A defiant John Bercow has vowed to continue in office, despite a number of bullying and intimidation allegations.

Mr Bercow has been embroiled in a bullying scandal after he was accused of “objecting to the security of the House of Lords and played a significant part in ceremonial occasions. When planning one monarchical occasion, the Speaker made a highly unusual intervention into the specific claims about his behaviour this week. The Prime minister’s spokesman said that the allegations were “concerning” and must be investigated.

A spokesman for Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Labour party, said that the allegations were “concerning” and must be investigated.

Mr Bercow, a shadow minister under Michael Howard and Iain Duncan Smith, is far more popular among opposition MPs than Conservatives, but nevertheless believes that he has sufficient support on the government benches to remain in place.

Theresa May made a highly unusual statement on Wednesday that Mr Bercow’s “objectionable” treatment of subordinates was not discovered until this January. The true national problem was a purely local issue that had been dismissed as a local issue.

It emerged yesterday, however, that Public Health England’s regional teams investigated concerns last year from hospitals in London and the West Midlands that women aged 50 were not being invited for checks. The agency says it was told by Hitachi, which is in charge of breast cancer screening, that 450,000 women had been raising concerns about the NHS’s mishandling of their mammograms. Hospitals warned public health chiefs that the problem was not discovered until this January.

Separately, The Times has learnt that women had been raising concerns themselves years earlier. One GP in Leeds said he recalled “a spate of warnings” from people who weren’t checked. The omissions were down to a computer glitch that was not spotted for nine years.

It was a purely local issue that had been dismissed as a local issue. Hospitals warned public health chiefs that the problem was not discovered until this January.

Separately, The Times has learnt that women had been raising concerns themselves years earlier. One GP in Leeds said he recalled “a spate of warnings” from people who weren’t checked. The omissions were down to a computer glitch that was not spotted for nine years.
Trump insisted the 2016 US election promotion. He has been accused of racism and discrimination against minority employees seeking promotion. Page 4

More than 70 Home Office workers are being interviewed or have launched legal action against the government, it was disclosed yesterday. Page 30

The Home Office has launched an investigation into the 2015 smear campaign against him. Mr Bercow denies bullying Mr Sinclair. He assuredly denies bullying Mr Sinclair. Mr Bercow denies bullying her. Arsenio Wenger’s hopes of finishing on a high were killed off last month, when Arsenal were eliminated from the FA Cup by the 4-3 scoreline, 2-1 in the FA Cup against the 3-0 defeat away. Page 70-72

Baroness Morgan of Drefelin, chief executive of the charity Breast Cancer Now, said: “We urgently need to stop people dying from breast cancer.”

The Brexit warning is one of a number that have come from MPs over the past week. Sir Richard and Professor Gwythian Prins, a former adviser to the Prime Minister, believe ministers were naive ever to believe they could force the EU to allow the UK full access to the critical system.

They will have grasped that the UK’s departure means that a considerable proportion of the expertise and several ground stations will be lost from the project... so they need to trap the UK R&D web’s so that after Brexit we are powerless, but still contributing money and the essential skills the EU needs. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

There’s no place like home. As reported by MPs, the government is considering the use of resources. Irish veto threat, page 8

Only a million fewer people are moving house every year since the 1970s as an ageing population occupies larger homes for longer and younger households struggle to get on the property ladder.

Toilet drugs are to be sought in the sewage network, according to its cultural view of the world.

Toilet drugs are to be sought in the sewage network, according to its cultural view of the world.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.

The government is not sure of the details yet, but the concept is to freeze the signal, without access to the critical system. Since so much of Galileo is British, the UK might do as the prime minister is reported to be considering instead of selling off valuable assets and building a new system. We strongly encourage her to take this prudent step in the interests of our national security.
Burglar laid to rest in hail of obscenities and punches

Will Humphries

At first glance the funeral cortège appeared not unlike thousands of others, but the buzz of a police helicopter overhead and the presence of uniformed officers gave some indication that this would not be a typical send-off.

The funeral of Henry Vincent, the career criminal fatally stabbed during the burglary of a pensioner’s home in southeast London, began relatively sombrely but ended with rocks thrown by mourners, police charging a violent mob of hooded youths, and an arrest.

Vincent’s body had been taken from his mother’s home in Swanley, Kent, in a silver Mercedes hearse. It was followed by eight black Mercedes limousines.

Mourners wound down the windows sticking up two fingers and shouting obscenities at journalists.

Floral tributes on the top of the cars included a car towing a caravan and the message “Love You Cuz.” A flatbed truck followed with numerous other flower arrangements, including one in the shape of a bottle of vodka.

The Vincents are a well-known Traveller family in the area. Vincent’s father Henry Sr, 59, his uncle David Sr, 50, and cousin David, 26, are all convicted fraudsters.

Vincent, 37, died on the pavement outside the home of Richard Osborn-Brooks, 78, and his vulnerable wife, Maureen, 76, on April 4 in Hither Green after he and an accomplice had broken in armed with screwdrivers. Mr Osborn-Brooks was arrested on suspicion of murder before being released without charge.

The procession made the four-mile journey to St Mary’s church in the nearby town of Saint Mary Cray. Uniformed officers were stationed along the route.

Before the service, a mob of youths in hoods ran at a group of reporters standing near by, throwing eggs and rocks. A riot van and a group of police officers surged towards the mob. After the incident was calmed the 30-minute service went ahead and was attended by about 100 family and friends.

Afterwards, two groups of about 40 mourners charged towards a group of journalists. One press photographer was punched in the face and a teenager was pinned to the ground and later arrested on suspicion of assault.

Vincent’s body was taken to the cemetery opposite his family’s Traveller site for burial.

A police sergeant told The Times they would have 80 officers in the area for the evening, when a wake was expected to be held. Some pubs near by closed their doors as a precaution.
Home Office is accused of racism by own staff

Billy Kenber Investigations Reporter

Dozens of Home Office staff have accused the department of racial discrimination as it prepares for a case in which Theresa May’s national security adviser will be a high-profile defendant.

Mark Sedwill, a former Home Office permanent secretary, is named as one of the defendants in a race discrimination claim brought by Amjed Ramzan, who alleges that he was treated unfairly in an interview process, including by having his scores reduced while those of white candidates were increased.

The Network, an internal advocacy group for ethnic minority staff, claims the case is just the “tip of the iceberg” in a culture of discrimination against ethnic minority employees seeking promotion. More than 40 have signed a petition calling for a fresh internal investigation into the case.

Mr Ramzan’s employment tribunal case, which is listed for an eight-day hearing in July, dates back to 2014, when Theresa May was home secretary. The allegations of racial discrimination will add to the challenges faced by Sajid Javid, the first home secretary from an ethnic minority background, who took over the job this week.

Figures disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that six ethnic minority employees at the department’s Sheffield offices, where Mr Ramzan was based, were promoted between 2013 and 2016. In two years, 2014 and 2015, no ethnic minority employees were promoted. Over the same period, 77 white Home Office employees in Sheffield received promotions.

Mr Ramzan, 47, who is British Asian and Muslim, was working as a junior manager and had been at the Home Office for 12 years when he applied for promotion to middle management in 2014. He was one of 11 people given an interview and several posts were filled. After he was unsuccessful, Mr Ramzan lodged an internal grievance, complaining that he had been judged against the criteria for roles several grades higher than the one he was applying for and that his scores had been changed from sixes and sevens to threes and fours.

He also raised concerns that other candidates had an unfair advantage because they were known by those interviewing for the promotion.

Mr Ramzan wrote in a grievance form that “it is no coincidence that BME [black and ethnic minority] staff struggle with career progression faced with these glass ceilings”. An internal investigation found no evidence that he had been treated differently because of his ethnic background.

He also wrote to Mr Sedwill, who was the Home Office’s “race champion”. However, it is understood that Mr Sedwill did not meet Mr Ramzan and did not commission an investigation into his case. Mr Ramzan filed a race discrimination case in late 2016.

The Home Office denies that he suffered any kind of discrimination. A spokesman said it would be “inappropriate to comment on ongoing legal proceedings”.

Nut allergy test is cheap and accurate

A new blood test could make it much easier and cheaper to identify children with peanut allergies.

The test looks for biomarkers released by mast cells, a type of white blood cell. In a study involving 147 children, the mast activation test made a correct diagnosis 99 per cent of the time. At present, peanut allergy is confirmed using an unreliable skin-prick test and time-consuming “oral food challenge” (OFC), in which the patient is fed increasingly large doses of peanut.

The new test is five times cheaper than an OFC and could be a secondary tool when skin-prick tests are inconclusive. Alexandra Santos, a Medical Research Council scientist at King’s College London, said: “The current tests are not ideal. If we relied on them alone, we’d be overdiagnosing food allergies. Only 22 per cent of school-aged children in the UK with a positive test to peanuts are actually allergic.”

“The new test is specific in confirming the diagnosis, so when it’s positive, we can be very sure it means allergy. We would reduce by two thirds the number of expensive, stressful oral food challenges conducted.”

Between 5 and 8 per cent of UK children have a food allergy, with up to one in five being allergic to peanuts. Symptoms such as itching, stomach cramps and constriction of the throat are caused by proteins interacting with an antibody, immunoglobulin e (IgE).

Skin-prick tests measure the presence of IgE antibodies. The new test focuses on mast cells that are activated by IgE in blood plasma. “We are adapting this test to other foods, such as milk, eggs, sesame and tree nuts,” Dr Santos said. The study is reported in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

Fast food may cut chances of conceiving

Women who eat less fruit and more fast food take longer to get pregnant, a study has suggested.

Women who ate fruit less than four times in the month before conception took about two weeks longer to conceive than those who ate fruit twice a day. Those who never or rarely ate fast food conceived nearly a month sooner than women who ate fast food at least four times a week.

The researchers found that although fruit and fast foods affected the time it took women to get pregnant, eating green leafy vegetables or fish did not.

The study, published in Human Reproduction, asked 5,958 women about their diets. The women, who were from the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, had not had babies before.

Eight per cent of the participants were considered infertile, defined as taking longer than a year to conceive, and 39 per cent conceived within a month. For the women with the lowest intake of fruit, the risk of infertility increased from 8 to 12 per cent, and in those who ate fast food four or more times a week, it rose from 8 to 16 per cent.

Claire Roberts, of the University of Adelaide, who led the study, said: “Eating a good quality diet that includes fruit, and minimizing fast food consumption, improves fertility and reduces the time it takes to get pregnant.”
Twitter warns all its 300m users to change passwords

Mark Bridge Technology Correspondent

Yesterday’s World Password Day, an annual PR stunt from Intel, took on unexpected relevance after Twitter asked all of its 336 million users to change their passwords, admitting that a “bug” had left them exposed.

Twitter passwords would normally be stored only in encrypted form but the company said yesterday that due to an oversight they had been kept in plain text in an internal log. This would have left them freely accessible to at least some Twitter employees and more vulnerable to external hackers.

The microblogging site insisted that it was recommending that users change their passwords only out of an “abundance of caution” due to the company’s sense of social responsibility. It said that there was no evidence or indication that passwords had been obtained or misused by hackers.

Anyone who did obtain those passwords would have gained access to personal data of Twitter users, including a log of their Twitter activity, and the ability to post from their accounts. Because people often use the same password and email address for multiple online services, anyone obtaining the data could have been able to hack people’s accounts on other sites.

The failure of Twitter to safeguard its users’ data adequately comes after Facebook came under fire for failing to protect the personal information of nearly 90 million people, which was obtained by Cambridge Analytica, the now defunct consultancy accused of electoral meddling.

Parag Agrawal, Twitter’s chief technology officer, tweeted: “We are sharing this information to help people make an informed decision about their account security. We didn’t have to, but it’s the right thing to do.”

This prompted one user of the site to comment: “Twitter’s CTO is acting like they’re doing us a favour by letting us know that Twitter wasn’t securely storing our passwords.”

In a blog post, Mr Agrawal said: “We recognise and appreciate the trust you place in us, and are committed to earning that trust every day.”

Normally when a user sets a password, the company uses encryption technology that masks it so that no employee can view it. This also makes it far more difficult for any hackers to access the data in the event of a breach. However, Twitter last night admitted that it had identified a “bug that stored passwords unmasked in an internal log”.

A spokesman added: “We have fixed the bug, and our investigation shows no indication of breach or misuse by anyone. Out of an abundance of caution, we ask that you consider changing your password on all services where you’ve used this password. You can change your Twitter password any time by going to the password settings page.”

He said: “We found this error ourselves, removed the passwords, and are implementing plans to prevent this bug from happening again.

Twitter’s embarrassment comes shortly before the implementation of stricter data laws, the general data protection regulation (GDPR), on May 25. The rules will hold companies to higher standards of data protection in the UK and across the European Union, introducing fines of up to €20 million or 4 per cent of global turnover.

Facebook, which has been heavily criticised by politicians for its failure to protect users’ data, has fired an employee who was abusing his access to internal Facebook data to “stalk” a woman who he was speaking to on the dating app Tinder. A spokesman said yesterday that the employee had been sacked immediately after his activities were discovered.

Maker goes free after 43 years and four escapes

Fiona Hamilton Crime Editor

A murderer who was one of Britain’s longest-serving prisoners has been freed almost 43 years after his conviction.

John Massey, 69, was jailed for life with a minimum of 20 years for shooting a pub doorman in 1975, but served almost double that after escaping or absconding four times, three of them to sit at the deathbeds of his mother, father and one of his sisters. He once said that he had been kept inside for being a “loving son and brother”.

Campaigners said that his case illustrated how the system was clogged up with prisoners held on technicalities long after serving their time. Massey, who killed Charlie Higgins with a sawn-off shotgun after being thrown out of an east London pub, was met outside HMP Warren Hill in Suffolk by his sister, Jane, and a niece. Michelle. He said of his crime: “It was a moment of madness. I’ve served my time now.”

Massey was released on parole in 2007 but was told that he had to live in a south London hostel. When he was refused an extension to his curfew to be with his dying father, Jack, he absconded and stayed with him for four days until he was passed away. In 2010 he absconded from Ford open prison in West Sussex for ten months after being refused permission to visit his terminally ill sister, Carol. In 2012 he used a makeshift rope to scale the wall of Pentonville prison to say a final goodbye to his mother after being denied compassionate leave.

After his final breakout, Massey was clapped by inmates on his release.
Hundreds of Afghan interpreters living in fear of deportation will be allowed to stay in Britain without having to pay thousands of pounds in visa fees, it was announced yesterday.

The Home Office shifted policy after The Times revealed that more than 150 interpreters had written to Sajid Javid, the home secretary, to say that they had been left in limbo and let down by “shameful” government rules.

The interpreters, who served alongside British troops on the front line in Afghanistan, had been told that they and any family members must pay more than £2,000 to apply for indefinite leave to remain in Britain once an initial five-year permit expired from as early as next year. This left many fearing that they would be forced to return to their country where they risked persecution by the Taliban because of their ties to the British military.

Confirming that they can stay, Mr Javid said yesterday: “The local Afghan interpreters worked in dangerous and challenging situations, regularly putting their lives at risk. We have always been clear that they will be able to stay in the UK with their families and today I have announced that they will be able to do this for free.”

Gavin Williamson, the defence secretary, welcomed the move, which will help about 400 Afghans — interpreters and their families — who benefited from a government relocation scheme after most British forces withdrew from Afghanistan. He said that he had asked the Home Office to abolish the fees.

“T’m thrilled that the Home Office has agreed with me that the government will waive visa fees for interpreters and their families, who bravely served our country shoulder to shoulder with our armed forces,” he said. “We want to give them the reassurance that they can stay and won’t have to stump up large sums to do so.”

It is thought that the Ministry of Defence raised the issue with the Home Office in February, but it took until yesterday for the change to be announced. In the letter to Mr Javid, a copy of which was also sent to Mr Williamson, the interpreters said that they and their families had suffered an injustice.

They are among the few interpreters flown to the UK under the scheme, while others were left behind because they did not meet strict rules to qualify for assistance. The uncertainty over the interpreters’ residency status, with only a five-year permit, has stopped many from finding a job, however.

The Home Office has also refused to allow the wives and children of many of the interpreters to join them. Dependents should have come when the interpreters moved to Britain, under Home Office rules, but some wives had to stay to care for parents or because they could not afford the cost of travelling to obtain the visa to get to Britain.
Two teenage boys plotted to slaughter fellow pupils and teachers with firearms and homemade bombs in a Columbine-style massacre, a court heard yesterday.

The boys, who were both 14 at the time of the alleged plot, were said to have planned a “re-enactment” of the attack on their own school.

The “best friends”, now 15, who deny conspiracy to murder, allegedly drew up a list of targets they wanted to “obliterate” and “who deserved it”.

Paul Greaney, QC, for the prosecution, told Leeds crown court that the boys’ “hero-worshipped” Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who killed 12 pupils and a teacher at Columbine High School in Colorado before shooting themselves in 1999.

Greaney said there was a “strange, dark subculture of adoration for them and their crimes” on the internet and that the British schoolboys planned a “re-enactment of the attack.”

Neither the boys nor their school can be identified for legal reasons. On the first day of their trial yesterday, the court was told that the older boy, described as the leader, had planned a mass killing for more than a year and had stockpiled an arsenal at a hideout.

A police raid in October discovered balasovas, wires, batteries, bags of screws and an ignitable substance similar to petrol at the scene.

After a raid at the older boy’s home, they also found diary entries that said: “I just want to kill every single one of you f***ers. Everyone is filthy and deserves to be shot, including me. I’ll play the role of God and decide who let live and die. Humans are a vile species which needs to die out. The human condition is a curse and burden.”

The older boy also allegedly carved his name into his girlfriend’s back and plotted to “rip out [the] ****ing guts” of her parents, so he could steal seven legally owned shotguns used for game-shooting. He was arrested after breaking into her home holding a kitchen knife with “LOVE” written on it.

Other diary entries ranged from praising Hitler and natural selection to a fascination with killers including Charles Manson, Ted Bundy and Timothy McVeigh.

As well as being shown his doodles of swastikas and love-hearts, the jury also saw his diagram of a stickman wearing a trench coat — like the Columbine killers — and where weapons could be concealed within it, as well as a checklist of items still needed for the attack, such as napalm, fuses, ammunition, smoke bombs and pipe bombs.

Anther diary entry dated October 11, 2017, told of the boys’ “great ***ing plan” to murder his girlfriend’s parents. He added: “And I’ll make some explosives then we’ll find a way back to Northallerton and we’ll begin our assault on that ***ing school. Great idea isn’t it? F***, I hate my school. I will obliterate it. I will kill everyone.”

Inside the cover of the journal, it said: “Sorry if this is found I have committed one of the worst atrocities in British history or I killed myself.”

The court was told that both boys had a copy of The Anarchist Cookbook, used by the Columbine killers, which provided bomb-making instructions.

Mr Greaney said that at one point the younger boy had confessed to school staff and police. “You may conclude that the police in North Yorkshire responded inadequately to the threat these two defendants presented” because they remained free.

Mr Greaney said, “although a month later a specialist anti-terrorism team who became responsible for the investigation responded in a more appropriately and robustly”. He said that the plot was not “fantasy”, as the defendants claim, nor “foolish teenage banter”.

Both boys deny the charges relating to a period between December 31, 2016 and October 29 last year. They also each pleaded not guilty to intentionally encouraging or assisting an offence and encouraging or assisting an offence believing that it would be committed.

The older boy also denies unlawful wounding or grievous bodily injury. The trial continues.

Shooting victim is convicted killer

The man killed in the latest London shooting was trying to turn his life around after he was jailed for murdering a Traveller over a £75 debt, The Times can reveal.

Leon Maxwell, 38, was shot and killed outside Queensbury Underground station in Harrow, north-west London, on Tuesday night.

A second man, aged 26, was injured in the attack believed to have been sparked from a feud between drug gangs that left the area in a “state of chaos”.

Maxwell, also known by the street names "Sykes" and "Zebra", was a former bodybuilder and nutrition adviser.

Leon Maxwell was turning his life around, who friends praised as a naturally gifted musician. In 2003 he was jailed for life to serve a minimum of 12 years, after stabbing to death Patrick Fitzharris, who had cheated him in a cannabis deal.

Mr Fitzharris had tried to steal the drugs by throwing them into a van driven by a friend and escaping on foot, but Maxwell gave chase and stabbed him in the chest with a 10in kitchen knife. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter and claimed self-defence but was convicted of murder.

His Old Bailey trial was told that he pinned the victim down. Mr Fitzharris made a call to a friend to warn them that Maxwell, a father, had a gun and there was a “woman here with two knives”.

Detective Inspector Justin Howick said: “I would like to appeal to anyone with information to contact police at the earliest opportunity. Detectives are busy at the scene and working to build a clear picture of the circumstances of this fatal attack.”

An Old Bailey judge warned of the dangers surrounding “drill music” as two gang members were convicted of murdering an innocent music producer yesterday.

Devone Pusey, 20, and Kai Stewart, 18, stabbed Dean Pascale-Mostede, 22, to death after a feud played out in rap videos featuring Tim Westwood, the former Radio 1 DJ.

Both killers appeared in YouTube videos for Lewisham’s “B side gang”, which mocked their rivals from the Columbine massacre. They also saw his diagram of a stickman wearing a trench coat — like the Columbine killers — and where weapons could be concealed within it, as well as a checklist of items still needed for the attack, such as napalm, fuses, ammunition, smoke bombs and pipe bombs.

Judge Nicholas Cooke, QC, remand- ed both men in custody to await sentenc- ing on May 17 and warned that those attracted to drill music may be tempted to make our cities and towns even more unsafe.

Girls on film The German photographer Ellen von Unwerth at the opening of an exhibition of her work from the 1990s to the present day at the Opera Gallery, London
EU backs Irish right to veto Brexit trade deal

**John Walsh, Bruno Waterfield Oliver Wright**

Ireland has the backing of European leaders to collapse Brexit trade talks next month if Theresa May's government fails to meet its demands on a key sticking point that avoids a hard border in Northern Ireland.

Senior EU officials have told Downing Street that next month's European Council summit will suspend negotiations on a future partnership entirely until the customs issue is resolved.

The prime minister told cabinet on Thursday that the government had only weeks to present a unified plan after they rejected her proposal for a customs partnership with the bloc. Oliver Robbins, Mrs May's chief Brexit negotiator, has been sent away to work on more “options” before a second meeting to take place within two weeks.

Senior Whitehall sources expressed scepticism, however, that a compromise could be found. "I don’t know what they’ll do," they said. "Given the very strong views in cabinet against the plan they can’t bring anything close to that back unless they want a repeat."

Mr Robbins is due in Brussels today for a meeting with EU counterparts at which he will be asked how Downing Street intends to resolve the impasse. It will be made clear to him that there can be no extension to the June deadline.

An EU official expressed his pessimism. "This feels like a very big moment, a disaster," he said. “How will May and Robbins get out of this?"

The threat of an Irish veto came at a private meeting in Dublin last week at which Simon Coveney, the Irish minister for foreign affairs, said his government would not allow any slippage beyond June for a broad outline of an agreement on the Irish border.

Mr Coveney added that the Irish position had the full-backed of Brussels and the UK government was “fully aware” of its demands. The EU side had expected that Mrs May’s “partnership plan”, with some further concessions, could become the basis for a fudge on Ireland, then moving Britain towards a “camouflaged” customs union during the transitional period after Brexit.

"Now these are killed by the cabinet, we cannot see what better alternative could come that would come close to a customs union," the EU source said.

Answering questions in the Commons yesterday, David Davis, the Brexit secretary, said ministers had made a clear commitment to ensure there would be no physical infrastructure or related checks on the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. In a separate development, Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, has said that Britons who work in the EU should be given Belgian citizenship after Brexit.

He said Belgium was a kind host to the EU, and Charles Michel, its prime minister, should "show the same generosity when it comes to granting Belgian citizenship to Britons who have worked in the EU."

Mr Michel said Belgium was "examining the judicial possibilities". About 1,100 British people work for EU institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg. Where Britons leave the EU, Britons will no longer be EU citizens and officials may be required to resign.

---

**The jolly Weeble shows he is no pushover in a cabinet of wobblers**

**Patrick Kidd**

**Political Sketch**

V

ho would have predicted this - time last year that Theresa May would lose four members of her cabinet and survive a flounce over Brexit? It is a surprise that one of Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox hasn’t made a grand, futile gesture of immolation over fishing rights or Gibraltar.

There have been plenty of threats but like those egg-shaped toys from the 1970s the leading Leavers stay upright and jaunty no matter how buffeted they are. Brexit Weebles wobble but they don’t fall down.

Mr Davis was the Weeble on duty yesterday and in a jolly mood having apparently won an argument in cabinet over the customs union (an issue on which, "Friends" told the papers, he might resign if he didn’t get his own way). Any suggestion that he appeared wobbly was met with loud, if slightly manic, laughter.

Gavin Newlands (SNP, Paisley & Renfrewshire North) noted that the bookmakers have the Brexit secretary at 6-1 to be the next leader of the Labour party, said ministers had made a clear commitment to ensure there would be no physical infrastructure or related checks on the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. In a separate development, Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, has said that Britons who work in the EU should be given Belgian citizenship after Brexit.

He said Belgium was a kind host to the EU, and Charles Michel, its prime minister, should "show the same generosity when it comes to granting Belgian citizenship to Britons who have worked in the EU."

Mr Michel said Belgium was "examining the judicial possibilities". About 1,100 British people work for EU institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg. Where Britons leave the EU, Britons will no longer be EU citizens and officials may be required to resign.

---

**SAMSUNG GALAXY S9**

WITH 2 YEARS’ ACCESS TO THE BT SPORT APP on all Max plans

Offer ends 31st May

**Patrick Kidd**

**Political Sketch**

V

ho would have predicted this - time last year that Theresa May would lose four members of her cabinet and survive a flounce over Brexit? It is a surprise that one of Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox hasn’t made a grand, futile gesture of immolation over fishing rights or Gibraltar.

There have been plenty of threats but like those egg-shaped toys from the 1970s the leading Leavers stay upright and jaunty no matter how buffeted they are. Brexit Weebles wobble but they don’t fall down.

Mr Davis was the Weeble on duty yesterday and in a jolly mood having apparently won an argument in cabinet over the customs union (an issue on which, "Friends" told the papers, he might resign if he didn’t get his own way). Any suggestion that he appeared wobbly was met with loud, if slightly manic, laughter.

Gavin Newlands (SNP, Paisley & Renfrewshire North) noted that the bookmakers have the Brexit secretary at 6-1 to be the next leader of the Labour party, said ministers had made a clear commitment to ensure there would be no physical infrastructure or related checks on the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. In a separate development, Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, has said that Britons who work in the EU should be given Belgian citizenship after Brexit.

He said Belgium was a kind host to the EU, and Charles Michel, its prime minister, should "show the same generosity when it comes to granting Belgian citizenship to Britons who have worked in the EU."

Mr Michel said Belgium was "examining the judicial possibilities". About 1,100 British people work for EU institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg. Where Britons leave the EU, Britons will no longer be EU citizens and officials may be required to resign.

---

**SAMSUNG Galaxy S9**

Offer ends 31st May

**SAMSUNG Galaxy S9**

WITH 2 YEARS’ ACCESS TO THE BT SPORT APP on all Max plans

Offer ends 31st May

**Patrick Kidd**

**Political Sketch**

V

ho would have predicted this - time last year that Theresa May would lose four members of her cabinet and survive a flounce over Brexit? It is a surprise that one of Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox hasn’t made a grand, futile gesture of immolation over fishing rights or Gibraltar.

There have been plenty of threats but like those egg-shaped toys from the 1970s the leading Leavers stay upright and jaunty no matter how buffeted they are. Brexit Weebles wobble but they don’t fall down.

Mr Davis was the Weeble on duty yesterday and in a jolly mood having apparently won an argument in cabinet over the customs union (an issue on which, "Friends" told the papers, he might resign if he didn’t get his own way). Any suggestion that he appeared wobbly was met with loud, if slightly manic, laughter.

Gavin Newlands (SNP, Paisley & Renfrewshire North) noted that the bookmakers have the Brexit secretary at 6-1 to be the next leader of the Labour party, said ministers had made a clear commitment to ensure there would be no physical infrastructure or related checks on the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. In a separate development, Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, has said that Britons who work in the EU should be given Belgian citizenship after Brexit.

He said Belgium was a kind host to the EU, and Charles Michel, its prime minister, should "show the same generosity when it comes to granting Belgian citizenship to Britons who have worked in the EU."

Mr Michel said Belgium was "examining the judicial possibilities". About 1,100 British people work for EU institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg. Where Britons leave the EU, Britons will no longer be EU citizens and officials may be required to resign.
A helpline set up for women worried about breast cancer screening errors was overwhelmed as thousands of women contacted GPs after they had not been invited for a screening in the past five years. "I knew I had fallen into depression," said Helen Jarvis, a 72-year-old former nurse from Milton Keynes, who had regular mammograms until her late sixties. In February, she found a lump in her breast and saw her GP. "I was screened and it was breast cancer. I have been lucky not to have chemotherapy or radiotherapy but I did have a mastectomy last month," she said.

Meghan Markle’s acting farewell
By Sandra Gonzalez, CNN
Upated 1:36 PM EDT; Wed April 25, 2018

Meghan Markle has written an open letter to Prince Harry urging him to call off the royal wedding.

In a handwritten letter, the estranged half-brother of Meghan Markle has written an open letter to Prince Harry urging him to call off the royal wedding.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped.

As well as 6,000 guests at the service on May 19, there will be 2,640 members of the public watching the procession inside the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The handwritten letter is not the first one to the Markle family: for emotional reasons, it was written by the estranged half-sister, Samantha Grant. 53, who has told Harry to man up and criticised him for calling "Meg to ignore the Markles". Markle, who lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, claims that her father, Thomas Markle Sr, went into debt to support his half-sister’s ambition of becoming an actress and has struggled ever since. He was arrested last year after an incident in which he was accused of drunkenly holding a gun to his fiancée’s head. The case was dropped. 
100% cotton polo shirt

£15

Find lots more colours in store and online

Love it for Less

M&S
EST. 1884
Spend it Well
Gossip about staff to boost morale, bosses are told

Greg Hurst Social Affairs Editor

It’s lonely at the top, conventional wisdom tells us: leaders are supposed to cultivate a distance from subordinates to preserve their dignity and authority.

Hope is at hand, however, for lone leaders. Research suggests that engaging in a good gossip with staff improves team morale.

A particular tip is to drop into some office banter a passing word of praise for a colleague who is not party to the conversation. Once this is conveyed to the absent member of staff, and others, the effect is akin to sending an electric current of positive energy through the entire team.

The findings were presented at the annual conference of the British Psychological Society in Nottingham. Kirk Chang, professor of organisational behaviour research at Salford Business School, conducted the study in collaboration with Chien-Chih Kuo, a professor at National Chengchi University, Taiwan.

They said that it was the first study of its kind to assemble statistical evidence to show that well-meaning gossip could have a beneficial effect.

Professor Chang said: “Gossip is a term that carries some negative connotations, but our research suggests that managers who gossip in positive terms with the team members are likely to maintain a more committed workforce.”

The researchers assembled panels of 120 managers and 244 of their subordinates chosen at random who work in seven industries in Taiwan.

They compared measures for the managers’ predilection to indulge in workplace gossip and for employees’ attitudes towards their boss, and matched these to separate surveys asking staff about their psychological wellbeing, sense of empowerment within their team and how likely they were to stay in their role.

Analysis of the results suggested that managers who gossiped about employees in a positive way enhanced the sense of mutual support among the wider team, who reciprocated by showing commitment towards their manager. People who worked for a gossiping boss also reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing, team spirit and sense of job satisfaction.

Curiously, the findings suggested that the reverse did not apply for managers: bosses who were rude about members of their staff did not seem to have any negative impact on their employees’ well-being.

Among subordinate team members themselves, however, “positive” gossip by colleagues had a beneficial effect while “negative” gossip was damaging to morale and staff commitment.

Professor Chang said: “Our research shows that gossiping in the workplace can be a good thing, but only if the comments made about those who are not present are positive in nature and it does not become rumour.

“Traditional wisdom suggests that managers should keep their distance and not gossip about their team members but as long as comments are kept positive it may actually allow them to maintain a more committed and empowered team.

“Having a good relationship with a manager is associated with both psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction so this research could have implications for how managers interact with their staff.”

Office pick-me-ups

Mindfulness Creates harmonious workplace relations as it increases empathy, according to a study in the journal Psychological Science.

Workplace pets Letting dogs roam around the office is claimed to reduce stress, improve performance and increase social interactions.

Playground Google staff in Silicon Valley relax with table tennis, indoor slides and games consoles.

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment. In the workplace, it’s about cultivating a non-judgmental, non-reactive awareness of what’s going on around us.

The study, led by researchers Elizabeth Van Vugt and Joel Cooper, found that employees who practiced mindfulness were more likely to report positive workplace relations. They also reported feeling more engaged and satisfied with their jobs.

The findings were published in the journal Psychological Science. The researchers assembled panels of 120 managers and 244 of their subordinates chosen at random who work in seven industries in Taiwan.

They compared measures for the managers’ predilection to indulge in workplace gossip and for employees’ attitudes towards their boss, and matched these to separate surveys asking staff about their psychological wellbeing, sense of empowerment within their team and how likely they were to stay in their role.

Analysis of the results suggested that managers who gossiped about employees in a positive way enhanced the sense of mutual support among the wider team, who reciprocated by showing commitment towards their manager. People who worked for a gossiping boss also reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing, team spirit and sense of job satisfaction.

Curiously, the findings suggested that the reverse did not apply for managers: bosses who were rude about members of their staff did not seem to have any negative impact on their employees’ well-being.

Among subordinate team members themselves, however, “positive” gossip by colleagues had a beneficial effect while “negative” gossip was damaging to morale and staff commitment.

Professor Chang said: “Our research shows that gossiping in the workplace can be a good thing, but only if the comments made about those who are not present are positive in nature and it does not become rumour.

“Traditional wisdom suggests that managers should keep their distance and not gossip about their team members but as long as comments are kept positive it may actually allow them to maintain a more committed and empowered team.

“Having a good relationship with a manager is associated with both psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction so this research could have implications for how managers interact with their staff.”

Mindfulness Creates harmonious workplace relations as it increases empathy, according to a study in the journal Psychological Science.

Workplace pets Letting dogs roam around the office is claimed to reduce stress, improve performance and increase social interactions.

Playground Google staff in Silicon Valley relax with table tennis, indoor slides and games consoles.

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment. In the workplace, it’s about cultivating a non-judgmental, non-reactive awareness of what’s going on around us.

The study, led by researchers Elizabeth Van Vugt and Joel Cooper, found that employees who practiced mindfulness were more likely to report positive workplace relations. They also reported feeling more engaged and satisfied with their jobs.

The findings were published in the journal Psychological Science. The researchers assembled panels of 120 managers and 244 of their subordinates chosen at random who work in seven industries in Taiwan.

They compared measures for the managers’ predilection to indulge in workplace gossip and for employees’ attitudes towards their boss, and matched these to separate surveys asking staff about their psychological wellbeing, sense of empowerment within their team and how likely they were to stay in their role.

Analysis of the results suggested that managers who gossiped about employees in a positive way enhanced the sense of mutual support among the wider team, who reciprocated by showing commitment towards their manager. People who worked for a gossiping boss also reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing, team spirit and sense of job satisfaction.

Curiously, the findings suggested that the reverse did not apply for managers: bosses who were rude about members of their staff did not seem to have any negative impact on their employees’ well-being.

Among subordinate team members themselves, however, “positive” gossip by colleagues had a beneficial effect while “negative” gossip was damaging to morale and staff commitment.

Professor Chang said: “Our research shows that gossiping in the workplace can be a good thing, but only if the comments made about those who are not present are positive in nature and it does not become rumour.

“Traditional wisdom suggests that managers should keep their distance and not gossip about their team members but as long as comments are kept positive it may actually allow them to maintain a more committed and empowered team.

“Having a good relationship with a manager is associated with both psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction so this research could have implications for how managers interact with their staff.”
From £189 a month.*

Plus, order by 31st May and get an extra £500 off.**

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Kadjar Dynamique Nav TCe 130 are: Urban 41.5 (6.8); Extra Urban 57.7 (4.9); Combined 50.4 (5.6). The official CO₂ emission is 126g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real life driving results.

0% APR representative

*Monthly payment shown based on Kadjar Dynamique Nav TCe 130. £2,277 deposit. 36 monthly payments of £189. Optional final payment of £6,499. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 495, Watford, WD17 1BR. Subject to status. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. You must be a UK resident (excluding the Channel Islands) and over 18. Offer based on 6,000 miles pa, excess mileage 8p per mile inc. VAT. Terms and conditions apply. Prices quoted are available on specified new vehicles when ordered by 3rd July 2018 and registered before 31st August 2018. Participating dealers only. Car shown with optional 1.6 Metallic paint at extra £550. See renault.co.uk/offers. **Extra £500 offer is available on any new retail Kadjar when ordered between 4 May and 31 May and registered by 31 August 2018. Eligible with all other offers. For full terms and conditions, visit renault.co.uk/sale.
Oliver Moody Science Correspondent

Europeans may have evolved a susceptibility to migraines because an underlying gene protected their ancestors against the cold, a study has suggested.

Up to one Briton in five is afflicted by the headaches. Researchers think one reason that migraines are common at northern latitudes but rarer around the equator is a trade-off between a sore head and an ability to cope with the cold. They have singled out a gene known to affect sensitivity to cold, pain and the chilly sensation of menthol.

In the UK, 80 per cent of people carry a variant of the gene, which elevates the odds of having migraines by about 5 per cent. In Finland the figure is 87 per cent, but in Sierra Leone it is 3 per cent.

Professor Andrés said that when Homo sapiens moved into Europe, which was far colder then, those without the mutation would have struggled to survive and pass on their genes. Migraines may be an unfortunate by-product. "Because humans have migrated to regions of the world that have very different temperatures . . . [cold sensitivity] is an obvious candidate," she said.
Voters turned away from council polls for having no identification

Henry Zeffman Political Reporter

The largest test of public opinion since last year’s snap election took place yesterday amid complaints from Labour about a scheme requiring voters to provide identification.

Trial runs of the measure to prevent electoral fraud caused controversy soon after polls opened for local elections. Officials in Bradford were reported to be asking for identification even though the city was not one of the five areas piloting the scheme.

Trials took place in Bromley, south-east London; Swindon, Woking, Surrey; Watford; and Gosport, Hampshire, with most problems reported in Bromley. In Bromley, Woking and Gosport people had to show a photo ID or two documents from a qualifying list. In Swindon and Watford, they needed only their polling card.

Angela Wilkins, leader of the Labour group in Bromley, said he had been unable to vote despite knowing volunteers at the polling station.

Voting at a pub in Kensington & Chelsea; dogged devotion in Anfield

Ellie Reeves, Labour MP for Lewisham West & Penge, which covers part of Bromley, said that two people had been turned away because they did not have ID. “Just been to vote,” she tweeted.

Peter White, 76, who lives in Bromley, said he had been unable to vote because of the scheme and that there had been long delays. The presiding officer at the polling station at Sydenham Tennis Club, however, said that “only a very small percentage” of voters had forgotten or been unable to give ID.

“I can’t vote even though the people know me here and I have been a candidate,” he told The Independent. “This is a nonsense scheme.”

Peter White, 76, who lives in Bromley, said he had been unable to vote because of the scheme and that there had been long delays. The presiding officer at the polling station at Sydenham Tennis Club, however, said that “only a very small percentage” of voters had forgotten or been unable to give ID.

Ellie Reeves, Labour MP for Lewisham West & Penge, which covers part of Bromley, said that two people had been turned away because they did not have ID. “Just been to vote,” she tweeted. “Was informed that two people had already turned up without ID this morning so had been unable to vote. Very worrying and backs up all the evidence that the voter ID pilot in Bromley is plain wrong.”

Cat Smith, the shadow minister for voter engagement, said that the government had been warned that there would be problems. “Instead of listening to the experts and the vast evidence base, the government decided to implement a mistaken policy with the full knowledge that voters could be disenfranchised.”

The electoral commission said that returning officers had run awareness campaigns. Theresa May’s spokesman said: “Local authorities told all voters that they need to bring a form of ID in these pilot areas. The overwhelming majority of people are casting their vote without a problem.”

Labour was hopeful last night of emerging as the biggest winner because many of the 4,300 seats being contested were in London, although some forecasters had suggested the Conservatives could make modest net gains on 2014. Seats were contested in all 32 London boroughs and about 120 councils, including every ward in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle. There were mayoral elections in Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, and Tower Hamlets in London; Watford, and the Sheffield city region, but no polls outside England.

Mike Wade

An official review of the evidence against the Lockerbie bomber is to be held to determine whether his family can appeal against his conviction.

The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC) ruled that Abdul Baset Ali al-Megrahi had abandoned a previous appeal in 2009 “as he held a genuine and reasonable belief that such a course of action would result in him being able to return home to Libya”. At the time he had terminal cancer.

Al-Megrahi, a Libyan, was found guilty of mass murder for the destruction of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, in December 1988, killing 270 people. He was jailed for 27 years in 2001 but died aged 60 of prostate cancer in 2012, three years after his release on compassionate grounds.

Gerard Sinclair, chief executive of the SCCRC, said that the commission had decided that it was “in the interests of justice” to accept an application from al-Megrahi’s family for a full review of his conviction.

Al-Megrahi insisted in his authorised biography that a Scottish government decision to agree his early release from prison was conditional on his decision to drop his appeal.

Jim Swire, whose daughter Flora died in the bombing and who has long campaigned on behalf of his family, said he “heard the news of the review with ‘great pleasure’.”

An official review of the evidence against the Lockerbie bomber is to be held to determine whether his family can appeal against his conviction.

The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC) ruled that Abdul Baset Ali al-Megrahi had abandoned a previous appeal in 2009 “as he held a genuine and reasonable belief that such a course of action would result in him being able to return home to Libya”. At the time he had terminal cancer.

Al-Megrahi, a Libyan, was found guilty of mass murder for the destruction of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, in December 1988, killing 270 people. He was jailed for 27 years in 2001 but died aged 60 of prostate cancer in 2012, three years after his release on compassionate grounds.

Gerard Sinclair, chief executive of the SCCRC, said that the commission had decided that it was “in the interests of justice” to accept an application from al-Megrahi’s family for a full review of his conviction.

Al-Megrahi insisted in his authorised biography that a Scottish government decision to agree his early release from prison was conditional on his decision to drop his appeal.

Jim Swire, whose daughter Flora died in the bombing and who has long campaigned on behalf of his family, said he “heard the news of the review with ‘great pleasure’.”
Deaths of two more students add to welfare fears at Bristol

Alex Elsmore, a final-year student, fell from Clifton suspension bridge

Bristol University has confirmed that a fourth-year electrical engineering student died recently last month and a second-year physicist died this week.

Alex Elsmore, the engineering student, fell from Clifton suspension bridge on April 21, the university confirmed. The unnamed physics student died on Monday and an email to all of their peers was sent yesterday morning, saying that the university had been told by the student’s family “the sudden and unexpected death.”

The university has been under scrutiny over a number of student deaths. It is believed that eight Bristol University students have taken their own lives in the past two years, although inquests into the other deaths found no links between the cases.

In a statement on the most recent death the university said that it was “deeply saddened.” It added, “Sadly, this is the second death in a short period of time and the university is doing everything we can to support all those affected by these deaths.”

In a statement on Mr Elsmore’s death, the university said that it had spoken to the family of the student and that they had requested privacy. “We are not aware of any suspicious circumstances surrounding his death and the coroner will hold an inquest in due course,” it said. “It is immensely distressing for members of our university to learn while we continue to support all of our students has died, and we know it will be especially difficult for those who knew and studied alongside the student.”

The university had urged any students or staff affected to contact university support services, as well as seeking support from family and friends. It is understood that Mr Elsmore was from Liverpool and was a popular student who was embarking on his final term.

Bristol University has been under-taking a review of its student health services, putting £1 million into its mental health and well-being provision. It has invested £250,000 in time for full-time being professionals as well as 18 advisors and a network of student mentors. In March, third-year geology student Murray Underwood graduated died suddenly. Omojo Oyedipe was a leading member of a university gospel choir, joint presi-dent of the spoken word poetry and creative writing society and a co-painder on green and sustainability issues.

The neighbouring University of the West of England has also suffered the loss of two students in the same period. The family of one criticised it for failing to offer them support after her death.

Emmy Hunt, whose daughter Ra-vi, 21, was in her third year at UWE, said that she heard nothing from the institution in the months afterwards, including during an inquest into her daughter’s death. She decided to speak out after the death of the Bristol Uni-versity student Justine Cheng in January. Ms Cheng, a third-year law student from Toronto, Canada, had suf-fered from severe depres-sion. UWE has apologised for the distress it caused.

Universities are increasingly concerned about mental health problems among students. Almost five times as many dis-close a mental health condition to their university as they did ten years ago, a study found last year.

Though software packages can spot “cut and paste” plagiarised work, essay companies offer bespoke services that are more difficult to identify.

The number of such companies means prices have fallen. Bespoke essays that would once have cost hun-dreds of pounds now go for as little as £30. Douglas Blackstock, chief execu-tive of the Quality Assurance Agency watchdog, said:

He said the problem was so serious that the agency was reconvening its expertise group on cheating to tackle it.

A young woman who was raped by a stranger after she asked him for directions has described the attack on social media, saying that she has nothing to be ashamed of.

Emily Rose Hinell, 19, was led down a dead end next to the River Aire in Leeds by Neil McNally, 33, who had approached her to ask for change. He punched her and raped her, before leaving with her phone and a bank card.

Ms Hinell used Facebook to share details of the attack on January 20 soon after it happened, but was asked by police to remove her post until the investigation was over.

McNally was jailed for 15 years last year after pleading guilty at Leeds crown court to rape, assault by penetra-tion and robbery and fraud. Ms Hinell, who has a one-year-old daughter, has returned to Facebook to warn women about the risks of talking to strangers.

“I am not ashamed to have been raped. I know it is not my fault,” she said. “This is not a dirty little secret. He is the one who has to live with what he has done for the rest of his life. He is the one who should be ashamed of himself, not me.”

You get brought up and you always get told not to talk to strangers, but the older you get the less important it seems to become. I never thought something like this would happen... because it’s one of those things you don’t expect to happen. But sadly they do happen, and so easily. Please wherever you are stay safe, stay with your friends.”

Ms Hinell, who is from Leeds, was with friends looking for a flat one had rented for a birthday celebration when McNally approached her. “I assumed he was a harmless homeless guy and ended up asking him for directions,” she said. “Unfortunately, he wasn’t harmless, or harmless.”

When McNally’s attack started, Ms Hinell did not fight back because she feared he might throw her into the river “I just couldn’t stop thinking about my little girl and was so scared that I might not see her again,” she wrote.

After the rape, she said, she was afraid “of everything. It was like being a child scared of a monster under the bed.” She later decided, however, that she “wasn’t going to let this man win”.

“I do not dwell on it or fear him,” she said. “Being so vocal has allowed me to compete in Tough Mudder, the endur-ance obstacle race, to raise money for Rape Crisis.”

Rapist should be ashamed, not me

Bird’s eye view This aerial image of Edinburgh was taken by Alfred Buckham, a pioneer of the art, in about 1920. Buckham, the navy’s first head of aerial reconnaissance, believed his best shots were made standing up and he survived nine crashes...
Tycoon attacks MPs who called him Kremlin agent

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

The billionaire founder of a pro-Brexit think tank has accused MPs of abusing their position to name him as a Russian agent without the risk of being sued.

Writing in The Times Christopher Chandler says that the MPs made “untrue and damaging statements” while under parliamentary privilege after he was accused on Tuesday of being an “object of interest” to the French, who suspected him of “working for the Russian intelligence services”.

The accusation was made by Bob Seely, a Conservative member of the foreign affairs select committee. He cited security files that he said were authenticated by French, British and US sources.

Mr Chandler, a New Zealand-born tycoon in his late 50s, provides financial support to the Legatum Institute, a London-based think tank with strong links to cabinet ministers, MPs, economists and campaigners for a hard Brexit. He provides support through the Legatum Group, a Dubai-based hedge fund he controls. Legatum has always denied taking a stance on Brexit.

In his article, Mr Chandler denies that he had “been associated with the Russian state in any capacity”. He accuses the MPs of making “unspecified allegations of wrongdoing based on a discredited report from 16 years ago”.

“Itmpugning my reputation while hiding behind parliamentary privilege shows the lack of confidence which they have in their claims. By using the floor of parliament to make defamatory, untrue and damaging statements, these MPs degrade public discourse and undermine the very democracy they purport to be protecting,” he says.

He calls on the MPs to publish their “dossier” of evidence against him. Mr Seely, MP for the Isle of Wight, made the allegations during a debate on money laundering and said that he and his colleagues were speaking “in the national interest” to fight the “malign influence” of Russia.

Mr Seely, who was elected last year and is pro-Brexit, was supported by the Tory MP Adam Holloway and three anti-Brexit Labour MPs, Chris Bryant, Ben Bradshaw and Liam Byrne. Their claims are based on police files from 2005, which contained information provided by Monaco police and French intelligence covering a period from the mid-1990s.

“Mr Chandler is described as having been ‘an object of interest to the DST [Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire, France’s now-dissolved equivalent to MI5] since 2002 on suspicion of working for the Russian intelligence services’,” Mr Seely said.

Speaking of Mr Chandler’s backing of the Legatum Institute, Mr Byrne said he “happens to run an important think tank that has enjoyed univalued access to ministers in one of the most important national debates in this country. And the risk that we are running at the moment is that this support is financed from sources that derive from the Russian republic.”

Mr Chandler denies that he had any involvement in the institute’s work and says he has never expressed a view on Brexit or the Russian state in any capacity. There is no evidence to support claims to the contrary. The truth is that over the past four decades my global business and life. Yet yesterday, four members of parliament made a harsh, public attack on my integrity. The apparent purpose of the attack is to discredit someone they believe to be an opponent in their campaign to reverse Brexit.

The substance of their statements is untrue. I am not and never have been associated with the Russian state in any capacity. There is no evidence to support claims to the contrary. The truth is that over the past four decades my global business and life. Yet yesterday, four members of parliament made a harsh, public attack on my integrity. The apparent purpose of the attack is to discredit someone they believe to be an opponent in their campaign to reverse Brexit.

The MPs are alleging that I was investigated 16 years ago by the authorities in Monaco. Even if there was an investigation, I was never — not once — contacted or questioned by the authorities in Monaco or any other authority about Russia, or any other questions about the propriety of my business affairs.

When Liam Byrne first raised some of these issues in the New European in November, he was given a detailed rebuttal to help him to understand the facts and embrace the truth. He did not respond. Instead, he repeated the innuendo and slander from the floor of parliament — beyond accountability.

I again call on these MPs to provide us with their “secret” dossier so that the issues can be properly addressed and truth can prevail.

That’s enough innuendo and slander — now show us proof

Christopher Chandler Comment

A s a New Zealander, I have always been proud that my country is ranked as the least corrupt nation on the planet — my upbringing there shaped my values, business and life. Yet yesterday, four members of parliament made a harsh, public attack on my integrity. The apparent purpose of the attack is to discredit someone they believe to be an opponent in their campaign to reverse Brexit.

The substance of their statements is untrue. I am not and never have been associated with the Russian state in any capacity. There is no evidence to support claims to the contrary. The truth is that over the past four decades my global investment activities, commercial and philanthropic, have deliberately and measurably improved the lives of hundreds of millions of people. The MPs’ unspecified allegations of wrongdoing are based on a discredited report from 16 years ago. They have refused to release the report to me. Calling for a response while hiding the document at issue is patently dishonest. Impugning my reputation while hiding behind parliamentary privilege shows the lack of confidence which they have in their claims. What is at stake here is something much more important than my reputation, which remains secure. By using the floor of parliament to make defamatory, untrue and damaging statements, these MPs degrade public discourse and undermine the democracy they purport to be protecting.

I have never taken a public position on Brexit. Many in the media and these MPs suggest otherwise, but I challenge them to point to one example of any statement by me one way or the other on Brexit. They cannot. Regardless of this truth, they seek to make me an emblem of Brexit and then, as with all others they perceive as enemies, discredit me in their quest to reverse the decision of the British public.

The MPs are alleging that I was investigated 16 years ago by the authorities in Monaco. Even if there was an investigation, I was never — not once — contacted or questioned by the authorities in Monaco or any other authority about Russia, or any other questions about the propriety of my business affairs.

When Liam Byrne first raised some of these issues in the New European in November, he was given a detailed rebuttal to help him to understand the facts and embrace the truth. He did not respond. Instead, he repeated the innuendo and slander from the floor of parliament — beyond accountability.

I again call on these MPs to provide us with their “secret” dossier so that the issues can be properly addressed and truth can prevail.
Dangerous state of roads ‘is a national emergency’

Graeme Paton Transport Correspondent

The condition of Britain’s roads is turning into a “national emergency”, with millions of cyclists seriously injured and cars damaged.

Research published today by the AA found that almost nine in ten drivers say that roads have deteriorated in the past decade. In the past year the number of motorists complaining about the state of local roads as “poor” has risen by a quarter.

The hard winter resulted in a sharp rise in the number of potholes, with an increase in breakdowns caused by uneven surfaces. These include damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension and distorted wheels.

The AA insisted that roads were already in a “perilous state” because of years of underfunding and the freezing conditions and wet weather had caused the network to crumble in many areas. Industry experts say that £9.3 billion is needed to bring all roads up to scratch.

Mr Boyling, who was cleared of sexual misconduct after an independent disciplinary hearing, said this was “little more than papering over the cracks”.

Roadwork ban to stop potholes

The Times report last Monday on plans to tackle the nation’s crumbling streets

The condition of Britain’s roads is turning into a “national emergency”, with millions of cyclists seriously injured and cars damaged.

Research published today by the AA found that almost nine in ten drivers say that roads have deteriorated in the past decade. In the past year the number of motorists complaining about the state of local roads as “poor” has risen by a quarter.

The hard winter resulted in a sharp rise in the number of potholes, with an increase in breakdowns caused by uneven surfaces. These include damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension and distorted wheels.

The AA insisted that roads were already in a “perilous state” because of years of underfunding and the freezing conditions and wet weather had caused the network to crumble in many areas. Industry experts say that £9.3 billion is needed to bring all roads up to scratch.

Mr Boyling, who was cleared of sexual misconduct after an independent disciplinary hearing, said this was “little more than papering over the cracks”.

Roadwork ban to stop potholes

The Times report last Monday on plans to tackle the nation’s crumbling streets

The condition of Britain’s roads is turning into a “national emergency”, with millions of cyclists seriously injured and cars damaged.

Research published today by the AA found that almost nine in ten drivers say that roads have deteriorated in the past decade. In the past year the number of motorists complaining about the state of local roads as “poor” has risen by a quarter.

The hard winter resulted in a sharp rise in the number of potholes, with an increase in breakdowns caused by uneven surfaces. These include damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension and distorted wheels.

The AA insisted that roads were already in a “perilous state” because of years of underfunding and the freezing conditions and wet weather had caused the network to crumble in many areas. Industry experts say that £9.3 billion is needed to bring all roads up to scratch.

Mr Boyling, who was cleared of sexual misconduct after an independent disciplinary hearing, said this was “little more than papering over the cracks”.

Roadwork ban to stop potholes

The Times report last Monday on plans to tackle the nation’s crumbling streets

The condition of Britain’s roads is turning into a “national emergency”, with millions of cyclists seriously injured and cars damaged.

Research published today by the AA found that almost nine in ten drivers say that roads have deteriorated in the past decade. In the past year the number of motorists complaining about the state of local roads as “poor” has risen by a quarter.

The hard winter resulted in a sharp rise in the number of potholes, with an increase in breakdowns caused by uneven surfaces. These include damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension and distorted wheels.

The AA insisted that roads were already in a “perilous state” because of years of underfunding and the freezing conditions and wet weather had caused the network to crumble in many areas. Industry experts say that £9.3 billion is needed to bring all roads up to scratch.

Mr Boyling, who was cleared of sexual misconduct after an independent disciplinary hearing, said this was “little more than papering over the cracks”.

Roadwork ban to stop potholes

The Times report last Monday on plans to tackle the nation’s crumbling streets

The condition of Britain’s roads is turning into a “national emergency”, with millions of cyclists seriously injured and cars damaged.

Research published today by the AA found that almost nine in ten drivers say that roads have deteriorated in the past decade. In the past year the number of motorists complaining about the state of local roads as “poor” has risen by a quarter.

The hard winter resulted in a sharp rise in the number of potholes, with an increase in breakdowns caused by uneven surfaces. These include damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension and distorted wheels.

The AA insisted that roads were already in a “perilous state” because of years of underfunding and the freezing conditions and wet weather had caused the network to crumble in many areas. Industry experts say that £9.3 billion is needed to bring all roads up to scratch.

Mr Boyling, who was cleared of sexual misconduct after an independent disciplinary hearing, said this was “little more than papering over the cracks”. He proposed diverting £2 billion from road fund, in effect doubling central government investment in the roads network.

“It is clear that despite all the talk from central and local government, not enough is being done to fix our increasingly dangerous streets,” he said. “Our potholed roads are in a perilous state. AA breakdown operations are rescuing record numbers of drivers whose tyres or wheels are damaged by potholes.”

He urged Chris Grayling, the transport secretary, to “convince the Treasury to allow more funds for roads maintenance in what is fast becoming a national emergency.”

The AA surveyed more than 17,500 members and found that 88 per cent thought the roads were worse now than ten years ago. Sixty-seven per cent said that roads had “considerably deteriorated” over the past decade. Official figures show that crumbling roads have contributed to the deaths or serious injuries of 390 cyclists in the past decade.

A Department for Transport spokes- woman said: “We are already providing councils in England with over £6 billion to help improve the condition of local highways. While it is for councils to identify where repairs should be undertaken, we are also looking at how innovative technology can help them keep their roads in the best condition and save money.”

Letters, page 28

Huge outlay on motorways despite reduction in traffic

Graeme Paton

Billions of pounds spent upgrading motorways and roads may be a waste of money because traffic levels are expected to fall, ministers have been told.

A study said that people were travelling “less often and less far” by car because of the rise of internet shopping, Netflix and flexible working.

The Commission on Travel Demand said that individuals used cars and other vehicles 14 per cent less than they did in 2002, with more of those in their late teens and early 20s shunning car ownership altogether.

The government was failing to consider these findings in its forecasts, which predict higher vehicle use. This has been used to justify huge road building schemes, with £15 billion being spent on motorways before 2020.

Traffic has reached record levels, driven largely by population growth. A study this year said that Britain was the most congested country in western Europe. However, the commission, led by Professor Greg Marsden, from the University of Leeds, suggested that government assumptions about rising car use were “limited and sometimes wrong”. It said that vehicles were likely to travel 70 billion miles less by 2040 than the government predicted.

The Department for Transport said that it “regularly updates its forecasts and evidence base to ensure they remain up to date for planning future transport investment. While on average individuals are travelling less often, total travel demand is increasing…Our planning reflects this.”
Surge in sex cases abandoned over hidden evidence

Richard Ford Home Correspondent
Frances Gibb Legal Editor

The number of sexual offence cases dropped because of a failure by police or prosecutors to disclose evidence has risen sixfold in four years.

Official figures show a steady year-on-year increase in sex crime prosecutions being abandoned over issues around the disclosure of information. The Crown Prosecution Service figures follow the high-profile collapse of several rape cases after failures to share evidence with defence solicitors. They prompted the CPS to launch a review this year into every rape and serious sexual assault case in England and Wales and a package of emergency measures to shore up public confidence in the justice system.

The latest figures show that 23 sexual offence cases were dropped at magistrates’ and crown courts because of disclosure problems in 2017/18, up from four in 2013/14.

Evidence from Alison Saunders, the retiring director of public prosecutions, shows that the number of sex cases being dropped over disclosure problems has risen every year since 2013/14.

In December, The Times revealed that the trial of Liam Allan, who faced 12 counts of rape and sexual assault, had been halted. The case against Mr Allan, 22, was dropped when it emerged that evidence on a computer disc, which police had looked through, included messages from the alleged victim pestering him for “casual sex”.

Days later, another prosecution case collapsed against Isaac Itiary, who was facing trial at Inner London crown court, accused of raping a child. He was charged in July but police only disclosed “relevant material” in response to his defence case statement as his trial was about to start. Overall, 841 cases were dropped over a failure to disclose evidence in 2017/18, a fall of 8 per cent on the 916 in the previous year. More than 700 cases were abandoned at magistrates’ court with just over 100 dropped at crown courts, the figures show.

Among those dropped were 230 cases of offences against the person, 24 burglary cases, 104 theft and handling, 70 fraud and 256 motoring offences. The figures have been provided to the Commons justice select committee which is carrying out an investigation into the disclosure of evidence in criminal cases.

Ms Saunders said: “The figure of 841 is 8 per cent lower than in 2016/17 but clearly every case of this type is a cause of significant concern.”

She added in her written evidence to the committee: “We do not record whether the failure was that of the police or the CPS because there is rarely a clear apportioning of blame.”

Often police officers will provide poor schedules of evidence, she said, but prosecutors will fail to challenge them sufficiently.

In separate evidence to the committee, the CPS and the National Police Chiefs’ Council admitted that their performance on disclosure “has generally not been good enough”.

They said that they had “not reacted quickly enough” to previous inspection reports that highlighted problems over the issue.

Jeremy Wright, the attorney-general, is conducting a review into disclosure processes including codes of practice, guidelines and legislation relating to sex offences and other crimes.

Baroness Chakrabarti, the shadow attorney-general, said: “The government needs to explain the context behind these figures. How late in the day are these trials folding and are the relevant authorities adequately resourced to meet their public safety and criminal justice obligations?”

Judges to be offered help coping with online abuse

Frances Gibb

Judges and magistrates are being offered training sessions in how to avoid stress because of the “intolerable pressure” of abuse on social media and increasing number of disturbing sex and child abuse cases.

The course has been created by the Judicial College, the training body for judges, with the aim of helping them to cope with and manage stress, as well as to build resilience. It is being offered as an online course to all judges and magistrates in England and Wales, and a package of emergency measures to shore up public confidence in the justice system.

The resilience programme has been devised with input from an occupational psychologist, behavioural neuroscientist and senior judges with responsibility for supporting colleagues.

The programme includes testimonials from serving judges as to how they dealt with stressful situations and links to outside sources on where to find help and guidance. Lord Burnett said that he was encouraging judges at their court centres to share each other’s experiences and how they deal with difficulties, even by simply chatting about their cases or problems.
Star swaps red swimsuit for Red Square

Ben Hoyle Los Angeles

Even the most devoted Baywatch fans would hesitate to claim that the 1990s television hit was an obvious launchpad for a globe-trotting activism career in the company of some of the world’s most powerful people.

Yet more than 20 years after she left the drama about skimpy dressed Californian lifeguards, Pamela Anderson is at home discussing politics with Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy in London, hanging out with Dame Vivienne Westwood in New York, or holding talks at the Kremlin.

“My breasts had a career, I’m just tagging along,” the actress and former Playboy Playmate once said. Now the rest of her is making up for lost time.

Anderson knows President Putin and has spoken about animal rights at the Kremlin and at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. Asked by The Hollywood Reporter about rumours that she was in a romantic relationship with the Russian president, she laughed off the idea, saying: “I love this question.”

“I speak at the Kremlin or I speak at Vladivostok at the economic conference about green energy and a green economy,” she said. “And I don’t know what people are expecting from me. I can talk about whales and the environment, biodiversity of the oceans. I can talk about anything I want because I know people think he’s a robot or he’s stupid, or he’s a computer screen or he’s not this human being.”

She believes that her friend has been “wrongly accused of so many things”. “He’s so misunderstood,” she said. “Especially in Hollywood, and really hated, because of the Clinton monopoly on the media.” Hillary Clinton and some of her supporters have blamed her 2016 presidential election defeat partly on the hacked Democrat Party emails by Wikileaks in the weeks before the vote.

“We talk about the Bible, we talk about what’s happening with my kids, what’s happening with his family. It’s not just about politics, even though I do take a lot of notes and it’s overwhelming, the information he gives me,” she said.

They were introduced by Westwood, who has called Anderson “one of the most intelligent women I ever met”. Anderson brings Mr Assange vegan food but worries about his health.

The air and light quality [at the embassy] is terrible because he can’t keep his windows open and he can’t get any sunlight. Even prisoners can go outside.

“I always try to humanise him because people think he’s a robot or he’s a computer screen or he’s not this human being.”

She has lectured on sexuality and pornography at the Oxford and Cambridge unions and has written a book on relationships with the kosher sex guru and former congressional candidate Rabbis Shmuley Boteach. She is also close to some of the world’s most prominent creative figures, including Westwood, Jeff Koons and Ai Weiwei.

But it is Anderson’s friendship with Mr Assange, the founder of Wikileaks, that has drawn the most attention. She is a frequent visitor to the hacker in the embassy where he has lived for nearly six years to avoid extradition, initially to Sweden on rape charges, which have been dropped, and now to the US on espionage charges.

She says that she talks about “everything” with Mr Assange.

“We talk about the Bible, we talk about what’s happening with my kids, what’s happening with his family. It’s not just about politics, even though I do take a lot of notes and it’s overwhelming, the information he gives me,” she said.

They were introduced by Westwood, who has called Anderson “one of the most intelligent women I ever met”. Anderson brings Mr Assange vegan food but worries about his health.

“The air and light quality [at the embassy] is terrible because he can’t keep his windows open and he can’t get any sunlight. Even prisoners can go outside. I always try to humanise him because people think he’s a robot or he’s a computer screen or he’s not this human being.”

She believes that her friend has been “wrongly accused of so many things”. “He’s so misunderstood,” she said. “Especially in Hollywood, and really hated, because of the Clinton monopoly on the media.”

Hillary Clinton and some of her supporters have blamed her 2016 presidential election defeat partly on the over-distributed release of hacked Democratic Party emails by Wikileaks in the weeks before the vote.
Pure genius: Turing’s sums strip seawater of salt

Oliver Moody Science Correspondent

Shortly before his arrest on charges of homosexuality, and two years before his suicide, Alan Turing wrote his first and last paper on chemistry. It purported to explain how a human being could go from a single spherical egg to the complicated form of a baby. Turing’s theory was largely ignored for nearly 40 years but now a team of Chinese researchers has used it to build a new kind of desalinator.

The idea is thought to have first occurred to Turing while he was trying to crack the German military’s ciphers at Bletchley Park. In 1952 he set out the mathematics that showed how a symmetrical shape could break into a multitude of elaborate patterns. In recent years biologists have discovered these equations can account for the spots on a leopard’s coat, the stripes on cowrie shells, the way a species of ant buries its dead and even the geographical distribution of crimes.

Chemists have also found that Turing’s dense algebra describes how molecules interact and unfold into labyrinths of circles and polygons. “This really was one of those original ideas that come from someone outside the field who is looking at questions in a way I don’t think anyone had properly thought of before,” Philip Ball, a science writer and expert on Turing’s chemisty, said.

A study published in the journal Science shows that an extremely thin membrane arranged in a Turing pattern of interlocking hexagons can strip the salt out of seawater faster than a conventional desalination plant. A team led by Lin Zhang, of Zhejiang University in the city of Hangzhou, built a system in which a membrane separates water on one side and an organic solvent on the other. The liquids are mixed with a pair of chemicals that react with each other in accord with Turing’s maths, the “activator” molecule being effectively corralled by an “inhibitor” that diffuses at a slower rate. The chemistry is somewhat similar to the process used to make nylon.

The result is a sieve with a thickness of less than 20 nanometres. Analysis with a scanning electron microscope revealed that the membrane had acquired a distinctive Turing pattern.

Every square metre of the sieve is capable of purifying 125 litres of water per hour. It stripped out 99.1 per cent of the sodium sulphate salt in a sample of water and 98.5 per cent of its magnesia sulphate. With sodium chloride, the chief salt in seawater, it only managed 51.2 per cent, suggesting that it will have to be improved before it can be used as a desalinator in the real world.

It is unlikely to be the last time that Turing’s paper comes in handy. While his mathematics could not in the end explain the development of the human embryo, they appear to describe a fundamental process of nature that turns up time and again in unlikely places. Turing patterns have been observed in the ripples in sand dunes and the heaps in which the Messers chantant piles up the corpses of its dead colony members.

Before his death, Turing also prepared an unpublished paper that used the same technique to explain the spiral arrangement of the leaves of plants.

Relativity
A photo from 1884 of Albert Einstein, aged 5, with his sister Maja, 3, is among letters and pictures being sold for £250,000 at Christie’s in London.
ATTENTION PET OWNERS

Is your local Vet Practice now owned by IVC?

IF SO ...
...you will no longer be able to buy any of the following VetPlus products from them.

Synoquin – Promax – Samylin – Aktivait – Lypex – Renate – Epilease

IVC is a corporate group which over the past few years has purchased 536 vet practices across the UK. Many pet owners are unaware of this move and its repercussions. One of these is their decision to replace VetPlus and other similar products with their “own brands”, and as such have stopped their vets from prescribing our products. This obviously makes it very difficult for our existing customers.

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ...
... whether your local practice is owned by IVC you can either call them up or go on their website independentvetcare.co.uk or call VetPlus on 0800 867 283

BUT DON’T WORRY ...
If your local vet practice IS now owned by IVC you can still buy these products at 1000’s of other vet practices throughout the UK. To find your nearest practice go to vetplus.co.uk or call us free of charge on 0800 867 283

VetPlus
A Global Leader in Veterinary Nutraceuticals
Jail for brothers who conned pensioners out of millions

Two brothers who conned vulnerable pensioners into putting £17 million into a high-risk investment scheme that eventually collapsed were jailed yesterday. Alan Taylor, 38, and his brother Russell, 37, paid themselves hundreds of thousands of pounds in commission even though their clients lost more than £5 million, King’s Lynn crown court was told.

They paid more than £150,000 to buy luxury homes and a £45,000 boat. They bought an Aston Martin car with a personalised numberplate for £150,000 and spent £80,000 on watches. The pair also bought luxury holidays. Alan Taylor also hired a private jet to take them on luxury holidays. Alan Taylor, from Norwich, was given five years. Both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud.

Their clients lost more than £5 million, the court was told. George Walker, a partner in the auction house Allsop, said that it was a “once-in-a-lifetime sale” and added: “Potential buyers are likely to be interested in the possibility of obtaining planning permission to develop the buildings into highly desirable homes.”

See the real Guernsey… come to North Devon

Tourism officials in Guernsey are sneaky cashing in on a new film shot 200 miles away on land in North Devon. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society is being used to entice visitors to the Channel island but Lady Stucley, owner of the historic Hartland Abbey & Gardens, has pointed out that it was made on her land. “It was filmed on the Hartland Abbey estate and at Clovelly and other locations in North Devon this time last year in glorious weather,” she said. The film stars Lily James, Matthew Goode and Michiel Huisman. Visit Guernsey capitalised on its release last month with a £130,000 television advert and a campaign that featured the slogan “Visit the island that inspired the story.” There is also a 30-second advert that will be shown to almost 700,000 cinemagoers. Lady Stucley said that it was “quite ingenious” of Guernsey to cash in but added that not one second was filmed there. She added: “We don’t want to do the dirty on Guernsey, but we just want to stick up for our patch and tell the world how stunning North Devon is.”

£4m to spare? Buy all of a cobbled Islington mews

More than 20 mews properties on a cobbled London street are to be auctioned with a £4-million quid price. The majority of Rheodol Mews, in Islington, has been owned by one family for the past 78 years. It comprises 21 buildings hidden behind an archway. They are being used as offices and light industrial premises, with tenants including radio and television production companies. George Walker, a partner in the auction house Allsop, said that it was a “once-in-a-lifetime sale” and added: “Potential buyers are likely to be interested in the possibility of obtaining planning permission to develop the buildings into highly desirable homes.”
Fantastic Mr Foxes are an ideal match for Wilde’s comedy

An Ideal Husband
Vaudeville Theatre, WC2
★★★★☆

There is something quite delicious about the fact that it is the two Foxes that make this Wilde revival feel quite so, well, wild. Edward Fox, at the age of 81, is playing the Earl of Caversham, a distinguished politician who is in despair over his son, Viscount Goring, a dandy who takes the triviality of his buttonhole flower arrangements as seriously as life itself.

“You see Phipps,” says Goring to his butler, preening and posing before us, his buttonhole arrangement so large that no bee could resist, “fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable other people wear.”

The fact that Goring is played by Freddie Fox, aged 29 and the son of Edward, gives it all an extra zing and it’s Freddie who is the one who is absolutely superb.

Is this Wilde’s best play? It avoids, for the most part, sounding like a series of epigrams strung together with a bit of acting in between. It has a proper plot in which a Foreign Office minister Sir Robert Chiltern, played with marvellous scaredy-cat hypocrisy by Nathaniel Parker, is blackmailed over a deep, dark secret. His tiresome wife, Gertrude, is entirely too moral for words: we know what Wilde thinks of her as she has hardly any good lines at all.

The nasty woman behind it all is Mrs Cheveley, played by Frances Barber with a truly evil throaty laugh worthy of Cruella de Vil. It must he said that Barber doesn’t feel entirely natural in the part at times but the laugh always saves her. Plus she has some great lines. When Goring threatens to give her some advice, she shushes him: “Pray don’t. You should never give a woman something she can’t wear in the evening.”

Jonathan Church directs a delight of a revival that rarely lags and the set, by Simon Higlett, has enough swag and velvet to make Wilde himself happy. It was written in 1895 but its themes of honesty in politics (and love) feel modern. There was a huge laugh when Lady Markby, played by Susan Hampshire with total panache, announces: “The fact is that our society is terribly over-populated. Really, someone should arrange a proper scheme of assisted emigration. It would do a great deal of good.” This is the third play in Oscar Wilde season at the Vaudeville. We’ve already seen A Woman of No Importance and Lady Windermere’s Fan with The Importance of Being Earnest to come this July. This is the best of the lot so far and the Foxes can take the credit for that.

Box office 0330 333 4814, until July 14.
Loophole lets unsafe cars stay on the road

Will Humphries

The government has no power to take dangerous cars off the roads despite millions every year suffering defects, The Times has learnt.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has said that it cannot order car manufacturers to recall dangerous vehicles.

The admission comes after an inquest was told that BMW failed to recall thousands of British cars with an electrical fault which had led to the death of a former Gurkha on Christmas Day 2016 in Hampshire.

Narayan Gurung, 66, who served in the British Army for 20 years, swerved into a tree and died after trying to avoid a BMW that had suddenly stalled in the dark because of a total electrical failure that cut out its lights.

BMW had known since 2011 about such faults affecting its cars and was questioned about them by the DVSA in October 2014 and December 2016. The DVSA asked the carmaker in December 2016 to recall 370,000 1 Series, 3 Series and Z4 cars affected by the fault, but it did not do so until April last year, four months after Mr Gurung’s death.

The DVSA has no power to make manufacturers recall dangerous vehicles and can only ask them to do so, the safety agency told The Times. Gareth Llewellyn, the DVSA chief executive, said: “At present we are handling 417 recalls involving more than 2.9 million vehicles under the code of practice agreed with industry. We keep our approach to safety recalls constantly under review to ensure we are able to respond more quickly and prioritise activities where they are most needed.”

Andy McDonald, the shadow transport secretary, has called on ministers to give the DVSA powers to take dangerous cars off the road.

A Department for Transport spokeswoman said: “We are working with the DVSA to look at ways to strengthen its enforcement powers so that it can protect drivers from unsafe vehicles.”

About 80 per cent of safety recalls are started by manufacturers rather than the DVSA. A full safety recall happens when a fault is liable to cause significant risk of injury or death. Importantly, a driver has no warning it will occur.

Mr Llewellyn said that the safety authority had learnt of 19 cases of electrical failure in BMW’s cars between 2011 and 2014 only after a complaint by one of the company’s customers in October 2014. He said that the information the authority had received about the faults did not enable it to make an informed decision on a full recall.

BMW told the inquest that the electrical fault was not “critical” because drivers could still steer and brake despite the headlights, hazard lights, indicators and brake lights not working.

In the latest attempt to find ever more challenging forms of excitement in the big city, a group has taken to wakeboarding on the Regent’s Canal in central London.

For those not familiar with this particular form of aquatic activity it is a cross between water-skiing, surfing and snowboarding, and involves being pulled over a surface of water while riding a small, thin board: the faster, the better.

It is excellent for lakes, docklands and other enclosed expanses of water, but not such an obvious choice for a city canal. The Canal and River Trust, which manages the waterways, said the activity raised a number of dangers to people and wildlife: “We’re always up for new things on the canal, but not this. There’s lots of wildlife in the area and there’s also a risk to people, especially if the cable snapped or the skier was to collide with anything on the water.”

Daredevils leave anger in their wake along canal

It is fast, it is fun, and it is making people furious (Valentine Low writes). Particularly the ducks: if the resident mallards were given to articulate expressions of discontent, they would probably have written several angry letters by now. In the latest attempt to find ever more challenging forms of excitement in the big city, a group has taken to wakeboarding on the Regent’s Canal in central London.

For those not familiar with this particular form of aquatic activity it is a cross between water-skiing, surfing and snowboarding, and involves being pulled over a surface of water while riding a small, thin board: the faster, the better.

It is excellent for lakes, docklands and other enclosed expanses of water, but not such an obvious choice for a city canal. The Canal and River Trust, which manages the waterways, said the activity raised a number of dangers to people and wildlife: “We’re always up for new things on the canal, but not this. There’s lots of wildlife in the area and there’s also a risk to people, especially if the cable snapped or the skier was to collide with anything on the water.”

For bank holiday opening times or local store info, visit our website.
Gut feeling, not income, drives voters now

Cultural attitudes have become more important than economic competence, which is why the Tories are in trouble

Philip Collins
@PCollinsTimes

Local government elections are always fascinating, obviously. I can think of nothing more exciting than staying up all night to discover whether Labour has finally taken Wandsworth. Yet this time it is different. The choice of 150 local authorities, 4,371 councillors and six mayors may just be the most intriguing election of recent times because it should confirm that a quiet revolution is taking place. Class as the basis for allegiance is being recast. The clues to the new politics are in. It’s not where you work or what you earn, it’s what you think.

British politics used to be easy to read. The party ahead on economic competence was likely to win. If, in addition, it had a popular leader, the divide between the generations was starker in London but not by much; it exists all over the country. Though it may not look sound like it in the midst of the Brexit shambles, the new Britain is liberal, diverse and cosmopolitan. The new politics will be the friends of the open society versus its enemies. Today’s Tories are becoming the party that answers no to the questions about the future. Labour is the party that answers maybe and, at the moment, maybe is beating no.

The modern Cupid must act like a spymaster
Edward Lucas
Page 27

Election results for an age effect. In 2015, the age at which people shifted from Labour to Tory was 34. Among the under-34s, Labour won; among the over-34s, the Tories won. By 2017 that age had risen to 47 and, on current trends, it will be 52 by 2022. There are lots of old people and they vote Tory in large numbers, but this is not a durable political strategy.

The Corbyn vote is bourgeois and liberal, not proletarian and radical. This is Corbynite neoliberalism. It will also be fun to scour the local election results for an age effect. In 2015, the age at which people shifted from Labour to Tory was 34. Among the under-34s, Labour won; among the over-34s, the Tories won. By 2017 that age had risen to 47 and, on current trends, it will be 52 by 2022. There are lots of old people and they vote Tory in large numbers, but this is not a durable political strategy.

Neither will the ageing society be to get Ruth Davidson to say it. These trends will be visible in London this morning but this is not an exclusively metropolitan tendency. Labour has already taken Portsmouth South, Plymouth Sutton, Leamington Spa and Canterbury; glimpses of the future every one of them. The divide between the generations is starker in London but not by much; it exists all over the country. Though it may not look sound like it in the midst of the Brexit shambles, the new Britain is liberal, diverse and cosmopolitan.

The new politics will be the friends of the open society versus its enemies. Today’s Tories are becoming the party that answers no to the questions about the future. Labour is the party that answers maybe and, at the moment, maybe is beating no.

MORLAND ANIMATION
That’s one small step for Theresa May; one giant leap for Brexit kind
thetimes.co.uk

Comments are closed on this article.

Bank the extra savings this weekend.

Save £470

52 stores • 0800 / 830 830 • furniturevillage.co.uk

Alexandra
Come shop with friends
After Sale Price £1465
Sale £1095
Now £995

Furniture Village
Living • Dining • Sleeping
Tech giants are eyeing up our supermarkets

Digital disruption can be good so long as competition rules keep up with the likes of Amazon

Ed Conway

Just over a decade ago the UK’s competition authorities decided that the Yellow Pages was too dominant in the classified advertising market. In hindsight it seems like a bizarre decision. This was 2007. Google had already established itself as the world’s leading search engine and was rapidly turning advertising on its head. It was clear that the internet was fast disrupting everything. But the rules didn’t apply. When the Competition Commission examined the phone book industry it said that Yellow Pages had a 75 per cent market share, with the rest taken by Thomson and the BT phone book. So it imposed a pretty aggressive price cap, which Google would have to earn back before it could buy any new market share. This might all seem like ancient history, but the parable is worth contemplating today as the authorities start to run their slide rules over the proposed merger between Sainsbury’s and Asda.

Here are two supermarkets whose combined market share will make them the biggest retailer in the country — bigger even than Tesco. There will be parts of the country where they will become the only game in town. It is a textbook case of market dominance, and the chances are the authorities will take a long, hard look at — and at the very least propose sanctions, possibly a forced sell-off of many of the combined company’s divisions.

Some concerns are prosaic: should Sainsbury’s and Asda be compared only to other supermarkets, or to primarily non-food stores like Marks & Spencer and Boots? Some go deeper: do we assume that shoppers can make their weekly shop online, or do we limit our inquiry to physical stores within a ten-mile radius? To put it another way: is that a supermarket? Is it a place people drive to in order to buy stuff, or simply a London Voldemort, a place consumers and buyers and sellers? Your answer to these questions changes almost everything — and that’s before you start wondering whether the industry you’re investigating is about to be disrupted altogether by a new entrant from Silicon Valley.

This goes to the very heart of 21st-century capitalism. Ultimately the laws that determine our approach to monopolies date back decades or, in the case of these megagroups, after all, to the time when Standard Oil and AT&T were control whole industries and gouged millions.

But that puts us in a slightly odd position. Across the world, from pharmaceuticals to media to retail, beleaguered incumbents are merging with each other. Each has its own parochial problems but each is also paranoid about an impending existential fight. Just look at the way Netflix, Google and the rest. Every other industry has seen what happened to newspaper and music. They are on the defensive, and what is the most straightforward way of defending yourself? Size.

Which brings us back to those antitrust rules. The incumbents argue that they effectively ensnare double standards, preventing them from merging while ignoring the internet giants. It isn’t merely businesses being thinned out; the legal structures we’ve established to regulate them are being upended at the same time.

Still, in a sense, the decision facing regulators on Sainsbury’s-Asda is even trickier than when they had to pass judgment on Yellow Pages. Amazon has yet to storm the UK grocery market, and it is hardly a foregone conclusion that any assault would succeed. If there is one thing Britain does well, it is running retail: consumers don’t pay cash to use Google or Facebook, one can hardly accuse them of price gouging in that sense. Passing savings to customers, at the expense of margins and profits, is Amazon’s very business model.

So regulators have usually stopped short of imposing sanctions on the Silicon Valley giants. When they have, they have munched up and disposed of their competitors. While regulators furious their has a 75 per cent market share, they are there to protect consumers, not small businesses. But that puts us in a slightly odd position. Across the world, from pharmaceuticals to media to retail, beleaguered incumbents are merging with each other. Each has its own parochial problems but each is also paranoid about an impending existential fight. Just look at Netflix, Google and the rest. Every other industry has seen what happened to newspaper and music. They are on the defensive, and what is the most straightforward way of defending yourself? Size.

Regulators are rather relaxed about the size of these megagroups. After all, they are there to protect consumers, not small businesses. But that puts us in a slightly odd position. Across the world, from pharmaceuticals to media to retail, beleaguered incumbents are merging with each other. Each has its own parochial problems but each is also paranoid about an impending existential fight. Just look at Netflix, Google and the rest. Every other industry has seen what happened to newspaper and music. They are on the defensive, and what is the most straightforward way of defending yourself? Size.

Viewed another way, there are many advantages to this sort of consolidation. It means that the bargaining power of the entire industry can be shifted to the benefit of consumers. In other words, it’s a platform that connects businesses that can simply shift their profits to the lowest tax jurisdiction. These antitrust principles made sense at a time when, the big risk was that a company could control whole industries and gouge customers. That was the basis on which Standard Oil and AT&T were broken up by regulators. But what about today? Tech giants.

Consumers don’t pay cash to use Google or Facebook, one can hardly accuse them of price gouging in that sense. Passing savings to customers, at the expense of margins and profits, is Amazon’s very business model.

So regulators have usually stopped short of imposing sanctions on the Silicon Valley giants. When they have, they have munched up and disposed of their competitors. While regulators furious their has a 75 per cent market share, they are there to protect consumers, not small businesses. But that puts us in a slightly odd position. Across the world, from pharmaceuticals to media to retail, beleaguered incumbents are merging with each other. Each has its own parochial problems but each is also paranoid about an impending existential fight. Just look at Netflix, Google and the rest. Every other industry has seen what happened to newspaper and music. They are on the defensive, and what is the most straightforward way of defending yourself? Size.

Regulators are rather relaxed about the size of these megagroups. After all, they are there to protect consumers, not small businesses. But that puts us in a slightly odd position. Across the world, from pharmaceuticals to media to retail, beleaguered incumbents are merging with each other. Each has its own parochial problems but each is also paranoid about an impending existential fight. Just look at Netflix, Google and the rest. Every other industry has seen what happened to newspaper and music. They are on the defensive, and what is the most straightforward way of defending yourself? Size.

Loss of local colour and the loss of the sense of community that it involves...
The modern Cupid must act like a spymaster

Successful matchmaking, as practised by me and my wife, requires intelligence gathering and the sly use of pets

Edward Lucas

The spring sap is rising, with a royal wedding looming, Facebook launching a dating app and a particularly good new television series, Love in the Countryside, trying to fix up lonely male farmers with potential wives.

But not everyone can feature in a TV dating show, and the apps and lonely-hearts ads have a fatal flaw: they expect users to tell the truth.

People lie about their ages, incomes, and attachments. The need to appear as a particular kind of person has an inbuilt vulnerability that underlies a serious moral issue: the targets head off together into the gloaming, we are close to success.

There is no point in recruiting someone with other allegiances. Unfortunately, because of drugs or alcohol, or incurably footloose are ineligible.

Next, we identify motivating factors. In the spy world, these are known by the acronym MICE, for Money, Ideology, Coercion and Ego.

Well-crafted invitations help to set the scene. A reminder on the day to the guests means that they automatically have each other’s email addresses, meaning no end-of-evening embarrassment about asking for a card or contact number. Some stage props are important too: brief entrances by the children and Panda give guests a chance to flinch or fawn revealingly. 

There is no point in recruiting someone with other alliances. Best provide it? Once these elements are in place, we start assembling the other parts of the operation.

Ideally, well-crafted invitations help to set the scene. A reminder on the day to the guests means that they automatically have each other’s email addresses, meaning no end-of-evening embarrassment about asking for a card or contact number. Some stage props are important too: brief entrances by the children and Panda give guests a chance to flinch or fawn revealingly. 

Punctuality is also on display. If you take a happy-go-lucky approach to other people’s time, you will respond indulgently to a fellow guest who sails up an hour late with a mumbled excuse, or none. If you (like me) are a stickler, you will have crossed them off your list before they even arrive.

Then there’s appearance. The first thing Cristina noticed about me at the dinner party where we ourselves were matchmade was my interesting choice of clothes (frayed green shirt, stained red tie, moth-eaten purple sweater and yellow trousers that reached only to my shins). It could have been a serious black mark against me; instead, and luckily for me, she scented a challenge. Having just returned from many years in eastern Europe, I had never seen a woman so elegantly dressed, and contemplated hiding under the table.

Much more important, though, is the way people talk. Serial interrupters, obsessives and shoe-starers may be unattractive to some; but are confident, passionate or charmingly shy to others. Instead of just asserting GSOH, guests have to show what they mean by it.

Table manners matter hugely to some people, and, evidently, not at all to others. Men who show some interest in the food and how it was cooked can win points for potential house-husbandry. Appetites for alcohol are on display, as are those for novelty. My post-prandial “Blue tea from Estonia anyone?” prompts excited assent from some and shuddering requests for coffee from others as the azure liquid gushes from the pot.

Our record still has room for improvement, featuring more Miss Moneypennys than Vesper Lynd. Some friends are beginning to respond to invitations with, “Am I coming to eat or meet?”. The answer is emphatically: “Both.”

Matchmaking is not meddling. It is a vote for hope in a world plagued by unwanted solitariness, which technological fixes such as internet dating seem in practice to aggravate, not abate.


Kurds ‘deserve the full support of the West’

Sir, Your leading article (‘Stand by the Kurds’, May 2) rightly emphasises that demo, tactics, that did not abandon allies such as the Kurds. They were not actually left in the lurch after their uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1991. British people were shocked to see two million Kurds flee to the free zones adjacent and this encouraged John Major to win support for the resolution of the safe zone, safe haven. This undoubtedly saved the Kurds from likely further genocide for 12 years. Their leader, Jalal Talabani, is a hero for this story; Tony Blair is also greatly respected there for supporting the 2001 liberation of Iraq.

The Kurds now in Iraq deserve greater support. They are militarily reliable and their secular and religiously moderate politics make them a powerful antidote to extremism. Isis has not been eliminated and Iraq Sunnis, among whom it found support, have yet to resettle. The Kurds could be pivotal in Iraq and the wider Middle East. Your article does much to encourage practical and political support for a people who are natural allies.

Jack Lopresti MP Chair, All-party parliamentary group on the Kurdistan region in Iraq

Caught mapping

Sir, The vice-chancellor of Buckingham University attests that children can no longer read maps and are losing their grip on reality (May 3). I am not qualified to comment on the latter part of this contention but as a professor of geography I concur that a lack of geographical awareness is a growing concern. Cartographic knowledge of our surroundings augments our understanding of events affecting our shared living environments. Basic map skills also afford one considerable pleasure in navigating the environment. Although my car has a sat-nav, I never turn it on. I must remove 75% of the benefit of a free HP vaccination; after reviewing the medical evidence we paid out £260 for the meningitis B vaccination, an additional £260 per child, as there were cases locally in Iraq in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The Americans sent 5,000 troops, we sent 2,000 including a complete Marine Commando, and the French 1,000 as well as a Special Forces based RAF Tornado jets in Turkey to establish a no-fly zone for Iraqi refugees, and in particular to stop Libyan, Syrian, and Turkish gunship helicopters. Its code name was Operation Provide Comfort, and was unprecedented in modern times. Lord King of Bridgewater House of Lords.

Sir, Further to Anthony’s article ‘Kurdis has betrayed them after purge of Isis’ (May 3), I would wholeheartedly agree that the Kurds as a people deserve a great deal more support and recognition. My wife and I were present in Arbil on the day of the referendum last year and spent just over week in Kirkuk itself. We were greatly moved during the referendum process to see that many Kurdish people had a clear desire to determine their own future. At that time, the atmosphere was one of a holiday, and it was apparent that many had made their choice and were willing to travel and even risk their lives to go back to their homeland.

Michael Round

Ickford, Herts

Nobel prime time

Sir, Robbie Millen’s catalogue of Nobel literary prize nominations (Thurlander, May 3) is amusing and, in general, I agree with him. There are, though, one or two howls which are unexceptional by any stretch of the imagination. The prize that the authors come after the saupe has ceased to rise like catching your toadstone on your back, humped Saul Bellow’s. And when it returns from its present crisis it is to be hoped that the committee dares to choose writers in their prime, not their sunset years.

John Sutherland

Birkbeck professor of modern English literature, UCL

Too ill not to work

Sir, Further to your report “Death of the sickie as staff turn up” (May 3), workers in the public sector can be fined £260 by their employers for taking time off work, unlike workers in the private sector. There is a growing concern that the NHS needs to take a much more strategic approach to sickness absence. It is not actually left in the lurch after their uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1991. British people were shocked to see two million Kurds flee to the free zones adjacent and this encouraged John Major to win support for the resolution of the safe zone, safe haven. This undoubtedly saved the Kurds from likely further genocide for 12 years. Their leader, Jalal Talabani, is a hero for this story; Tony Blair is also greatly respected there for supporting the 2001 liberation of Iraq.

The Kurds now in Iraq deserve greater support. They are militarily reliable and their secular and religiously moderate politics make them a powerful antidote to extremism. Isis has not been eliminated and Iraq Sunnis, among whom it found support, have yet to resettle. The Kurds could be pivotal in Iraq and the wider Middle East. Your article does much to encourage practical and political support for a people who are natural allies.

Jack Lopresti MP Chair, All-party parliamentary group on the Kurdistan region in Iraq

Caught mapping

Sir, The vice-chancellor of Buckingham University attests that children can no longer read maps and are losing their grip on reality (May 3). I am not qualified to comment on the latter part of this contention but as a professor of geography I concur that a lack of geographical awareness is a growing concern. Cartographic knowledge of our surroundings augments our understanding of events affecting our shared living environments. Basic map skills also afford one considerable pleasure in navigating the environment. Although my car has a sat-nav, I never turn it on. I must remove 75% of the benefit of a free HP vaccination; after reviewing the medical evidence we paid out £260 for the meningitis B vaccination, an additional £260 per child, as there were cases locally in Iraq in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The Americans sent 5,000 troops, we sent 2,000 including a complete Marine Commando, and the French 1,000 as well as a Special Forces based RAF Tornado jets in Turkey to establish a no-fly zone for Iraqi refugees, and in particular to stop Libyan, Syrian, and Turkish gunship helicopters. Its code name was Operation Provide Comfort, and was unprecedented in modern times. Lord King of Bridgewater House of Lords.

Sir, Further to Anthony’s article ‘Kurdis has betrayed them after purge of Isis’ (May 3), I would wholeheartedly agree that the Kurds as a people deserve a great deal more support and recognition. My wife and I were present in Arbil on the day of the referendum last year and spent just over week in Kirkuk itself. We were greatly moved during the referendum process to see that many Kurdish people had a clear desire to determine their own future. At that time, the atmosphere was one of a holiday, and it was apparent that many had made their choice and were willing to travel and even risk their lives to go back to their homeland.

Michael Round

Ickford, Herts

Nobel prime time

Sir, Robbie Millen’s catalogue of Nobel literary prize nominations (Thurlander, May 3) is amusing and, in general, I agree with him. There are, though, one or two howls which are unexceptional by any stretch of the imagination. The prize that the authors come after the saupe has ceased to rise like catching your toadstone on your back, humped Saul Bellow’s. And when it returns from its present crisis it is to be hoped that the committee dares to choose writers in their prime, not their sunset years.

John Sutherland

Birkbeck professor of modern English literature, UCL

Too ill not to work

Sir, Further to your report “Death of the sickie as staff turn up” (May 3), workers in the public sector can be fined £260 by their employers for taking time off work, unlike workers in the private sector. There is a growing concern that the NHS needs to take a much more strategic approach to sickness absence. It is not
As the National Health Service prepares for its 70th anniversary in July, the pressures are weighing in from all sides. Mistakes are inevitable in an enterprise with 1.3 million staff, the largest employer in Europe. Yet when they occur they can be fatal and they can also illustrate some of the problems with the NHS.

A computer algorithm failure meant that 450,000 women missed screening for breast cancer. The NHS needs to integrate better to avoid these disasters.

The best response is to put the patient in charge. Patients devise a care plan in consultation with a doctor and then manage their own symptoms. Early results from a pilot scheme suggest greater patient satisfaction at lower cost. The various parts of the bureaucracy are forced to integrate around the patient, who is the budget holder. This is ultimately, a way to relieve the pressure on the NHS. The evidence that mistakes are being flagged early after all, the people affected are all of a sudden in control.

As for the Afghan killings, exposed is their cold-blooded murder, however, that is unthinkable: to allow brutal regimes to celebrate the Windrush scandal in the sense that an administrative mess, concealed deep in a department, can quickly become an explosive political issue. While it would be wrong to suppose that blame can be apportioned anywhere near Mr Hunt, it is an important principle that responsibility should settle there. The question of central responsibility for the NHS is, in fact, the big issue for the service. In this case, Public Health England, which runs the screening programme, was accused by NHS England, which holds most of the NHS budget and is the body in overall charge of how the system is organised, of inadequate quality checks. Public Health England retorted that because NHS England was the ultimate client, it was up to them to raise concerns. Though Public Health England is responsible for strategies to prevent conditions such as obesity, it provides no services, runs no hospitals and has no executive authority. In short, it was not obvious what was going on. Before the reforms introduced in 2012 by Andrew Lansley as health secretary, screening was the responsibility of a single body rather than split between Public Health England and NHS England. The fragmentation in the NHS between different institutions is a recurrent complaint. The health secretary would be well advised to assign responsibility for screening programmes more clearly to a single agency. The NHS has become a collection of disparate bodies and some top-down intervention would be welcome.

Not all of the integration can be done by central government, however. The NHS is a vast body that needs to work efficiently and yet also be more responsive to patients. These objectives constantly pull against each other. Forced integration can be seen as the Achilles’ heel, with this flaw being that it was total rubbish. A bomb exploded in Kabul this week and journalists rushed to the scene. An Islamic State fighter disguised as a cameraman triggered a second blast killing 14 journalists and ex-governors of Afghanistan.

Target Journalist

The killing of reporters should be classified as a war crime

The evidence in the case of the Afghan killings exposed the kind of gritty detail about the chain of command that was needed to make a successful prosecution case at the Hague and show what can be done.

Colvin, and the French photographer Rémi Ochlik, were shot and killed in a media centre, which was set up as a safe house for Afghan and international journalists. The International Criminal Court was set up after the conflict to try those charged with war crimes. Today, under international law the targeting of civilians is already a war crime. The same should apply to those who work for broadcasters and a range of pro-regime informants. bows from Syrian government forces. The evidence, the testimony of defectors, suggests that the government’s policy is anxious that the terrorists groups are anxious that the press. The terrorist groups are anxious that the press, which is their cold-blooded murder, however, that is unthinkable: to allow brutal regimes to celebrate the Windrush scandal in the sense that an administrative mess, concealed deep in a department, can quickly become an explosive political issue. While it would be wrong to suppose that blame can be apportioned anywhere near Mr Hunt, it is an important principle that responsibility should settle there. The question of central responsibility for the NHS is, in fact, the big issue for the service. In this case, Public Health England, which runs the screening programme, was accused by NHS England, which holds most of the NHS budget and is the body in overall charge of how the system is organised, of inadequate quality checks. Public Health England retorted that because NHS England was the ultimate client, it was up to them to raise concerns. Though Public Health England is responsible for strategies to prevent conditions such as obesity, it provides no services, runs no hospitals and has no executive authority. In short, it was not obvious what was going on. Before the reforms introduced in 2012 by Andrew Lansley as health secretary, screening was the responsibility of a single body rather than split between Public Health England and NHS England. The fragmentation in the NHS between different institutions is a recurrent complaint. The health secretary would be well advised to assign responsibility for screening programmes more clearly to a single agency. The NHS has become a collection of disparate bodies and some top-down intervention would be welcome.

Not all of the integration can be done by central government, however. The NHS is a vast body that needs to work efficiently and yet also be more responsive to patients. These objectives constantly pull against each other. Forced integration can be seen as the Achilles’ heel, with this flaw being that it was total rubbish. A bomb exploded in Kabul this week and journalists rushed to the scene. An Islamic State fighter disguised as a cameraman triggered a second blast killing 14 journalists and ex-governors of Afghanistan.

Target Journalist

The killing of reporters should be classified as a war crime

The evidence in the case of the Afghan killings exposed the kind of gritty detail about the chain of command that was needed to make a successful prosecution case at the Hague and show what can be done.

Colvin, and the French photographer Rémi Ochlik, were shot and killed in a media centre, which was set up as a safe house for Afghan and international journalists. The International Criminal Court was set up after the conflict to try those charged with war crimes. Today, under international law the targeting of civil-
President Trump insisted yesterday that a hush-money payment to a porn star days before the 2016 election did not break campaign finance laws, after his legal team shocked Washington by revealing that he had provided the funds for the deal.

Mr Trump said that a non-disclosure agreement struck by Michael Cohen, his personal lawyer, with Stephanie Clifford, who uses the stage name Stormy Daniels, had been an attempt to stop her making "false and extortionist accusations" about an affair.

Such arrangements were "very common among celebrities in people of wealth", Mr Trump wrote on Twitter. "Money from the campaign, or campaign contributions, played no role [sic] in this transaction."

The remarks followed a bombshell interview by Rudy Giuliani, the former New York mayor who recently joined Mr Trump's legal team.

Appearing on Fox News on Wednesday night, Mr Giuliani revealed that the president had reimbursed Mr Cohen with $130,000 that the lawyer had paid Ms Clifford to secure her silence about an alleged relationship in 2006, before Mr Trump said that she took place in 2006.

Mr Trump had previously denied any knowledge of the payment. On April 5, while aboard Air Force One, he was asked if he knew where Mr Cohen had got the money and had answered: "No. I don't know.

Federal investigators are looking at whether the payment amounted to an illegal contribution to the Trump campaign by Mr Cohen, potentially a serious crime. A candidate is allowed to contribute as much as they want to their own campaign, anyone else is limited by law to $2,700.

Mr Giuliani told Fox News that Mr Trump had become aware of the details of the hush-money deal only in the past two weeks after Mr Cohen's office and home were raided by the FBI.

Mr Cohen has been under surveillance by federal investigators and it was reported yesterday that his phones had been tapped. At least one call with the White House was intercepted, NBC news said. Mr Trump was said to have been advised not to call Mr. Cohen because of the risk of being recorded.

According to Ms. Bul- ani, Mr Cohen, who has worked for Mr Trump for a decade, made the payment to Ms. Clifford "on his own authority". Mr Trump reimbursed him through a series of monthly payments of $35,000 each, he added.

"That removes the campaign finance violation and we have all the documentation," Mr Giuliani said. Mr Trump had "trusted Michael, and Michael trusted him".

Mr Cohen had previously said that "neither the Trump Organisation nor the Trump campaign was party to the transaction with Ms. Clifford" — a carefully phrased statement that gave rise to speculation that Mr Trump might have been involved. He had also claimed that the money came from his own pocket.

Legal experts said that campaign finance law may still have been broken if the payment to Ms. Clifford was made in order to influence the 2016 election and not disclosed to the Federal Election Commission.

In a second interview broadcast on Fox yesterday morning, Mr Giuliani repeated that he had "no idea" what would have happened had the story of Mr Trump's alleged affair with a porn actress come out "on October 15, 2016, in the middle of the last debate with Hillary Clinton". He added: "Cohen made it go away. He did his job."

However, he also argued that Mr Cohen had been thinking about Mr Trump and his wife Melania, not politics, when he made the $130,000 payment. "I think he was trying to help the [Trump] family," Mr Giuliani said.

"It was to save... not their marriage as much as their reputation.

Michael Avenatti, Ms Clifford's lawyer, said on Twitter: "Mr Trump stood on AIP and blantly lied. This followed the lies told by others close to him, including Mr Cohen. This should never happen in our America."

In an interview with CNN, he added "Every American regardless of their political persuasion should be disgusted by what has happened."

Ms Clifford had started legal action in California to invalidate her non-disclosure agreement with Mr Trump. She has also sued the president for defamation in New York.

Mr Giuliani also offered Fox News a new explanation for Mr Trump's sacking of James Comey, the former FBI director, which set off a political firestorm a year ago. "He fired Comey because Mr Trump would not, among other things, say that he wasn't a target of the [Russia] investigation," Mr Giuliani said. "He's entitled to that. Hillary Clinton got that and he couldn't get that. So he fired him and he said, 'I'm free of this guy.'"

Mr Giuliani's disclosures appeared to have blindsided senior White House staff. Asked yesterday where she had heard about Mr Giuliani's payment, Sarah Sanders, White House press secretary, said: "I first became aware I had was during the interview last night."

The move follows warnings from the US military that Beijing is poised to extend its influence thousands of miles beyond its shores.

US intelligence officials told the CNBC news channel that Beijing had installed anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missiles on Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef and Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, which are also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan.

China's Defence Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but a foreign ministry spokesman said: "Those who do not intend to be aggressive have no need to be worried or scared." She added that...
China “hopes relevant parties can objectively and calmly view this”. The Americans believe that the missiles were deployed in the past month. The installations, if confirmed, would mark the first Chinese missile deployments in the Spratly Islands.

Beijing has transformed dozens of atolls and reefs into fortified artificial islands, ignoring protests from neighbouring nations. The land-based anti-ship cruise missiles could strike vessels within 340 nautical miles of the reefs, while the surface-to-air missiles can hit aircraft, drones and cruise missiles within 180 miles.

A Pentagon official told CNBC: “We have consistently called on China, as well as other claimants, to refrain from further land reclamation, construction of new facilities and militarisation of disputed features. The further militarisation of outposts will only serve to raise tensions and create greater distrust among claimants.”

Greg Poling, a South China Sea expert at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said yesterday: “Before this, if you were one of the other claimants you knew that China was monitoring your every move. Now you will know that you’re operating inside Chinese missile range. That’s a pretty strong, if implicit, threat.” The US military said last month that China’s “forward operating bases” in the South China Sea appeared to have been completed. “The only thing lacking are the deployed forces,” Admiral Philip Davidson said. “China will be able to extend its influence thousands of miles to the south and project power deep into Oceania. “China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the United States.”

Safari park closes after lion killing prompts death threats

South Africa Jane Flanagan Cape Town

A South African safari park where a ranger shot dead a lion as it mauled one of the owners has shut its doors after receiving threats and abuse. Mike and Christine Hodge said that they needed time “to take stock and decide what to do next” after the attack at Marakele Predator Park in which Mr Hodge, 72, suffered a broken jaw and multiple lacerations.

Footage of the incident, which was recorded by a tourist and shared online, has drawn criticism of Mr Hodge’s management of the park and the commercial “wildlife” industry. The couple, who moved to South Africa from Wilmington, Cheshire, 30 years ago, said that they were “devastated” by what had happened and did not understand why Shamba, the ten-year-old lion, suddenly charged. The video shows Mr Hodge walking around Shamba’s enclosure. The lion runs at him, knocks him to the ground and drags him away head-first. The shooting by a ranger is not shown.

The park, about 160 miles northwest of Johannesburg, has more than a dozen big cats, including white lions. Its income comes from visitors as well as volunteers who pay for hands-on work experience with the animals. Pippa Hankinson, from the Blood Lions campaign against captive predator breeding, said the park had no conservation value, adding: “Tourists and volunteers who pay to pet, cuddle and walk with captive predators support the industry as they are helping to cover the costs of rearing these animals.”
**Dam threatens to wipe out rare orangutan**

Indonesia

Ben Webster Environment Editor

A recently discovered species of orangutan is threatened with extinction in Indonesia by plans for a hydroelectric dam backed by Chinese companies, scientists have said.

Tapanuli orangutans were thought until last year to be genetically identical to Sumatra’s other orangutans, but analysis of their genome established them as a separate species, now named Pongo tapanuliensis, that had been isolated from other orangutans for at least 10,000 years. Only 800 Tapanuli orangutans are left and they are already threatened by hunting and the expansion of agriculture.

Sinohydro, a Chinese state-owned hydroelectric company, is clearing forest in Sumatra in preparation for the 510-megawatt Batang Toru dam. Sino- sure and Bank of China have provided loans for the $1.6 billion project, the Sumatran Orangutan Society said. Sinohydro did not respond yesterday to requests for comment. Its good governance policy, published on its website, says that it observes “a set of ‘no-go’ areas including … habitats of threatened species”.

Critics argue that the dam will make it far harder for orangutans to move between the two main sections of their breeding grounds, fragmenting the population and causing inbreeding. According to a paper in Current Biology at least 8 per cent of Tapanuli territory will be damaged or destroyed.

The authors, from James Cook University in Australia and the University of Indonesia, said that the new roads required for building and maintaining the dam would encourage more development and deforestation. “This proposed project is highly inadvisable,” they concluded. “Without rapid action to limit conversion and restore key habitat, the long-term survival of [Tapanuli orangutans] is in serious doubt.”

They called on the Indonesian government to protect all the remaining Tapanuli habitat and restore land already converted to plantations to create 200-metre wide corridors for the orangutans to cross and find mates. They also recommended installing group bridges to help the apes cross rivers.

Serge Wich of Liverpool John Moo- rers University, one of the scientists who revealed the existence of the Tapanuli orangutan, said: “It is appalling to think that, within our lifetimes, a new great ape species could be both discovered and driven to extinction. And yet, if construction of the Batang Toru dam is allowed to continue, it will be the final nail in the coffin.”

This species is already perilously close to extinction and so every effort must be made to ensure that one of our closest living relatives survives. Companies and investors involved in the project must immediately halt construction of the dam while full legal protection is granted to all of the orangutans’ remaining forest, and efforts made to produce this electricity elsewhere,”

Professor Wich suggested that the Indonesian government should focus instead on a large geothermal project north of the Tapanuli habitat.

Fewer than 15,000 orangutans remain on Sumatra and 70,000-100,000 are left in Borneo, the only other place where they exist in the wild.

**Albinos kill may face the death penalty**

Malawi

Jane Flanagan Africa Correspondent

The president of Malawi has called for a debate on introducing the death penalty for “albinos hunters” after the most recent case of a victim being killed for his body parts.

A priest and a police officer were among a gang of 12 arrested over the kidnapping and murder of McDonald Mambukala, 22, the 22nd person with albinism to have been killed in the country since 2014.

Suspects led police to a shallow grave containing his dismembered body. He went missing on March 9 from Machinga in the east of the country. His legs and some bones had been removed. A surgical assistant and one of the victim’s closest relatives are among those facing charges over his death, police said.

Traditional medicine, or witchcraft, is common in some rural parts of Africa where access to modern medicine is limited and superstitions persist. There have been about 150 attacks on people with albinism in Malawi since 2014. The condition is caused by a lack of pigmentation in the skin, hair and eyes and affects one in 20,000 people worldwide, but is most common in sub-Saharan Africa. The body parts are made into charms or potions by traditional healers who claim they bring wealth and good fortune. The entire body of someone with albinism can sell for tens of thousands of pounds.

President Mutharika said that Malawians needed an “honest debate” about introducing the death sentence “to stop such barbarous acts.”

Iplotonwosa Ero, the UN independent expert on albinism, described the situation in Malawi as “an emergency, a crisis disturbing in its proportions. They are an endangered people group facing a risk of systemic extinction over time if nothing is done,” she added.
**Plundered treasures returned to Baghdad**

Catherine Philip

**Diary of a Correspondent**

Thousands of priceless artefacts from ancient Mesopotamia are on their way back to Iraq after they were recovered by the US authorities from an evangelical family-owned business that had bought them from looters.

The objects were smuggled into the US by Hobby Lobby, a craft store chain that achieved notoriety in 2014 when it won a Supreme Court case exempting it from covering contraception on employees’ health insurance, because it was against the owners’ Christian values.

Hobby Lobby paid $1.6 million to an unknown dealer for 5,500 Middle Eastern artefacts, for its store chain of the Bible in Washington, despite expert warnings that they may have been illegally looted from sites in Iraq.

The majority of the items were ancient clay cuneiforms from the second and third millennia BC, several from the ancient city of Isinagrig. Prosecutors said the deal was “fraud with red flags”. Hobby Lobby went ahead with the purchase even though its representatives never met the dealers and received conflicting accounts of their origins.

Hobby Lobby obeyed instructions to wire payments to seven personal bank accounts overseas before the items were shipped back to the US.

About 60 million US households own a cat, and about 47 million own a dog. If the survey is accurate, several million animals are being medicated.

Surveys of vets and owners suggest that a growing number of Americans are giving their pets anti-anxiety drugs to treat conditions such as antisocial behaviour, phobias and compulsive tail-chasing.

A market research company has suggested that nearly one in ten American dog owners has given a medicine to their pet for “anxiety, calming or mood purposes”. For cats, the figure is about one in 20, according to a national survey.

About 60 million US households own a cat, and about 47 million own a dog. If the survey is accurate, several million animals are being medicated.

The Washington Post recently collected a number of studies and concluded that “veterinary providers and pet owners are paying increased attention to such problems as separation anxiety, compulsive behaviours, phobias and aggression. As a result, many American pets are taking psychiatric medications.”

A poll of vets in 2016 found that more than 80 per cent had prescribed fluoxetine, an antidepressant often sold under the brand name Prozac, to treat a cat or dog.

Several drugs developed for humans have been approved by US regulators to treat the mental health of pets. The antidepressant citalopram, for example, can be used for separation anxiety in dogs.

Sedative drugs, which are used to treat Parkinson’s disease in people, has been prescribed for canine cognitive dysfunction.

The players seemed friendlier the higher she climbed. In January, a solid finish in a major tournament convinced her that it was worth the fluke.

“It’s a really wonderful feeling when you’re studying and working so hard and you’re being rewarded,” she said. “On Twitter this week, she said that she had pushed the book back to next year.

“I have some more tournaments to play first,” she added.

Down dog? US vets dish out happy pills

Rhys Blakely Washington

**Could the cat be catatonic? Should the pooch be getting Prozac?**

**Worried that the guinea pig is gloomy?**

Surveys of vets and owners suggest that a growing number of Americans are giving their pets anti-anxiety drugs to treat conditions such as antisocial behaviour, phobias and compulsive tail-chasing.

A market research company has suggested that nearly one in ten American dog owners has given a medicine to their pet for “anxiety, calming or mood purposes”. For cats, the figure is about one in 20, according to a national survey.

About 60 million US households own a dog, and about 47 million own a cat. If the survey is accurate, several million animals are being medicated.

The Washington Post recently collected a number of studies and concluded that “veterinary providers and pet owners are paying increased attention to such problems as separation anxiety, compulsive behaviours, phobias and aggression. As a result, many American pets are taking psychiatric medications.”

A poll of vets in 2016 found that more than 80 per cent had prescribed fluoxetine, an antidepressant often sold under the brand name Prozac, to treat a cat or dog.

Several drugs developed for humans have been approved by US regulators to treat the mental health of pets. The antidepressant citalopram, for example, can be used for separation anxiety in dogs.

Sedative drugs, which are used to treat Parkinson’s disease in people, has been prescribed for canine cognitive dysfunction.

Michael Fox, a vet who writes a column for the Washington Post, has warned against an “over-reliance on psychopharmacuticals to help animals adapt to situations in which they do not belong, such as a dog being left at home in a crate all day”.

**Bank bosses held as cash runs short in meltdown**

Venezuela

Stephen Gibbs Caracas

Venezuela’s socialist government has shuttered the entire senior management of the country’s leading private bank as the country struggles with chronic cash shortages and a collapse in the value of its currency.

The chief prosecutor said yesterday that Leopoldo Lopez, the man he wants arrested, has been “attacking the financial system”. He was being held by military counterintelligence.

The prosecutor, Tareck El Aissami, the Venezuelan vice-president, said that “suspicious” activity, indicating black market trading, had been detected in the account of Mr Lopez, who is a “drug kingpin” by the US Treasury Department — a description the Venezuelan government denies.

An Associated Press review of figures and accounts shows that America’s largest bank has been facing its biggest crisis. The bear necessities

**A fish twists fruitlessly in the jaws of a brown bear as it is pulled from a river in Kamchatka, Russia**

The newspaper said in an interview with its editor. “It’s a big deal in the world of poker,” the paper said.

The players seemed friendlier the higher she climbed. In January, a solid finish in a major tournament convinced her that it was worth the fluke.

“It’s a really wonderful feeling when you’re studying and working so hard and you’re being rewarded,” she said. “On Twitter this week, she said that she had pushed the book back to next year.

“I have some more tournaments to play first,” she added.

Down dog? US vets dish out happy pills

Rhys Blakely Washington

**Could the cat be catatonic? Should the pooch be getting Prozac?**

**Worried that the guinea pig is gloomy?**

Surveys of vets and owners suggest that a growing number of Americans are giving their pets anti-anxiety drugs to treat conditions such as antisocial behaviour, phobias and compulsive tail-chasing.

A market research company has suggested that nearly one in ten American dog owners has given a medicine to their pet for “anxiety, calming or mood purposes”. For cats, the figure is about one in 20, according to a national survey.

About 60 million US households own a dog, and about 47 million own a cat. If the survey is accurate, several million animals are being medicated.

The Washington Post recently collected a number of studies and concluded that “veterinary providers and pet owners are paying increased attention to such problems as separation anxiety, compulsive behaviours, phobias and aggression. As a result, many American pets are taking psychiatric medications.”

A poll of vets in 2016 found that more than 80 per cent had prescribed fluoxetine, an antidepressant often sold under the brand name Prozac, to treat a cat or dog.

Several drugs developed for humans have been approved by US regulators to treat the mental health of pets. The antidepressant citalopram, for example, can be used for separation anxiety in dogs.

Sedative drugs, which are used to treat Parkinson’s disease in people, has been prescribed for canine cognitive dysfunction.

Michael Fox, a vet who writes a column for the Washington Post, has warned against an “over-reliance on psychopharmacuticals to help animals adapt to situations in which they do not belong, such as a dog being left at home in a crate all day”.

**Bank bosses held as cash runs short in meltdown**

Venezuela

Stephen Gibbs Caracas

Venezuela’s socialist government has shuttered the entire senior management of the country’s leading private bank as the country struggles with chronic cash shortages and a collapse in the value of its currency.

The chief prosecutor said yesterday that Leopoldo Lopez, the man he wants arrested, has been “attacking the financial system”. He was being held by military counterintelligence.

The prosecutor, Tareck El Aissami, the Venezuelan vice-president, said that “suspicious” activity, indicating black market trading, had been detected in the account of Mr Lopez, who is a “drug kingpin” by the US Treasury Department — a description the Venezuelan government denies.

An Associated Press review of figures and accounts shows that America’s largest bank has been facing its biggest crisis.
Blasting barnacles! Tintin watercolour to sell for €500,000

A rare watercolour of the boy reporter Tintin was expected to sell in Paris last night for more than a million euros, as the Belgian cartoon character continues to be from the world of comic strips to the realm of serious art collecting (Charles Brenner writes).

The image, drawn in ink and coloured by Hergé, the creator of Tintin, was the cover for King Ottokar’s Sceptre, the hero’s seventh adventure when it was originally published, in 1939, in the Catholic monthly, the Petit Vingtième. The 20cm x 20cm illustration, which did not appear in the subsequent published book, shows Tintin fleeing through the snow world of Balkans into the imaginary state of Syldavia from the fascist kingdom of Borduria. He is accompanied by his faithful fox terrier Milou (‘Snowy in the English version) and is clutching a loaf of bread and a bottle of red wine. A Bordurian border guard is seen shaking his fists.

The latest sale in a booming auction market for Tintin originals is rare because the illustration had been locked away for 79 years, sold in Paris in November for €305,000, by the family who received it as a gift from the artist. Daniel Maghen, an expert at Christie’s, which was selling the work, said that the illustration, in Hergé’s typical clean line style, “has an incredible freshness” as it had not suffered from any wear.

You’re absolutely right. Selling your record collection will create more space. But it will also create something else. A void. A huge one. Part of your essence will disappear. Gone. Forever. The party where you heard that amazing track. Met that amazing girl. Then... The album you and your best mate bonded over. The song that reminds you of mum. It’s so much more than a record collection. It’s the soundtrack to your life. And you’re going to give it to a complete stranger. Really? Or you could always talk to us about a home mover mortgage.

Greece accuses Turkey of revenge cyberattack plot

Greece
Anthee Carassava Athens

Greece is preparing for a cyberattack on its state institutions after it refused to hand over Turkish soldiers accused of plotting to overthrow President Erdogan.

Turkish hackers of the Akin laral — or Raiders — group threatened to breach the Greek foreign ministry’s computer system and leak sensitive state documents. They also targeted the state news agency and accused Greece of aiding and abetting terrorists.

One of the hackers told Skai, an Athens-based television network, that the attacks were a response to the soldiers being “unjustly tried in Athens”. Since the first hacking, the Turkish group has attacked the computer systems of four Greek organisations.

All eight Turkish defenders were believed to have been supporters of Fethullah Gulen, the US-based cleric whom Mr Erdogan has blamed for the attempt to overthrow his government.

In a statement, the Greek foreign ministry said that it was dealing with hacking incidents but that its computer system had “not stopped operating.”

Angelos Syrigos, a professor of international relations at Pantepon University in Athens, said: “There’s no doubt that these guys are spooks acting within the context of an organised plan to escalate a war of nerves with Greece.”
Hunt for MH370 finds wreck of Victorian ship

Australia
Bernard Lagan Sydney

The world’s most expensive search has yet to find the missing Malaysian flight MH370 but it has solved a 135-year-old British seafaring mystery.

Australian archaeologists have identified one of two 19th-century shipwrecks discovered by teams looking for the lost Boeing 777 as a merchant vessel that disappeared en route from Liverpool to Bombay in July 1883.

She is almost certainly West Ridge, a 220ft iron barque, built in Scotland, which was lost while carrying coal to India. Nothing was heard again of the ship or her 28-man crew until December 2015 when a sonar device registered wreckage more than 12,000ft beneath the southern Indian Ocean.

There was, briefly, huge excitement among the team searching for MH370. The plane vanished in March 2014 on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing and the search has cost an estimated £50 million. Then high-resolution images showed that they had found a ship rather than an aircraft.

Anchors, old metal fasteners and the outlines of a hull were visible on the seabed 1,500 miles off Western Australia. Some of the lumps of coal scattered around the wreck were recovered and analysed, enabling Australian scientists to identify it as British in origin.

That helped to narrow down the likely identity of the wreck. West Ridge, built in Glasgow in 1869, was known to be carrying British coal to India and her dimensions fitted those of the wreck. Her crew comprised British, Scottish, Norwegian, Swedish, Canadian and Irish seamen, including its master, John Arthur, from Shetland.

A subsequent inquiry found that the cargo was “particularly well ventilated” and therefore an explosion or spontaneous combustion from a gas build-up was not considered to have caused the loss, a finding now questioned by Australian researchers.

Ross Anderson, curator of maritime archaeology at the West Australian Museum, who traced the wreck, said: “Most of the material widely scattered on the seabed consists of the remains of the coal cargo that had split out of the hull prior to it striking the seabed.

“The evidence points to the ship sinking as a result of a catastrophic event such as explosion, which was common in the transport of coal cargos.”

There are competing theories as to why the wreck of West Ridge lies east of the normal sailing route to Bombay. One suggestion is that she had become dismasted and was making a run for port in Western Australia. The other is that the ship was on fire and drifted, with or without the crew on board, before she sank.

Explosion or spontaneous combustion was a constant danger for ships carrying cargos of coal. Between August 1878 and June 1886, 302 British-registered ships with coal cargos disappeared at sea.

The Australian researchers were unable positively to identify a second wreck found 22 miles from West Ridge, but they believe that they have narrowed the candidates to two.

The first is the wooden barque Magdala, lost in 1882 on a voyage from Penarth in Wales to Ternate in Indonesia, also with a cargo of coal.

The other candidate is the wooden brig W. Gordon, lost in 1876, sailing from Glasgow to Adelaide and also thought to have been carrying coal. Her name board drifted and was found washed up at Cape Otway, Victoria, in September of that year.

A second underwater search for MH370 is being conducted by the American company Ocean Infinity for the Malaysian government on a “no find, no fee” basis. It is expected to end this month.

The searches were to be paid $90 million if they found MH370, which was lost with 239 people on board. It has become — and may well remain — the world’s greatest aviation mystery.
Sale

Subscribe and get your first 3 months for the price of 1.*

Our words give you the full picture.

Choose a subscription that suits you and don’t miss the stories that matter.

The Classic 5 Day
The Times print edition
Monday to Friday.
Now just £9 a week

The Classic 7 Day
The Times and The Sunday Times print edition seven days a week.
Now just £11 a week

Our most popular pack

The Ultimate Pack
The Times and The Sunday Times print edition seven days a week.
Now just £13 a week

*Offer relates to the first 3 months of a 12 month contract.

Call 0800 158 2816 or visit thetimes.co.uk/sale

Ends in 5 days.

Closes May 8, 2018. UK residents only, aged 18 or over. This offer is subject to availability. Offer open to new and existing subscribers. 12 month minimum term. Existing subscribers will need to recontract. Terms and conditions apply for existing subscribers taking out this offer. Offer includes instant access to our Classic 7 Day Pack, 6 Day Pack or 5 Day Pack for a minimum term of 12 months from your start date, followed by a rolling quarterly contract. An upfront payment will be taken on confirmation of your order for your first three months. Following the initial three month period, you will be billed on a monthly basis at a cost of £24.67 per month for the 7 Day Pack, £22.17 for the 6 Day Pack and £22 for the 5 Day Pack. You may cancel your subscription within 14 days of your subscription start date without giving any reason and we will refund all payments received from you. After 14 days you will not be able to cancel your subscription until at least 15 days before the end of your minimum 12 month term. We reserve the right to change the subscription price and/or benefits with 30 days’ notice. If you default on any payment, we may take whatever action necessary to recover any unpaid sums. Full Subscription and Cancellation terms can be found at store.thetimes.co.uk and will be attached to your welcome email or sent by post if requested. Your subscription is with Times Newspapers Limited (publishers of The Times and The Sunday Times).
Americans charge ex-Volkswagen boss with conspiracy and fraud

James Dean US Business Editor

American prosecutors have charged Volkswagen's former chief executive with conspiring to mislead customers and regulators about the carmaker's diesel emissions cheating.

Martin Winterkorn was indicted on four counts of conspiracy and wire fraud, becoming the most senior VW executive to be charged in connection with the scandal. About 11 million Volkswagen vehicles, including half a million in America, were secretly and deliberately equipped with "defeat devices" that allowed them to cheat diesel emissions tests. Volkswagen admitted the existence of the devices in 2015 during an investigation by the US environment watchdog and Mr Winterkorn resigned soon after.

In March last year, VW paid a $2.8 billion fine after pleading guilty to deceiving US regulators with the defeat devices. Two former VW engineers have been jailed and a further five former employees have been charged but not apprehended. One former VW employee has been charged and is awaiting extradition from Germany.

Mr Winterkorn was indicted secretly in March and the indictment was unsealed, or made public, in a Detroit court yesterday.

Jeff Sessions, the attorney general, said last night: "The indictment unsealed today alleges that Volkswagen's scheme to cheat its legal requirements went all the way to the top of the company. These are serious allegations, and we will prosecute this case to the fullest extent of the law. If you try to deceive the United States, then you will pay a heavy price."

Prosecutors allege that Mr Winterkorn, 70, was informed about emissions cheating in May 2014 and again in July 2015 but agreed with other top VW executives to continue to perpetrate the fraud. He is charged with conspiring to defraud the US, violating environmental law and wire fraud.

A spokesman for VW said that the company did not comment on individuals and was co-operating with the authorities. VW has agreed to spend more than $25 billion in the US to address legal claims linked to the emissions scandal. It has offered to buy back about 500,000 vehicles in the US.

TSB chaos set to ‘last for months’

City watchdog sends in team to oversee repairs

Harry Wilson City Editor

Customers of TSB are likely to face months of disruption before the bank is able to fully fix the computer problems that have left many unable to access their accounts and struggling to perform basic services such as paying in cheques, financial regulators believe.

In a highly unusual move, a team from the Financial Conduct Authority has set up a temporary operation in TSB’s head office to monitor the bank’s efforts to restore its systems. One source with knowledge of the work said officials were working on the basis that fully repairing the problems could take several months.

The move by the FCA illustrates the concerns among regulators over TSB’s problems, which have cost the bank millions as it struggles to persuade its more than five million customers not to leave it while it repairs the problems.

An IT expert with knowledge of the situation said that fixing the Spanish-owned lender’s system, after a bungled upgrade, could take three to six months because of the severity of the problems. “The fact you can see other people’s accounts suggests this is way beyond a capacity issue. I think this is genuinely catastrophic for TSB,” said the expert, who works for a UK bank and asked not to be named.

IBM has been brought in by TSB to help with the recovery operation but the expert said that this was a “stunt” and that it would take weeks before the team got to grips with the bank’s technology and provided meaningful help. TSB has 550 branches in England, Scotland and Wales with more than £20 billion of loans and customer deposits, and has its headquarters in Edinburgh. It was divested from Lloyds Banking Group in 2009 following a mission ruling that the government’s purchase of a 43.4 per cent stake in the group in 2009 counted as state aid. TSB listed on the London Stock Exchange in 2014 and accepted a takeover offer from Santander in 2015.

Yesterday was the 11th day since the problems emerged after a planned transfer of more than a million customer accounts and more than a billion records went awry, sending online banking services down and leaving in-branch computer systems in disarray. In a message on the bank’s Twitter account yesterday, it suggested customers having problems with services such as paying in cash or cheques use the Post Office instead of their TSB branch.

Paul Pester, chief executive of TSB, declined at a parliamentary hearing on Wednesday to discuss whether the bank had properly planned for the transfer to a new IT system developed by Sabadell.

Speaking to the MPs, Miquel Montes, general manager of Sabadell and a director of TSB, said that the end to the problems was “very close”. Mr Pester refused to be drawn on when the problems would be resolved. A spokesman for the bank said: “It has been appointed to help us identify and resolve the performance issues in our platform. We need to understand what the IBM experts tell us so we can fully understand the issues. Only then can we understand the timescales to fix this.”

Cashflow woes, page 45

Tesla shares crash after Musk outburst

James Dean US Business Editor

Ill-tempered comments by Elon Musk, the boss of Tesla, triggered a sell-off in the electric carmaker’s shares yesterday, wiping about $3 billion from its value.

On an earnings call after Tesla reported its fifth consecutive record loss on Wednesday night Mr Musk, the billionaire technology entrepreneur, described questions from financial analysts as “bonehead” and “dry.”

Adam Jonas, an analyst at Morgan Stanley, who was on the call, said it was “arguably the most unusual call I have experienced in 20 years”. In Silicon Valley Mr Musk is revered for his brains but feared for his temper. He often vents his anger at his critics on Twitter and is supported by an army of loyal followers who believe he is trying to change the world for the better.

Tesla’s main business is selling electric cars, although it also makes batteries for home and industrial use and solar power systems. The company’s shares closed down 5.6 per cent at $284.45 in New York last night, valuing the company at $48.1 billion, with analysts suggesting the decline showed that Wall Street was running out of patience with Tesla.

Mr Musk took issue with technical questions from analysts about Tesla’s profit margins, cashflow and customer reservations for its new Model 3 saloon, which is expected to be on Britain’s roads next year, at a cost of £35,000 for a basic Model. After venting his anger at two analysts, Mr Musk turned to a 25-year-old YouTube blogger and Tesla enthusiast who was allowed to ask questions for 23 minutes.

Tesla has struggled to ramp up production of the Model 3, its first mass-market car and the key to its future, because of what Mr Musk described as “manufacturing hell.” In the past few months it has become increasingly frustrated with his detractors, who point to a series of missed production targets and finances that are becoming increasingly squeezed.

Tesla’s shares have fallen by 26.4 per cent from a high of $385 in September, when the company was valued higher than General Motors, America’s largest carmaker.

Cashflow woes, page 45
Poor services dent hopes of rate increase

Philip Aldrick Economics Editor

Poor service sector activity in April looks to have dealt a final blow to hopes of an interest rate rise next week.

With all three private sector activity surveys for last month now published, there is little sign that the economy has gathered speed after dismal first-quarter growth of 0.1 per cent, raising concerns about the UK’s prospects and almost guaranteeing that the Bank of England will leave rates on hold at 0.5 per cent next Thursday.

The disappointment was confirmed by April’s purchasing managers’ index for services, which accounts for four fifths of the economy — from logistics to accounting. The reading edged up from a 20-month low of 51.7 in March to 52.8 last month, below forecasts for 53.5 and the second-worst figure in more than 18 months. Anything above 50 indicates expansion.

The all-sector output index of services, manufacturing and construction failed to recover the ground lost in March, when it sank from 54.2 in February to 51.9. For April it was 53.2. “The economy has slowed since late last year,” Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, the survey compiler, said. “The rate of economic growth remained subdued at the start of the second quarter.”

Mr Williamson added that the composite index reading was “historically consistent” with second-quarter growth of only 0.2 per cent if there is no pick-up.

The PMIs have been under an unusual level of scrutiny because the Bank of England is using them to gauge whether to raise interest rates on May 10. Just over two weeks ago many economists rated a rate rise of a rate rise to 0.75 per cent at about 90 per cent. They now give it just 10 per cent chance.

The reversal has been accompanied by a collapse in the pound. In mid-April sterling was at a five-year high and was trading above $1.4377. A series of sharp falls over the past week have left it at $1.3551. The pound fell after yesterday’s services PMI release. The full set of April PMIs parts of the economy, such as hotels and restaurants, and showed that the services sector’s strongest expansion was in financial services.

Hiring among services companies was the strongest since the end of last year. Some said they could not replace staff fast enough because of a lack of qualified applicants. Others said higher employment costs meant that they were seeking to squeeze more work out of existing staff.

James Smith, an economist at ING Financial Markets, said that the poor services data “has to do with weak consumer demand and we don’t expect this to fade rapidly”.

**Tax cuts in the US and the rise of protectionist policies around the world are putting economic growth in the eurozone under threat, the European Union has said.** The bloc’s official forecasters predicted that the economy would expand by 2.3 per cent this year, which would be “ambiguously negative risk”. Inflation in the zone fell to its lowest level in more than a year, to 1.2 per cent in April. This is likely to call into question plans for the European Central Bank to end its huge bond-buying programme.

**Philipp Higginson, who now chairs WM Retail, an alleged “bully” who presided over a “really shameful period in the company history”.**

Mr Higginson, who now chairs WM Retail, an alleged “bully” who presided over a “really shameful period in the company history”.

**Philip Clarke, the former boss of Tesco, has been accused of carrying out “an extraordinary raid of corporate vandalism” during his troubled period at the helm of Britain’s largest grocer.**

In a stinging attack by Andrew Britton, Britain’s largest grocer. In a stinging attack by Andrew Britton, the boss of Tesla, the world’s largest electric carmaker’s shares, wiping about $3.2 billion from its value.

Philip Clarke, the former boss of Tesco, has been accused of carrying out “an extraordinary raid of corporate vandalism” during his troubled period at the helm of Britain’s largest grocer.

In a stinging attack by Andrew Britton, the boss of Tesla, the world’s largest electric carmaker’s shares, wiping about $3.2 billion from its value.

**Poor service sector activity in April looks to have dealt a final blow to hopes of an interest rate rise next week.**

With all three private sector activity surveys for last month now published, there is little sign that the economy has gathered speed after dismal first-quarter growth of 0.1 per cent, raising concerns about the UK’s prospects and almost guaranteeing that the Bank of England will leave rates on hold at 0.5 per cent next Thursday.

The disappointment was confirmed by April’s purchasing managers’ index for services, which accounts for four fifths of the economy — from logistics to accounting. The reading edged up from a 20-month low of 51.7 in March to 52.8 last month, below forecasts for 53.5 and the second-worst figure in more than 18 months. Anything above 50 indicates expansion.

The all-sector output index of services, manufacturing and construction failed to recover the ground lost in March, when it sank from 54.2 in February to 51.9. For April it was 53.2. “The economy has slowed since late last year,” Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, the survey compiler, said. “The rate of economic growth remained subdued at the start of the second quarter.”

Mr Williamson added that the composite index reading was “historically consistent” with second-quarter growth of only 0.2 per cent if there is no pick-up.

The PMIs have been under an unusual level of scrutiny because the Bank of England is using them to gauge whether to raise interest rates on May 10. Just over two weeks ago many economists rated a rate rise of a rate rise to 0.75 per cent at about 90 per cent. They now give it just 10 per cent chance.

The reversal has been accompanied by a collapse in the pound. In mid-April sterling was at a five-year high and was trading above $1.4377. A series of sharp falls over the past week have left it at $1.3551. The pound fell after yesterday’s services PMI release. The full set of April PMIs parts of the economy, such as hotels and restaurants, and showed that the services sector’s strongest expansion was in financial services.

Hiring among services companies was the strongest since the end of last year. Some said they could not replace staff fast enough because of a lack of qualified applicants. Others said higher employment costs meant that they were seeking to squeeze more work out of existing staff.

James Smith, an economist at ING Financial Markets, said that the poor services data “has to do with weak consumer demand and we don’t expect this to fade rapidly”.

**Us trade deficit falls as exports hit record high**

James Dean US Business Editor

America’s trade deficit with China narrowed in April, providing some hope to President Trump’s attempt to reshape relations with Beijing.

The deficit fell to $23.7 billion from $29.3 billion, figures from the US Department of Commerce showed. The overall deficit fell to a six-month low of $49 billion from $57.7 billion the month before, lower than economists’ forecast of $50 billion.

America and China are engaged in a tit-for-tat dispute over import tariffs, which has led to volatility in the markets. Mr Trump wants to drastically cut the trade deficit, a measure by which the country’s cost of imports exceeds the value of its exports. He says that a lower deficit would protect jobs and bolster national security.

Exports rose by 2 per cent month on month in March to $208.8 billion, the highest since records began 26 years ago. They were boosted by exports of food and drinks and capital goods. Imports fell by 1.8 per cent to $257.5 billion.

Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said that the “trade deficit has much further to fall”, while Andrew Hunter, at Capital Economics, said: “Assuming the Trump administration backs down from its protectionist threats, the outlook for exports is fairly bright.”

America’s trade surplus with the UK widened to a record $16.6 billion in March, bringing the surplus figure for the first quarter to $25.8 billion. Mr Trump has spoken of cutting the trade deficit with Mexico but that expanded to $8.1 billion in March, the largest on record.

Although the March reading for the overall trade deficit was positive for Mr Trump, it has nonetheless widened in the first quarter of this year, to $200.6 billion. Factory orders in the US were stronger than expected in March, rising by 1.6 per cent compared with February, according to a separate report, while another showed that productivity rose by 0.7 per cent in the first quarter.

The number of new claims for unemployment benefits rose by 2,000 to 20,000 last week, which was below the consensus forecast of 225,000. Productivity rose by 0.7 per cent in the first quarter, which was less than the 0.9 per cent expected, another report showed. Labour costs rose by 2.7 per cent, which was better than the consensus estimate of 3 per cent.

The Institute for Supply Management’s non-manufacturing index fell to 56.8 in April, below forecasts of 58.4. Anything above 50 shows growth.
Rises every six months for the next two years

The Bank of England will raise interest rates for the second time in only a decade in August and will continue to increase them every six months for the next two years, according to a leading economic institute.

The Bank of England is poised to raise interest rates to their highest level for a decade in August, according to a leading economic institute.

Tom Knowles
Economist, recessions, and the consequence for businesses

Tom Knowles
Economist, recessions, and the consequence for businesses

Tom Knowles
Economist, recessions, and the consequence for businesses

When civil servants go off the rails

There's a puzzler: who is responsible for Transport for London's Windrush scandal? Clue: it's not Amber Rudd.

While you were away, here's a recap for non-trainees. When the DIT awarded First Group the London to Scotland line after a ludicrous £1.3 billion bid, all hell broke loose. The DIT's incumbent, Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Trains, took legal action claiming the bid process was flawed and biased. He also alleged that Justin Greening, the transport secretary, had acted "irrationally" in naming First Group the winner after an "unrealistically" low bid.

First Group always disputed that. But Ms Greening asked the civil servants to double-check their work. They responded they'd found one small error that would not have affected the outcome — indicating that so alarmed Ms Greening that she instigated the process all over again.

The next day she was reshuffled to international development.

So, it fell to her successor, Patrick McLoughlin, to unveil the review findings. The main one? That DIT officials had made "deeply regrettable and completely unacceptable mistakes" in the way they managed the process. The bid competition was called off.

Cue chaos. Three DIT civil servants were suspended. All other rail franchises bids were shelved, putting the network in limbo. And the farrago was criticised in endless reports: from the National Audit Office, the public accounts committee, the transport committee, the DIT's senior executive, ex-Centrica boss Sam Laidlaw, and from the judicial review.

In January 2013, the DIT's then permanent secretary, Philip Rutnam, was hauled before the transport committee and asked: "Who do you believe is responsible for creating a culture... within an organisation and what are you doing to address that so it does not happen again?"

Mr Rutnam, who'd taken the job six months before the fatal First Group bid decision, replied: "Even stronger and more important than the role of ministers is the role of senior officials, starting with me." Indeed, The Guardian reported that he wrote a note of apology to Ms Greening saying the debate was "clearly the responsibility of officials and not ministers.

And what, you ask, happened to him? Well, today the now Sir Philip Rutnam is pension secretary, according to one investigation and one of the biggest corporate losses in British history.

Mr Rutnam had left. But he wasn't alone. A government inquiry would find no immediate parallels with Mr Rudd's "one-in-a-million" accidents for deporting illegal immigrants. Except for one thing: the question of whether to dismiss an aide who was head of Home Office officials, who may have let her down or deliberately finished her off. Such a thing happens to people who trigger a vicious blame game.

George Osborne, now Evening Standard editor, has this week said that the paper had "seen the completely misleading emails, the data getting from her civil servants on targets" — all pretty extraordinary in his view. And maybe, just maybe, that this sort of caper happens on Del Monte — neither he nor the Home Office have made any comment. But you can think of one person who might like to change his new home secretary, Sayid Javid.

Don't panic

L ast time Mark Carney took fright at the monthly PMI data, he halved interest rates. Now, the signs of an improved economy that the Bank of England governor (and his monetary policy committee) are now merely 1.9% forecasts to leave them unchanged at next week's meeting.

The MPC will hold its three-weekly meeting on Thursday, with Mr Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, deciding on interest rates, sending the pound tumbling

April 19 Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England, plays down prospect of imminent rise in interest rates, sending the pound tumbling

April 12 Official figures UK economy grew by just 0.1% per cent in the first quarter of 2018, far slower than expected

May 1 Manufacturing PMIs show growth in the sector has hit a 17-month low

May 3 Expectations of an interest rate rise in May all but disappear after services PMI, which is closely-watched by the Bank of England, rebounds than forecast

Business

The new boss of the bust Enron: he ended much. We appreciate that. Asshole.”

Mr Rutnam, who'd taken the job six months before the fatal First Group bid decision, replied: “Even stronger and more important than the role of ministers is the role of senior officials, starting with me.” Indeed, The Guardian reported that he wrote a note of apology to Ms Greening saying the debate was “clearly the responsibility of officials and not ministers.

And what, you ask, happened to him? Well, today the now Sir Philip Rutnam is pension secretary, according to one investigation and one of the biggest corporate losses in British history.

Mr Rutnam had left. But he wasn’t alone. A government inquiry would find no immediate parallels with Mr Rudd’s “one-in-a-million” accidents for deporting illegal immigrants. Except for one thing: the question of whether to dismiss an aide who was head of Home Office officials, who may have let her down or deliberately finished her off. Such a thing happens to people who trigger a vicious blame game.

George Osborne, now Evening Standard editor, has this week said that the paper had “seen the completely misleading emails, the data getting from her civil servants on targets” — all pretty extraordinary in his view. And maybe, just maybe, that this sort of caper happens on Del Monte — neither he nor the Home Office have made any comment. But you can think of one person who might like to change his new home secretary, Sayid Javid.

Don’t panic

L ast time Mark Carney took fright at the monthly PMI data, he halved interest rates. Now, the signs of an improved economy that the Bank of England governor (and his monetary policy committee) are now merely 1.9% forecasts to leave them unchanged at next week’s meeting.

The MPC will hold its three-weekly meeting on Thursday, with Mr Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, deciding on interest rates, sending the pound tumbling

April 19 Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England, plays down prospect of imminent rise in interest rates, sending the pound tumbling

April 12 Official figures UK economy grew by just 0.1% per cent in the first quarter of 2018, far slower than expected

May 1 Manufacturing PMIs show growth in the sector has hit a 17-month low

May 3 Expectations of an interest rate rise in May all but disappear after services PMI, which is closely-watched by the Bank of England, rebounds than forecast

Business

The new boss of the bust Enron: he ended much. We appreciate that. Asshole.”

Mr Rutnam, who'd taken the job six months before the fatal First Group bid decision, replied: “Even stronger and more important than the role of ministers is the role of senior officials, starting with me.” Indeed, The Guardian reported that he wrote a note of apology to Ms Greening saying the debate was “clearly the responsibility of officials and not ministers.

And what, you ask, happened to him? Well, today the now Sir Philip Rutnam is pension secretary, according to one investigation and one of the biggest corporate losses in British history.

Mr Rutnam had left. But he wasn’t alone. A government inquiry would find no immediate parallels with Mr Rudd’s “one-in-a-million” accidents for deporting illegal immigrants. Except for one thing: the question of whether to dismiss an aide who was head of Home Office officials, who may have let her down or deliberately finished her off. Such a thing happens to people who trigger a vicious blame game.

George Osborne, now Evening Standard editor, has this week said that the paper had “seen the completely misleading emails, the data getting from her civil servants on targets” — all pretty extraordinary in his view. And maybe, just maybe, that this sort of caper happens on Del Monte — neither he nor the Home Office have made any comment. But you can think of one person who might like to change his new home secretary, Sayid Javid.

Don’t panic

L ast time Mark Carney took fright at the monthly PMI data, he halved interest rates. Now, the signs of an improved economy that the Bank of England governor (and his monetary policy committee) are now merely 1.9% forecasts to leave them unchanged at next week’s meeting.

The MPC will hold its three-weekly meeting on Thursday, with Mr Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, deciding on interest rates, sending the pound tumbling

April 19 Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England, plays down prospect of imminent rise in interest rates, sending the pound tumbling

April 12 Official figures UK economy grew by just 0.1% per cent in the first quarter of 2018, far slower than expected

May 1 Manufacturing PMIs show growth in the sector has hit a 17-month low

May 3 Expectations of an interest rate rise in May all but disappear after services PMI, which is closely-watched by the Bank of England, rebounds than forecast

Business

The new boss of the bust Enron: he ended much. We appreciate that. Asshole.”

Mr Rutnam, who'd taken the job six months before the fatal First Group bid decision, replied: “Even stronger and more important than the role of ministers is the role of senior officials, starting with me.” Indeed, The Guardian reported that he wrote a note of apology to Ms Greening saying the debate was “clearly the responsibility of officials and not ministers.

And what, you ask, happened to him? Well, today the now Sir Philip Rutnam is pension secretary, according to one investigation and one of the biggest corporate losses in British history.

Mr Rutnam had left. But he wasn’t alone. A government inquiry would find no immediate parallels with Mr Rudd’s “one-in-a-million” accidents for deporting illegal immigrants. Except for one thing: the question of whether to dismiss an aide who was head of Home Office officials, who may have let her down or deliberately finished her off. Such a thing happens to people who trigger a vicious blame game.

George Osborne, now Evening Standard editor, has this week said that the paper had “seen the completely misleading emails, the data getting from her civil servants on targets” — all pretty extraordinary in his view. And maybe, just maybe, that this sort of caper happens on Del Monte — neither he nor the Home Office have made any comment. But you can think of one person who might like to change his new home secretary, Sayid Javid.
Politicians on two influential parliamentary committees have written to Britain’s competition regulator to raise concerns about how suppliers will be impacted by the proposed merger between J Sainsbury and Asda.

Rachel Reeves, chairwoman of the committee for business, energy and industrial strategy; and Neil Parish, chair- man of the environment, food and rural affairs committee, told the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) that close attention must be paid to the level of market dominance that could result from the merger of Britain’s second and third largest grocers.

If the deal went ahead it could create an enlarged group with sales of £51 billion, 330,000 staff and more than 2,800 UK stores. Walmart, the American parent of Asda, will receive a cash pay- ment from Sainsbury’s of nearly £3 billion and will hold a 42 per cent stake in the combined group, albeit with 29.9 per cent of the voting rights. The deal values Asda at £17.3 billion on a debt-free, cash- and pension-free basis.

However, the proposed merger has raised concerns among politicians, sup- pliers and unions worried that a com- bined Sainsbury’s and Asda would, with Tesco, control nearly 60 per cent of the food and grocery market in Britain. MPs have said: “This merger would threat- en customers’ choice, hands yet more power to mighty supermarket players and increase pressure on small and medium suppliers. The CMA must look closely at the impact of this merger on the grocery sector as well as the effect on competition in the sector.”

Mr Parish said there were legitimate concerns that if Sainsbury’s/Asda and Tesco controlled two-thirds of the market, it could be hard for suppliers to increase prices without running the risk of losing business.

“Grocery retailers don’t have a gleaming record of treating suppliers well and the Grocery Code Adjudica- tor’s 2017 survey found that Asda was the worst grocery retailer in the eyes of its suppliers,” he said. “The cost savings being promised through this merger must not come at the expense of squeezing those further down the supply chain.”

The two politicians questioned Ge- orge Eustice, the farming minister, and Christine Tacon, the grocery code adju- dicator, who regulates the relationships between grocers and suppliers, in par- liament on Wednesday. Ms Tacon said that the adjudicator’s role was to ensure both retailers and grocers kept to the terms of their contracts, but did not ex- tend to monitoring pricing agreements.

Mr Eustice said the CMA would have to “methodically” examine the full impact of the merger on shoppers.

Asda and Sainsbury’s have said fears that their merger would be bad for con- sumers and the market were misplaced. Mike Coupe, chief executive of Sainsbury’s, said the tie-up would help shop- pers by improving choice and price. He said: “Eighty-five per cent of the food and grocery sales of both organisations come from 100 suppliers and all of them are large multinational suppliers who have huge pricing power and will be larger, in some cases, than the combined entity [of Sainsbury’s and Asda]. All we ask is that the top 100 suppliers give us the same terms and conditions that they give to our shareholders. In the court of public opinion, I don’t think that would be an unreasonable stance to take.”

Deidre Hipwell Retail Editor

Amazon HQ rejection acts as wake-up call

Gurpreet Narwan

When Amazon invited cities across America to enter a competition to host its second headquarters with the prom- ise of a $5 billion investment and 50,000 new jobs, it was too good an opportunity for them to pass up.

As many as 236 cities threw their hats into the ring, which meant a lot of bro- ken hearts when the ecommerce giant, whose first headquarters are in Seattle, Washington, rejected the majority to select its 20 finalists in January.

Not content with sending out rejec- tion notes, Amazon phoned city offi- cers explaining why they had not made the cut as it sought to console those who had been rebuffed while empha- sing that they “were the best of the best.”

Many of the cities have begun to make changes in response to those crit- icisms, which ranged from the quality of transport infrastructure to the local pool of technology talent. Johnna Reeder, chief executive of the regional economic development initia- tive in Cincinnati, Ohio, said the post- mortem had encouraged officials to put their current plans “on steroids.” The city told The Wall Street Journal that it was restructuring its workforce devel- opment programme to focus on tech talent after Amazon said they did not have enough home-grown expertise.

The Cincinnati Regional Chamber is focusing on an apprentice programme and has created opportunities for in- terns at information technology firms. In Orlando, Florida, officials have set up a community fund to invest in local tech companies and business leaders in Detroit, Michigan, are working on a regional transport initiative that would connect the outer counties to the city.

Gerry Anderson, chief executive of DTE Energy, a local utility company, said: “Amazon was a wake-up call. Had we not been an investor that would have been a very attractive investor, who looked at our transit system and did not like what they saw.”

Financial incentives such as large tax breaks are often offered to woo compa- nies to sites. However, in many cases it is a fairly low-key affair. Joseph Paril- la, of the Brookings Institution, said Amazon’s highly visible move was forc- ing cities to explain themselves: “It is a kind of look-in-the-mirror moment.”

Not everyone was so enthusiastic about the approach, however. “I don’t think governments should be rushing to please Amazon,” Richard Florida, a professor at the University of Toronto, said. “They should look to build their regional economies and not let any large company tell them what to do.”
It is easy to get sucked into this stuff, believe me. But here's the thing: these are not incidental details that are put into serious features to add colour. This content is about nothing else. Google "routine of [your] favourite chief executive" (and don't pretend you don't have one). You will discover dozens of articles on the minutiae of their daily life. I could spend all day, every day, reading about what billions do all day, every day. So what is going on?

Here's a thought: chief executives are celebrities (or perhaps CEOlebrities) for late-stage capitalism so everything they do must be of interest. Where once we were screaming teenage fans for Prince and Elton, we are now screaming grown-up fans for Zuck and Elon. And it is not pop music we are cheering: it is careers, self-improvement and success.

For a while I considered going all in and creating a kind of optimum successful person routine. I would rise at 4am and run ten miles to a three-hour yoga class. I would break fast on an octopus I had killed myself, washed down with bulletproof coffee. I would read two books, take a five-minute lunch and play an hour's tennis before looking in a mirror and asking: "How well do I look today?" Then I would do a couple of lines of coke (because and I promise I am not making this up) I have just found an article entitled '10 Innovators Who Did More Drugs Than You'.

But I think I have found the biggest flaw. For every successful person who does X, there is another one who does not. Jeff sleeps a lot. Michelle Meyer does not. Sergey Brin drinks green smoothies and Jeff Buffett drinks five cans of Coke a day. Perhaps the trick, then, is to pick one chief executive you really love and stay loyal to them. The "true fan" model of CEObession.

There is also an element of Kremilinology at work here. We are so convinced that we can decode these success formula that every little thing that superstar chief executives do must be a clue. But what if doing an hour's meditation means nothing except that the person does it? I am pretty sure that this is the conclusion many of the Russia experts of the 1980s came to as they watched the Soviet top brass at the Bolshoi Ballet for the 400th time to see who was 'real'.

I could go on in this vein. I could say that correlation does not imply causation. I could add that (in the name of research) I have tried many of the things that successful people do. The results are nothing if not consistent. Me plus breakfast octopus does not equal Jeff Bezos. I equal me with garlic yoghurt breath. I could turn this on its head: Bezos would still be successful if he did not eat octopus. It is just a thing he does. A small thing. He enjoys weird food, just like Warren Buffett does not.

But not every lifestyle detail is minor, right? I once interviewed a fund manager who did three hours of quantum mechanics every morning. Unlike owning one T-shirt this was not extra impressive and interesting. But there is no careerist takeaway here either, except that I am not a maths genius.

Anyway, hats off to Twitter's Jack Dorsey. Jack often gets a bad rap but I cannot fault one of his responses in an online Q&A. When asked how he relaxed outside work he replied: "Meditation, exercise, dinner with friends. Nothing too out of the ordinary."

Of course someone, somewhere will turn this into Jack's answers are really ordinary and here's why this is extraordinary and then someone else will say, 'Ordinary Is the New Octopus — According to @jack'. I'm not complaining. This is the stuff we, CEO-lifestyle Junkies live for.

Rhymer Rigby is a journalist and author. Follow him on Twitter @rhymerrigby

Sathnam Sanghera is away

"
Branson teams up with old friend in private equity move

Tabby Kinder

Sir Richard Branson is to make a new foray into private equity by going into partnership with an old friend to invest more than $2 billion in consumer businesses over the next decade.

Sir Richard, the founder of Virgin Group, will become a partner in a new fund co-managed by Metric Capital Partners that aims to raise $500 million from pension plans and sovereign wealth funds this summer. His involvement shines a light on buyout funds, which raised record sums of capital last year and have an estimated $1 trillion of cash to put into new ventures. It is understood that Sir Richard, 67, and Metric, a firm based in London, will raise two further funds in a business relationship expected to last ten years. The funds will invest in businesses in the luxury goods, leisure, food and drink, media and hotel industries. They will use Sir Richard’s connections to help portfolio companies develop revenue and aim to deliver 20 per cent returns to investors.

Sir Richard started his first business, a mail-order record company, aged 16, before launching a chain of record shops. He has turned Virgin Group into a business empire with stakes in more than 100 companies, including in the banking, aerospace, health, travel and music industries. His personal fortune is estimated at $3 billion.

John Sinik, founder of Metric Capital, met the Virgin boss while working in the finance departments at UBS and Deutsche Bank, and they have been friends for 20 years. Virgin Group has issued billions of dollars of bonds through both banks. Sir Richard is understood to have been attracted to Metric partly because its founder is also a self-made entrepreneur.

Mr Sinik founded the private equity fund in 2011 and it controls $2 billion of investor assets and has generated a realised annual return rate of 30 per cent for investors since its launch.

Sir Richard will receive a share of the profits made on the fund’s investments through a remuneration structure called carried interest, or share of profit. In addition, 10 per cent of the carried interest will be donated to women’s and children’s charities.

His new role comes as buyout funds have raised record sums of money that have been deployed in buyout transactions globally in 2017, according to Preqin, a data provider. That was the best year for buyout funds since 2007 when firms raised $44 billion, the previous record.

Some of the largest private equity funds on record were also created last year, with Apollo Global Management, an American firm, raising a $25 billion fund and CVC Capital Partners, an European buyout firm, raising one of a €16 billion.

Mood food

With delicate cakes, doorstop sandwiches and a guide to all things fish, The Dish is full of joyful food.

Pick up The Sunday Times this weekend.

CITY PEOPLE

The feuds, the faces and the farcical

Dominic Walsh @walshdominic

M&S hopes where there’s a wills there’s a way

Shaun Wills, former chief financial officer of Superdry, who was forced to leave the fashion retailer in February 2015 when he was declared bankrupt after a dispute with Revenue & Customs, has been appointed as interim finance director for Marks & Spencer’s Hungarian division of EY, the accountancy group.

But Jozsef Varadi, who co-founded the carrier in 2003, was taking a safety-first approach to Brexit yesterday. Wizz Air obtained licences for its UK subsidiary from the Civil Aviation Authority, partly to ensure it can continue operating in the country after Britain leaves the European Union. Mr Varadi said it was part of a Brexit “contingency plan”.

The boss of Wizz Air, the low-cost eastern European airline, once won the “brave innovator” award from the Hungarian division of EY, the accountancy group. But Jozsef Varadi, who co-founded the carrier in 2003, was taking a safety-first approach to Brexit yesterday. Wizz Air obtained licences for its UK subsidiary from the Civil Aviation Authority, partly to ensure it can continue operating in the country after Britain leaves the European Union. Mr Varadi said it was part of a Brexit “contingency plan”.

Wizz Air, a constituent of the FTSE 250 mid-cap index, expanded by opening up routes for east European migrant workers to Britain and helped build trade links. Its headquarters are at Luton airport and it operates more than 600 routes, flying 29.6 million passengers in its past financial year with a fleet of Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft.

With Mr Varadi in the cockpit, Wizz Air has been expanding its network and flew almost 2.8 million passengers in April, up 19.2 per cent on a year earlier. It is the eighth-largest airline in Britain. Mr Varadi, who has a master’s degree in law from the University of London, is an industry veteran. He was boss of the state carrier Malev Hungarian Airlines until 2003.

Waltz Air, a constituent of the FTSE 250 mid-cap index, expanded by opening up routes for east European migrant workers to Britain and helped build trade links. Its headquarters are at Luton airport and it operates more than 600 routes, flying 29.6 million passengers in its past financial year with a fleet of Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft.

With Mr Varadi in the cockpit, Wizz Air has been expanding its network and flew almost 2.8 million passengers in April, up 19.2 per cent on a year earlier. It is the eighth-largest airline in Britain. Mr Varadi, who has a master’s degree in law from the University of London, is an industry veteran. He was boss of the state carrier Malev Hungarian Airlines until 2003.
Smith & Nephew cuts growth outlook

Alex Ralph, Miles Costello

Smith & Nephew, the medical equipment maker under pressure from an activist investor to break up the group, has cut its financial forecasts days before a new chief executive takes over.

The FTSE 100 company said that weak first-quarter trading meant that underlying revenue growth this year was expected to be between 2 per cent and 3 per cent, and trading profit margin “at or above that achieved in 2017.”

Elliot Advisors, the activist investor that is understood to have built a stake of about 2 per cent in the company, is thought to have been pushing for it to offload parts of the group.

Smith & Nephew traces its roots back 162 years to when Thomas Smith opened a pharmacy in Hull. The company, which has 15,000 employees and annual sales of $4.8 billion, specialises in orthopaedic reconstruction, wound care products and sports medicine.

The forecast downgrade yesterday prompted a sell-off in Smith & Nephew shares, which closed 7 per cent lower at £13.025p, making it the biggest faller on the FTSE 100.

At its full-year results in February, the company said that it expected revenue growth of 3 per cent to 4 per cent and profit margin improvement of 30-70 basis points “driven by our strong product portfolio and pipeline of innovative products”.

The downbeat trading statement marks a disappointing end to the tenure of Olivier Bohouin, who is being replaced as chief executive after the bank holiday weekend by Namal Nawana, a former head of Alere, the medical diagnostics company where he was credited with leading a turnaround.

Revenue in the first quarter was up 5 per cent on a reported basis to almost £1.2 billion but that was entirely down to a foreign exchange tailwind and was flat on an underlying basis. The figure was about 2 per cent weaker than forecasts and was weakened by pricing pressure on Santyl, an ointment for wounds, and some destocking.

Underlying sales in its established markets, including the United States and Europe, fell by 2 per cent. In emerging markets there was growth of 9 per cent, but these accounted for only 17 per cent of group revenue.

Mr Bohouin called the first quarter “a mixed performance … with the effects of some softer markets and a slowdown in our bioactives [wound care] business offset by another quarter of strong growth in the emerging markets”.

He added: “We expect trading conditions to return to more normal levels, which, combined with the continued roll-out of new products and our sustained emerging markets performance, gives us confidence in delivering an improving performance throughout the remainder of the year.”

The company announced in October that Mr Bohouin was leaving after seven years in charge. Analysts at JP Morgan said at the time that they did not “read anything into near-term performance from this announcement”.

A month later, though, Smith & Nephew issued a weak trading update and cut 2017 guidance, which it blamed on hurricanes delaying procedures in the US, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Elliott declined to comment.

Cost of Rolls engine saga hits £1bn

Robert Lea, Industrial Editor

The total bill for hundreds of malfunctioning Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft will top £1 billion for Rolls-Royce as the world’s fourth-largest engine maker is hit by a third problem with its Trent 1000 jet.

Faults in the Trent 1000 engine, right, which was specially designed and built by Rolls for the Dreamliner, have grounded aircraft operated by British Airways, Virgin Atlantic and Norwegian, among others. The rising costs of the crisis have led to a clampdown on executive expenses at the FTSE 100 group with a ban on non-essential travel, the shelving of some IT projects and a delay in other unspecified capital expenditure.

Rolls-Royce is one of the world’s leading aerospace companies, with £11 billion of annual revenues, employing 50,000 people around the world, nearly half of them in the UK, and specialising in making engines for long-haul aircraft such as the Dreamliner. Its Airbus equivalent is the A350 and for the A380 superjumbo.

After years of crises at the company, multiple profit warnings and the destabilising reputational damage of being found to be serially corrupt over five continents and three decades by the Serious Fraud Office, the rebuilding of Rolls-Royce’s stature in the corporate community has taken a hit from the Trent 1000 setback.

The issues over the engines — wearing out of turbine blades, for example — were pointed out before the plane was cleared for service — on delivery in Derby, Warren East, chief executive, said that the issue was continuing to have financial implications for the company. “The requirement for more regular inspections will lead to higher than previously guided cash costs,” he said.

The company warned in March that the Trent 1000 issue would cost it about £340 million this year on top of the £170 million outlay in 2017 and with a further £240 million cost in 2019. The accelerated inspection and replacement programme with the associated cost of components, maintenance personnel and compensation to airlines is now thought by analysts to be adding as much as a further £300 million over the next 18 months. That would take the total bill to more than £1 billion.

The shares in Rolls-Royce, which have fallen about 10 per cent since March, slipped a further 6.5p yesterday to 830p.

Virgin Media and Calvetron put hundreds of jobs at risk

Robin Pagnamenta

Hundreds of jobs will be lost at Virgin Media, the broadband operator, and at the owner of the high street clothing chain Jacques Vert.

Tom Mockridge, chief executive of Virgin Media, said that the group plans to cut 500 jobs as it shuffles sites in Swansea and Nottingham.

The company, which employs 14,000 workers at more than 100 sites, said the number of customer operations bases would be cut from eight to four — Wyttenham, Sheffield, Birmingham and Stockton-on-Tees. Mr Mockridge said that the closures were part of a three-year programme to “create fewer, higher quality work places to better support our people, our business and growing customer base”.

Jacques Vert is expected to become the latest retailer to call in administrators today, putting a further thousand jobs at risk. The French high street fashion brand is owned by the private equity firm LBO Partners and acquired by Punch Taverns last year.

Virgin Media confirmed yesterday that it expects to make a further 6 per cent in its underlying profit this year, with the effect of lower sales and a delay in other unspecified capital expenditure.

The FTSE 100 company said that it expected revenue growth this year of about 2 per cent in the company, is thought to have been pushing for it to offload parts of the group.

If the closures are confirmed, it could mean that Virgin Media will lose about £300 million over the next 18 months.
Glencore upbeat as Congo project clicks into gear

Robin Pagnamenta
Deputy Business Editor

Glencore, the Switzerland-based FTSE 100 mining giant, has unveiled an upbeat earnings forecast for its trading division and said the ramp-up of a big new copper and cobalt project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was progressing well.

Glencore is one of the world’s biggest mining and commodities companies, with more than 145,000 staff. It produced net income of more than $5 billion in 2017.

In a production update, Glencore said that earnings from its trading division were likely to be at the upper end of a range between $2.2 billion and $3.2 billion for the full year. Production from its other main business, including mining operations in a range of countries from Chile to Australia, remained in line with expectations and full-year guidance was unchanged.

Glencore said that output for the three months to March from a new mining project at Katanga in the DRC was 27,700 tonnes of copper and 500 tonnes of cobalt, a key ingredient in the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles and electronic devices. Glencore produces at least one quarter of the world’s cobalt, which has bigger deposits in the DRC than any other country.

Katanga is in the middle of an expansion phase and Glencore expects total copper and cobalt output to hit 150,000 tonnes and 11,000 tonnes this year. Cobalt, a by-product of copper production, is at the centre of Glencore’s business strategy.

The upbeat forecasts came despite legal uncertainty over the Congolese projects. Gécamines, the DRC state mining company, has launched legal action against Glencore in a dispute over a capital shortfall of $3.9 billion in one of its subsidiaries in the African country.

Gécamines is seeking to dissolve Kamoto Copper Company after Katanga failed to reduce big debts that have eaten into its share of the profits. Separately Dan Gertler, an Israeli billionaire, is seeking to reclaim nearly $2.9 billion of royalties that he claims are owed to him from mines in the DRC. He was involved in negotiating some of the mining projects in DRC in which Glencore holds a stake.

Last year the US Treasury stopped American companies from entering into transactions with Mr Gertler, calling him a “billionaire who has amassed his fortune through hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of opaque and corrupt mining and oil deals” in the DRC. He has been accused of using a friendship with Joseph Kabila, the Congolese president, to secure lucrative mining deals. He has consistently denied wrongdoing.

Mr Gertler has taken legal action in the DRC and Hong Kong to recover the royalties he claims are owed to him by two Glencore subsidiaries, Mutanda Mining and Kamoto Copper, for $695 million and $2.28 billion respectively. Glencore has won a temporary injunction in a London court blocking Mr Gertler from taking further action in the dispute. The disputes in the DRC have weighed on the group’s share price in recent weeks.

Paul Gait, analyst at Bernstein, said that the guidance “should be an incremental comfort to those who continue to be concerned about the marketing business” at Glencore. Glencore’s shares rose 1½p to 359¼p.

Explorer plans for move into Asia on the double

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

Ophir Energy has agreed to pay $205 million for oil and gasfields in southeast Asia that will more than double its production and could pave the way for shareholder returns within the next two years.

The exploration group’s shares rose 5 per cent after the announce- ment of the surprise deal to buy the assets from Australia’s Santos, which it said should deliver enough cash to accelerate the prospect of buybacks or a dividend from 2022 to 2020.

The exploration group’s shares rose close only 0.5 per cent higher at 39p. Output from the fields in Vietnam and Indonesia should increase Ophir’s production from about 11,500 barrels per day to 25,000 barrels per day and the company said that it was trying to clarify whether the transaction was big enough constitute a reverse takeover although it did not believe that it was.

Ophir Energy listed in 2011 as an Africa-focused explorer and became a stock market darling with an initial run of drilling successes. However, it fell out of the FTSE 250 index as oil prices slumped and later drilling campaigns disappointed.

The company has been building a portfolio of producing fields to generate cashflow to cover its operations, starting with the 2015 acquisition of southeast Asia-focused Salamander Energy. It has also been working on plans to develop a floating liquefied natural gas plant at its Fortuna discovery off Equatorial Guinea but the project has repeatedly delayed by financing difficulties and Ophir’s shares have fallen to historic lows.

Nick Cooper, chief executive, said the Santos deal did not affect progress on Fortuna, for which funding had been ring-fenced. “Fortuna is like the sidecar... we have befriend the motorbike,” he said.

‘The deal should make Ophir “fully sustainable”. “We have gone from a pure equity-funded explorer three years ago to now one which is living within its means quite comfortably,” he said.

Mr Cooper said that Ophir had been “under-geared” with a far lower net debt to earnings ratio than most of its peers and that it would still have lower debt levels than most after the deal.

Analysts at Jefferies said that the acquisition was “arguably unexpect- ed” but “a good and necessary deal, especially as Fortuna financing seemed even further away.

Vodafone set to clinch deal with Liberty

Robin Pagnamenta

Vodafone is close to a deal to acquire Liberty Global’s continental European assets which could be announced within the next few weeks, according to reports last night.

The FTSE 100 telecoms group, which is to present its full-year results on May 15, confirmed in February that it was in talks with Liberty, the American cable TV empire controlled by John Malone, the US billionaire. It has made no further comment since then on the discussions.

They are likely to involve holdings in Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic and Romania. Any deal is not expected to involve Liberty’s UK assets or its Irish units.

The discussions were said to be nearing a conclusion and an an- nouncement was expected within days. Liberty’s first quarter results are out on May 9.

Yesterday both companies declined to comment. Analysts have predicted a deal could be worth between €14 billion and €20 billion.

BT is expected to reveal plans to cut thousands more jobs when it reports its annual results next week. The group announced 4,000 job cuts a year ago, but analysts at Exane BNP Paribas have estimated it could cut a further 6,600 in order to save £500 million over three years, according to the Financial Times.
Cashflow woes threaten to bring Tesla crashing back down to earth

James Dean US Business Editor

Crunch time has arrived for Tesla and Elon Musk, the entrepreneur who is becoming increasingly combative as he comes to terms with the challenge of cranking out thousands of shiny new electric cars every week.

Mr Musk has bet the house on the Model 3, the “affordable” family car that is the first that Tesla will produce in numbers to rival established carmakers such as Ford. To make good on his bet, Mr Musk needs to start churning out the cars at a much faster rate. If he fails, Tesla will run out of money.

Tesla’s first-quarter earnings report, which was released on Wednesday, suggests that the future is very much in the balance. Tesla said that Model 3 production was ramping up towards its target of 5,000 cars a week, which it would hit in a couple of months’ time. As it tries to complete the task, the company has burnt through millions of dollars. This is Wall Street’s greatest worry. Before the result, Bloomberg calculated that Tesla was burning cash at a rate of $6.500 a minute.

That figure will have grown given that net free cashflow — cash generated after capital expenditures — was about minus $1.3 billion in the first quarter, compared with forecasts of minus $700 million. Unlike in previous quarters Tesla, perhaps sensitive about the figure, did not include it as a line in its accounts.

If the cash continues to disappear at this rate, Tesla will be forced to go cap in hand to investors, as it has done every year since becoming a public company in 2010. Mr Musk said on Wednesday night that he did not intend and did not want to issue new debt or shares. Tesla cut its full-year capital expenditure forecast to $3.4 billion from $3.9 billion.

Yet the Bentley brand is as big as it has ever been. The discounters might say that in the 21st century it is just a luxury Volkswagen because of the German company that now owns it, just as Rolls-Royce was reborn after the millennium by becoming a BMW with a Spirit of Ecstasy on its nose. But one thing is clear: these are brands that are with us for a few more lifetimes yet.

The pessimists fear that Tesla is moving towards a chequered flag. What has become evident is that for all Tesla’s disruption in the complacent, self-satisfied motor industry, for all its achievements in bringing new electric technology to market, and for building cars that prompt a second and third look as they pass, if they cannot be manufactured and marketed economically, then corporate life will be short.

If Tesla, the industrial company co-founded by Elon Musk, left, has a shortening shelf life, Tesla, the brand, does not. It has in a decade become a status symbol like no other. Yet the technology and attractiveness of its electric cars are being caught up by the conventional opposition and will be overtaken by these manufacturers with their operational nous.

Depressing as it sounds, for Tesla to have a commercial future it may need to be in a sounder organisation — perhaps a US technology group or an ambitious Chinese motor company.

Carmaker risks being overtaken

Behind the story

In 1928 WO Bentley unleashed one of the greatest cars of all time, the Speed Six — the apotheosis of automotive culture in the Roaring Twenties and a vehicle that bulldozed its way to successive victories at Le Mans. Within three years Bentley Motors was in liquidation and was subsequently taken over by Rolls-Royce (Robert Lea writes).

Yet the Bentley brand is as big as it has ever been. The discounters might say that in the 21st century it is just a luxury Volkswagen because of the German company that now owns it, just as Rolls-Royce was reborn after the millennium by becoming a BMW with a Spirit of Ecstasy on its nose. But one thing is clear: these are brands that are with us for a few more lifetimes yet.

The pessimists fear that Tesla is moving towards a chequered flag. What has become evident is that for all Tesla’s disruption in the complacent, self-satisfied motor industry, for all its achievements in bringing new electric technology to market, and for building cars that prompt a second and third look as they pass, if they cannot be manufactured and marketed economically, then corporate life will be short.

If Tesla, the industrial company co-founded by Elon Musk, left, has a shortening shelf life, Tesla, the brand, does not. It has in a decade become a status symbol like no other. Yet the technology and attractiveness of its electric cars are being caught up by the conventional opposition and will be overtaken by these manufacturers with their operational nous.

Depressing as it sounds, for Tesla to have a commercial future it may need to be in a sounder organisation — perhaps a US technology group or an ambitious Chinese motor company.

Musk spurs boring, bonehead analysts in favour of his fanboys

James Dean

When a hedge fund manager asked left-wingers of being an Enron earnings conference call in 2001, his response was sharp: “Thank you very much, you’ve appreciated that . . . a- hole.” Months later, the Texas-based energy group had collapsed under the weight of fraud and Skilling was on his way to jail.

Tesla bulls and bears alike were drawing comparisons between Skilling’s performance and that of Elon Musk during Tesla’s earnings call on Wednesday. It began when Toni Sacconaghi, an analyst with Bernstein, asked about the margin target for the Model 3. “Don’t make a federal case out of it,” Mr Musk urged him. After Mr Sacconaghi asked another question, Mr Musk paused, then said “Boring, bonehead questions are not cool. Next.”

Next came Joseph Spak, of RBC, who asked about reservations for the car. Mr Musk made no effort to hide his disdain. “Sorry. These questions are so dry. They’re killing me.”

He turned the call over to Galileo Russell, a 25-year-old YouTube blogger and Tesla enthusiast. “Hey. Great quarter. Thanks for having me on the call,” Mr Russell said, before asking about Tesla’s self-driving taxi programme. “Thank you for an interesting question,” Mr Musk replied, before letting Mr Russell, who owns shares in Tesla, question him for 23 minutes.

Mr Musk wasn’t quite done with the analysts, though. Ben Kallo, of Baird, asked whether Tesla would give more details to its spending forecast. “It’s high time we became profitable,” Mr Musk said. “Boring. That’s a good criticism that has been levied at Tesla, an accurate one: it’s high time we became profitable.”

Mr Russell said, before asking about Tesla’s Model 3 net reservation figures. “This is the third and fourth quarters. A ‘good criticism that has been levied at Tesla, an accurate one: it’s high time we became profitable.’” Mr Musk said. “I have experienced in 20 years . . . many mours swirled that Mr Musk was drunk when hammering panels into shape when a machine should have been doing it. The company admitted on Wednesday that it had tried to automate too much of the production process too quickly.

The slow progress has exacerbated the cash squeeze. Even with a reduction to its spending forecast, Tesla is expected to burn through most of the $3.2 billion cash it had at the end of March. Tesla said that it expected to be in the third and fourth quarters.

“A good criticism that has been levied at Tesla, an accurate one: it’s high time we became profitable,” Mr Musk said. “That’s our focus right now. I’m feeling quite confident about hitting positive cashflow in the third quarter.”

Whether or not Tesla succeeds depends on how much investors believe in Mr Musk and how much comfort they take from his promises.
**Supermarkets good for a bargain**

TESCO & WM MORRISON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share price</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TESCO</td>
<td>353.50</td>
<td>346.50</td>
<td>342.50</td>
<td>341.50</td>
<td>343.50</td>
<td>346.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons</td>
<td>210.00</td>
<td>215.00</td>
<td>220.00</td>
<td>225.00</td>
<td>230.00</td>
<td>235.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tesco’s progress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Sales (bn)</th>
<th>Profits (bn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>£49.9bn</td>
<td>£1.28bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>£50.0bn</td>
<td>£1.30bn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Morrison’s like-for-like sales (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share price</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESCO</td>
<td>353.50</td>
<td>346.50</td>
<td>342.50</td>
<td>341.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons</td>
<td>210.00</td>
<td>215.00</td>
<td>220.00</td>
<td>225.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tempus**

Buy, sell or hold: today’s best share tips

** Nikonon **

46

**London Financial Futures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract</th>
<th>Open Interest</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIFFE</td>
<td>63,147,449</td>
<td>522.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>522.50</td>
<td>522.50</td>
<td>522.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIFFE</td>
<td>63,147,449</td>
<td>488.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>488.50</td>
<td>488.50</td>
<td>488.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commodities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Open Interest</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crude Oil</td>
<td>Spot</td>
<td>1,234,567</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>64.50</td>
<td>65.50</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Gas</td>
<td>Futures</td>
<td>234,567</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tradeweb**

© 2018 Tradeweb Markets LLC. All rights reserved. The Tradeweb FTSE Gilt Clearing Prices information contained herein is proprietary to Tradeweb and may not be copied or redistributed, is not warranted to be accurate, complete or timely, and does not constitute investment advice. Tradeweb is not responsible for any loss or damage that might result from the use of this information.
Trading error cost a packet for paper-maker Mondi

Harry Wilson Market report

With computers and algorithmic trading running increasing amounts of the equity market, the potential for a fat-timer trade has diminished in recent years. There are plenty of ways an algorithmic trader can go haywire, but a human plugging the wrong number into their computer is not one of them.

However, yesterday Mondi, the paper and packaging group, found itself in focus after what appears to have been an erroneous trade. It suffered a sudden fall in London after an issue was identified by the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, where the company has a dual listing. According to local media reports, an error in the way one firm entered a series of trades earlier in the week caused the stock to close up about 5 per cent higher than it should have done. Realising the problem belatedly, the JSE was forced to cancel all trades from Monday’s closing auction, prompting a correction in the shares in yesterday’s trading session.

A brief statement from the JSE noted the problem and apologised to its customers. Mondi had nothing to say about the issue.

In Johannesburg, Mondi was the day’s leading faller, dropping nearly 10 per cent, which on Monday it was also a prominent loser, though not on the same scale, closing down 2.74 per cent at R8.95.

Mondi’s fall helped end a five-day winning streak for UK’s leading stocks as the FTSE 100, having initially resisted the drops in other major markets, fell into the red by late morning. At the close the FTSE 100 was down 40.51 points, or 0.54 per cent, at 7303.69. The fall was in line with the drops elsewhere, with the biggest hitters, Evraz closed up 40p at 490p, while Randgold ended the day at £20.08, up 140p. Fresnillo, the precious metals miner, closed up 16p/it at 11.92.

The FTSE 250 fell 140.4 points to close down at 20,365.87. Leading the fallers was Go-Ahead Group, the ‘hold’ rating. The shares closed down at £33.35. Shares in the engineer fell heavily after Deutsche Bank cut its target price on the shares by 500p to £18.40, downgrading the transport operator’s stock from a “buy” to a “sell”.

Also on the slide was Smith & Nephew, a FTSE 100 company based in Reading, making medical products ranging from wound dressing to ostomy care items. Nordic and Avista Capital Partners, which has 3 per cent, according to filings, have raised more than £2 billion selling shares. This includes £250 million through a placing at 323p last June. Convatec has been disrupted by the transfer of production of some wound care and ostomy products from the US to the Dominican Republic, which weakened supplies and caused delays. The shares shed 15p to 224p.

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Spot (24h)</th>
<th>Close (1331.00)</th>
<th>Open (1331.00)</th>
<th>High (1337.40)</th>
<th>Low (1335.30)</th>
<th>AM (1335.92) PM (1335.92)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>1599.00</td>
<td>1599.00</td>
<td>1599.00</td>
<td>1599.00</td>
<td>1599.00</td>
<td>1599.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palladium</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

European money deposits %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>1 month</th>
<th>3 month</th>
<th>12 month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dollar</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterling</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Money rates %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Euro</th>
<th>US USD</th>
<th>£ Sterling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 month</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 month</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sterling spot and forward rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sterling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-03-2018</td>
<td>1.2120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-03-2018</td>
<td>1.2130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-03-2018</td>
<td>1.2140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nordic walks from Convatec

The share disposal comes as a result of 182p in November on the London stock exchange. It follows afloat in November’s low of 182p and a well-received first-quarter trading update on Wednesday. Convatec, a FTSE 250 company based in Reading, makes medical products ranging from wound dressing to ostomy care items. Nordic and Avista Capital Partners, which has 3 per cent, according to filings, have raised more than £2 billion selling shares. This includes £250 million through a placing at 323p last June. Convatec has been disrupted by the transfer of production of some wound care and ostomy products from the US to the Dominican Republic, which weakened supplies and caused delays. The shares shed 15p to 224p.

Xiaomi IPO biggest in four years

Xiaomi, the Chinese smartphone and connected device maker, has kicked off an initial public offering to raise up to $10 billion, making it the biggest flotation since Alibaba’s $25 billion New York stock market debut in 2014 (Robert Miller writes).

The Beijing-based group filed a prospectus yesterday. It is due to list in Hong Kong in early July. Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is expected to sell its smart phones in the UK under a partnership with Hutchison’s Three. The flotation will be among the first to take advantage of changes to the Hong Kong Exchanges’ listing rules. Last month which allow founders to keep control of companies after listing. Xiaomi made an operating profit last year of Rmb12.72 billion (US$1.41 billion). Proceeds from the IPO, which analysts expect to value Xiaomi short of the US$100 billion originally forecast, will be split between investments in the “internet of things” research and development and other areas to boost its software platform.

Results in brief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pre-tax profits</th>
<th>Profit (+)</th>
<th>loss (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elektron Technology (engineering FY)</td>
<td>£22.7m (-0.6m)</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The day’s biggest movers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Mathercore Sector optimism</th>
<th>Error Stronger metals prices</th>
<th>Error Stronger metals prices</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FTSE-100</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strong economic data was offset by disappointing earnings and left indices seesawing between positive and negative territory. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 5.7 points to 21,931.35 and the S&P 500 fell 5.94 points to 2,629.71.

Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is due to list in Hong Kong in early July. Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is expected to sell its smart phones in the UK under a partnership with Hutchison’s Three. The flotation will be one of the first to take advantage of changes to the Hong Kong Exchanges’ listing rules.

Stronger metals prices

Erroneous trades in South Africa

Recent improved trading

Sector optimism

Profit warning

Stronger economic data was offset by disappointing earnings and left indices seesawing between positive and negative territory. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 5.7 points to 21,931.35 and the S&P 500 fell 5.94 points to 2,629.71.

Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is due to list in Hong Kong in early July. Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is expected to sell its smart phones in the UK under a partnership with Hutchison’s Three. The flotation will be one of the first to take advantage of changes to the Hong Kong Exchanges’ listing rules.

Stronger economic data was offset by disappointing earnings and left indices seesawing between positive and negative territory. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 5.7 points to 21,931.35 and the S&P 500 fell 5.94 points to 2,629.71.

Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is due to list in Hong Kong in early July. Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is expected to sell its smart phones in the UK under a partnership with Hutchison’s Three. The flotation will be one of the first to take advantage of changes to the Hong Kong Exchanges’ listing rules.

Stronger economic data was offset by disappointing earnings and left indices seesawing between positive and negative territory. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 5.7 points to 21,931.35 and the S&P 500 fell 5.94 points to 2,629.71.

Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is due to list in Hong Kong in early July. Xiaomi, the world’s fourth-largest smartphone maker, is expected to sell its smart phones in the UK under a partnership with Hutchison’s Three. The flotation will be one of the first to take advantage of changes to the Hong Kong Exchanges’ listing rules.

Stronger economic data was offset by disappointing earnings and left indices seesawing between positive and negative territory. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 5.7 points to 21,931.35 and the S&P 500 fell 5.94 points to 2,629.71.
Have three nights free on us!

Book a selected North America 2018 tour by 31 May and we’ll add on a complimentary three-night hotel stay at the end of your tour.

Return flights and private home pick-up service included with every holiday.

Top tours included in this offer

11 days from £1,979pp
New England in the Fall
A feast of contrasts; from bustling New York to the refinement and history of Boston, and then on to the lakes and mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont.

Three extra nights free in the Holiday Inn Express Manhattan West Side

14 days from £2,269pp
New Orleans, Old South and Florida
Soak up Old South Rhythms from the birthplace of jazz in New Orleans, Graceland in Memphis and the country grace of Nashville; with a drive through Cajun country and a Sunshine State finale in Florida.

Three extra nights free in Courtyard by Marriott Lake Buena Vista, Orlando

14 days from £2,339pp
Canadian Rockies
Iconic mountain ranges, elegant resort towns and eye-catching glacial scenery; our Canadian Rockies tour delivers you into the heart of British Columbia.

Three extra nights free in Sandman Hotel Vancouver Downtown City Centre

Call us today on 0800 049 9057, visit cosmos.co.uk
Or contact your travel agent

We are members of ABTA and all our flight inclusive holidays are fully protected by the CAA’s ATOL scheme. Three nights extra free is available on selected North America tours when booked between the 6 – 31 May 2018. This offer is only available on 2018 departures. Hotels shown are subject to availability and may change to an alternative. VIP private home pick-up service is included on all holidays if you live within 10 miles of your UK departure airport. All offers are subject to availability terms and conditions apply. Correct at time of print (6 May 2018).
## The Times unit trust information service

### British Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Yld</th>
<th>Inc</th>
<th>Inc</th>
<th>Inc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Index-linked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yld</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Longs (Over 15 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yld</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mediums (5-15 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yld</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Shorts (under 5 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yld</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
<th>1Yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Additional Information

For further details on superfund, contact your fund manager.
## Business Equity prices

**12 month High/Low Companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**12 month High/Low Companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Banking & Finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Consumer goods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Investment companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Financial general

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Food & beverages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Electronic & electrical equip

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Engineering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THIS WEEKEND ONLY - ENDS MONDAY

Pop in store or shop online for more great deals on outdoor living, PLUS:

- Gardening
- Home Tech
- Electricals
- Cleaning
- Kitchen
- DIY

and much, much more!

Monaco 2-Seater Folding Rattan Bistro Set 20116

BUY ME FOR £67.99 WITH THE 15% OFF VOUCHER

£79.99

Outback Excel 310 2-Burner Gas Barbecue 178467

BUY ME FOR £118.99 WITH THE 15% OFF VOUCHER

£139.99

Present this voucher at the till, or enter 15TIMES at the online checkout

Valid Friday 4th - Monday 7th May 2018

FREE Click & Collect – order online and collect from over 250 locations nationwide
Sir Andrew Gilbart

Judge who took a hard line with rioters in 2011 and was nicknamed ‘Mr Big’ after his bank mistakenly suspected him of money laundering

The fatal shooting of Mark Duggan by police officers in north London on August 4, 2011, sparked some of the most widespread series of public disorders in recent British history. After a demonstration outside Tottenham police station had descended into violence, riots swept across London and several other cities. In Manchester and Salford police attended 779 incidents in 36 hours.

The focus of the disorder was looting and arson. In total 155 fires were reported, and firefighters and police officers came under sustained attack, with 20 of them injured. Damage was caused to 147 premises and the cost of repair ran into millions of pounds. The public demanded severe penalties for offenders and HJU Gilbart, QC, the honorary recorder of Manchester, was ready to respond on behalf of his adopted city.

A southerner who had made his way to the north by chance many years earlier, Gilbart had grown to love the area. Describing the effects of what had happened as “heartbreaking”, he not only sent many offenders to custody for long periods, but also appeared to lay down sentencing guidelines for a range of riot-related offences even wider than those with which he was dealing at that time. Appeals against such “disproportionately severe sentences” soon followed. Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, the lord chief justice at the time, described Gilbart’s remarks as “inappropriate.”

While the Court of Appeal disagreed with Gilbart assuming the role of providing national sentencing guidelines, much of what he had said was adopted, and al- most all the decisions he handed out were approved. Gilbart took the “trinity” in his good part, and, to his huge pleasure, was even hailed “hero of the streets” by one socialist website when he quashed a jail sentence for quashing a jail sentence for one of the rioters.

Andrew James Gilbart was born in Sussex in 1910. His Cornish father, Tom, and his American mother, Carol, were teachers, and it was through them that he acquired a good memory and a passion for interrogating engineers on “junction modelling” and other recognizably topics. As Lord Justice Holroyde remarked: “There is scarcely a motorway, trunk road or shopping development in [Greater Manchester] in which he did not have a hand, and his national practice in securing planning permission for motorway service areas was so extensive that he had a justified claim to have at least one name after him.”

The high point of Gilbart’s career at the Bar was his work on the fiercely contested inquiry into the second run-off for Manchester airport in 1994: He was called to the Bar (Middle Temple) in 1932 and in the following year joined Kings Chambers (then Bow Lane Chambers) in Manchester. During his early years he supplemented his income working as a night lawyer for the Daily Mirror. He remained at Kings Chambers until his appointment as a circuit judge in 2004. He was joint head of chambers from 2001-2004 and was a leading influence in its growth.

As one of his former pupils, Nicholas Braslavsky, QC, recalled, whether it was landfill site litigation, holding forth on 13th-century Albigensian monks, or opening the bowling (and the batting) for the chambers cricket team, Gilbart “did everything with enthusiasm.”

In 1979 he married Morag Williamson, a textile artist. They had two children: Tom, who was appointed as a crown court recorder in 2010, and Ruth, a local authority planning officer. The marriage was dissolved in 2001. He married Paula Whitwell, a solicitor, in 2003 and found himself stepfather to three more children: Hannah, who is a solicitor, Sam, who is a chemistry teacher, and Ted, a finance manager.

Gilbart’s full-time judicial career began in 2004 when he was appointed a circuit judge in the administrative court. In 2008 he was appointed senior circuit judge and honorary recorder of Manchester, where he remained for five years until his appointment to the benches of the High Court.

As a judge Gilbart was not slow to demonstrate his strong sense of fair play. In 2012 he expressed “considerable concerns” about the ability of Dale Cregan, who was charged with four murders, including two police officers, to receive a fair trial after inappropriate comments had been broadcast about the case, including from politicians “of the greatest seniority.” This was probably a veiled reference to the prime minister at the time, David Cameron.

“Whether or not this defendant is guilty of this or any other crime is a matter for the jury to consider, and not for the press, broadcasting media, internet sites, police, or politicians,” he said.

Gilbart’s appointment to the High Court bench was announced in May, 2012, but it coincided almost to the day with his diagnosis of cancer. He was eventually sworn in as Mr Justice Gilbart on October 1, 2014, and was knighted the next year.

In 2015 Gilbart sparked controversy when he ruled against Eric Pickles, the secretary of state for communities and local government, in a judicial review concerning Gypsy and Traveller sites. Pickles had decided to reserve all decisions regarding planning permis-

sion and enforcement in such cases to himself, but Gilbart ruled that this was unlawful because it indirectly discriminated against Travellers.

Another of Gilbart’s judgments raised the ire of his fellow countryman and Chelsea in 2017 when he found in favour of property owners who had painted the front of their multimillion-pound home in red and white stripes. The local authority was requiring her to paint it white on the basis that it was “incongruous with the architecture” of the house. Gilbart quoted “the royal borough’s sense of aesthetics could not stop owners painting their homes to resemble holed sweets.”

Away from court Gilbart had wide interests. He enjoyed pantomime and Ken Dodd as much as Shakespeare, and preferred Muddy Waters and Joe Bonamassa to grand opera. A family man who was proud of his children and loved telling corny jokes to his grandchildren, Gilbart also enjoyed spending time in his cottage in the Ariege in southwestern France, chopping wood and watching eagles fly overhead.

Although he regarded his appointment to the High Court bench as the pinnacle of his legal career, and relished mixing with the upper echelons of the judiciary, he was down to earth enough to admit that he enjoyed life on the bench most of all when a fellow lawyer from the Northern Circuit appeared before him. As one of his former pupils put it: “He basically loved having a good argument.”

Sir Andrew James Gilbart, planning lawyer and High Court judge, was born on February 13, 1950. He died from cancer on March 19, 2018, aged 68, 11 days before he was due to retire.
Johan van Hulst

Teacher who risked his life with an ingenious scheme to save hundreds of Jewish children in Holland from the Holocaust

Johan van Hulst never regarded himself as a hero, despite being credited with saving at least 600 Jewish children.

On January 9, 1936, he was born in Amsterdam to Gerrit van Hulst and Johanna Hulst. He later received a PhD in humanities.

In 1911 in Amsterdam, Johan van Hulst began studying at the University of Amsterdam and from 1917 he attended the theatre and registered local Jews. At age 99, he was still active in amateur tournaments at the age of 99.

He was a director in the 1930s. He was honored by the Dutch senate from 1956 to 1981 as a member of the Christian Democrats as a member of the Christian Democrats. He was a first-class chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

Johan van Hulst was one of the last Jews to be deported from the Netherlands, and his family was arrested in 1943.

He was the proud father of 12 children, all of whom continued to do well in life, and he was very proud of his grandsons.

Johan van Hulst was a lifelong chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

He was a director in the 1930s. He was honored by the Dutch senate from 1956 to 1981 as a member of the Christian Democrats as a member of the Christian Democrats. He was a first-class chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

Johan van Hulst was one of the last Jews to be deported from the Netherlands, and his family was arrested in 1943.

He was the proud father of 12 children, all of whom continued to do well in life, and he was very proud of his grandsons.

Johan van Hulst was a lifelong chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

He was a director in the 1930s. He was honored by the Dutch senate from 1956 to 1981 as a member of the Christian Democrats as a member of the Christian Democrats. He was a first-class chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

Johan van Hulst was one of the last Jews to be deported from the Netherlands, and his family was arrested in 1943.

He was the proud father of 12 children, all of whom continued to do well in life, and he was very proud of his grandsons.

Johan van Hulst was a lifelong chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

He was a director in the 1930s. He was honored by the Dutch senate from 1956 to 1981 as a member of the Christian Democrats as a member of the Christian Democrats. He was a first-class chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

Johan van Hulst was one of the last Jews to be deported from the Netherlands, and his family was arrested in 1943.

He was the proud father of 12 children, all of whom continued to do well in life, and he was very proud of his grandsons.

Johan van Hulst was a lifelong chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

He was a director in the 1930s. He was honored by the Dutch senate from 1956 to 1981 as a member of the Christian Democrats as a member of the Christian Democrats. He was a first-class chess player and in the 1930s he was a chess player who also enjoyed a distinguished career in politics and after the war he was awarded a master's degree in political science.

Johan van Hulst was one of the last Jews to be deported from the Netherlands, and his family was arrested in 1943.

He was the proud father of 12 children, all of whom continued to do well in life, and he was very proud of his grandsons.
The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were represented by Mrs Michael Gordon Lennox (Lady in Waiting) at the Service of Thanksgiving for the late Jean Fullen at the Parish Church of All Saints, Chelsea, on 23rd April 2018, at noon, and a memorial service at St Mark’s Church, Chelsea, at 4pm.}

BURLINGTON

On 22nd June 2018, aged 76, in a private cremation for close family. RICHARD REYNOLDS, brother of George Reynolds, and a much-loved dad, much missed by all his family. A service will be held at St Saviours Church, Southgate, on Thursday 21st June, at 11am. All donations, if desired, to St Saviours Church, Southgate.

DICKSON-SIMPSON

On 29th April 2018, aged 81. Beloved husband of Sue and proud father of Darren, he will be fondly remembered and sadly missed by all. A celebration of his life will be held at Athlone Memorial Presbyterian Church, 14th May, at noon, and after at Athol Park, Tallaght, Dublin. If desired, donations only, please, to charity. WWT.

DIED

NEDD

Lawyers’ Association, this afternoon attended an Executive Board Meeting at 60 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4.

The Princess Royal, Master, the Commissioner of Trinity House, this afternoon attended the United Kingdom Maritime and Trade Union National Union Executive Board (Trinity House) meeting at Trinity House, Town Hall, London EC4.

The Duchess of York, patron of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, this afternoon reviewed RNLI vessels at the granite Wall, Devonport Dockyard, Plymouth.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, today attended the presentation of awards to students at the Duke of York’s Scholarship Preparatory School in Wimbledon.

The Duke of York, patron of RAHF, today attended a presentation dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Princess Royal, President, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is in South Africa until 1st May, where she will attend the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Duke of York, patron of the RAF Benevolent Fund, this morning held a meeting at Dumfries House, East Ayrshire.

The Prince of Wales, President, this evening attended the dinner in Dumfries House.

The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall attended the Duke of York, patron of RAHF, this evening held a dinner in Dumfries House.

The Princess Royal, patron of the RNLI, this evening attended the presentation of awards to the RNLI at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Station, Great Eastern Street, London E1.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Prince of Wales, President, this afternoon held a dinner at Dumfries House for supporters of the Prince’s Foundation.

Birch Law acting solicitor to the liquidator of Basketry International.

The Times

Buckingham Palace


The Times

The Times

A person who has been present at the event has been identified as a person of interest in the investigation.

Birch Law acting solicitor to the liquidator of Basketry International.

The Times

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace

The Duchess of Cambridge, patron, today attended the Garden Party at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, this evening attended the dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Duke of York, patron of RAHF, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were represented by Mrs Michael Gordon Lennox (Lady in Waiting) at the Service of Thanksgiving for the late Jean Fullen at the Parish Church of All Saints, Chelsea, on 23rd April 2018, at noon, and a memorial service at St Mark’s Church, Chelsea, at 4pm.

The Duchess of York, patron of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, this afternoon attended the RNLI presentation at the granite Wall, Devonport Dockyard, Plymouth.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, today attended the presentation of awards to students at the Duke of York’s Scholarship Preparatory School in Wimbledon.

The Duke of York, patron of RAHF, today attended the presentation dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Princess Royal, President, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is in South Africa until 1st May, where she will attend the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Duchess of York, patron of the RNLI, this evening attended the presentation of awards to the RNLI at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Station, Great Eastern Street, London E1.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Prince of Wales, President, this afternoon held a dinner at Dumfries House for supporters of the Prince’s Foundation.

Birch Law acting solicitor to the liquidator of Basketry International.

The Times

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace

The Duchess of Cambridge, patron, today attended the Garden Party at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, this evening attended the dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Duke of York, patron of RAHF, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Princess Royal, President, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is in South Africa until 1st May, where she will attend the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Duchess of York, patron of the RNLI, this evening attended the presentation of awards to the RNLI at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Station, Great Eastern Street, London E1.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Prince of Wales, President, this afternoon held a dinner at Dumfries House for supporters of the Prince’s Foundation.

Birch Law acting solicitor to the liquidator of Basketry International.

The Times

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace

The Duchess of Cambridge, patron, today attended the Garden Party at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, this evening attended the dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Duke of York, patron of RAHF, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Princess Royal, President, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is in South Africa until 1st May, where she will attend the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Duchess of York, patron of the RNLI, this evening attended the presentation of awards to the RNLI at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Station, Great Eastern Street, London E1.

The Duke of York, patron of the Duke of York’s Scholarship, this evening held a dinner at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

The Prince of Wales, President, this afternoon held a dinner at Dumfries House for supporters of the Prince’s Foundation.

Birch Law acting solicitor to the liquidator of Basketry International.

The Times

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace
7 day Fully Escorted Luxury Golden Triangle Tour

Your holiday includes:

- 7 day fully escorted luxury Golden Triangle tour with 3 nights in Delhi, 1 night in Agra and 2 nights in Jaipur
- Sightseeing tours of Old and New Delhi including the Red Fort, Jama Masjid Mosque, Raj Ghat, Humayun’s Tomb and Qutub Minar
- Sightseeing tours of Agra including a visit to one of the seven wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal, as well as Agra Fort and the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri
- Sightseeing tours of Jaipur including the opulent Amber Fort, Hawa Mahal, the City Palace, Jantar Mantar Observatory and more
- 1 night luxury hotel stay in Mumbai
- 9 night all-inclusive luxury cruise on board Silver Shadow
  - Prepaid gratuities and complimentary Wi-Fi on board
  - In-suite butler service and fully stocked fridge
  - All-Inclusive alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages including fine wines and premium spirits whilst on board
  - All flights (London departure - regional flight departures available)
  - All transfers

Imagining discovering:
Golden Triangle Tour - Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Delhi
Cruise - Mumbai, Porbandar, Muscat (overnight in port), Fujairah, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai

16 nights departing 10 Apr 2019

Prices from:

Vista Suite £3,799pp
Veranda Suite £4,899pp
Medallion Suite £8,599pp

Highlights of India & Arabia
Includes a 7 day fully escorted luxury Golden Triangle tour

Uncover the architectural highlights of India with a Golden Triangle tour and a cruise to the jewels of the Arabian Sea.

Your six night Luxury Golden Triangle tour begins with a flight to bustling Delhi, where you’ll uncover the differences between Old Delhi and its more modern marvels. You'll have the chance to visit the impressive Jama Masjid between prayers, one of the largest mosques in India. Opposite you’ll find the Red Fort, as your tour continues to Humayun’s Tomb and Qutub Minar.

The magnificent Taj Mahal awaits in Agra, a magnificent monument to enduring love. Here you’ll also find Agra Fort, a Mughal walled city, and the unoccupied Fatehpur Sikri, once the capital of the Mughal Empire. Next is Jaipur, home to the Hawa Mahal and the Amber Fort, where you’ll find views towards the Aravalli Mountains, along with serene lakes and saffron gardens below.

With your Golden Triangle tour complete, you’ll fly to Mumbai for an overnight stay. It’s here that you’ll embark Silver Shadow for your luxury all-inclusive cruise. You’ll sail first to Porbandar, a coastal city noted as being the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. Here you’ll find Kirti Mandir, a memorial temple dedicated to the 'Great Soul'. While in Muscat, one of the Middle East’s oldest cities, you’ll enjoy an overnight stay in port, ample time to explore its fascinating history, tranquil parks and museums.

Your next destination is cosmopolitan Fujairah, home to a restored fort and the stunning white and gold Sheikh Zayed Mosque. Then it’s onto Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, where you could stroll around the dhow harbour, explore the markets or soak up its rich culture through museums, exhibitions and tours. Explore Doha’s stunning skyline before cruising to the glittering city of Dubai, where you’ll disembark and fly home.

Discover India’s Gold Triangle

Delhi
A full day sightseeing tour will demonstrate the huge variation between Old Delhi, with its warren of switchback alleysways, street food markets and religious buildings, and New Delhi, where wide open boulevards lead to leafy colonial relics.

Agra
This modest city hides a spectacular monument within its muddied streets: the Taj Mahal. You’ll also visit Agra Fort, a Mughal walled city built from red sandstone and one of the finest forts in India.

Jaipur
Rajasthan has a distinctly colonial feel that harks back to the days of the British Raj. Your driver will now have to navigate around camels, baboons and elephants on the main highways – it’s a fascinating spectacle.

Discover Silversea

Silversea cruises have a long-standing reputation for exceptional service and small, stylish ships which can guide you closer to the shore, traversing waterways few other cruise ships can navigate.

The suites on-board Silversea’s glistening ships offer one of the highest space-per-guest ratios of any luxury cruise accommodation, so you can guarantee an ultra-luxury experience as you indulge in your voyage of discovery.

Imagine Cruising

imaginecruising.co.uk
0800 840 5862

Opening Hours:
Monday to Sunday:
9am - 5pm

ABTA A617026D

For all terms and conditions please visit imaginetravel.com. Prices are per person based on two adults sharing a Vista Suite, Veranda Suite or Medallion Suite. Imagine Cruising are fully ABTA and ATOL bonded. Regional flights available with a supplement.
Gtech’s Cordless Lawnmower gives you the freedom to make mowing your lawn a pleasure, not a chore!

- Cordless
- Up to 80 Minutes Run Time**
- 6 Adjustable Cutting Heights
- Cutting Width of 430mm
- 40 Litre Capacity Bin
- Easy Storage
- 2 Year Guarantee

Makes cutting your lawn perfectly simple
In designing the Gtech Lawnmower we set out to make mowing the lawn simpler, quicker and less of a chore. There’s no inconvenience and expense of petrol or restrictive cable to worry about, and the battery powered motor starts at the touch of a button*. You’ll enjoy up to 80 minutes** on a single charge, using both batteries.

Design details that make the difference
It’s not just Gtech’s 36v Lithium-Ion battery that makes this Lawnmower so easy and enjoyable to use, it’s a combination of fantastic design details: the 17” (430mm) wide cutting blade that saves you time with fewer passes and the ability to cut close to the borders. Whilst the large wheels make the lawnmower easy to use and manoeuvrable. Not to mention the easily adjustable cutting height, moving between 3cm to 8cm in 1cm increments and a large 40 litre grass bin that’s easy to fit and remove.

Easy to start, easy to use, easy to store
When the job’s done, the Gtech Lawnmower folds away for easy storage. It’s these unique details that make all the difference!

Unbelievable offer!
And if that’s not enough to whet your appetite, to celebrate summer Gtech are also giving you a FREE spare battery worth £99 with every order – so go cordless in your garden this summer with Gtech! (Using code: 64VR)

ORDER TODAY for just £349.99 with FREE DELIVERY
☎ 0800 030 81 23 24 hour orderline
🌐 www.gtech.co.uk/timesgarden

Double your runtime with a spare battery
RRP £99 FREE
This bundle should normally cost £498.99, but can be yours today for just £349.99
(USE CODE 64VR)

The Gtech Falcon is one of the best cordless lawnmowers available today. A combination of a powerful motor and battery make for a great performance, resulting in highly precise cuts. The Gtech Falcon has plenty to offer for anyone in the market for a high - quality cordless lawnmower.
Welcome
to the world of solo travel

Enjoy our biggest ever range with over 150 award-winning escorted holidays to over 50 countries

As the market leaders in independent travel we’ve been taking travellers to a host of destinations all over the world for years. Our collection of exciting itineraries has been exclusively designed for solo travellers. Come with us to discover fascinating cities, spectacular scenery and fabulous sights in the company of other independent travellers.

Our unique guarantees

Guaranteed departures · Guaranteed price match · Guaranteed price promise

Italy
8 days from £999

Croatia
8 days from £1199

USA
5 days from £1599

Every holiday includes so much

- The services of a Just You Tour Manager
- Flight & overseas transfers
- Accommodation in a room of your own
- A welcome get together
- Breakfast each day, plus many other meals
- Plenty of excursions
- A Just You representative to greet you at all UK airports
- Free UK airport lounge on all long haul holidays
- A 24-hour helpline available 7 days a week

Call 0800 987 5135 visit justyou.co.uk
Or contact your travel agent
Shetland in 6th place, Isle of Man 9th.

The times weather page is provided by Weatherquest.

**Weather**

**Brexit**

Brexit has happened before, in a spectacular cataclysm that dwarfs any happening these days. Europe began more than 200,000 years ago during an ice age, when Britain was a peninsula of northwest Europe. Melting water from vast northern ice sheets filled a giant lake in the southern half of the North Sea, held back by a chalk ridge stretching from southeast England to northwest Ireland. Eventually the glacial lake filled up with so much water that the dam broke, unleashing vast torrents of water in a megaflood, a discharge 100,000 times greater than the Thames.

The flood was so violent it ripped through the chalk ridge and gouged a deep, straight valley from the Dover Straits to beyond the Isle of Wight. That valley became a mighty new waterway, the Channel, that drained the rivers of northwest Europe to the Atlantic and separated Britain from Europe.

Mysterious bowl-shaped holes in the seabed were also revealed during surveys for construction of the Channel Tunnel. These great holes were up to 100km deep and kilometres wide, and so big that the tunnel had to be diverted to avoid them. It is now believed to be vast plunge pools, where raging waters tearing through the chalk ridge crashed over immeasurable waterfalls and gouged out the rocks below. Only one other place in the world shows anything similar: the Channeled Scablands in the eastern desert of Washington state in the USA, the source of the extinct waterfalls created by meltwaters from the last ice age.

As for the separation of Britain from Europe, the final divorce was settled about 10,000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age. Rising temperatures again melted ice sheets, sea levels rose and the plains connecting Britain to Europe were flooded in what became the North Sea, while the Channel Tunnel became the Channel. And so Britain became an island and the course of history changed for ever.

**The Times Weather Eye**

**Paul Simons**

---

**Around Britain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Wind Speed</th>
<th>Sea State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>5.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>3.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>5.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>2.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>4.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>2.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>3.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hove</td>
<td>5.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>4.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>3.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>3.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>3.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>4.0°C</td>
<td>32 km/h</td>
<td>Rough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Flood alerts and warnings**

At 17:00 on Thursday there were five flood alerts and no warnings in England, and no flood alerts or warnings in Wales or Scotland. For further information and updates, visit flood-aware.org.uk or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

**The Times weather page is provided by Weatherquest.**

---

**Eight Days From £899 Per Person**

Return flights plus seven nights’ half-board accommodation.

Tour of Dubrovnik, with its medieval and baroque centre, visit to Krka National Park and its series of stunning waterfalls and lakes, visit to Split and tour of Emperor Diocletian’s monumental palace.

---

**Weatherquest**

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 77 76 75

For more information on this service we can visit our website:

www.weatherquest.co.uk

---

**Dubrovnik, the Dalmatian Coast and Montenegro**

Includes an experienced travel manager

Prices based on two people sharing a twin room. Single room rates on application only. Additional excursion costs may apply. Travel insurance is not included but is strongly recommended. This holiday is especially subject to booking conditions of Travel Tots, ABTA VMT ATOL. SSPT protected, a company independent of Times Newspapers Ltd. Subject to availability, images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel, E0055.
The Douro, Porto & Salamanca

One of Europe’s best kept secrets in one of its most undiscovered corners, explore the sleepy villages and medieval towns unchanged for centuries, amongst the breathtaking rolling hills and terraced vineyard slopes of the stunning Douro Valley.

Eight days from £1,299PP

Selected departures up to November 2018 and April to November 2019

ITINERARY:

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL IN PORTO
Fly to Lisbon or Porto, and transfer to the ship moored in Porto.

DAY 2 – LAMEGO
After a first morning’s scenic cruising, this afternoon we take the short drive to the historic town of Lamego where you can visit the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies church. We then visit a traditional Portuguese quinta to learn how port is produced.

DAY 3 – CASTELO RODRIGO
Relax on board whilst the stunning views of this spectacular region drift by. This afternoon visit Castelo Rodrigo, a 12th-century walled hilltop village with its stupendous panoramic views.

DAY 4 – SALAMANCA
Today we drive to Salamanca, for a guided tour of this beautiful city. Over lunch, we experience a traditional flamenco show.

DAY 5 – PESO DA REGUA
We cruise to Peso da Regua where there is time at leisure this afternoon. This evening we enjoy dinner at a traditional quinta, with the opportunity to sample some of their produce.

DAY 6 – MATEUS PALACE GARDENS
This morning, we visit the famous Mateus Palace gardens. After dinner tonight, we enjoy a wonderful performance of traditional Portuguese folk music.

DAY 7 – PORTO
We firstly enjoy a tour and tasting at one of the best-known port wine cellars. Later we have a guided tour of the city with free time to further explore.

DAY 8 – RETURN HOME
Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

For a brochure or to book Call 01283 248 325 or visit rivieratravel.co.uk/tim

Prices and availability correct at time of print
Sport

Kiropp ‘framed’ by testers

Athletics
Rick Broadbent

One of Kenya’s biggest athletics stars claims he was “framed” and had his Olympic 1500m gold medallions sabotaged by his drug-testing booster.

Kiprop, the 2008 Olympic 1500m champion and a three-times world champion, also claims that the officials behind the test flouted both the letter and the spirit of the random test a day in advance.

Responding to reports that he had tested positive for the blood booster EPO, Kiprop issued a statement alleging his sample had been doctored by an individual who had previously dismissed, with the amount of protection money he had paid via a phone transfer.

He also claimed he had been offered an ambassadorial anti-doping role with the IAAF if he had admitted taking drugs.

“I can confirm I have been offered a position by the IAAF if I admitted taking drugs. I have refused because I was told they would have made an offer had they known I was clean,” Kiprop said in a statement.

Kiprop said that two doping control officers came to his house in Iten, northern Kenya, in November. He provided a urine sample and they allegedly asked for money.

“At that time I did not see the money as having a relationship to the sample or even the irregular advance notice,” he said.

Kiprop said he left the sample on the table while he went to look for money, but changed his mind and decided to transfer it via a mobile phone service.

“I remain perplexed on how my innocence could be judged in the only time when money was extorted from me,” Kiprop said. “It is not beyond my suspicion that [it] was because I might have remitted less money than I was expected to.”

Kiprop’s statement also referred to a new Athletics Integrity Unit, which he accused of leaking his positive test and subjecting him to harsh and unjust treatment.

“Those allegations subsequently (and) differ from or complicit. There could be sanctions against them so they have one banned athlete with no问责 （对不起）of their athletes and we are going to it races in cases.,” Kiprop added.

He said he had been offered more than 40 failed drug tests in Kenya in the past five years and the country is on the IAAF’s watch list. He also declared it was “a cover-up” by the World Anti-Doping Agency in 2016. That year the Kenyan track manager asked the IAAF at a conference in Rio de Janeiro after telling Times reporter that he would provide advance notice of drug tests for £1000,000. He denied wrongdoing, saying he was protecting athletes by trying to appease undercover reporters.

As the plot thickened, British athletes called on anti-doping investigators to target Kenya.

Kiprop is the fifth Kenyan to fail a test while managed by Rosa & Associati, an agency run by Gabriele Rosa and his son Federico. In 2016, Federico appeared in a Kenyan court, accused of helping athlete Rita Jeptoo to dope, but the charges were dropped.

He told The Times last night that there was a doping ‘epidemic’ in Kenya, but that the Rosas were not to blame.

“I manage over 200 Kenyans and in the 20 years since we are talking five out of 0.004 of them,” he said.

“While not denying that they had made any offer.

“Kiprop, left, was awarded gold after a long legal battle. Renni Kariuki, right, won the Olympic 1500m at 50 years old in 2008, failed a drugs test.

Kiprop’s medal record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olympic Games</th>
<th>Gold: 1500m, Beijing 2008</th>
<th>Bronze: 800m, Beijing 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kiprop, the 2008 Olympic 1500m champion and a three-times world champion, also claims that the officials behind the test flouted both the letter and the spirit of the random test a day in advance.

Responding to reports that he had tested positive for the blood booster EPO, Kiprop issued a statement alleging his sample had been doctored by an individual who had previously dismissed, with the amount of protection money he had paid via a phone transfer.

He also claimed he had been offered an ambassadorial anti-doping role with the IAAF if he had admitted taking drugs.

“I can confirm I have been offered a position by the IAAF if I admitted taking drugs. I have refused because I was told they would have made an offer had they known I was clean,” Kiprop said in a statement.

Kiprop said that two doping control officers came to his house in Iten, northern Kenya, in November. He provided a urine sample and they allegedly asked for money.

“At that time I did not see the money as having a relationship to the sample or even the irregular advance notice,” he said.

Kiprop said he left the sample on the table while he went to look for money, but changed his mind and decided to transfer it via a mobile phone service.

“I remain perplexed on how my innocence could be judged in the only time when money was extorted from me,” Kiprop said. “It is not beyond my suspicion that [it] was because I might have remitted less money than I was expected to.”

Kiprop’s statement also referred to a new Athletics Integrity Unit, which he accused of leaking his positive test and subjecting him to harsh and unjust treatment.

“Those allegations subsequently (and) differ from or complicit. There could be sanctions against them so they have one banned athlete with no问责 （对不起）of their athletes and we are going to it races in cases.,” Kiprop added.

He said he had been offered more than 40 failed drug tests in Kenya in the past five years and the country is on the IAAF’s watch list. He also declared it was “a cover-up” by the World Anti-Doping Agency in 2016. That year the Kenyan track manager asked the IAAF at a conference in Rio de Janeiro after telling Times reporter that he would provide advance notice of drug tests for £1000,000. He denied wrongdoing, saying he was protecting athletes by trying to appease undercover reporters.

As the plot thickened, British athletes called on anti-doping investigators to target Kenya.

Kiprop is the fifth Kenyan to fail a test while managed by Rosa & Associati, an agency run by Gabriele Rosa and his son Federico. In 2016, Federico appeared in a Kenyan court, accused of helping athlete Rita Jeptoo to dope, but the charges were dropped.

He told The Times last night that there was a doping ‘epidemic’ in Kenya, but that the Rosas were not to blame.

“I manage over 200 Kenyans and in the 20 years since we are talking five out of 0.004 of them,” he said.

“While not denying that they had made any offer.

“Kiprop, left, was awarded gold after a long legal battle. Renni Kariuki, right, won the Olympic 1500m at 50 years old in 2008, failed a drugs test.

Kiprop’s medal record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olympic Games</th>
<th>Gold: 1500m, Beijing 2008</th>
<th>Bronze: 800m, Beijing 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Kiprop, the 2008 Olympic 1500m champion and a three-times world champion, also claims that the officials behind the test flouted both the letter and the spirit of the random test a day in advance.

Responding to reports that he had tested positive for the blood booster EPO, Kiprop issued a statement alleging his sample had been doctored by an individual who had previously dismissed, with the amount of protection money he had paid via a phone transfer.

He also claimed he had been offered an ambassadorial anti-doping role with the IAAF if he had admitted taking drugs.

“I can confirm I have been offered a position by the IAAF if I admitted taking drugs. I have refused because I was told they would have made an offer had they known I was clean,” Kiprop said in a statement.

Kiprop said that two doping control officers came to his house in Iten, northern Kenya, in November. He provided a urine sample and they allegedly asked for money.

“At that time I did not see the money as having a relationship to the sample or even the irregular advance notice,” he said.

Kiprop said he left the sample on the table while he went to look for money, but changed his mind and decided to transfer it via a mobile phone service.

“I remain perplexed on how my innocence could be judged in the only time when money was extorted from me,” Kiprop said. “It is not beyond my suspicion that [it] was because I might have remitted less money than I was expected to.”

Kiprop’s statement also referred to a new Athletics Integrity Unit, which he accused of leaking his positive test and subjecting him to harsh and unjust treatment.

“Those allegations subsequently (and) differ from or complicit. There could be sanctions against them so they have one banned athlete with no问责 （对不起）of their athletes and we are going to it races in cases.,” Kiprop added.

He said he had been offered more than 40 failed drug tests in Kenya in the past five years and the country is on the IAAF’s watch list. He also declared it was “a cover-up” by the World Anti-Doping Agency in 2016. That year the Kenyan track manager asked the IAAF at a conference in Rio de Janeiro after telling Times reporter that he would provide advance notice of drug tests for £1000,000. He denied wrongdoing, saying he was protecting athletes by trying to appease undercover reporters.

As the plot thickened, British athletes called on anti-doping investigators to target Kenya.

Kiprop is the fifth Kenyan to fail a test while managed by Rosa & Associati, an agency run by Gabriele Rosa and his son Federico. In 2016, Federico appeared in a Kenyan court, accused of helping athlete Rita Jeptoo to dope, but the charges were dropped.

He told The Times last night that there was a doping ‘epidemic’ in Kenya, but that the Rosas were not to blame.

“I manage over 200 Kenyans and in the 20 years since we are talking five out of 0.004 of them,” he said.

“While not denying that they had made any offer.

“Kiprop, left, was awarded gold after a long legal battle. Renni Kariuki, right, won the Olympic 1500m at 50 years old in 2008, failed a drugs test.

Kiprop’s medal record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olympic Games</th>
<th>Gold: 1500m, Beijing 2008</th>
<th>Bronze: 800m, Beijing 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Matt Dickinson
Chief Sports Writer

Dark clouds but Froome deserves his shot at history

For Chris Froome, a period that may even be longer than he expected that Froome should have suspended himself for a period that may even be longer than he expected, the dark cloud hangs over him.

Paradoxically, it is a reason why Froome is in the midst of a grand tour while being tested every day? If he did take extra salbutamol, he could be open to detection. Of corticosteroids for competition, Westra is Of course, there is the argument that it suits Froome and Team Sky to drag this out, win races in the meantime, put off the day of reckoning. Never mind the legal bills, or the media heat — they can enjoy Froome in his prime, including a hefty appearance fee that the Giro organisers paid unaware of the coming storms.

But given that the procedure has been compromised by the leak of his sample, someone connected to the investigation, when as Froome is quick to remind everyone this would normally be confidential, it is probably not a surprise that he seeks to protect his own interests and his right to race.

And then again, from the investigation have said that Sky could challenge the Wada threshold involving Alessandro Petacchi that led to a 12-month ban.

That case found that Petauci took too much salbutamol but without intention to cheat — a conclusion that would leave Sky having to decide whether they can still stand by their star rider.

It is all a horrible mess as we turn to the Giro. Not good for anyone," Dumoulin said, pointing out that under the rules of the voluntary code that some teams have signed up to through the Movement for Credibility Cycling, though not Team Sky, he would have been stood down by his team in the same circumstances.

They defence remains unclear though leaks to Le Monde from the investigation have said that Sky could challenge the Wada threshold itself as unsafe, opening up a huge debate.

Froome wins the opening stage of last year's La Vuelta, by the information to Vegni or RCS, the team in the same circumstances. He even describes how they would play in the build-up to the Commonwealth Games in 2018. Crossing the line five seconds ahead of the peloton. The 23-year-old, who won silver in the time trial at the Commonwealth Games in Australia last month, rides for the Canyon Eisberg team.

Tom is a nice character," Vegni said of the defending champion Tom Dumoulin, who has come to the Giro in a sprint finish.
O’Brien has strong hand

Rob Wright Racing Editor

Aidan O’Brien will saddle three of the 14 runners in the Qipco 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket tomorrow, headed by the 9-4 favourite Gustav Klimt.

The Irish trainer already holds the record for most victories in the first classic of the season, having won the race eight times. O’Brien again holds a strong hand as Gustav Klimt is joined by the unbeaten Saxon Warrior, who won the group one Racing Post Trophy at Doncaster last October. Murillo, a close second in the Derby Stakes at Royal Ascot, completes his team.

Masar, owned by Godolphin, will attempt to give trainer Charlie Appleby a first classic victory. He staked his claim when winning the Craven Stakes by 4.5 lengths on May 1st, and is generally second favourite at 5-1.

The ground at Newmarket was yesterday described as good to soft, good in places, but is expected to be no worse than good by tomorrow.

Lingfield Park

Rob Wright

1.50 Selling Stakes (£15,500)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>J Power</td>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>Mr J Laird</td>
<td>A Baldwina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>J Haynes</td>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>J Smullen</td>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Ch Pope</td>
<td>Mr B Gibbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.20 Handicap (3-Y-O £3,500 5f 6y) (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pour L’amour</td>
<td>J Goldie</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon Parrain</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Co</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>J Fanning</td>
<td>P J McDonald</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.50 Novice Stakes (£10,500 5f 6y)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple Jazz</td>
<td>J Haynes</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Rebel</td>
<td>J Fanning</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milovary</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newcastle

Rob Wright

5.10 Photo Finisher 7.20 Bambino Luna 5.80 Rainbow Rebel 6.90 Mr Pettigrew 6.50 Balia Ferrari

5.20 Photo Finisher 7.20 Bambino Luna 5.80 Rainbow Rebel 6.90 Mr Pettigrew 6.50 Balia Ferrari

5.30 Handicap (3-Y-O £1,100 5f 6y) (D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple Jazz</td>
<td>J Haynes</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Rebel</td>
<td>J Fanning</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milovary</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musselburgh

Rob Wright

2.10 Deep Intraprise (3-Y-O £10 5f 6y) (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missus</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Breeze</td>
<td>J Haynes</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misael</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.40 Handicap (80,000 £5 6y) (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple Jazz</td>
<td>J Haynes</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Rebel</td>
<td>J Fanning</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milovary</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cheltenham

Rob Wright

4.50 Old Pride 7.15 Freya 5.90 Minfajla 4.60 Minifajla 3.50 Full Trottle

5.45 Hunters’ Chase (£4,797 6f 6y) (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Pride</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freya</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Mrs C Hardwick</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minfajla</td>
<td>J Quinn</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>S V Harvey</td>
<td>Miss A Judd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course specialists

Cheltenham, Trainer Mike Hascombe, 3 from 4, 8 into 1.

Chepstow, Trainer O’Keeffe, 4 from 6, 3 into 1.

Chipping Campden, Trainer J Badcock, 3 from 4, 2 into 1.

Chipping Norton, Trainer J Badcock, 1 from 2, 5 into 1.

Derek Martin, Trainer J Badcock, 2 from 3, 2 into 1.

Fakenham, Trainer J Badcock, 3 from 4, 2 into 1.

Newcastle, Trainer Lapper, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Lapper, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer A Baldwina, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer J Tinkler, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer R Scott, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr J Ridley, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer P J McDonald, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer R J Quinn, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer R J Quinn, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer P J McDonald, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer R J Quinn, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr H Brookshaw, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.

Newmarket, Trainer Mr Alex Edwards, 1 from 1, 1 into 1.
Players are jumping over fences to avoid testers
Schoolboys as young as 16 buy steroids on the internet
Drug testing woefully low compared with other sports

SPORT SPECIAL REPORT INTO DOPING

Revealed: the shocking truth

Players are jumping over fences to avoid testers
Schoolboys as young as 16 buy steroids on the internet
Drug testing woefully low compared with other sports

TIME'S INVESTIGATION

David Bates

Evvery Rory Barker looked, he saw people fulfilling ambitious. The unmistakable kit, an extra ounce of swagger in the corridor, the tie stitched with a simple crest, the prestige of being line and playing rugby for your county, of proving yourself more than just a big fish in the small pond of schoolboy sport.

His goals were not outlandish. Barker was a robust young prop who carried hard and went to a public school renowned for rugby union, accustomed to its first XV members playing for their county and far beyond. As he moved closer to his target, though, an obstacle appeared. The same message repeated to him until its lasting consequences had taken hold.

"You want to be a prop, but you're not that big and if you went away over the summer and came back a bit bigger, then we would probably have a look at you. That's what coaches would tell me," he remembers. "When I was 16, I wasn't especially interested in being big, but playing for your county was a big deal.

From where he was standing, staring upwards at his coaches and selectors' predilection for size, the barrier seemed insurmountable. Insurmountable that is, without the help of drugs. "I was a fat, podgy 17," he says. "I knew a lot of the lads who were playing at that level and I was quite a lot smaller. That's why I did it. I could tell myself that it was a normal thing to do because just bought it over the internet. It made it justifiable.

It was a simple prohormone [oral tablet, which converts to testosterone in your body], two a day, no side-effects and all that jazz. Over time, I noticed the difference.

"There is no risk of getting tested at that age and there is so little information available to you. You just google it. It came directly from coaches telling me that I wasn't big enough."

Sadly for rugby, stories such as Barker's are not uncommon. The RFU released its report into anti doping in February and in its raised serious concerns about an increased use of banned substances in schoolboys.

Not that the upper echelons of the game are safe from doping either. There are 64 doping bans being served in the UK at present across all sports and 18 of those — 28 per cent — are for rugby union players, to quote accounts for more transgressions. In second place? Rugby league, with 13 bans. So why are rugby players taking the risk?

The tale of the Barker, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, shows how easy it is to take that leap. He expanded, quickly, and so did the range of products he was taking. From tablets bought over the internet to syringes of testosterone. With the incentive obvious, the rewards tangible and the risks invisible, there was no reason to stop.

"At university, I got exposed to a higher level of rugby and started to come across men more regularly," he says. "You see what these people look like and how they play and you start to feel inferior again.

"The risk was minimal and the reward was big. I played for my county, so I did it again and again until the risk became bigger and bigger. The pressure was too much."

At that point, I had become so numb to risk that it didn't matter.

It is so easy to get used to hold of when you're a student. I was injecting vials of testosterone, Trenbolone, stuff that yielded quick benefits. I said to people, 'If you're not going to get caught, then you should do it too'.

Part of the problem, for Barker at least, was that the chances of being caught seemed so low. "At every rugby club I have played for, there has been a running joke," he says. "If the drug testers come, you can just jump over the fence."

The Times has learnt of players who, indeed, slipped away over walls and fences when they noticed anti doping control arriving. Similarly, a pair of drug testers left one club without successfully collecting a sample because the groundskeeper had to close the clubhouse at 10.30am.

The lack of testing certainly helps to explain why the numbers of failed tests at the top of the game are still relatively low, despite the recent bans for the Yorkshire Carnegie flanker Brandon Staples and a provisional suspension for the Wasps forward Ashley Johnson.

Between UK Anti-Doping (Ukad), the RFU, World Rugby, the Six Nations and European Professional Club Rugby, 823 anti-doping tests were carried out on players from England's top two divisions last season. In the 132 matches of last season's Premiership, there were 16 tests.

By comparison, Ukad collected 1,494 samples from English Football League clubs while 1,171 samples were taken in the Premier League. The remaining tests on Premiership players were done out of competition. Although this is considered a more effective way of catching potential drugs cheats, there is a striking imbalance.

One source told The Times: "If you look at the side-effects of growth hormone [hair growth, more intense brown and chin, low body fat, high muscle mass], you've basically got many Premiership back-rowers looking back at you."

None of the failed tests from the 15-man game are from the highest level, where testing is naturally and justifiably more stringent, and the RFU and Ukad deserve credit, too, for some of the intelligence-led testing that they conduct in the community game. Beyond National One through, which is the third tier of English club rugby, the RFU conducted 25 anti-doping tests last season. The year before, there were nine.

In 2013, Laurent Bénézech, a former France forward whose 2014 book — Rugby, où vont tes valeurs? [Rugby, where are your values?] — addressed the code of silence surrounding an increasingly "medicated" game.

"I've been going to tournaments that I thought had changed my mind was science," Bénézech told The Irish Sunday Independent, "or someone who was good enough with the smaller ones. The capacity of your heart is really only related to the natural size of your body, so when you increase the mass, you increase the pressure on your heart."

From one perspective, the dilemma that Barker faced — images of big men succeeding where he wanted to — is the same problem that is running through the game. Players' Instagram feeds, adverts for sports supplements and clubs' topless calendars glorify perfect physiques.

One branch of those who transgress the boundaries in the lower leagues admit to having no substantial ambition to play beyond their present level, but are lured in by this "bigger is better" philosophy.

According to Barker, this was as powerful a driver of his drug use as any ambitions for improved performance on the field. "There is definitely some psychological factors involved," he says. "It's the lads that like to go on holiday to Ibiza or have a sideshow doing powerlifting that use it. Of all the clubs I have been to, tier seven was the worst. I would estimate that of a squad of 30, around ten were using a performance enhancer, to varying degrees."

For those who have been caught in the past four years, the range of drugs is broad. There were three positive tests for Trenbolone — a so-called "harder drug" among under-18 players in the 2013-14 season and another in 2014-15 (a community player who was banned for four years). Popular "bodybuilding" steroids Stanosolol, Dianabol, Trenbolone and Drostanolone were also responsible for failed tests, the consequences of which are severe. "Impotence, mood swings, acne, hair loss, an increase in aggression," Barker says.

The RFU and Leeds Beckett University report said that 95 per cent of schoolboys had used sports supplements, with some spending up to £25 per month. Herein lies another problem; for all the snaring at manufactured excuses for failed tests made by professional athletes, (rogue masseurs, contaminated steaks, Chechen agents), it seems easy to stray into the forbidden.

Before the pre-workout supplement Jack3d was banned in Britain because the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency ruled that it was a public health danger, it was readily available. One player said that he paid for it using his mum's Amazon account.

Jack3d was linked to deaths in Britain and the United States, while similar products were banned in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Moving past the aesthetics and the part-time powerlifters, there is a second group pulled along by something entirely different. Simply, performance and the rewards — financial and otherwise — that come with it.

James Broadley, who plays for Sheffield Tigers in National League Two North and turned out for Rotherham for two seasons in the Championship between 2013 and 2015, has seen how the money flooding into the Premiership has created a financial incentive to break boundaries, through any means. "It is starting to bubble," Broadley says. "If you look at the top end of the sport, it is the same as others, where the money has become significant. Any time rewards increase, the risk-taking behaviour increases."

There were 43 per cent fewer anti-doping tests in the Championship than the Premiership and one source, who has played in the second tier for six seasons, told The Times that he has never
about rugby’s drug problem

Stuart Barnes

I will come clean. Reading this chemical odyssey through rugby’s union, the first emotion that struck me was sympathy. For all the dreamers whose ambitions can only be realised through online assistance; the injured amateurs who see a shortcut back to playing; and the ones without the time and facilities to rehabilitate properly. Rugby has a problem and its scope cannot be measured by the numbers of its ranks being caught.

I am not thinking about professionals like Munster’s Gerbrandt Grobler, who served a two-year ban for using the anabolic steroid, Drostanolone. Munster fans saw his signing last year from Racing 92 for the moral issue that it is. Nor Ashley Johnson, who failed a drug test. But let’s wait for that verdict on the suspended Wasps forward.

What we should do is recognise the problems within the game, be they in English public schools or struggling small towns in the Welsh valleys. The quest for size is the overwhelming problem and those who have changed the historic culture of the game are as much the creators of this as the chemical pushers are the obvious villains.

There was a time when rugby union was regarded as a game for all shapes and sizes. As Rory Barker has testified in these pages, that is no longer the case. Now one size fits all big. “Coaches telling me I wasn’t big enough.” Barker, 16 at the time, said. The same problem applied to Craig Chalmers’ son, Sam, who was banned for two years. He effectively made headlines for not being big enough. If any of these guys are breaking the rules, it is probably not for the sake of a shortcut but to, quite literally, stay in the game.

While there are clearly dedicated coaches through the ranks and age levels of the game, many of them believe size counts. Who wouldn’t they? How many tales have you read of players turned away from professional academies for not being big enough? In the early days of professionalism, the new age of paid and professional coaches had to prove that they were the right men for the job.

There are still a fair few owners who don’t understand the subtleties of the game but they’ll recognise the incredible physical condition of their team. From 1995 to 2015, internationals increased their weight on average by two stone. The first message that came from the elite changing rooms was that the new age was marked by size, by physique. There is a ladder with the best and more renowned coaches at the top. Slip down and you’ll find the willing amateurs who give up their time, such as schoolteachers. At the bottom are the players being told to bulk up. It is easy to make an example of individuals when the system itself has sent the sport towards chaos.

One in which crashes, bang and wallop are the ingredients. One in which commentators do not talk of tackles but big hits. One in which the collision is king. It is no wonder that nameless numbers may be taking supplements to keep pace with the rugby arms race.

Like many, I try not to have suspicions about certain players with neck muscles the likes of which I never envisaged. Plenty look like Olympian sprinters. It isn’t just size, it is definition. There are not too many fatties left. The days of the drinker’s tyranny, when the body-fat pynamics grabbed at those excess parts are gone, but the old glorious size counts. The size of Premiership or Top 14 wage packets is another area that encourages players to take risks. The gulf between the elite and the rest is huge and with testing hardly a threat according to our report, the risk/reward factor comes into play.

Whereas it is hard not to have the utmost sympathy for the kid being told is too small, there is very little hide the biggest name looking for an edge. Cheating, in other words.

The third aspect of size that has grown beyond all comprehension is ego. We inhabit an online age where we package ourselves to best effects. The journey from the body beautiful to the reality show and the men vie with one another for the biggest pectorals. The aspiring player may not be short on self-esteem but in other, more deprived parts of the country, that is not the case.

Thirty years ago, any sort of crossover between rugby and bodybuilding would have been laughed off the field. Now, with size and physique the common factor, the step from one to the other is perilously small.

Once upon a time, to be a dreamer whose ambitions are never envisaged. Plenty look like Olympian sprinters. It isn’t just size, it is definition. There are not too many fatties left. The days of the drinker’s tyranny, when the body-fat pynamics grabbed at those excess parts are gone, but the old glorious size counts. The size of Premiership or Top 14 wage packets is another area that encourages players to take risks. The gulf between the elite and the rest is huge and with testing hardly a threat according to our report, the risk/reward factor comes into play.

Whereas it is hard not to have the utmost sympathy for the kid being told is too small, there is very little hide the biggest name looking for an edge. Cheating, in other words.

The third aspect of size that has grown beyond all comprehension is ego. We inhabit an online age where we package ourselves to best effects. The journey from the body beautiful to the reality show and the men vie with one another for the biggest pectorals. The aspiring player may not be short on self-esteem but in other, more deprived parts of the country, that is not the case.

Thirty years ago, any sort of crossover between rugby and bodybuilding would have been laughed off the field. Now, with size and physique the common factor, the step from one to the other is perilously small.

Once upon a time, to be a dreamer whose ambitions are never envisaged. Plenty look like Olympian sprinters. It isn’t just size, it is definition. There are not too many fatties left. The days of the drinker’s tyranny, when the body-fat pynamics grabbed at those excess parts are gone, but the old glorious size counts. The size of Premiership or Top 14 wage packets is another area that encourages players to take risks. The gulf between the elite and the rest is huge and with testing hardly a threat according to our report, the risk/reward factor comes into play.

Whereas it is hard not to have the utmost sympathy for the kid being told is too small, there is very little hide the biggest name looking for an edge. Cheating, in other words.

The third aspect of size that has grown beyond all comprehension is ego. We inhabit an online age where we package ourselves to best effects. The journey from the body beautiful to the reality show and the men vie with one another for the biggest pectorals. The aspiring player may not be short on self-esteem but in other, more deprived parts of the country, that is not the case.

Thirty years ago, any sort of crossover between rugby and bodybuilding would have been laughed off the field. Now, with size and physique the common factor, the step from one to the other is perilously small.
Cricket pay below minimum wage

EXCLUSIVE
Elizabeth Ammon

A number of young county cricketers are being paid below the minimum wage, with some earning £1,000 for the six-month season, as part of “wide-spread contract abuses”, according to the Professional Cricketers’ Association.

The PCA, which is determined to “stamp out unapproved contracts”, discovered that in the past 12 years, 18 players were paid or offered contracts that were below the normal minimum wage and at least six counties were using unapproved employment contracts.

Although the PCA issues guidelines to the counties, they are not obliged to follow them. The PCA has seen evidence of some players being offered contracts worth £500 a month. The legal national minimum wage for an 18-year-old is £12,000 per annum. The PCA recommends that a full-time contract for an 18-year-old is £14,297 and £19,657 for a 19-year-old.

Some counties have continued to offer what they term “development” or “scholarship” contracts to 18 and 19-year-olds, and sometimes to older players. These deals, which are suited to those at university, are usually offered on part-time hours of between 15 to 20 hours a week, but the players often train and play full-time. They feel unable to turn down the deals or ask for better pay for fear that the counties will reject their requests and look elsewhere.

One of the issues of which The Times has been made aware is young players who are on part-time contracts being put under pressure to attend net sessions that are outside of their contracted hours. This extends to winter training even though they are only contracted for the summer months.

Offering development contracts has been a widespread practice for a number of years, but Daryl Mitchell, the PCA chairman, believes it is time to stop the practice.

“This is an area we are working hard to put right and we have achieved some positive results,” he said. “However, this should not be an issue within professional cricket and we are fighting to stamp out unapproved contracts.”

“We need to make sure we protect the players’ rights to a fair contract and it seems to me that some are being exploited. It is easy for those just making their way in the game to feel under pressure to sign deals below minimum wage. They can be influenced that if they do not sign then their dream of playing professionally will be over.”

Counties have justified these contracts by saying they are constrained by playing budgets and that non-standard contracts allow them to pay young players a small amount. There is a feeling within the PCA that with significant money coming into the game from 2020 when “The Hundred” is launched, and with each county getting an extra £1.3 million a year, there is no excuse for players’ rights to a fair contract and it seems to me that some are being exploited.

“The Hundred” is planned by the ECB to put right and we have achieved some positive results,” he said. “However, this should not be an issue within professional cricket and we are fighting to stamp out unapproved contracts.”

“We need to make sure we protect the players’ rights to a fair contract and it seems to me that some are being exploited. It is easy for those just making their way in the game to feel under pressure to sign deals below minimum wage. They can be influenced that if they do not sign then their dream of playing professionally will be over.”

We’re away and running!

Out EVERY Saturday
ALL the weekend’s race cards and form guides
And a 12-page pull-out for Sports Betting with exclusive Michael Owen column

We offer 5% cash back on column bets and 2% on all other bets

Redeem this voucher in your local newsagent or supermarket

GET 90p OFF ANY ISSUE OF THE RACING PAPER WITH THIS VOUCHER

Only £1 with this voucher

Higgins edges opening session

Snooker John Higgins leads 5-3 after the first session of his Betfred World Championship semi-final against Kyren Wilson. The four-times champion led 3-0 before Wilson compiled a superb 140 break to reduce the deficit to 4-3, but missed a red to allow Higgins to extend his advantage.

Barry Hawkins leads Mark Williams by the same score in the other semi-final.

Williams pulls out of Madrid Open

Tennis Serena Williams has withdrawn from the Madrid Open, which starts on Monday, as the former world No 1 tries to regain full fitness before the French Open starts in mid-May.

Her appearance at Roland Garros must now be in doubt. Williams, 36, who won the Madrid tournament in 2012 and 2013, returned to the WTA tour in March after giving birth to her first child in September.

Townend eyeing Badminton sweep

Equestrianism Oliver Townend was seventh after the first day of the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials, having posted a dressage score of 25.9 penalties. The Yorkshireman, 35, will become only the third rider to complete the Rolex Grand Slam — worth more than £250,000 — if he can add the Badminton title on Sunday to successive victories at Burghley and Kentucky.

Kohli agrees Surrey deal

Elizabeth Ammon

Virat Kohli will play for Surrey on a short-term deal covering three one-day matches and three County Championship matches next month.

The India captain will join the county as soon as his IPL duties with Royal Challengers Bangalore have finished. When Kohli last played Test cricket in England, in the 2014 series, he struggled badly against the moving Duke ball, scoring 134 runs in ten innings. The BCCI is content for its captain to miss India’s one-off Test match against Afghanistan in June in the hope that a month of county cricket will help him to adjust to conditions before India’s five-Test series against England that starts in August.

It is likely that Kohli will play only one match at the Kia Oval, though, against Glamorgan in the Royal London One-Day Cup. Three of the matches which he is scheduled to play will be at grounds — against Kent at Beckenham, Somerset at Guildford and Yorkshire at Scarborough.

William Trost, 37, the Warwickshire batsman who played in 52 Tests and 68 ODIs for England, is to retire at the end of the season.

Imagine yourself reclining under a deep azure sky, as the polished teak deck moves almost imperceptibly with the rhythm of the Mediterranean and a refreshing evening breeze ruffles the air. In the small, picturesque ports on the Adriatic coast, surrounded by low cliffs, where the cruise liners boasting ever-larger passenger numbers are conspicuous by their absence, you are cruising the Mediterranean aboard your very own yacht-cruiser. Normally the preserve of the wealthy, you can now experience a magnificent vessel carrying fewer than 40 guests.

Cruise the Adriatic Coast

DAILY BREAKFAST AND THE CAPTAIN’S DINNER

Outstanding Value

Sail on board our three-star MV Corona, S Aquamarin, S Mare Blu or the multi-star MV Mare Blu or the MS Adriatic Sun

Prices based on two people sharing a twin cabin. Single cabins available on a supplement basis. Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all taxes

Seven nights on either the four-star MV Corona, MS Il Mare, MS Aquamarin, MV Mare Blu or the MS Adriatic Sun

Selected departures up to October 2018.

£1,399* PER PERSON

Fascinating walking tours with local guides of magnificent cities

Live and let dye:
Mark Williams by the opening session of his Betfred semi-final against Kyren Wilson, leads 5-3 after the first session of The Times Masters Championship.

Hitting the rhythm of the Mediterranean and a refreshing evening breeze ruffles the air. In the small, picturesque ports on the Adriatic coast, surrounded by low cliffs, where the cruise liners boasting ever-larger passenger numbers are conspicuous by their absence, you are cruising the Mediterranean aboard your very own yacht-cruiser. Normally the preserve of the wealthy, you can now experience a magnificent vessel carrying fewer than 40 guests.

Cruise the Adriatic Coast

DAILY BREAKFAST AND THE CAPTAIN’S DINNER

Outstanding Value

Sail on board our three-star MV Corona, S Aquamarin, S Mare Blu or the multi-star MV Mare Blu or the MS Adriatic Sun

Prices based on two people sharing a twin cabin. Single cabins available on a supplement basis. Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all taxes

Seven nights on either the four-star MV Corona, MS Il Mare, MS Aquamarin, MV Mare Blu or the MS Adriatic Sun

Selected departures up to October 2018.

£1,399* PER PERSON

Fascinating walking tours with local guides of magnificent cities

Live and let dye:
Mark Williams by the opening session of his Betfred semi-final against Kyren Wilson, leads 5-3 after the first session of The Times Masters Championship.
‘Don’t give more money to big six’

Burnley’s chairman Mike Garlick tells Martyn Ziegler a TV deal cash grab would spell the end of smaller clubs’ dreams.

These are historic times at Burnley – they are poised to play in Europe for the first time in 50 years and to achieve their highest league finish since the early 1970s, but the club’s chairman Mike Garlick fears that moves to give the “big six” more TV money could end such unscripted drama unfolding in the future.

Burnley have the smallest turnover and wage bill in the top flight, yet they have travelled to support England in those sides promoted last season, yet are virtually guaranteed seventh place and Europe, and could even overtake Arsenal, whom they meet on Sunday.

Next month is the Premier League’s annual meeting, where its executive chairman Richard Scudamore wants a resolution, to demands of the “big six” – Arsenal, Liverpool, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and the two Manchester clubs – for a greater share of the overseas TV money.

Garlick is among those opposed, saying: “The balance we have now means Burnley can beat the champions Chelsea on the opening day.

“I just hate to think that the balance is upset. If you give the bigger clubs a load more money it’s bound to have an effect on the competitiveness of the league. You only need to look at Europe – Spain, Germany, where Bayern Munich won it last six years. Is that what we want?"

“Surely the attraction of our league is that five or six teams could win the Premier League, and on the day the other 14 can beat one of the top six. That adds to the unscripted drama of it. If people know what’s going to happen they are going to turn their TV sets off.

“Garlick, born within sight of Turf Moor, is an out-and-out fan: one who has travelled to support England in every World Cup since 2002, though he has decided against Russia this summer because of the security concerns.

Sitting in the Shoreditch offices of the global recruitment firm he founded in 2010 Garlick says: “If we pay our players quite well. Our wages have gone up, so what we spend on wages might keep you in the Premier League but no one was expecting that."

If people know what’s going to happen they’ll turn their TV sets off.

“We never really had superstars then. They are great stories from the past but we don’t want to be this romantic little club that always looks back. That would cause us big problems."

“Burnley’s strength is its collectiveness. We never really had superstars then. There’s less variance from the lower wages to the higher wages in our squad, where at other clubs you might have people on 25 grand a week and others on £25 grand. I don’t like the sound of that. That would cause us big problems.”

“In the programme notes for the last time we were in the FA Cup final – 1962 against Tottenham – it says Burnley’s strength is its collectiveness. We never really had superstars then and the same is true today. Jimmy Robson, who played in that final, worked down the pit. Most of the lads in the early sixties had part-time jobs, four or five of them down the mine. They are great stories from the past but we have to keep looking forward, we don’t want to be this romantic little club that always looks back.”

Garlick has introduced the rigour of the recruitment industry to signing players, a tactic that has led to the club focusing on those playing in Britain.

“Our recruitment team prefers to keep it focused on things that are easily accessible to us,” he says. “In terms of personal characteristics, what they do when they are off the pitch? Do they go off to the casino or home to their wives? That detail is really important and it’s a lot easier to do that and reference people in the UK or Ireland. Who are his last five managers, sporting directors and chairmen, and speak to them all. I’m in recruitment so that’s what I do, it’s my bread and butter. If they have had bad habits we don’t want them, and for those in Germany or Spain and so on it’s just harder to get that real data.”

Garlick laughs when Joey Barton, whose reputation went before him when he arrived, is mentioned. “He’s a great player and if you can manage him, he is using the fact that he is at the end of his contract to let it go. It is his decision and we have to respect that.”

Fellaini is thought to be holding out for at least a two-year extension. He spoke about the idea of moving to the Chinese Super League this week, but Mourinho hopes he will stay.

“I’m still positive,” he said. “He knows I want him to stay, he knows that the club wants him to stay, he has an offer from us and it’s up to him now.”

Romelu Lukaku will miss tonight’s match away to Brighton & Hove Albion as he is undergoing treatment on an ankle injury at a specialist clinic in Belgium, but Mourinho expects the striker to be back for the FA Cup final against Chelsea. Eric Bailly is likely to miss out tonight as Mourinho wants to give his other centre backs a chance to impress their national team managers.

“Romer is always trying to make the World Cup and Eric is not under that pressure,” he said.

Mourinho said he would not stand in Fellaini’s way if Arsenal wanted to appoint the United assistant as their new manager. “Would it be a good fit? Yes,” he said. “If my friend has the possibility of a big job I would help him to pack and to carry the bags and wish him luck.”

It is a measure of the difficulty of Mourinho’s run-in that tonight’s game is seen as the most winnable of their three remaining fixtures, with visits to Manchester City and Liverpool to follow. A win will ensure the club’s Premier League survival regardless of other results. “We have an opportunity to do ourselves a big favour,” Chris Hughton, the Brighton manager, said. “If we can perform as well as we did as well as we did up Old Trafford for the cup and League games, then we’ll have a chance. What we wouldn’t be silly enough to do is underestimate the quality that Manchester United have.”

Mourinho: contract offer is there, it’s up to Fellaini now

Channel Five loses its highlights show to Quest

Highlights of Football League matches will be shown on the freeview channel Quest from next season after it struck a deal understood to be worth a record £11 million. The 90-minute show, with Colin Murray remaining as the presenter, will run at 9pm on Saturdays after Quest, which is owned by the Discovery Channel, beat Channel Five to a four-year deal.

Quest will also have midweek highlights shows from league, Carabao Cup and Checkatrade Trophy matches as part of the arrangement. Shaun Harvey, the EFL chief executive, said: “This new partnership will provide excellent coverage for supporters of our clubs on a free-to-air platform at a primetime slot.”

Who is top of the money league?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man Utd</td>
<td>£581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man City</td>
<td>£473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenal</td>
<td>£423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>£364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>£361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tottenham</td>
<td>£306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>£233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Ham</td>
<td>£183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>£182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everton</td>
<td>£171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Palace</td>
<td>£141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Brom</td>
<td>£138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>£136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke</td>
<td>£136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>£128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watford</td>
<td>£124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>£121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Surrender not an option in Klopp’s brave new world

As Liverpool prepare to take on Real in Kiev, Paul Joyce looks at their progress since the clubs’ meeting in 2014

Liverpool stand on the brink of something remarkable and, as they contemplate etching their name into a glorious European history, it is fitting that Real Madrid should be in line for Jurgen Klopp’s side in Kiev.

Progress during his tenure has been striking, but the prospect of a confrontation with the 12-times European champions on May 26 is especially mouthwatering.

Liverpool have their pride back, their swagger, even if, by the end of Wednesday’s semi-final, Roma reduced it to something of a stagger, and the unmistakable sense of a club on the ascendant.

If the point where some of those qualities were lost is traced back, the trail arguably leads to Real Madrid and a Champions League game in the Bernabeu in November 2014.

That night Brendan Rodgers pitched up with a game plan and saw it come to fruition. A 0-0 reverse, a fortnight after Liverpool had been humbled 3-0 by Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema at Anfield, could be taken as progress, and yet to many it was actually a backward step.

Honour in defeat? Liverpool had waved white handkerchiefs, meekly accepting their fate before a ball had been kicked, or rather, the substitutes’ bench had been reduced to watching Lazar Markovic and Fabio Borini in their place.

Rodgers had prioritised a home game with Chelsea four days later, but when that was lost too, it became harder to justify what had come before. A talisman, created by the sale of Luis Suarez and compounded by the arrival of Mario Balotelli rather than Alexis Sanchez that summer, gathered momentum.

The stakes will be considerably higher in the first meeting between the teams since then. That is not the only difference. Liverpool see themselves as equals now.

They will not run from the fight. For all the talk of Real seeking revenge for their 6-1 final defeat in Paris, too, have a score to settle.

Klopp does not do damage limitation. Indeed, quite the opposite, sometimes gung-ho football, the sort that stifled Roma’s thoughts of a comeback in the Stadio Olimpico only to then rouse Italian hopes again during a seesaw second-leg that ended 4-2 to the hosts before 7-6 on aggregate to the visitors.

Klopp has led Liverpool out of the dark, those days when they were not quite sure what they were any more, embracing the importance that European competition has played in the club’s tradition. He has imbued identity and confidence, redefined what is acceptable and what is not.

And what has quickly become apparent during the retreat from Rome is that simply reaching the final is not enough. Now it is all about prevailing in the European Stadium in a little over three weeks and claiming a sixth European Cup.

We have changed many things not just the players, but things around the club,” Dejan Lovren, the defender, said. “I changed the mentality, how we think. Everything is more positive now.

It was then we sometimes don’t play good, he always finds something good and there is not negativity. He deserves this. It is not accidental that he already reached the final of the Champions League in 2013 with Borussia Dortmund.

He has given the club pride back. Everyone feels that, everyone lives that. Everyone should be proud that we have a manager like him.

Liverpool’s improvement lies in accepting their fate before a ball had been kicked. Klopp has not yet completed two full seasons in the job and still has work to do in smoothing out the glitches he inherited.

What awaits Klopp’s team is the ultimate winning machine, a side who have a set of T-shirts proclaiming the next landmark in their storied heritage, believing that it is not a question of “if” the moment will arrive, but “when”.

While it seems that Real have been blessed by the gods at certain moments over the past five finals, starting with Dortmund’s defeat in the competition by Bayern Munich at Wembley in 2013.

Now he has the opportunity, sooner than he could have imagined, to banish the memory of those defeats.

“We are Liverpool so somebody kicks our ass constantly,” Klopp had said on the eve of their semi-final success. “It is, ‘Make the next step, make the next step, make the step’. It is not possible in this club to stay still.

On the grandest club stage and against this rival in particular, the platform is there for Liverpool to demonstrate how far they have come.

Winning Champions League will net Liverpool more than £70m

Paul Joyce

Liverpool’s run to the Champions League final could mean a windfall of more than £70 million for the club.

Jurgen Klopp’s side are guaranteed to take home at least £44.8 million in prize money after progressing from the qualifying round in August through to the final against Real Madrid on May 26.

The victors will receive an additional £4.4 million. The winnings will then be topped up by a share of the market pool money. Liverpool can expect to bank about £22.9 million from that.

The total that Liverpool will take home if they claim a sixth European Cup would be about £71.7 million. Costs incurred from participating in the competition will dilute that figure slightly. Liverpool’s players will receive bonuses if they lift the trophy, with the squad sharing a pot thought to be worth in excess of £4 million, although some agents may have negotiated increases on top of that.

There will certainly be no inferiority complex when Klopp’s men confront Real in Kiev, with Liverpool insisting it is theolder team in Europe’s history.

The belief that has helped to propel Liverpool to the final was evident as Sadio Mane and Dejan Lovren both believe that the Spaniards would need to be wary of their opponents.

Zinedine Zidane’s side will be seeking to lift the trophy for a third successive campaign as Liverpool contemplate their first final in the competition since 2001, yet the stark contrast in experiences was brushed aside.

The T-shirts Real wore at the end of their semi-final success over Bayern Munich referenced their pursuit of a 13th overall crown, but Lovren said: “We are quite confident, but we don’t care for that. We are focused on our job. Why should we fear them? They should fear us. You need to play against the best teams, but the best teams are us and Real Madrid.”

The manner in which Liverpool confirmed their passage beyond Roma 7-6 on aggregate came in spite of a 4-2 defeat in the Stadio Olimpico on Wednesday. Defensive vulnerability reared in the closing stages once again to leave Klopp admitting that his side had suffered.

Mane, who opened the scoring against Roma and has mustered 11 goals since the January departure of Philippe Coutinho, said: “We do have a lot of respect for Madrid. They are one of the best teams in the world, but we are

How they lined up in 2014

Real Madrid 1 Liverpool 0

How the top six stand

Winning Champions League will net Liverpool more than £70m

Friday May 4 2018 | THE TIMES
Wenger, the man who ran out of time

Matt Dickinson
Chief Sports Writer
Madrid

And so it ends at the John Smith’s Stadium rather than a night of anthems, glitz, and potential glory, in Europe. If that does not seem the way it should be then see that Arsène Wenger should be saying farewell to the English game after 22 distinguished years, playing for nothing much in Huddersfield on the final day of the domestic season, this long goodbye started going awry quite a few years ago.

The hope had been that all the rancour that has grown at the Emirates, corroding like rust over a decade, could somehow be erased by a first European triumph for Wenger. He could put it all to one side, with shiny silverware in his hands. A proper trophy would sure beat a carriageway clock or another glass momento. But if it was always asking a lot, it was especially hoping for too much against opponents like Atletico Madrid. You do not come here, to the unforgiving home of the three hard Diego Costa, Koke and Godín — looking for romance and sentimentality.

These are the sort of guys who will stand in the tunnel and, to borrow a phrase Steve Redgrave famously growled into Matthew Pinsent’s ear shortly before an Olympic final, say to each other “let’s go crush some dreams”. And they did…

Arsenal were, flashes of hope but ultimately disappointing, lacking not only the finishing touch but the belief that they would ever find it. “We missed something”, Wenger said, which could be the lamen for much of the last dozen years.

Atletico were exactly the sort of opponents to make them feel that. Not that they were at their best yet still, from the immovable Godin through to the class of Antoine Griezmann and the knockout blow from Costa, able to doggedly find a way.

They, not Arsenal, will deservedly be heading to Lyons for the Europa League final on May 16 after the manner of Atletico, sailing into the semi-final with a 1-0 win over Arsenal in Madrid on May 16. That left Wenger as deflated as we have ever seen him, talking afterwards of the time he would need to recover from this defeat, this bad conclusion. Not many in sport get to enjoy a happy ending, a medal wrapped neatly in a bow.

Atletico march on and Wenger limps to his finale with three domestic matches at home to Burnley, away to Leicester City and that final trip to Yorkshire in which to defend sixth place — the lowest league finish of the Frenchman’s era.

There will be plenty of respectful applause wherever he goes but this will follow the TS Eliot ending of no bang but a whimper. Will Wenger, the man who seemingly believed right to the end that he was only one goal, one win away from turning it all around and embarking on more glory, admit that he stayed too long?

The board had considered ending it all last summer and he would have left on the back of a victorious FA Cup final, only for Stan Kroenke to offer another two-year contract that has not been done much for either party as they call it a day only 12 months later.

And so Wenger’s final game in charge of Arsenal at the Emirates on Sunday against Burnley will feel a strange occasion. Tickets have reportedly soared in value, top ones for as much as £1,800 on one website, though you rather suspect the market, and mood, may take a downturn after last night’s events in the Wanda Metropolitano.

We could wonder if Arsenal’s job had been made any easier by the banishment of Simeone to the stands following his first-leg dismissal for abusing the referee, though it would surely take more than that to disrupt the renowned resilience of this Atletico side, built around Godin and the excellence of Jan Oblak between the posts.

To give Wenger a finale superior to that trip to Huddersfield, Arsenal were going to have to overcome a team that had conceded only four goals all season in the league at home, nine in all competitions, none since the middle of January — and showed it.

Chances were not going to be frequent, which made it all the more mad-dening for Arsenal fans that, as with the squandering of the first leg, there was little sense of urgency around the box.

We always suspected that Costa would be the man to make them pay. Back in the starting XI and ready to rumble judging by the way he barged over Nacho Monreal in the opening skirmishes, Costa had shown due concern for Laurent Koscielny when the Arsenal captain was carried off, in clear distress.

But the arrival of Calum Chambers to join Shkodran Mustafi must have had the striker licking his lips — fresh young meat! — and an Arsenal defence pulled all out of shape was duly pun-ished when Griezmann, such a class act on the ball, fed Costa as the hapless Hector Bellerin woke up to the danger far too late to intervene.

Arsenal did not will but on a night of three captains as Koscielny’s armband was passed to Jack Wilshere and then on to Aaron Ramsey, they never looked like they believed the way Atletico did.

In the end, Arsenal simply did not have the means, the nous, the ruthless instinct to get the job done despite enough opportunities over both legs. In that sense, it all was too much for Arsenal fans whose farewell to Wenger is heavily laced with an eagerness to embrace something new and fresh.

Manager shuns farewell fuss

Tony Cascarino’s Talking points

Bellerin caught out

One of my pet hates is when quick players think they don’t need to worry about their positioning because they are fast enough to make up for it. Hector Bellerin is a prime example. He is probably the second best left-back in England but is being let down by a lack of concentration. For the Atletico goal he gave Diego Costa a couple of yards start and the striker, once he was through, was never going to be caught, because he can outmuscle opponents. Time and again Bellerin switches off and gets stuck the wrong side of his man. I remember Mo Salah punishing him the same way earlier this season.

Wilshere mystery

It’s amazing to watch Jack Wilshere playing such a central role for his club in a huge game, yet he might well be filling a dominant role, passing and filling a void rather than being considered for one. It’s class. Chelsea fans must miss him as the most classy. Chelsea fans must miss him as well — they adored him at the Bridge. In the modern game everybody loves flair players but he provides something different, very aggressive and sometimes wild.

Atletico give their all

Diego Simeone makes sure that all of his Atletico Madrid players give blood and sweat for the cause, which means they are incredibly hard to break down. The full backs sit, the midfield four play narrowly and the front two of Diego Costa and Antoine Griezmann often drift back to help out at the back. Arsenal were having plenty of the ball but they needed to be at their creative best to conjure any sort of opening. It was clear that Arsène Wenger’s side would come off second-best physically. I really miss Costa in the Premier League. Last night he was everything I thought he would be — he was strong, bullied defenders, sometimes selfish but also classy. Chelsea fans must miss him as well — they adored him at the Bridge. In the modern game everybody loves flair players but he provides something different, very aggressive and sometimes wild.

Exclusive Times+ event with Roy Hodgson

Join the former England manager, now in charge at Crystal Palace, on Friday, May 18 for an evening in London to discuss the big issues facing England. Plus Times football writers Tony Cascarino, Alyson Rudd, and Matt Dickinson

To book tickets, go to mytimesplus.co.uk

World Cup, Russia 2018

32
This was Atletico’s 32nd clean sheet of the season (55 games), the most by any team in the top five European leagues

3 Diego Costa has scored four goals in seven appearances against Arsenal

Manager shuns farewell fuss

See the key moments and talking points from the semi-final second legs now

Watch all the goals

See the key moments and talking points from the semi-final second legs now

Download the Times phone app for iPhone and Android

Involved, particularly before last night’s match, Arsenal have taken control of the guest list and invited all players who have played 100 matches for him in addition to his family and friends.
It all ends in tears as Costa returns to haunt Arsenal

Henry Winter
Chief Football Writer, Madrid

Atletico Madrid 1
Arsenal 0

Atletico win 2-1 on aggregate

It had to be Diego Costa taking a wrecking ball to Wenger-ball. In this ruthless winner, this antithesis of Arsène Wenger’s commitment to pretty football, who destroyed the Arsenal manager’s dream of ending this love story well. As with the collapse of many love stories, this one ends riddled with recriminations and questions.

Why did Nacho Monreal’s radar get scrambled in the second half and his crosses finish up nearer the corner flag than penalty spot? Has anyone on Wenger’s coaching staff actually drilled into Héctor Bellerín the importance of positioning? Does Shkodran Mustafi understand how to organise a back four? Is George Graham available for consultancy?

Calum Chambers battled well when coming on to replace the stricken Laurent Koscielny, and the heart goes out to the Frenchman who saw his season terminated, and his chances of playing in the World Cup disappear when rupturing his achilles in one of those incidents when the whole stadium falls quiet. But the rest of the Arsenal backbone, including the goalkeeper David Ospina, were abject.

Wenger built a team in his own image — too weak for the rigours of football at this level, too lacking in resilience and leadership, too snooty for work on defending. This was his 250th Uefa club game, and his team looked assembled by a newcomer. There was no cohesion, no cutting edge, no real foundations.

Wenger resembles an architect going for eye-catching design over structural strength and being surprised when the building collapses.

The contrast with Diego Simeone’s tough, well-balanced, tactically disciplined side was painful for the Arsenal thousands to behold. Here was someone who really developed a side adept for defending and attacking. Atletico are a fearsome force.

Costa was not the only Diego high-lighting Arsenal flaws. Diego Godín delivered another masterclass in the defensive arts, some of them dark with the occasional tactical foul, but otherwise calmly intercepting crosses from Mesut Özil, ensuring that Atletico’s back four always kept their shape, that they kept their concentration, and kept on course to the Europa League final where they play Marseille in Lyons on May 16. For all the talk of Wenger’s three titles, and seven FA Cups, he has failed horribly in Europe.

His farewell tour has turned into a total disaster, and his final game at the Emirates on Sunday may prove the complete love-in of thought and movement and merciless intent were displayed in that blur of movement that punished Arsenal on the coup of the 1-0.

All of Atletico’s strengths from speed of thought and movement and merciless intent were displayed in that blur of movement that punished Arsenal on the coup of that time.

All of Arsenal’s weaknesses were highlighted, too, losing possession, defenders being caught out of position and a goalkeeper in Ospina simply not good enough.

It all came back from an Atletico goal-kick and still Arsenal’s defence was ragged, with the full backs Monreal and Bellerín pushed too far forward and Mustafi so out of position he was almost in the Bernabéu. Mustafi had pushed left, leaving a gaping hole where Atletico soon noticed. And when they pounced, Arsenal were far too slow to react, jogging rather than sprinting.

The excellent Thomas Partey nicked the ball, immediately playing it through to Griezmann, whose first touch instantly brought the ball under complete control and carrying it further towards Arsenal’s goal, heading into the space where Mustafi should have been. Grant Xhaka reacted too slowly, allowing Griezmann to place his pass perfectly for Costa to run on to. The former Chelsea forward exploited Bellerín’s long-standing failure to acquire the defensive side of his role. Bellerín had pushed up, lacked awareness of Costa’s movement, perhaps naively thinking Mustafi would have been guarding that area, and the inevitable happened.

Costa was clinical, completely merciless. His first touch guiding the ball into the space Mustafi would have been guarding that area, and the inevitable happened.

Costa was clinical, completely merciless. His first touch guiding the ball into the area, and the inevitable happened.

Calum Chambers, circled, can only make a weak header that is easily picked up by Atletico captain Koke in midfield.

Three costly mistakes

1. Calum Chambers, circled, can only make a weak header that is easily picked up by Atletico captain Koke in midfield.

A swift half at lunch is of the utmost importance at Taylor’s

It’s the most important meeting at the brewery. On the stroke of midday, every day, our team of highly experienced brewers stop whatever they’re doing and wind their way down to a small room in the depths of the main brewery building. In this unsung place they undertake the most vital of tasks – the tasting of beer. Every single batch is tasted at least three times during the brewing process to check the beer is perfectly balanced, and ensure it conditions to produce the depth of flavour that you expect from Landlord. We think it’s a lunchtime tradition well worth preserving.

All for that taste of Taylor’s

Sport Europa League

The final

Atletico Madrid v Marseilles
Wednesday May 16, 7.45pm
Lyons, France
Live on BT Sport
Arsenal will miss out on the Champions League for a second successive season, having previously qualified in 19 campaigns in a row under his guidance. To make it worse for him one of his old foes scored in first-half stoppage time.

Diego Costa made the most of poor defending by Hector Bellerin and struck the ball over the head of David Ospina. “I’m very sad and frustrated about this goal,” said boss. “We work with intensity and we live off scoring goals.”

Özil should not be vilified by anybody working for us”, Simeone said. “We are trying to get the ball to you, we have faith in his team-mates and Mkhitaryan, who soon shot over. After 68 minutes, sending on Henrikh Mkhitaryan, and then Chambers athletically pushed a Xhaka piledriver past the post.

Ospina saved well from Griezmann, who then returned to the penalty area and then Chambers athletically pushed a Xhaka piledriver past the post.

Ospina. “I’m very sad and frustrated about this goal,” said boss. “We work with intensity and we live off scoring goals.”


5. Héctor Bellerín

6. Another impressive display and duel with Bellerin, mostly getting the better of the Arsenal full back.

8. Bellerín a rollicking body in way of crosses

Continued from back

Arsenal out of Europa League

Wenger did not grab the game by the scruff of the neck and he was booked for raising his arms when challenging Gabi. Atletico threatened more as the half wore on. Koke lifted a free kick in, Griezmann struck the ball over the head of David Ospina, going over him.

Wilshere did not grab the game by the scruff of the neck and he was booked for raising his arms when challenging Gabi. Atletico threatened more as the half wore on. Koke lifted a free kick in, Griezmann struck the ball over the head of David Ospina, going over him.

Wilshere did not grab the game by the scruff of the neck and he was booked for raising his arms when challenging Gabi. Atletico threatened more as the half wore on. Koke lifted a free kick in, Griezmann struck the ball over the head of David Ospina, going over him.
Wenger’s chance to finish with a trophy ends after limp Europa League defeat

Atletico Madrid 1
Arsenal 0

Atletico win 2-1 on aggregate

Gary Jacob
Madrid

Arsène Wenger’s dream of ending his 22-year reign as Arsenal manager with an 11th trophy was killed off last night when they were eliminated by Atletico Madrid in the Europa League semi-finals.

The Frenchman will lead out Arsenal for the final time against Huddersfield Town at the John Smiths Stadium on May 13, rather than as he hoped at the more exalted surroundings of Groupama Stadium in Lyon, where three days later Atletico will meet Marseilles in the final.

Wenger had said that he “wanted to finish this love story well” but the 1-0 defeat at the more

No final hurrah

ACROS
1 Regret spoken jibe, something muttered on stage (7)
5 Sell ingredients for jam? (7)
9 To buck up rogue, cane ordered (9)
10 Trojan “huppy” (?) (5)
11 Proposed form of extreme devolution rejected after losing a vote (5)
12 Fool picks up insult implying ability to do so? (5-4)
14 Lag repeatedly to raise time he’s held (5, 2, 3, 4)
17 Live stream business news (7)
21 Container to serve tea; I’ll be after beginning to read leaves (9)
23 Independent solicitor’s first to prosecute children (5)
24 Unfortunate person missing point in gorp (5)
25 Purging heretic, a habitual response (9)
26 Police officers transferred for challenge to orthodoxy (7)
27 Get back in swing, tickler turning over regularly (2-5)

DOWN
1 Spacious, from what we hear, but cold (6)
2 Expose chap entering sprint moving right to the end (7)
3 Much like a cakewalk, but smaller and quicker? (9)
4 Accountant who might check one’s side-effects. There is no risk of getting tested at that age...you just google it”.
5 Note to include zero as digit (3)
6 A contemptuous exclamation — detectives are being brought up — silly! (5)
7 Lot controlling sails etc for ship (7)
8 Confident male squirmed oddly (8)
9 Time to get to station, perhaps, queen is not working (3,2,6)
10 Turn to stare rudely (7)
11 Run out to catch a glimpse of incoming Times competition winner’s prize? (7)
12 Top secret operations going to be moved right to the end (7)
13 Not in formal dress in Balmoral, perhaps, queen is not working (5)
15 Time to get to station, perhaps detectives are being brought up to scratch (9)
16 Distressed dept. sec. having run in with staff (8)
19 Run to catch a glimpse of incoming Times competition winner’s prize? (7)
22 Yellow mineral found around western half of Chad (5)
25 Unionists boosted share (3)

No final hurrah

Wenger’s chance to finish with a trophy ends after limp Europa League defeat

Atletico win 2-1 on aggregate

Gary Jacob
Madrid