5-2 win against Spain in India. Yet Manchester City’s golden ball winner Phil Foden and Liverpool’s eight-goal golden boot winner Rhian Brewster are now - along with all players born in 2000 - too old.

Cooper says: “This is a different under-17 group to the one that won in India - boys born in 2001 - so they’re very much on their own journey on this international stage. We have all teams doing so well in last 12 months, with World Cup wins for the 17s and 20s, and the u19s becoming European champions, too, we know the landscape has changed a little with expectation.

“So we need to thrive on it but by the same time focus on our work. We want to be successful in every event we enter but we’re also building for the future. The aim of our work is to produce players for a senior winning England team.”

As the hosts, England, who are based at the tournament hub, St George’s Park, did not have to qualify, so the 38-year-old arranged bespoke preparation.

In a November friendly less than two weeks after England’s World Cup triumph, they defeated Portugal 3-2, before 2-1 victories over Russia and Germany in the buildup to February’s Alpine Games, where they were captained by Manchester United’s Jimmy Garner and City’s Tommy Doyle. England lost 4-0 to Portugal, drew 1-1 with Germany - the goal scored by Bobby Duncan, who is Steven Gerrard’s cousin - and defeated the Netherlands 2-0. Their last two matches before the Euros were against Brazil in Spain, losing 1-0 and drawing 1-1.

Cooper’s, whose team against Israel may feature Fulham’s Luke Ashby-Hammond in goal, Doyle in midfield, United’s Mason Greenwood at No 10 and Duncan at centre-forward, says: “We’ve had a different kind of programme and have tried to arrange the most demanding games possible. There’s been some good and not so good results and performances. We’ve managed to look at a lot of players this season, different now as we’re in tournament mode.”

After Israel, England face Italy in Walsall in the final before closing the group phase against Switzerland in Rotherham on Thursday.

Cooper says: “The beauty of the under-17s is that you don’t quite know what you’re playing against and sometimes don’t know what you’ll get from your own boys at these tournaments because it’s their first experience of the Uefa finals.

“Israel are a really good team - we’ve studied them closely. Some people may look at the fixture and think it’s going to be straightforward but it’ll be far from it. They qualified comprehensively in a tough group and we’ll be showing them maximum respect.”

Bailly left out so others can grab World Cup spot, says Mourinho

Paul Wilson

José Mourinho has revealed why Eric Bailly has not featured since the Manchester derby a month ago but Mourinho denied reports of a rift or possible sale.

“There is no situation, Eric is fine,” the manager said. “If I have to make an emotional choice then Eric is the one I am not going to help. The other four are all fighting for a place.”

United are at Brighton tonight with the home side knowing a victory would make Premier League survival certain, though Mourinho believes Chris Hughton’s side have already done enough.

“Chris has done a very good job and all he needs to do is to turn it into an amazing job so is for safety to be mathematically confirmed,” he said. “I think Brighton have enough points already.”

Mourinho has the opportunity to give Anthony Martial or Marcus Rashford a rare start, because Romelu Lukaku is in Belgium for treatment on an ankle injury in an injury be fit to play for the FA Cup final on May 19. “They have had limited opportunities because Romelu has been playing so well but I trust them both,” he said.

Martial is one of several players at United who may be prepared to move in search of more playing time, though Mourinho insisted he wants to keep hold of all his squad. “I am not recommending we sell anyone. Marouane Fellaini may decide to leave but he knows we want him to stay. He has an offer on the table that is better than the one he had before.”

Mourinho would not confirm who is his new assistant. “Rui Faria has been in touch with Arsenal, though he would not stand in Faria’s way if an opportunity came along. “Afer 18 years he is more than my assistant, he is my friend. If the chance of a big job arises I will try to help him.”

Hodgson fears exit of Ward and Cabaye

Dominic Fifield

Crystal Palace are to hold talks with Yohan Cabaye and Joel Ward next week to clarify their plans for the future, with Roy Hodgson expecting to lose the experienced pair under freedom of contract this summer.

Palace go into tomorrow’s game at Stoke six points clear of the relegation places and with thoughts turning to next season. Talks with five players whose deals expire on July 1 have been on hold while the club were under the threat of relegation but the sporting director, Doug Freeemed, will meet those concerned next week.

As it stands, Cabaye and Ward will depart. Cabaye has proved a key performer under Hodgson but would need to accept a cut to his £100,000-a-week salary to extend his stay. Marseille have been credited with an interest.

“We need to get our preparation and recruitment right because we are going to lose some very good players at the end of this season,” Hodgson said.

“Then we are not going to be hard work in the coming days for myself and Doug Freedman.

“There is no doubt we are losing players, not least [the loanees] Ruben Loftus-Cheek and Tim Fosu-Mensah, quite apart from anyone who might take the free role for other reasons.”

Hodgson would expect to recruit replacements to ensure his 25-man squad is filled. The Spanish midfielder Vicente Guaita is joining from Getafe, and Palace have looked at Fulham’s Ryan Babel and the Anduríl midfielder Leander Dendoncker.

The manager said he was “fairly confident” Christian Benteke would be retained, despite a disappointing season, and stressed he saw his own future at the club next term.
Palace is going to be a war we must win, says Shaqiri

Stuart James

Xherdan Shaqiri will hold talks with Stoke City about his future in the summer regardless of whether they retain their Premier League status, with the Switzerland forward determined to do everything in his power to help the club survive this season but honest enough to admit that fighting relegation is not what he signed up for when he joined from Internazionale.

Speaking in the lead-up to the critical home match against Crystal Palace tomorrow, Shaqiri sounded totally committed in the short term as he stressed the need for “11 warriors on the pitch” for a game that Stoke must win to have any chance of avoiding the drop, yet there was also no escaping his sense of disappointment at the way things have turned out at the club he joined three years ago for £20m.

“I am as frustrated as everyone, I think because I came here for different ambitions, not to play for relegation,” Shaqiri said. “But sometimes at a club something goes wrong and you have to stand up and try to do the best.

“Of course they need to do a lot of new things in the club. But the most important thing is to stay up with this club and then you can rebuild.”

Asked what he did expect when he signed for Stoke, the 26-year-old replied: “I didn’t expect to go to the Champions League, or to be champions, but at least to see the club going forward, that was for me the most important thing. When I came here, I wanted to do more than they are at the moment, every year getting better and better and better. It was not [to be] like this and it’s always difficult to say why.

“When I came here, the coach [Mark Hughes] called me and said ‘I want you here’, that he wanted to improve a team that would play maybe for Europe - maybe like Burnley now, they’re going for sixth or seventh place, which is surprising. But it never happened here. It’s sometimes difficult to accept but I give everything to my club, I have a long contract that I signed here, so I try to give a performance every weekend to help my team-mates achieve something.”

Shaqiri, who is Stoke’s leading scorer this season with seven Premier League goals, has two years remaining on his current deal and it seems like a foregone conclusion that the former Bayern Munich winger will move on in the event of relegation.

“Everybody knows I’m a player who wants to play at the highest level, that’s pretty normal,” Shaqiri said. “But I hope we are going to end this well, that we stay up, then we will sit down with the club.”

Shaqiri’s aspirations when he arrived were fuelled by the idea that Hughes was trying to take Stoke in a much more exciting direction and, in fairness, there were moments when that plan had real substance. The 2-0 victory against Manchester City in December 2015 springs to mind, when Shaqiri starred alongside Marko Arnautovic and Bojan Krkic in a thrilling attacking trident that wreaked havoc against Manuel Pellegrini’s side. Yet the fun only lasted so long and there were signs that Stoke were losing their way long before the start of this season.

With so much at stake still, Shaqiri is reluctant to wade into the reasons for the club’s decline but poor recruitment is clearly at the heart of the matter, in particular up front, where the absence of a regular goalscorer has been a huge problem. “Everybody knows at the club what was wrong, so they’re going to look at everything at the end of the season,” Shaqiri said. “There’s no time here to do that now, to go through each point.

“People know the biggest thing that happened in this club. There have been a lot of transfers that they thought were going to help us - and they were good transfers - but something went wrong.”

The damage is not yet terminal as far as Stoke’s survival prospects are concerned but, realistically, they will need to beat Palace and then win at Swansea on the final day to have any chance of avoiding relegation. Shaqiri is up for the challenge.

“I’m going to try everything and give my best,” he said. “Sometimes you have to go to war. Crystal Palace is going to be like this - it’s a war we have to win for sure. We need 11 warriors on the pitch who are going to beat their opponent.”

Rangers confident of locking down Gerrard manager deal

Rangers are hoping to push through a deal for Steven Gerrard to become their manager in the coming days.

Brox sources were increasingly confident of finalising a deal after the former Liverpool captain confirmed on Tuesday that he had held “positive” initial talks with the Glasgow club and would revisit them yesterday.

Gerrard’s former team-mate Danny Murphy had earlier reported that the 37-year-old was looking for firm assurances about the finances available.

The prospect of a global name like Steven Gerrard coming into the Scottish game can only be seen as a good thing, it would be a box-office name,” the Aberdeen manager, Derek McInnes, said. “That can only help the Scottish game. I’m sure.”

Scotland’s manager, Alex McLeish, moreover, who won seven trophies in five and a half seasons at Brox, is adamant that the country needs a strong Rangers. “I think the Scottish game is looking for a strong Rangers team,” he said. “We need that. I’m sure Celtic would relish a good challenge. There’s all sorts of talk about a new manager and I’m sure he will want to come mob-handed in terms of money to spend.”

Gerrard’s only coaching experience is with Liverpool Under-18s but McLeish is an example of someone who made an impact managing in Scotland as a young rookie. The former Aberdeen defender led Motherwell to second place in the league in his first campaign as a player-manager in 1994-95. The team then slid down the table as he discovered how crucial it was to recruit well.

Gerrard is said to be seeking guarantees over available funds, but Rangers have received loans totalling about £20m to cover transfer fees and a planned share issue is yet to materialise.

McLeish said: “My first season we were second behind Rangers. To think we could be above one of the Old Firm at the end of the season was quite astonishing and I thought: ‘This manager lark is a doddle.’ And then I found out when we had to get new recruits, because we lost about seven or eight of that special team.

“That’s when you realise how important recruitment is.”

Steven Gerrard has asked for firm guarantees about finances available
Costa escapes Arsenal’s clutches to deny Wenger

For Arsène Wenger, there will be no happy ending. Diego Simeone’s team are, as promised, on their way to the Europa League final and Wenger’s long goodbye will reach its climax without the final chapter he desperately wanted to be written into the story.

All that is left now is Sunday’s game against Burnley – his farewell to the Emirates – and the trip to Huddersfield the following weekend and perhaps it is typical of Arsenal’s decline since his peak years that it should end this way. Arsenal came up short, as they often do against elite opposition, and Atlético were too worldly for them once Diego Costa had given the home side a 2-1 aggregate lead late in the first half.

This was Atlético’s 12th successive match at this stadium when they have not conceded a goal – an incredible run that goes back to 20 January and covers 1,097 minutes in play – and that parsimonious defending, ultimately, was the difference between the two sides over the two legs. Atlético were brilliantly efficient at the back and, unfortunately for Wenger, the same is rarely said of his team.

On top of everything else Arsenal also lost Laurent Koscielny to injury that meant they had to play all but the opening seven minutes without their captain. Koscielny, who has been nursing a long-standing achilles problem, went down in such a way the seriousness of the situation immediately became apparent. He was in distress, pounding the turf in agony and frustration, and it was difficult not to think there will be ramifications for France, too. Koscielny was supposed to retire from international football after the World Cup; instead, his involvement in Russia looks doubtful.

For Arsenal, that meant an unexpected appearance for Calum Chambers to fill in alongside Shkodran Mustafi with the task of trying to subdue Diego Costa and Antoine Griezmann. That was never going to be straightforward and the two Atlético forwards combined brilliantly at the end of the first half, in the time added on for Koscielny’s four minutes of treatment, to give Diego Simeone’s team the lead.

The goal showed the qualities of both players. Griezmann’s pass was beautifully weighted and once Costa had got behind Héctor Bellerín it was always going to be difficult for the Arsenal right-back to make up for his positional error. Bellerín might have been faster but Costa was stronger, shielding the ball with his body while expertly holding out an arm to keep his opponent a safe distance away. David Ospina, who had a nervous opening 45 minutes, advanced from his line and Costa swept the ball past Arsenal’s goalkeeper with a confident left-foot finish.

Until the point the Arsenal supporters, positioned in the most vertiginous levels of this sweeping new-build stadium, must have been pleasantly surprised by the way their team had been playing. All the same, they had a lot of the ball on the edge of the Atlético pen.

**Atlético Madrid**

Costa 1

**Arsenal**

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And here’s one for old times’ sake

Diego Costa hammers in Atlético Madrid’s goal despite the attentions of Héctor Bellerín

MATT MCNULTY/JMP/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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When Atlético Madrid were knocked out of the Champions League their captain, Gabi Fernández, admitted: ‘Right now, the Europa League looks shit to us’, but it feels mighty good to them now.

Another final awaits, another trophy, and even if this was a club that had felt like it left Europe’s other competition behind, it is one for which they will reach. No one here doubts that a trophy, any trophy, matters. They need only ask Fernando Torres, playing out his final weeks at a club he had joined two decades ago - back when they were a byword for failure and crisis.

Torres left, of course. He became a World Cup winner, but the only title he won with Atlético was the second division. By the time he retired, everything had changed. Atlético used to lose such games as this, now, they held on to Diego Costa’s opening goal as Arsenal pressed. Atlético became a side that know how to resist and in Jan Oblak they now have a goalkeeper among Europe’s best. No one had scored here before January, Games one after another, Arsenal tried, but could not prevent that result from standing. And so here Atlético are, in their fourth European final in seven years.

As for Torres, this could be his first title with his club and he will hope to appear in Lyon. It would be their sixth with Diego Simeone. There have also been two Champions League finals. This year, they were denied a third in Europe’s major competition and there were regrets when Chelsea and Roma progressed ahead of them, but this is still history. It’s hope, too.

Atlético are in the final of a competition they won in 2012, their first, the competition they won in 2012, history. It is hope, too.

Still, though, Arsenal struggled to create a clear chance. There was only one goal in it but the onslaught that might have been anticipated late on never materialised and it was a feeble one. Arsenal struggled to score here.

It is their first season at the Estadio Metropolitano, and this felt like its first big night. That, certainly, is what they wanted, how they tried to build this. This did not feel like a home yet, this semi would be a new era and in a new home, which is why it felt like there was even more than a place in the final there, was a place in their own, too.

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Arsène Wenger shows his frustration as Arsenal strive to create an opening in Madrid

Catherine Hill/ Getty Images

A club reborn under Simeone and grateful for opportunity to win any trophy they can

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**Costa ends Wenger’s dream**

Atlético brush aside Arsenal to ruin Arsène’s perfect send-off

**Match report**

Daniel Taylor

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Liverpool’s legacy

How Klopp moulded his side of European also-rans into team on cusp of glory

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Team Sky under fire once more at Giro start

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The foundation for change in the game is a difference in the style of coaches **Liam Rosenior** explains why pragmatism can trump ideology