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Hello, my name is Martin.

I have become political. The Big Issue had the idea of being a 'poverty-fighting machine' on the cover recently. I'm trying to work to improve my own situation. Selling this magazine has helped me reconnect with people, as well as earn money. Read more of my story on page 46.

EST. 1991

**THE BIG
ISSUE**

FEBRUARY 20-26 2017
NO. 1244



THE BIG ISSUE MANIFESTO

WE BELIEVE in a hand up, not a handout...

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WE BELIEVE in the right to citizenship...

Which is why The Big Issue Foundation, our charitable arm, helps sellers tackle social and financial exclusion.

WE BELIEVE in prevention...

Which is why Big Issue Invest offers backing and investments to social enterprises, charities and businesses which deliver social value to communities.

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CORRESPONDENCE

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COMMENT OF THE WEEK

There's big support for our books campaign

Our council wants to close the city library to make offices for itself where, I suppose, they will employ people to close libraries.

The new 'library' looks to be a titchy space with what looks like Mormons entering Heaven (you know those architects' 'artists' impressions!').

They've already crowded a police desk in there and closed our 'nick' to make university offices. You can get your bus pass nearby. Or not, if the camera doesn't work, like when yours truly called in there. Technology, don't you love it?

I find the best alternative is the Oxfam bookshop where you can get bookshelves

of used, decent books for low prices but then, of course, libraries have already been paid for and the books are free; to borrow, not keep though.

These 'ghost signs' around the city – faded signs and paintings advertising lending libraries – that were privately run. You could, for example, borrow books from Boots years ago. Will this be our future?

Good fortune to The Big Issue's campaign. Which will win – money or a good society?
AD 'Tiny' French, Bath

For more reader response to our literacy campaign turn to page 18

EU are stereotyping

As a non-smoking, Costa-loving, degree-qualified professional, I fulfill John Bird's definition of an EU Remainer [Feb 13-19]. However, I strongly believed back in June that we should leave the bureaucratic and aggrandising European Union (let's not think we are somehow leaving 'Europe') and events since then have convinced me the majority made the right decision. Talking of definitions, the media still seem determined to make simplistic ones, particularly the claim that the 'old' voted to leave and the 'young' voted to stay. I know people in their 80s who were adamant we should stay, and people in their 30s who were adamant we needed to leave.
Tim Wells, Chickerell, Dorset

Women first

It was very interesting reading Harriet Harman's Letter to My Younger Self, [Feb 6-12]. The Labour MP said: "I'm absolutely gutted there's been no Labour woman prime minister or deputy prime minister." While the Labour Party pride themselves with their All Women Shortlists for Labour safe-ish seats, that appears to be where it ends. Despite Labour's woman-friendly approach, they have missed golden opportunities to elevate women to the top posts. The likes of Mo Mowlam would have been an ideal first Labour PM.
George Robert Dunning, Middlesbrough

Save your energy

There are schemes similar to 'groepsaankoop' in the UK [News, Jan 23-29]. An extract from my local authority website: "Collective energy switching is a term used to describe communities coming together to secure discounted tariffs from energy suppliers. It's a national initiative where councils go to auction to see which energy company will offer the best tariff for their residents."
Keith Batham, West Midlands

Drug awareness

Colin McCubbin wrote a fantastic article in The Big Issue [January 23-29] called 'The Greeting Veins'. It was graphic but described so well the awful effects that hard drugs have on the body and the life of the drug user. I think this article should be included in every drug awareness programme for senior school pupils. It would certainly make them stop and think about the consequences of ever starting to take drugs.
Eileen M McLean, Perth

Housing policy

I have been supporting homeless charities for 30 years and read your article [Analysis, Jan 30–Feb 5] in The Big Issue with great interest. However, I would suggest the main reason for the lack of homes in London is due to the population increase of over 1,000,000 people in the last 10 years! That would challenge any government, especially at a time of financial cutbacks.
Alan Milsom, email

Present and correct

What a fabulous idea Gail Chamberlain [Correspondence, Jan 30–Feb 5] had, asking her friends to buy a Big Issue instead of a birthday card or present for her birthday. I shall be making this request for my

birthday (November).
Sue Dowling, a granny in Ipswich

Alt-right hostility

I am sure Nigel Crisp is pointing in the right direction [How to rebuild the NHS, Jan 30–Feb 5]. But he faces a major problem with Tory resistance to the need for an interventionist state to tackle excessive sugar and salt in foods; to increase taxation on alcohol. It doesn't fit with alt-right hostility to strong state interference with allegedly free markets.
Daniel Vulliamy, Driffield

Find some balance

I agreed with Sam Delaney [TV, Jan 30–Feb 5] that there are some excellent book adaptations on TV, which I also would prefer to *Middlemarch*. However, I do feel that Sam has just not read the right books yet! Sam, do try reading *A Fine Balance* or *Family Matters* by Rohinton Mistry. Despite them looking weighty and a bit off-putting, I was gripped from the first page and they are a wonderful evocation of what it is to be human. Funny and poignant.
Bobby, Kings Heath



BOXING CLEVER



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Tricky one this week
@BigIssue, but
I got there

‘A literary phenomenon-turned-theatrical-event’

THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Niamh Cusack

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THE EDITOR

Star-spangled thinking



Maybe Churchill had it right.

The old Bulldog liked to look to space. It emerged last week that amongst the things that kept him busy (cigars, whisky, winning the war) were thoughts of where we might find extraterrestrial life. He believed it was out there. His quote is worth repeating.

"I, for one, am not so immensely impressed by the success we are making of our civilisation here that I am prepared to think we are the only spot in this immense universe," he wrote in 1939, "which contains living, thinking creatures. Or that we are the highest type of mental and physical development which has ever appeared in the vast compass of space and time."

He shows a level of humanity, humility and intelligence that some of our leaders – who profess to love him, leaders on both sides of the Atlantic – would do well to pause upon.

Of course not everybody is going to be like Churchill. To expect all important leaders to have greatness in them is foolish. Not all football managers are going to be Sir Alex Ferguson.

But at least there could be an aspiration to reach up and hit the heights, a desire to be better. It's not just intellectual pygmyism that is seeping down, threatening to infect us all, it's the closure to others. Churchill was so open he was going BEYOND the planet! Now, increasingly, there is a desire to close off, to compartmentalise and to blame damn outsiders, everybody except those we believe to be of our tiny patch and closed tribe.

It squeezes light and hope, and we need to stand up to it. It's a mindset that normalises ideas and thoughts that should not be normalised. And it stops focus on work that needs to happen.

In Britain, when Theresa May took over as PM, she

promised to focus on social injustice, to speak for those just about managing and provide opportunities for children from struggling families to allow their talents to take them as far as they can.

There is little sign of this happening. With all energy on Brexit plans, and our focus frequently taken with the dark carnival of change rumbling through the White House, it's easy to stop thinking about the tough realities all around us. Unless, of course, you're in those realities. Last week the Joseph Rowntree Foundation revealed that the number of people struggling to get by in Britain has risen by four million in the last six years. This is illuminating if not particularly instructive. It doesn't tell us how to fix this shameful situation. Stagnating wages and cuts to income support may be somewhat to blame but what are the wider societal steps that can be taken to fix the worsening situation? We're still waiting to hear from the PM on that.

We believe literacy is key. Better literacy, early access to books and keeping libraries open won't solve everything, of course. But we will continue to bang the drum to make changes to help literacy improve the life chances of those born without a silver spoon.

If there are kids on tough estates looking up at the sky and having the same thoughts as Churchill but unable to take the step into learning more and opening up the incredible vistas of their imagination – and their future – then shame on us all.

Chronic narcissists and soundbite specialists in charge will only do so much, if anything at all.

The real change has to come from us.

BSME British editor of the Year 2016
@pauldmcnamee

NEWS



YOU ARE NOT THERE FOR YOURSELF!

Big Issue founder who stars in candid documentary about the Lords reveals sage advice from a vendor

"One of our Big Issue vendors said to me, 'Remember, you are not there for yourself – you are there for others. If you go through parliament for the next five or 10 years and become richer and fatter, that is not the purpose'. So my purpose is to represent the interest of those who are still stuck in the sticky stuff."

So explains The Big Issue founder Lord John Bird about his decision to take a seat in the House of Lords. The admission comes as Bird stars in a revealing new BBC series showing the inner workings of the Lords.

Cameras have been allowed to roam the corridors of the UK parliament's revising chamber for the very first time. And our gov'nor – who became a crossbench peer in late 2015 – is one of the key figures guiding viewers through the institution's vital work.

Bird explained his motivation in accepting the life



FROM THE VAULT...

FEBRUARY 20-26 2012 NO.988

In a candid cover interview, Emeli Sandé reveals her Smart-Pop manifesto, the benefits of having a neuroscience degree to fall back on and how she felt when meeting Madonna. We also speak to Peter Capaldi, who tells his younger self that geeks will inherit the Earth.



peerage. "Becoming a Lord is about trying to become more useful," he said. "People join it for other reasons but I joined it to be useful. That is my interest. I'm really glad I'm in the House of Lords – I don't think only the privileged should be allowed in."

The BBC cameras capture Bird being formally sworn in, discussing his own "unparliamentary" language with Black Rod, and meeting the staff in the palace kitchen where he once worked as a "washer-upper". Bird is also seen pointing out the spot in Victoria Gardens, next to the House of Lords, where he once slept rough.

"I thought they were brave taking me," said Bird of his role. "I don't know if I would have taken me. Because I am a bit of a wild card."

The three-part series follows the work of the House of Lords over the course of a year, charting the big debate over Brexit and legislative clashes with the Conservative government.

Meet the Lords airs 9pm, February 27, on BBC Two

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- **WERNER HERZOG** "everything I have done is wonderful"
- **MICHAEL KEATON** likes salmon fishing
- **LA LA LAND** toe-tapping Oscar whopper's ivory-tinkling maestro

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FORMER ROUGH SLEEPER LAUNCHES JOBS BUSINESS

An ex-homeless man, who lived in his car for a year, is launching a new jobs service to help others climb out of poverty like he did.

Chris Adamson said he was inspired to start an "honest" recruitment business after struggling to prove his own talents while sleeping rough.

For 12 months he slept in his car in a car park in Stroud, Gloucestershire, where he showered at the local swimming baths and lived on

19p loaves of bread. "I lived in a car because I could not afford to have a house," he explained.

"I went to many recruitment agencies to find work and again and again they promised to help but they never followed through. I never want to see someone have to go through that because they don't have access to all the available jobs."

Chris, 34, is launching *The Fruit Group* in Gloucestershire at the end of this month. He hopes to help businesses and clients work together in the recruitment process, allowing a wide range of people a chance to showcase their talents.

"There are jobs out there, and we want to help people find employment," he said.



STATE OF THE NATION VOX POPULI

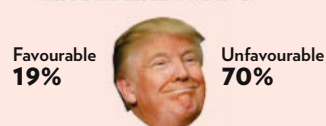
Who do you prefer? ¹



Party leaders, net favourability²



Do you have a favourable view of Donald Trump? ³



Should David Beckham get a knighthood? ⁴



Was Speaker John Bercow right to say Trump shouldn't address parliament? ⁵



Poll ¹ 4,711 people; ² 4,647; ³ 6,899; ⁴ 1,670; ⁵ 1,670

Source: YouGov

STREET ART

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ATISHOO

BY RENE ROBBINS

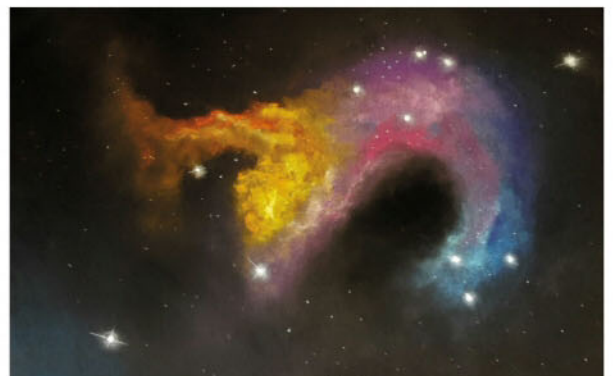
Rene, who lives in London, is the daughter of an architect. Following the death of her husband and son she experienced a period of homelessness but doesn't like to dwell on misfortune. At a low point, one of her friends invited her to go to an art project and she has been attending ever since. She works slowly and patiently due to a degenerative eye condition. Her work has been published and sold at exhibition.



COSMOS

BY MANGO

Mango is a London-based graffiti artist who has been creating art for about 20 years. He describes his skills as including "crazy fades, wild styles and cool characters". He is also known for his gothic art, and work as an MC and compère.



Street Art is created by people who are marginalised by issues like homelessness, disability and mental health conditions. Contact streetlights@bigissue.com to see your art here.



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We're living through a time of intimidation. We must speak up



“How did you get into first class? You don't deserve to be in first class. You should be in common class. In fact, you shouldn't be in this country at all. You don't deserve to be here. Bloody foreigners. Where were you even born?”

The words Alexander MacKinnon, a 47-year-old public school-educated solicitor, hurled at the Scottish lawyer Sanaa Shahid, who happens to be of Asian descent, and her four-year-old son, Zayn, on a train.

Shahid calmly challenged his behaviour, called a member of train staff to witness what was going on and filmed the ongoing verbal abuse on her mobile phone. Thanks to her, MacKinnon was arrested and fined this month, after admitting racially aggravated offences. But, as Shahid said: “There were another 10 to 12 passengers in the carriage and not one of them spoke up. That was shocking, too.”

MacKinnon had been drunk at the time, which we all know lifts inhibitions. But as official police figures from England and Wales confirmed a 41 per cent spike in reported hate crimes in the three months after the EU referendum compared to the year before, many people are asking: how deep and widespread are such views? Has there been a collective lifting of inhibitions from closet racists and misogynists, who might now feel emboldened to express their real feelings?

Anecdotally, I've heard white male friends describe experiencing threats for the first time in London. “Are you a Jew?” was hurled on a crowded tube train at a sole traveller and a group of heterosexual couples threatened to beat up another as a “poofster” because he dared to complain when they shouldered him violently off the pavement as they walked six abreast blocking the way.

Civility, the idea of being decent to each other, is entwined with the idea of citizenship. How we behave as a society defines

who we are. I can't help wondering if the verbal abuse now routinely inflicted on MPs and judges in recent months has corroded acceptable standards of discourse to dangerous levels. The far-right links of the murderer of MP Jo Cox are truly disturbing.

I was mulling on this incivility at the theatre the other night. *This House*, set in the troubled minority government of Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan, looks all the more like a time capsule from an alien world. A world in which unwritten rules of fair play governed the Commons. Pairing MPs from opposing sides to prevent unfair advantage – if one side's went sick, the pair would not vote either. An understanding that there was a core civility beneath the policy rows that superseded political positions.



Off the rails: drunk solicitor Alexander MacKinnon

“Has there been a collective lifting of inhibitions from closet racists who might now feel emboldened?”

By chance that night I found myself sitting next to the Commons speaker John Bercow and his wife, Sally. It was the very day Speaker Bercow had hit the headlines for declaring that President Trump should not address parliament on a future state visit because, Bercow said, “as far as this place is concerned, I feel very strongly that our opposition to racism and to sexism, and our support for equality before the law and an independent judiciary, are hugely important considerations in the House of Commons.”

Bercow explained to me why he felt so strongly. There was a clear and assured sense of moral right and wrong in why he'd said what he did. I find it personally fascinating that he's gone on such a political journey over his career, from the younger member of the Monday Club to a public campaigner against racism. And none of his furious fellow Tory MPs campaigning to sack him are citing the moral and ethical concerns in his words but only his break with the rules, the protocol of parliament.

One can see entirely that rules matter. That there is a case to say Bercow has broken with the strict impartiality required of the Speaker. But the circumstances of this battle matter. It's a time when so many people are intimidated and feel threatened by what they perceive as emboldened racist, sexist and homophobic attitudes from prominent and powerful public figures.

The row over Bercow reminds us that rules are in danger of being used to bypass what are important ethical and moral concerns. Like the bullying of Gina Miller, who stood up for the primacy of parliament, we are living through a time of intimidation and shouting down.

It's time to restore some civility to public service, as much as on our public streets and transport.

Samira Ahmed is a columnist for The Big Issue. She is a journalist and broadcaster. @SamiraAhmedUK

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PAUSE



Illustration: Mitch Blunt

BEN RASKIN

How to compost

Recycling may be a recent buzzword but nature has been doing it forever. Billions of organisms work away at organic material, breaking it down and releasing nutrients for plants and animals.

We can make use of this army of tiny workers in a compost heap to give us lovely rich compost to feed our garden soil. A teaspoon of healthy soil can have as many organisms living in it as there are people on the planet. Bacteria, protozoa, nematodes, rotifers, worms; all these and more will be in a compost heap and soil. It's like having your own private mini zoo, or science experiment, in your garden.

If you have ever made your own compost you may have

noticed that it gets quite warm. This happens when the microbes start working hard to decompose the old vegetable waste. Just like we get warm when we work out or eat a big meal, so smaller creatures do too. If you then get billions of them in a heap, the whole pile starts to warm up. Once they have finished digesting the organic matter, they slow down and the heap cools down again.

To make a really good compost you need a mixture of green and brown material. Green is higher

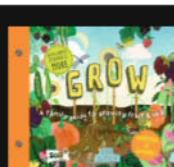
in nitrogen and includes things like grass clippings and vegetable waste from the kitchen. Brown material has lots of carbon in it, such as woody material, straw and cardboard. With the right balance of materials you can make good compost in as little as six weeks. As a rough guide you should put about three parts brown to one part green.

There are a huge number of different types of compost bin to choose from but design is less important than looking after the heap and turning it. This lets the air

in and mixes up the different materials, as well as cooling it if it gets too hot.

For compost geeks like me, you can get very technical and turn your heap at exactly the right temperature to keep the microbes happy and make the best compost in the shortest time. It doesn't take that much work but you do have to visit the heap regularly.

But don't be put off if that sounds too complicated. Even if you don't want to get obsessed it is still worth composting if you have the space and some soil or pots to use it on. You can even just leave your fruit and vegetable waste in a pile in the corner of your garden and forget about it for a year – you will still be able to feed the soil with it.



Ben Raskin is author of *Compost: A Family Guide to Making Soil from Scraps*. His new book *Grow: A Family Guide to Growing Fruit & Veg* is out on Feb 23 (Leaping Hare Press, £9.99).

LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Darren Boyd

Bafta-award winning actor who stopped asking 'what if?'

I went through a metamorphosis when I was 16. I was terribly shy as a kid. Lacking in self-confidence. I never excelled at anything at school, sport or academic. Then one night I went along to the town hall to wait for my best friend while he was doing a rehearsal for this musical, *Carousel*. I stood at the back watching people with regular nine-to-five jobs throw themselves into this thing with great passion. Then someone asked if I was interested in joining and I heard myself saying yes. A few weeks later I was asked to stand up, hold hands with this very attractive girl and walk from up stage left to down stage right. Everyone else was sat round the edge watching. I almost convinced myself that I couldn't do it. But I did it, and by the time I reached the other end of the stage, I know it sounds laughable, but I was a different person. Over the next few weeks that discovery of drama absolutely, fundamentally changed my life, and gave me a confidence and self-belief I'd never had before.

It must have been kind of weird for my parents – this kid who barely spoke and spent most of his time in his room drawing and sculpting monsters suddenly walks into the living room and bursts into *You'll Never Walk Alone*. But I'd gone through a lot of phases by then. I was kind of lost. I'd come home and say, "This is it, I definitely want to work with animals," and I'd get nothing but support. The next month I'd come home and say, "I've got to get into movie special effects. One life, one chance, that's who I am." And I'd get nothing but support. Then a few weeks later; "But the animals!" So I guess my parents just saw my passion for drama as the next thing. They never preached to me, they told me to go for everything. And for every show I ever did, I got a massive family turn out; aunts, uncles, cousins. All I remember from them is happiness and pride.

Comedy acting was never an interest or a strength. I was 24, 25 and I'd moved to London because I got a gig in the ensemble in *Les Misérables*. Chris Langham, at that time a very successful comic actor, was one of the stars, and he liked me and wrote a part for me in his new sitcom, *Kiss Me Kate*, with Caroline Quentin. I left *Les Mis* and within a few days I was at ITV studios filming this TV sitcom. After that I did *Smack the Pony* and *Hippies*, with Simon Pegg and Sally Phillips. I did pause then actually. I was playing this big, dim character again. I didn't want to be stuck doing the same shtick over and over. But it was work, and at that stage I wasn't going to turn it down. But I always felt like an imposter in the comedy world. I'm not a comedian, I don't write comedy, I don't have comedy in my bones. I felt this pressure in press interviews to be extrovert, full of hilarious anecdotes. And that just wasn't me.

I'm not someone who always wanted to have kids. I don't know if I considered myself father material. This business – it's a huge commitment. It gives you these massive highs and terrible lows. It's not sanity-inducing. It's a selfish, single-minded pursuit. And it doesn't offer security. So it doesn't add up naturally with having a family. My kids are three and four now, and I'm still figuring out where those

two worlds meet. How do I draw from both of them, not let either down and not go completely nuts in the process. I always told myself I'd have kids late and I was okay with the idea I might not have them at all. I had my first child when I was 41. So I suppose it worked out how I told the universe it would.

I've been doing a lot of work recently, for personal reasons, really tuning into my own sense of gratitude. It's easy to take things for granted. And I've realised it all comes down to one letter of the alphabet. All my issues – being anxious or pissed off or not dealing with things or making bad decisions – have come down to allowing myself to keep asking 'What if?' That starts a whole carousel of brain farts. But if you change that to 'What is', the brain is made almost redundant. If you tune into 'what is', you are filled with gratitude. Look out there – the sun's in the sky, the birds are singing. You can change your whole landscape. And instead of driving yourself mad worrying, for instance, about if your daughter is picking up all the bad things about you and that's going to make her turn out like the worst version of you, you think of what is, and just go right now and give her a big old hug.

We fill a lot of lives, especially actors, with this bullshit about competition. When you think about it, it's laughable. I've won awards and don't get me wrong, it's fantastic to be recognised and rewarded. But, ultimately, there's no best anything. Who's the best actor? It doesn't make sense, it's not even a thing. My friend and I were riffing on this recently. 'Who's the best person? Come on, who's the best one? It's a big old world, lots of people in it – who's the best one?' 'What do you mean – the most successful, the richest, the most spiritually fulfilled?' 'No, just the best one. That's what I want to be.' There's no such thing as the best one, there's only the best you.

If I could go back and relive one moment in my life... You asked me earlier about family coming to my shows and what their reaction was. I'd just moved to London. It was the opening night of *Les Misérables* at the Palace Theatre in the West End. My family came, and at the curtain call at the end of the show my little group came forward and cheered as loud as you can imagine. It was almost embarrassing and deeply moving. Then I got changed and walked out of the stage door to be greeted by about 20 members of my family, and they all started whooping and shouting and slapping me on the back. And then I caught my dad's eye. Phew... okay... hang on... And he wasn't whooping or shouting. He was just standing there and his eyes were red, and he just gave me this look. And then he gave me a little nod. Whew, wait... Just this quiet little nod. And I knew I'd done that thing I'd wanted to do for so long, and that was break away. And there was something in that moment – it was the end of my hometown and my life there. It was the end of something and the beginning of something else. And the old man was just standing there, and he knew. And he was waving me off.

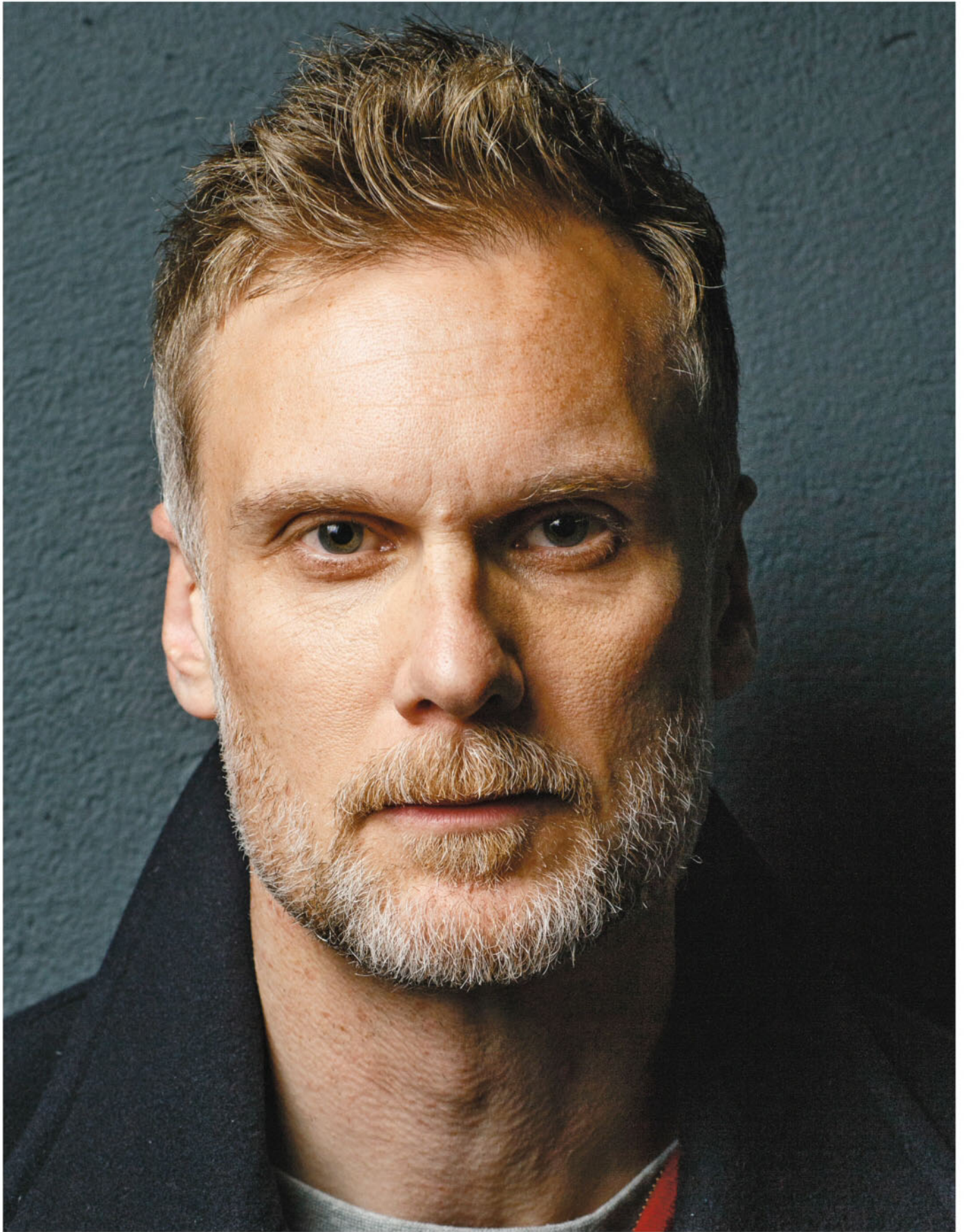


From the top: Darren Boyd in *Kiss Me Kate* with Chris Langham, Caroline Quentin and Amanda Holden; with his Bafta for *Spy* in 2012; alongside his wife, Amanda, and their two children in 2015

IN 1987 THE YEAR DARREN BOYD TURNS 16...

The great storm of 1987 kills 19 people in England / Ikea opens its first UK store in Warrington / Terry Waite is kidnapped in Beirut

Darren Boyd appears in the new series of Stan Lee's *Lucky Man*, starting February 24 on Sky 1
Interview: Jane Graham @Janeannie



**“I always felt like
an imposter in the
comedy world”**



ON THE FRONTLINE

This month, faced with fresh competition, Kim Jong-un dramatically raised the stakes in the Who Is The World's Craziest President? contest. After celebrating the successful launch of a ballistic missile, the North Korean government was likely behind the assassination of the Dear Leader's less-than-dear half-brother, Kim Jong-nam, at Kuala Lumpur airport.

This tightened already quite taut tensions on the Korean peninsula, and this bizarre room is the

epicentre of the political earthquake. Forget Trump's Mexican wall, the 38th Parallel – the line splitting North (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) from South (Republic of Korea) – is a proper border. Though the divide itself is marked by an underwhelming chain-link fence, it has a two-kilometre demilitarised zone (DMZ) on either side of the 250km border, dotted with two million landmines (there used to be three million). **TBI**

Words and images: Steven MacKenzie @stevenmackenzie



Above

NO ROOM FOR ERROR

The one spot where North and South Koreans can stare each other in the face – and they do, for hours each day – is the Joint Security Area (JSA), an island in the DMZ administered by the UN where the two sides can come together for peace talks, which they rarely do. This room sits right on the border, half in the DPRK and half in the RoK.



Above

BORDER PATROL

This scene of apocalypse-maybe-becoming-soon is one of the region's most popular tourist attractions. A couple of hundred visitors are bussed in daily, led by clean-cut US soldiers with film-star charisma. They speak of eagerly anticipating President Trump's visit to the base, check nobody is planning to defect and encourage photo-taking, except of "the big grey weather tower", enunciated in a way that conveys it is definitely *not* a weather tower.

Top

A TOURIST'S GUIDE

To go on the tour you need to do two things: sign a waiver acknowledging "the possibility of injury or death as a direct result of enemy action", and adhere to a dress code – dress to impress so the rest of the world looks smart. Tourists are clearly brought in to annoy North Korea. On the day *The Big Issue* visits, it is the first time in a week both sides have not been blasting propaganda recordings at each other – songs celebrating the Dear Leader versus K-pop. While missiles are tested and people assassinated, on the frontline the battle is waged with music and snap-happy tourists. Strange days, indeed.



WHY READING MATTERS

We're off and running. The Big Issue campaign to keep libraries open and to work for better literacy levels in Britain has engaged and galvanized. We're delighted and heartened by the messages of support

– and intent – from readers. We will continue to lead the fight.

We have also been joined by some well-known figures and key partners. Here are their messages. Next week, we'll explain the next steps.

Photos: Getty



“We need libraries and independent bookstores, these little bootcamps of interaction where people can go”

What we need to invest in now is intelligence. If we're going to get any sort of traction as individuals or as a society, we have to do that. That's the great equaliser. People in poorer backgrounds should be investing in knowledge. Not in college and stuff like that, they should be reading books. We've got the world's biggest library there on the internet, yet – and I am guilty of this myself – we look at the same three or four websites all the time. We need to look at knowledge. We need libraries and independent bookstores, these little bootcamps of interaction where people can go.
Irvine Welsh, author and all round great chap



WHAT LIBRARIES MEAN TO YOU

This is a snapshot of the powerful comments from you, our readers, about your local libraries and **#WhyBooksMatter**

Libraries have played a significant part at many points in my life but one of the most significant occurred when I was in sixth form. My family lived in a village eight miles from the nearest town with a school I could attend, and that meant commuting by bus. Taking the scheduled school run bus home was a stressful experience – the bus was almost invariably late, almost invariably overcrowded, and, worst of all, there were several bullies who took the bus and were determined to make everyone's life unpleasant.

But my school bus pass enabled me to take a different bus, two hours later. How did I spend those two hours? In the town library, doing my homework. The library, therefore, removed a significant source of stress from my life.

Rebecca Warren

I would be lost without my library. They are a fountain of help, and once a week put out tea and biscuits and entertainment for oldies. So helpful, and let me have about nine books at once. So friendly, too, all of them. My library is Askew Road Library in Shepherd's Bush and long may it stay open. And it's not just for oldies like me but youngsters who like to read and working mums. We can't all afford to buy books and reading is like going into another world.

Lynne Ward, Facebook



@PrettyHatMech

My local library as a kid was my escape from school violence & a gateway to personal growth. If the government wants to cut libraries then I will be giving books to inspire those who must challenge that government.

I use my library regularly, and every time I go in it's always busy. It also includes council workers, as our local office is closed, and computers and a tourist information centre. This is a good mix as it means the building is used for several things and is not just a library. I think this helps.
Dot Cartwright, Facebook

“I'm into the campaign 100 per cent – sign me up”

I could get behind the campaign 100 per cent. That is what I am involved in, in all my writing, online, my videos – I have had 26 million views, and each one is linked to a text. What I'm saying to teachers and parents, if kids like that, look at the book, go to the library, read the books and perform it. I'm making the link between the oral and the written – it is one way to get into reading. So sign me up!
Michael Rosen, celebrated novelist and former Children's Laureate



“A lot of my book reading was in libraries”

I am a great reader. I love reading. I always read three things at once. I am going to pick up my pile of books. I am currently reading, hang on, *Burmese Days* by George Orwell, *Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality* by Fredric Jameson, *Poems All Over the Place, Mostly Seventies* by Allen Ginsberg, which is something I read before going to bed.

Andrea Riseborough, actress and national treasure



20
FEB

WORLD DAY OF
SOCIAL JUSTICE

*If we help improve literacy, we help working children
take back their childhood. Go to projectliteracy.com/give*

PROJECT
LITERACY
Rewriting Lives





PARTNERS IN OUR CAMPAIGN

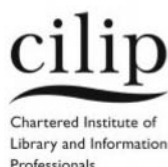
“Libraries change lives and bring communities together. We’re delighted to be working with The Big Issue to showcase this”

If you stop and think about it, libraries really are amazing. You can walk into any library across the country and read, learn and discover something new – for free. Everyone is welcome and friendly staff are there to help or leave you alone if you want to get stuck into a good book.

Classes take place, friends talk and clubs meet. Every year they lend 220 million books and provide over 30 million hours of internet access. Libraries change lives and bring communities together. They introduce children to books and stories, they help people with their studies, they improve health and well-being and combat loneliness and isolation.

We want more people to discover what’s happening in their library, to experience the thrill of getting their first library card and borrowing their first book. We’re delighted to be working with The Big Issue to showcase all the brilliant things you can do at your library from learning and having fun with your children to managing your health, finding a job or starting a business, and getting involved with your community.

Join, read and discover for free at your local library.
Nick Poole, Chief Executive of CILIP, the library and information association



“We look forward to working with The Big Issue to give books away on World Book Night”

We are happy to be working with The Big Issue on this important campaign. Reading for pleasure is a more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background; it broadens horizons, builds empathy and improves social interaction.

But 36 per cent of adults in England don’t read for pleasure and one in six adults in England and Northern Ireland score at the lowest level of proficiency in literacy.

As part of this campaign we are looking forward to working with The Big Issue to give books away on World Book Night, an annual celebration of reading and books for adults and young people on April 23. External evaluation of this programme showed the difference it can make to people’s lives, which is why we are working with homeless shelters and other organisations across the country, to distribute books donated by publishers to the people who need them the most.

We also welcome the campaign’s support of public libraries. We believe that access to reading should be free and open to all. We are working closely with our library partners and the Libraries Taskforce to encourage everyone to think Libraries First – because as trusted, safe community spaces staffed by expert professionals, libraries ensure that every single one of us has access to the books and information we need to manage our lives and realise our ambitions. The Reading Agency is supporting The Big Issue’s

Sue Wilkinson, CEO, The Reading Agency



“Poor literacy holds people back at every stage of their life”

The National Literacy Trust fully supports the Big Issue’s Literacy Campaign to transform the life chances of children and families in disadvantaged communities through literacy.

Poor literacy holds people back at every stage of their life: as a child they won’t be able to do well at school, as a young adult they will be locked out of the job market, and on becoming a parent they won’t be able to support their child’s learning. Through the campaign, we hope to tackle intergenerational patterns of illiteracy and change the life stories of disadvantaged individuals.

Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust



#WhyBooksMatter

Where I work in Gloucestershire my patients can go to their local library and borrow self-help books about anxiety, depression, agoraphobia, eating disorders and a host of other mental health issues. They even have a special range to cater for young people. This is a really good way of empowering people and preventing ill health. Losing libraries means people cannot access this so easily. In these times of poor provision for mental health, this is a disaster.
Helen Bromwich (GP)

My children love going to the library. I have two under 10. If we didn’t have the library, they probably wouldn’t be so keen to read. They both read really well, meeting and exceeding reading levels. And when literacy in boys is continuing to fall, closing libraries en masse makes no sense.
Jo Cann, Facebook

The countrywide restructures and cuts in library services will result in the death of libraries as we know them – now it will be volunteers and self-service machines all the way. If reading/literacy is important why is the wholesale dismantling of the profession of librarianship by the government via the local councils being allowed to happen? I have belonged to a library since the age of five and worked in them for 41 years and cannot believe that this is being allowed to happen.
Marjorie Bennett, Facebook



@lizmcgettigan
Libraries are an incredible democratic resource.

I help to run a writing group in what might be described as a post-industrial area. We work closely with one of the libraries in the city (who give us a free room every fortnight) and our group encompasses all ages, backgrounds, abilities etc etc. We value our library greatly.
June Palmer, Facebook

I am emailing you to lend my support to the ‘Fight for Libraries’ campaign. I am based in Cardiff near Penylan Library, which provides the hub of our community providing not only book but computers, soft play and sports facilities. I am a single mum with three kids and the library has allowed us to enjoy its facilities and given my young kids a joy of books.

They must not shut down.
Melissa Johansson

NEXT WEEK

HOW TO SAVE YOUR LIBRARY: OUR CAMPAIGN KIT IS PACKED WITH IDEAS AND ADVICE FROM THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND WON

PEPPA PIG FUTURE OF

The harrumphing over prisoners colouring in a popular children's character misses the point, says **Victoria Anderson**. We need to properly deal with rehabilitation, and do it now

Last week Peppa Pig became a symbol of all that is wrong with prisons in the UK. The custodial crisis has made for lurid headlines over the past 12 months, and the December rioting of hundreds of prisoners at HMP Birmingham was described as the worst British prison riot since Strangeways in 1986. Then, last week came the *Panorama* investigation into HMP Northumberland. What we saw on our screens looked like a complete breakdown of order – resulting in dangerously chaotic and even terrifying conditions for prisoners and staff alike.

Panorama suggested that one reason for this apparent breakdown was privatisation. In HMP Northumberland the transfer of ownership to French company Sodexo has translated into staffing cuts of nearly 50 per cent, meaning lack of support for prison officers, seemingly endless shifts and an inability to maintain order or even provide necessary items such as soap, towels or toilet paper to inmates. Added to this was a serious drugs problem, principally the influx of synthetic cannabinoids such as Spice, the effects of which are far more potent and deleterious than natural cannabis.

During the 30-minute programme we were shown prisoners in an employability skills class who were sitting quietly, colouring in pictures of the children's character Peppa Pig with bright felt tips. The contracted learning provider, Novus, was asked to account for the Peppa Pig incident and promised to investigate. Meanwhile, former prisons director and government adviser Martin Narey told *Panorama* that the secret footage of Peppa Pig was "inexcusable". So exactly what were Narey, and other loud voices, getting so perplexed about? The Peppa Pig shots were shown shortly after the programme revealed that a quarter of British prisoners cannot read and write at the level expected of an 11-year-old, while government reports show that as many as a third of prisoners consider themselves to

PRISON CHAOS: THE FACTS

6,430

Number of assaults on prison staff in 2016, a 40 per cent rise on the previous year.

18,510

Number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in 2016, a 30 per cent rise on the previous year.

354

Number of deaths in custody in 2016, including 119 suicides and three murders, a 38 per cent rise on the previous year.

46%

Proportion of inmates who said it was easy to obtain illegal drugs in prison.

48%

Proportion of inmates who said they felt unsafe in prison.

Below: *Panorama* films a prison inmate colouring in for an employability skills class



be learning-disabled. Is it really so very 'inexcusable' that in an environment of absolute chaos and chronic stress they should be sitting quietly and colouring in?

Liz Truss, Secretary of State for Justice, has recently announced the scrapping of the National Offender Management System, as part of "far-reaching organisational reforms to the system, which will make services more accountable to ministers for delivery and performance". Anyone who has heard Truss speak in recent months might be struck by the parallels she makes between prisons and schools. In December she said that prisons are "secret bunkers", like schools in the 1980s before the arrival

AND THE F PRISONS



of Ofsted, with its shiny inspections and insistence on school league tables: in other words, unknown and ungoverned.

It is hard to know whether Truss really does envisage prisons as schools or whether, perhaps, she imagines schools as prisons. Either way, this is how Truss plans to reform criminal justice: through inspectorates and quality control, bringing in what she calls “the best graduates” to work as prison officers – to show that it is, as she puts it, a “noble profession”. Are we to assume, then, that current prison staff are not considered noble?

An important review of education in prison, published last year by Dame Sally Coates, said that education “should be at the heart of the prison system”, and is both the “engine of social mobility” and “prisoner rehabilitation”. As with schools, the report says that educational provision should not just be a matter of employability skills (according to the Prison Reform Trust, a significant proportion of prisoners are serving “indeterminate sentences”, meaning they don’t know when – or even if – they will be released) but should encompass a wide range of learning activities, including arts. The fact that adult men were occupied with Peppa Pig was less an indictment of Novus as education providers, and more a sign that those within the criminal justice system need access not only to employability skills but also to the creative and therapeutic arts as part of a wider rehabilitation programme.

As a trustee for Stretch, a charity that works with prisoner rehabilitation through the arts, I asked director Carlotta Allum about the difficulties prisons have in funding and implementing cohesive educational provision. “Any new system should have rehabilitation at its core,” she said, “but what’s really lacking is staff and money so everyone has access to the projects and the work, not just a chosen few.” Clearly, UK prisons are not working. If reforms are to be successfully implemented, then greater transparency can only be a positive. **TE**

Dr Victoria Anderson is a teacher at Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. She is a trustee of Stretch, a prisoner rehabilitation charity. @victarious

RADICAL REHAB: A BIGGER ROLE FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES?

The drugs, violence and disorder recently revealed inside some of Britain’s jails raises some key questions about prison reform: how might inmates spend their time more productively? What are the best ways to begin inmates’ rehabilitation? Some of Britain’s social enterprises believe they have the answers, having developed innovative employment ideas to break the reoffending cycle.

The Freedom Bakery was allowed to set up an artisan bakery inside HMP Low Moss near Glasgow, training prisoners to make bread and cake before assisting them in finding catering work upon their release. Similarly, the London-based Clink Charity runs a training programme inside several prison kitchens, then mentors people towards work across a range of roles in the hospitality industry after they get out.

Big Issue Invest – the social investment arm of The Big Issue Group – has helped finance several social enterprises that find opportunities for former prisoners.

Blue Sky, for instance, handles waste management and recycling contracts across the south of England, and it employs ex-offenders exclusively to do the work. The organisation has recently expanded, arranging entry-level positions in the construction industry for former prisoners.

Yet frustration remains that government contracts – both in the running of prisons and the probation service – have gone to firms promising cost savings, rather than developing the preventive work that stops people falling back into crime. The Big Issue’s founder Lord John Bird said social enterprises could play a far bigger role in running parts of Her Majesty’s Prison Service. “I would love to run one,” said Bird. “I would do it better than Group 4.”

More information at bigissueinvest.com
Adam Forrest @adamtomforrest

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FRIDAY 3RD MARCH 2017

STREETS YOU KNOW,
STORIES YOU DON'T



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For more information and to register visit
WWW.BIGISSUE.ORG.UK/WALK

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HOW TO MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE!



We all want three wishes, and Bill Griffin has spent years collecting them and making them come true. But here's the catch: there is no genie – and you need to do the work

The Crowdwish app recently celebrated its third birthday. You've probably never heard of it but that's okay. It's an anonymous network where people post the three things they most want in the world; whatever those things may be.

If that was all Crowdwish offered it would be maybe kind of fine but a bit facile – kind of like an online 'dreamcatcher', and no one needs one of those. The point of difference is this – at 6pm every day, the most up-voted wish is chosen and an action is taken against it in the real world. These actions can be anything, depending on the nature of the wish made; they might involve the creation of a product, an experience, a public gesture or a simple act of kindness. One action a day, every day, for more than 1000 days.

A few examples – we helped raise the money for a disabled girl to get a specially adapted trike, conned Katie Hopkins into signing into her own gagging order, provided funeral flowers for someone who died before their time, helped people get over break-ups, sent a dog some mince pies, gave out warm hats and gloves to those living on the streets, sent sensory toys to children living with autism, left a tree to be planted in a rundown area,

provided career advice to those writing their first novels, helped a left-handed child feel more confident, composed a theme song for someone called Mike, helped people travel the world by paying for tickets, distributed signs telling people to clear up after their dogs, helped someone get closer to her dream of returning her boyfriend's ashes to their final resting place in the Sahara desert, rewrote people's CVs, paid for someone to have a decent haircut, helped people renting flats who were being abused by their landlords, left flowers and chocolates anonymously outside the flat of an elderly person who lived alone, helped someone meet a Beatle, left daffodils around the place for people to find and take home to their loved ones, handed out umbrellas in the rain, helped a very sick boy called Denver receive an amazing number of birthday cards, left a cheeky sign in Harrods taking a stance against condescending women on make-up counters, sent someone called Pete a Polaroid picture autographed by Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, and hundreds of other things that you're now too tired to read about.

So what have I learnt after three years of helping people get closer to their stated desires? A few things I guess...

Firstly, people's wishes are generally closer to home and more achievable than we might first imagine. On Crowdwish, users wish they didn't feel anxious all the time, that they could get on better with their co-workers, that they didn't feel so intimidated at parties, that they were closer to their parents. Normal, everyday thoughts that we have all had from time to time.

Secondly, people – or those who have engaged with the project at least – are fundamentally good. They're typically highly empathetic, kind, grateful and perceptive. They can feel glad for complete strangers, and sympathise with people they will never meet.

Thirdly, we are very poor predictors of our own future happiness and disproportionately attach meaning to material accomplishments. We believe that we will be happier with a larger house, faster car or more exotic holiday. This is, broadly speaking, a fallacy. So that which we think will make us happy very frequently doesn't – or if it does, its impact is very short term. I completely concede that this is not a very original observation.

Finally, like I said, the app doesn't make wishes come true; it just encourages people to fulfil their own aspirations and helps provide a little motivation to get started: a journey of a thousand miles starting with a single step, if you'll forgive the terrible cliché. The Russian psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik produced a ton of evidence that once people began an assigned task, they would almost always see it through, even if interrupted. The reason is simple: things hang around in our heads if they're unfinished, just as once they're complete they tend to vanish. Our brains are hardwired towards completing tasks once they have been started, and shying away from ones we haven't yet begun. So if there's an

aspiration, a hope, a desire, a wish that you have – get started on the path towards achieving it. Even if it's just a small step in what you think is the right direction: any action is always better than none.

Turn over to make some of your dreams become reality! >



Bill Griffin: collecting wishes

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HERE ARE PEOPLE'S MOST POPULAR WISHES ... AND HOW TO MAKE THEM COME TRUE

I WISH I WAS A MILLIONAIRE

The best way to a million pounds is to start your own company, which is easier and cheaper, arguably, than ever before. Here's how:

- 1) Find a solution to a real problem. Ideally one of which you have first-hand experience.
- 2) Build something a hundred people completely love rather than a thousand people think is kind of okay.
- 3) Be conscious of the Pareto Principle: 80 per cent of meaningful results will come from 20 per cent of your time/endeavours. Find out what that means for you.
- 4) Turns out Yoda was right all along. Do or do not. There is no try. Never talk about what you're going to do. It's meaningless. Talk about what you're doing right now. Today.

I WISH I WASN'T IN THE THROES OF AN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

You're not alone: according to a poll commissioned by the Open University in 2016, almost half of the British public have either had or are going through a 'life crisis' of some kind. Existentialist philosophy puts emphasis on individual freedom and choice; it posits that we define our own meaning in life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. In that sense the crisis cannot be ignored and in many ways is your friend: asking yourself whether or not you are leading the most productive and fulfilling existence is not inherently a bad thing. The best way through the crisis is to raise your game – find something that has an inherently higher purpose – charitable work is an obvious example or any project that will benefit others in some way.

I WISH I COULD TIME TRAVEL

Well you can't. So in the absence of real time travel, let's do this instead: write a letter to a future version of yourself. You may want to use it to check you've achieved a particular goal, offer encouragement to your future self, set a deadline for confronting a difficult issue or conversation, help yourself to forgive, or add anything else you might find inspiring, motivating or helpful in the future. We realise this isn't 'time travel' but receiving a letter from your past self is a one-off kind of experience, and knowing it is coming – holding you to account – may be more interesting or influential than you imagine.

I WISH I COULD GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Once you've got past adolescence you only need seven hours' sleep. Anything else is unnecessary and your brain has become wrongly accustomed to it. You are possibly entering a second cycle of sleep if you sleep too long – this is why you wake up exhausted. So, decide when you are going to go to bed and when you're going

to get up, and stick to those times.

1) Cut out caffeine after 2pm. This includes tea, coffee, soft drinks and chocolate.

2) The bedroom is for sex and sleep. That's it. So in the hour before bed you should avoid reading, listening to music, watching television or dicking around on your phone.

3) Before going to bed jot down your to-do list for tomorrow in a little journal. When you've done that, close the book with an emphatic thud. You will no longer have the nagging feeling of having forgotten something, and the slamming shut of the book unconsciously makes the mind less likely to disturb you while you're trying to get to sleep.

4) Do three things every night to condition your brain that sleep is coming, for example turn the lights out, brush your teeth, use the bathroom.

5) If it takes longer than 20 minutes to sleep or if you wake up and can't get back to sleep, get up and potter around.

I WISH I COULD PAY OFF MY DEBTS

In the UK average household debt stands at £54,000 – almost twice the level a decade ago. Start saving in little achievable ways that don't impact your quality of life.

Switch utility providers, uswitch.com is a comprehensive comparison site and a good place to start.

Likewise, mobile phone operators. Deals can be done if they think you're going to leave.

Ditch pay TV and get Freeview instead.

Don't go shopping for food while hungry, and always make a list and stick to it. Old-hat advice but psychology works.

Take a packed lunch to work.

Drive less, walk more.

You only need to buy a coffee and croissant every day to spend £1,500 a year. That's a big chunk of most overdrafts.

I WISH I COULD GET A NANDO'S BLACK CARD

Nando's Black Card is something of an urban legend. Apparently, it allows the cardholder to take up to five people out for a completely free meal any time. The card has allegedly been sent out to numerous celebrities, including David Beckham, Ricky Gervais, Pixie Lott and Ed Sheeran. Nando's themselves kind of refuse to confirm or deny the card's existence, saying only: "All we can tell you for certain is that no one who's requested a card, no matter how politely, has ever received one."

Despite their slightly coy response, the Black Card is a real thing but one of those celebrity perks that always seem a bit unjust. That said, Nando's offer a 20 per cent discount to police, the fire service, the ambulance service and NHS staff. **TEB**

Taken from *The Wish: The 99 Things We Think We Want Most* by Bill Griffin, which is out now (Constable, £12.99)



INTERVIEW: NAOMIE HARRIS

“I GREW UP WITH STRONG, INTELLIGENT, POWERFUL WOMEN BUT I NEVER SAW THEM ON SCREEN”

Britain's brightest Oscar hope, Naomie Harris, tells **Adrian Lobb** how 007 nearly robbed her of her biggest movie moment yet – playing a crack addict mum

Naomie Harris is used to being in big films. She plays Eve Moneypenny in Daniel Craig-era Bond, and sea goddess Calypso in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise. But it is a role in writer-director Barry Jenkins' independent film *Moonlight*, which she shot during a whistlestop, three-day trip to Miami squeezed between press junkets on a global promotion tour for *Spectre*, that is winning the 40-year-old north Londoner enormous critical acclaim.

Nominated for both a Golden Globe and Bafta, the smart money suggests a two-way battle with Viola Davis for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar this weekend.

“Hands down this was the best three days' work I have ever done,” grins Harris. A combination of visa problems and the demands of global publicity for *Spectre* almost prevented her taking the role.

“It was touch and go whether I could do the movie. But, ultimately, it ended up being great because you never get any downtime. You don't get an opportunity to go into your head, which is dangerous as an actor. It is better that you stay free and allow yourself to deliver your performance.”



INTERVIEW: NAOMIE HARRIS

She compares the process to an athlete, trusting their training and able to be at peak performance level the moment the starter pistol sounds. "I love it. I'm asking my agent, 'Any other three-day movies, I'm down!'"

As a meditation on masculinity, sexuality, fate, identity, family, friendship and the difficulty of finding space to show vulnerability in a tough community, *Moonlight* – loosely based on a play by Tarell Alvin McCraney – is an extraordinary film, full of long silences, full of compassion. It is firmly rooted in its location, the housing projects of Liberty Square, Miami, telling the story of Chiron (played by Alex Hibbert, Ashton Sanders and Trevante Rhodes) through three distinct chapters in his life.

Harris plays Chiron's mother Paula in each stage of the film, tracking the evolution of the relationship between son and a mother struggling with addiction to crack cocaine.

"We'd get the work done, quick hair and make-up change and back on to the next time frame. But I always felt I had all the time in the world to get it right," Harris says. "There were quite a few people on set for whom it would not really have been appropriate for me to stay in character as Paula between takes. I'm basically playing [writer-director] Barry's mother. It was cathartic but also a traumatising experience for him to have his mother come to life on set. He needed the respite, and another actor's close relative was addicted, so for him it was traumatic as well. Because of that, it was really important that after we broke from filming I came out of character: 'Hi everyone, I'm Naomie! I'm British! I couldn't be further from Paula!'"

It is true. The serene, softly spoken actor fighting off a winter cold in the most soulless of hotel suites could scarcely be further away from her latest alter ego. "I don't smoke. I don't drink. I have no real experience of addiction whatsoever."

After trawling YouTube for candid interviews with crack addicts, Harris began to construct the character, determined, she says, to play the person not the addiction.

"I wanted to show her full humanity and her emotional complexity. I had to go on a journey to feel compassion for her. Whenever you play a character, you have to fall in love with them on some level. I needed to fall in love with Paula and I really did."

"There are a few things I really wanted to bring out. I discovered that every single one of the female addicts I researched had been sexually abused or raped. That was a real eye opener. I realised they were using drugs as escapism. They would end up reliving the trauma of their experience over and over in their head. So, when living in your body and mind becomes a torment, it is understandable that someone would reach out to something to numb that level of pain."

"Another woman described her addiction as being like a relationship with a psychopath. How, at the start

of the relationship, they make you feel like the most special person in the world, so attractive, so happy, so loved. It is not until you are deeply into the relationship that they start to reveal who they really are, the control, the manipulation, the brutality. It is the same with drugs."

In the past Harris has studiously avoided roles that could reinforce negative stereotypes of women. It was while making *Small Island*, the BBC adaptation of Andrea Levy's book, that Harris learned a lot about the lives of her grandparents, who came over to the UK in the Windrush era.

"I didn't realise the levels of racism that they would have suffered," she says. "It is such a shame they aren't alive today because they would be so proud, given all the sacrifices they made for their children, to see how we are all doing."

How important, then, is her stand against stereotypical roles, what are the lines in the sand, and how was she persuaded that this character and *Moonlight* were different?

"It is incredibly important to me because I have a wonderful, wonderful powerhouse of a mother," she says. "I grew up around women who are strong, intelligent and capable. So there was this disconnect between my experience and what was reflected to me on screen."

"Very early on in my career I made a decision that I wanted to portray the kind of women I grew up with. Because I just didn't see them enough. I wanted them to be strong. I wanted them to be intelligent. I wanted them to be powerful. I wanted them to be part of driving the story forward. And I didn't want negative portrayals of women, and that is what I feared about taking Paula on, that she would be reduced to her addiction. But when I spoke to Barry, he said, 'look, I am basically asking you to play my mum'. I realised he was emotionally invested in ensuring there would never be any clichés. He wanted to tell his story, and that involves his mother, who was a crack addict. So what can he do? He can't write her out of the story. He just has to tell it in the best way he possibly can."

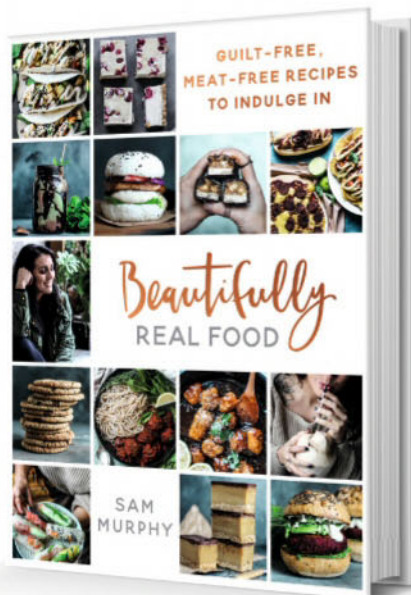
"Barry talks about how it is healing for people to see themselves reflected on screen. And if you ignore swathes of society, it is very damaging to them because they can feel like they don't exist. That is the same with addicts. My decision to not portray them wasn't that I didn't want to play a crack addict, it was that I didn't want to play a one-dimensional version of a crack addict." **TBI**

Moonlight is out now in cinemas. The Oscars are held this Sunday. @adey70



From the top: Naomie Harris as Money Penny in *Spectre*; the goddess Calypso in *Pirates of the Caribbean*; in *Moonlight*

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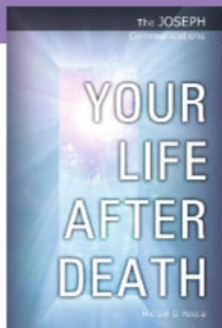
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Suzanne Ibru - Southwark, London



Suzanne has been missing from
Southwark since 6 January this
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Idriss Ali - London



This month marks the fourth
anniversary of Idriss going
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THE ENLIGHTENMENT

BOOKS/FILM/TV/MUSIC

BEST OF ALL

THE RED DEVIL

George Best was one of the first sportsmen to make as many headlines on the front pages as the back. His unmatched skill on the pitch and turbulent life off it have been much written about but never as well documented as in Daniel Gordon's new film *Best*. Capturing the triumph and tragedy, more than a decade since his death, the lasting impression is of his incredible talent. As George Best himself reflected: "As long as they remember the football... because that's what it was all about."

► *Best* is in cinemas from February 24

BOOKS

Body of evidence

Kathryn Hughes fleshes out the Victorians: from bushy beards to beautiful lips

A few years ago it suddenly hit me that, as an historian of the 19th century, I hadn't been doing a very good job. Or rather, I had done only half a job. Because while I had been diligent in finding out everything there was to know about the intellectual, professional and emotional lives of various eminent Victorians, I didn't have a clue about what it felt like to live in their bodies. Was George Eliot secretly pleased that she managed to stay slender right through her 50s? What steps did Prime Minister William Gladstone take to disguise the fact that the forefinger of his left hand was missing? And how did the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning deal with the experience of being mixed race (her family were Jamaican plantation owners) in a smart residential area of London that was overwhelmingly white?

These are the kinds of puzzles that I set out to unravel in my new book **Victorians Undone**. At first my plan was to write about the everyday bodily sensations experienced by unstarry Victorians – toothache, constipation, a graceful neck or slender foot. Almost immediately, though, I hit the buffers. For it turns out that even the most conscientious Victorian diarist didn't usually bother to mention her bunions or her freckles. The kinds of evidence I was after – oozes, itches, a glance of admiration or a blush of shame – just weren't there in the letters, diaries, photographs and memoirs left behind by busy but essentially anonymous men and women of the 19th century.

The only thing to do was to turn to famous, brand-name Victorians whose dense, rich archives had been saved for posterity, right down to their laundry lists. For instance, in order to answer the question of what it felt like to take a long walk in shoes that were too big for you, I had to consult the young Queen Victoria's journal. Here she mentions how uncomfortable it is to have stones sneaking into your gaping shoes, and uses it as an excuse for not taking the long walks she so desperately needs to keep her weight down. Or what about the experience of a man with a weak chin, delighted to discover that bulky beards have suddenly become deeply fashionable? I found the

answer to that one among the letters and photographs in Charles Dickens' archive.

By tracking five carefully selected body parts through the archive I have tried to produce a richer alternative to the usual rather bland biographical narratives. The fact that George Eliot's right hand was bigger than her left as a result of working in the dairy on her father's farm led me to the discovery that her heirs had been desperate to cover up the fact that their illustrious literary aunt had once done menial work. Darwin's huge bushy beard turns out not only to be a convenient disguise for the scientist's lifelong eczema but also a key component in his groundbreaking theorising on sexual selection. What, he wanted to know, was the beard for exactly?

To make a man's jaw look bigger in relation to those of male competitors? Or to attract the ladies? Intriguingly, the evidence I uncovered from the women in Darwin's circle suggests that, actually, a high proportion of them couldn't stand hairy chins.

Then there was the case of Fanny Cornforth, the secret mistress of Pre-Raphaelite painter D G Rossetti. Fanny's beautiful lips are the focus of Rossetti's most famous painting, *The Kissed Mouth*, but I was also intrigued to find out how she used them in everyday life. Unlike Rossetti's better-known mistresses, Lizzie Siddal and Jane Morris, Fanny never bothered to tone down her strong working-class accent. Nor did she restrict her intake of food as Jane and Lizzie did in order to

squeeze into the medieval 'aesthetic' dress that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood liked their women to wear. Instead she was, rather magnificently, her full-bodied self.

Finally, I found myself in two very different kinds of courts. In the early reign of Queen Victoria, an unpopular lady-in-waiting called Lady Flora Hastings whose stomach was suspiciously large was accused of being unmarried but pregnant. Victoria ordered Flora to submit to a horrendous medical examination, which exonerated the lady-in-waiting of immorality but failed to spot that she was suffering from a fatal liver disease.

And then there is little Fanny Adams, an eight-year-old, working-class girl from Hampshire who was beheaded and eviscerated by a 29-year-old legal clerk called Frederick Baker who hung for his horrible crime in 1867. A couple of years later some British sailors, disgusted by the rotting meat in their rations, came up with a novel explanation. Bits of Fanny Adams that had never been recovered from the murder scene must have somehow found their way into the Navy's victualling yard. Here, then, is the origins of the phrase 'sweet Fanny Adams' or 'sweet FA' to mean something worthless, of absolutely no value at all.

Victorians Undone by Kathryn Hughes is out now in hardback (Fourth Estate, £20)



Queen Victoria ordered her lady-in-waiting to undergo a horrendous examination

“Bits of Fanny Adams must have found their way into the Navy's victualling yard”





5 TIME-TRAVEL BOOKS EVERY CHILD SHOULD READ BY 12

ANGIE STANTON



1. RUBY RED

Kerstin Gier

Ruby Red and the two follow-up books, *Sapphire Blue* and *Emerald Green*, are fantastic YA novels! In fact, after finishing *Ruby Red* during a winter cold snap of -27°C (not kidding), I cranked up my frozen car for a trip across town to get book two and three.



2. TIMEBOUND

Rysa Walker

This is the first book in her award-winning series of time-travel novels. A strange blue medallion bestowed by her eccentric grandmother sends our young heroine on a time-travel venture across time.



3. HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

JK Rowling

My favourite of all the Potter books, especially because of the fact Hermione uses a time turner amulet to skip back in time to save a hippogriff, among other good deeds.



4. TIME BETWEEN US

Tamara Ireland Stone

Contemporary time-travel story packed full of first-love angst, when two teens face the impossible – loving someone from another time.



5. TIMEKEEPER

Tara Sim

In an alternative Victorian world controlled by clocks, a 17-year-old clock mechanic find himself responsible for controlling the fabric of time – but also saving his father who is trapped in its threads.

Waking in Time by Angie Stanton is in paperback on March 9 (Curious Fox, £7.99). angiestanton.com



REVIEWS

IDAHO / WHATEVER HAPPENED TO INTERRACIAL LOVE?

The first cut is the deepest

Emily Ruskovich's razor-sharp debut deals with loss and redemption

This week we're looking at a couple of astonishing debut books that don't fit neatly into any particular genre or style. Both are by American women writers, one at the start of her career, the other sadly no longer with us.

First up is the astounding *Idaho* by Emily Ruskovich. Ruskovich grew up in Idaho and graduated from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her short stories have won several awards. This debut novel is framed almost like a psychological thriller but it actually turns out to be an exquisite examination of how the ripples from a single tragic event play out across a panoply of vividly drawn characters.

The book is experimental, ambitious and brave, and this is not the novel to turn to if you want all the answers tied up in a neat bow at the end. *Idaho* is as messy and conflicted and unresolved as real life, with Ruskovich jumping between time frames and various points of view to look at issues of loss and horror, redemption and love, and a strong exploration of how memory makes us who we are.

The central event is tragic and unbearable. Husband and wife Wade and Jenny are on a trip to the hills to collect firewood with their two daughters, June and May. While they take a break, an unspeakable and inexplicable act of violence occurs (I won't give it away here), with disastrous repercussions for all involved.

The book opens after the event, with Wade's now-wife Ann still struggling to put together the events of that day, as well as caring for Wade, who is now suffering from early-onset dementia, a condition that sometimes makes him violent as well as just forgetful.

There is a lot of sadness depicted in *Idaho*; almost all of the characters are struggling

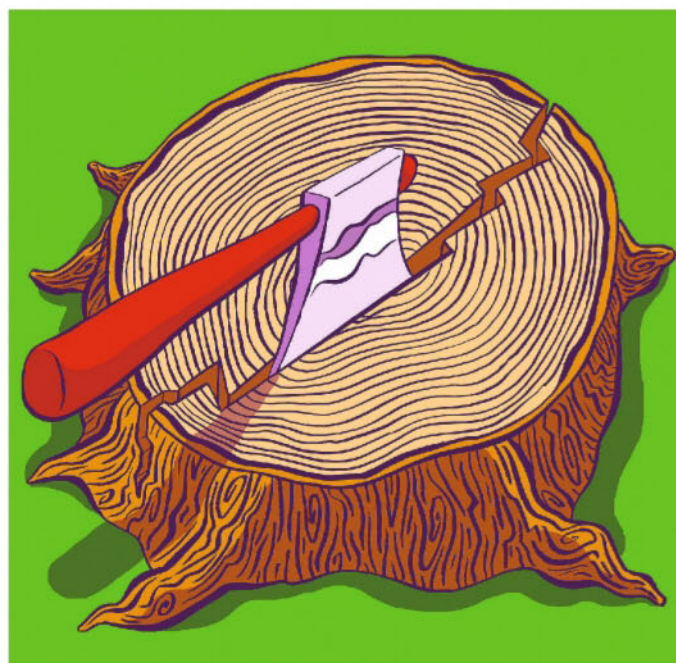


Illustration: Dom McKenzie

with extreme burdens but Ruskovich's prose is electric and lithe in its depictions of those struggles. Her observations of human nature and the world we live in are razor sharp, and the unconventional structure she uses to tell her story adds resonance and depth to everything that happens.

It is a remarkably confident and assured debut, a piece of writing as uplifting as it is poignant, and it's without a doubt one of the best debut novels I've read in a long time.

Next up we have *Whatever Happened to Interracial Love?* by Kathleen Collins.

Collins was a black activist, playwright and film-maker who sadly died in 1988 at the age of 46. She was somewhat overlooked during her lifetime but is gradually being reassessed and her work revived. This collection of short stories is a welcome part of that process.

The 16 stories here were all written in the 1960s and 1970s but remained unpublished in Collins' lifetime. Which is a real shame because they are vibrant, funny and cutting, short bursts of stream-of-consciousness or acerbic dialogue, stories that mix personal relationships with civil rights, sexual politics with religion, art and more.

Collins' eye for the absurdity of the human condition is very keen, and her passion for the world she saw around her, along with all its foibles and annoyances, is palpable on the page. The energy to her prose is absolutely propelling, making it all the more bittersweet that she's not still around to give us more stories such as this.



Idaho

Emily Ruskovich

Chatto and Windus, £14.99

Whatever Happened to Interracial Love?

Kathleen Collins

Granta Books, £12.99

Doug Johnstone @doug.johnstone

'I was instructed in the art of not belonging from a very early age'

from the title story in the collection *Black Vodka*, by Deborah Levy (*And Other Stories*, 2012), shortlisted for the BBC Short Story Award

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THE FITS

Coming of age

With a stand-out performance from rising star Royalty Hightower, this eerie drama dances rings round *La La Land*

In the shared bathroom of a community gym in Cincinnati, two young girls are staring in a mirror. Toni, the taciturn, serious-looking 11-year-old at the centre of Anna Rose Holmer's *The Fits*, is fiddling with a pin, screwing up the courage to pierce her ear. Her friend is egging her on in a state of nervous giggles.

Toni, though, remains quiet and determined: she takes the pin and plunges it straight through her ear lobe. She doesn't scream – and once it's over dabs the blood away and inspects the results with studied connoisseurship. Mind you, she has to ask an older girl to do the other ear. Toni is brave but not that brave. *The Fits* is a haunting, quietly poetic portrait of such small rites of passage for girls Toni's age. Set almost entirely inside the community centre, it revolves around Toni's efforts to join a dance troupe of older girls (who compete in city-wide tournaments that show off their sharply synchopated high-energy steps).

She loses interest in hanging out in the boxing gym with her older brother and his male friends. Instead she develops a fascination with the older dancers, whose competitive gossip about boys she had

always spurned, and starts training furiously to emulate their intricate moves. This is a film about a brief but profound period of transition: the world that beckons to the young Toni isn't just that of loud music and tightly-plotted choreography but of adolescence, of burgeoning womanhood.

But Toni's growing pains are taking place against a background of galloping panic. One by one, the older girls in the troupe begin to fall victim to a mysterious physical complaint: a bout of shaking over which they have no control and that momentarily knocks them out. The few supervising adults in this world blame the water supply but they're soon proven wrong. One of the girl's definition of these terrifying "fits" as a "boyfriend disease" might be closer to the truth – this is a film fraught with the anxieties and excitement of sexual discovery. Or is it, as Toni herself suspects, a form of mass hysteria, which some of the girls seem to will into existence?

These explanations are valid only so far because what gives *The Fits* its strange, gripping power is the absorbing sense of mystery that hangs over the action. Enduring the fits becomes something of an initiation

ceremony for the girls; they suffer but are rewarded the privilege of a shared secret knowledge. It's a symbol and an echo of the experience of adolescence itself, a process that is closed off and intimidating even to tough cookies like Toni. *The Fits* is ostensibly a coming-of-age tale but there's none of the romantic glow that often attaches to the genre. Here the business of growing up is played out with a creeping sense of menace, material for a kind of bloodless (with the exception of that symbolic ear-piercing) but lastingly effective horror film.

In *The Fits*' probing of the uneasy enigmas of adolescence you can feel the influence of films ranging from Peter Weir's spectral 1976 Australian drama *Picnic at Hanging Rock* to Lucile Hadzihalilovic's underrated 2005 fantasy *Innocence*. But *The Fits* – remarkably, a debut effort from the young Holmer – is also defiantly its own thing, not least in the magnetic performance, all attitude and watchful curiosity, she gets from Royalty Hightower as Toni, and the explosively dynamic way she stages the dance sequence. With some of the finest on-screen choreography this year, the film dances rings round *La La Land*.

***The Fits* is in cinemas from February 24**

FINAL REEL...

A terminally ill writer returns to his family home in rural France to announce his impending doom in *It's Only the End of the World*, also released this week. The Canadian director Xavier Dolan assembles a classy cast (Marion Cotillard, Vincent Cassel and Léa Seydoux are among the family members) but the film, adapted from a play, is a tiresome talkfest.

Words: Edward Lawrenson @EdwardLawrenson



French connection: Marion Cotillard and Vincent Cassel

TV

L-R: Ben McKenzie, Mischa Barton and Peter Gallagher in *The O.C.*



THE O.C.

My nine-year-old is learning about teenage hedonism

I've been rewatching *The O.C.* with my nine-year-old daughter. If you never saw it the first time around in the mid-Noughties, it is a drama surrounding privileged white people in the Californian suburb of Newport Beach. It turned Mischa Barton into such a big star that she seemed destined for a long and lucrative Hollywood career before her well documented personal problems put paid to all that.

On the face of it, *The O.C.* was just another airheaded US soap about beautiful people. But its trump card was that it was consistently funny. Most of the laughs came from Adam Brody playing the character of Seth Cohen like a west coast emo version of Woody Allen. But then there was Melinda Clarke as Julie Cooper: the greatest bitch on TV since Alexis Colby. Plus Peter Gallagher as Sandy Cohen, the wise-cracking dad we wish we all had, and Alan 'Jim Robinson' Dale as his absolute bastard of a tycoon father-in-law. He was hilarious, too.

It was basically *Dawson's Creek* without all the nauseating navel-gazing and tears. It also had edge: teenagers were forever overdosing on ecstasy and passing out in swimming pools; people often got shot at lavish house parties; Mischa Barton became a lesbian for one season; Seth's mum became an alcoholic in the space of half an episode

and had to go to rehab. And people were often seen snorting coke in nightclubs because, hey, they were young and gorgeous and minted and so why the hell shouldn't they?

Yes, all in all, it is thoroughly inappropriate viewing for a nine-year-old girl who I was hoping might never ever find out what alcohol rehab was, much less a line of coke. Now she knows about all of those things because by the time I remembered that *The O.C.* wasn't just nice middle-class kids exchanging witty dialogue on a beach it was too late.

She was lured in by the superficial glamour then hooked by the eye-

"My generation had *Grange Hill*, which taught us about things like heroin. I didn't rush out to try and score skag"

opening expose of teenage hedonism. I should maybe be ashamed. But then, my generation had *Grange Hill*, which taught us about things like heroin. When Roland found Zammo passed out on the toilet floor in that youth club, I didn't rush out to try and score some skag for myself. If anything, it helped scare me off the stuff for life. Mind you, the likes of Roland and Zammo were never that aspirational.

The risk is that my little girl might actually find the misadventures of *The O.C.* crowd rather more appealing. I'll just have to keep my fingers crossed she doesn't take up drugs in adolescence. Or, perhaps worse, start affecting a Californian accent.

Words: Sam Delaney @DelaneyMan

OUT AND ABOUT



HE'S THE STAR MAN

Just over a year since his passing, many of us still haven't gotten over the death of David Bowie. You can, however, celebrate his astonishing career and perfect melding of high art with pop music in **Adam Buxton's Bug: David Bowie Special** (February 22, Leicester; curveonline.co.uk). Buxton is a Bowie nerd, so expect a mix of the insightful, the celebratory and the irreverent.



The Royal African (until June 4, Docklands, London; museumoflondon.org.uk) tells the story of how an African prince, William Sessarakoo (pictured), was tricked and sold into slavery

in 1744 in Barbados. He spent four years in enslavement until he was freed by the Royal African Company. A shocking story that crystallises the horrors of a shameful system that underpinned imperialism.

Jewish Book Week (February 25 to March 5, King's Cross, London; jewishbookweek.com) kicks off this week, having run in London each year since 1952. A mix of readings, talks, interviews and comedy are dotted through the week. Big-name draws this year include Rebecca Front, Howard Jacobson, and Emily Maitlis interviewing James P Rubin, a senior media adviser to Hillary Clinton in her presidential bid.

Talking of BBC journalists doing public interviews, **Gavin Esler in Conversation with Jo Brand** (February 28, Canterbury; thegulbenkian.co.uk)



will see the comedian, writer, presenter and actor talk about her long career in entertainment, as well as her previous, and very different, career as a psychiatric nurse. On top of this, she is a campaigner for minority groups, using her fame and influence to make things better for society's most powerless.

Punk's great contribution to human movement was the pogo but we all age and sometimes a nice walk is as strenuous as we want things



to be. The ongoing **Punk 40 celebrations** (February 25, various locations, London; museumoflondon.org.uk) offers a two-hour tour of key sites in the capital where the scene first roared into life. Most of the

filthy venues and squats are prime real estate now, so be prepared to face up to just how much gentrification has erased the sputum and grubby fingerprints from the city.



Now in its fifth year, **Craft Beer Rising** (February 23-25, Brick Lane, London; craftbeerising.co.uk) quickly became a big draw for people who like their beer (and their food) to exist outside of the main brands, constantly searching for the interesting and unique. Obviously, the bigger it gets the less it can argue it's the alternative – but it seems to be holding it together well so far.

Eamonn Forde

MUSIC

DECCA CLASSICS

To make overtures

I don't want to scandalise any divas out there but sometimes I just feel like there's a bit too much singing in opera. Don't get me wrong, I love a good aria as much as the next punter but all that vocal action can get a tad tiresome. A nice chunk of instrumental music can offset the warbling very nicely, thank you very much.

Facetious assertions aside, some of the very best bits of opera come directly from the pit, when the orchestra is given a chance to shine in the metaphorical limelight. Composers have known this from the start, of course, which is why many operatic works are punctuated by instrumental interludes. A new CD on the Decca label from conductor **Riccardo Chailly** and the **Filarmonica della Scala**, the orchestra of Milan's famous opera house, places these orchestral numbers centre stage, and what a treat it is.

La Scala is one of the world's most iconic opera houses, and this disc showcases its historical importance by featuring overtures, preludes and intermezzi from operas premiered within its hallowed walls. Works by operatic giants Verdi, Rossini, Puccini and Bellini rub shoulders with those of lesser-known composers like Boito, Giordano and Ponchielli, and the result is an intriguing insight into Italian orchestral writing from the Romantic era. The Filarmonica is on sparkling form: vibrant and ebullient in energetic curtain raisers by Verdi and Rossini; restrained and delicate in an Introduction by Catalani (a real discovery for me); impassioned and expansive in intermezzi by Puccini and Leoncavallo.

From Milan to Mannheim and another new Decca release: clarinetist heartthrob **Andreas Ottensamer's** third solo album, which focuses on music from the German city. A hotbed of musical innovation and creativity in the mid-18th century, its clarinetists were the envy of the musical world. Their skills were put to good use by several composers, including 'founding father' of the Mannheim musical movement Johann Stamitz and his son Carl Philipp. Concertos



Centre stage: Riccardo Chailly and the Filarmonica della Scala

by these little-known composers bookend the disc, and they are delightful. Ottensamer's sweet, light sound and his complete control of tone and phrasing are matched by the Kammerakademie Potsdam's lithe, responsive accompaniment.

Alongside his flourishing solo career, Ottensamer – who is still in his mid-20s – is also principal clarinetist of the Berlin Philharmonic. For the meat in the Stamitz sandwich, he asked a couple of his orchestral colleagues to come play. Flautist extraordinaire Emmanuel Pahud appears in duet arrangements of a charming pair of Mozart arias, and Albrecht Mayer joins Ottensamer in Danzi's Concerto for Clarinet and Bassoon – except that he plays it on a cor anglais, which I feel is lacking in the rounder sound of the original instrument. Still, these collaborations add a fun extra element to the recording, which, all in all, is a jolly lovely one.



Sheku Kanneh-Mason

LAST NOTE...

Things just keep getting bigger and better for 17-year-old Nottinghamshire cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason**. Last May he won the BBC Young Musician of the Year, in November he signed with a major record company (you guessed it: Decca) and last weekend he played to millions at the Baftas. Go Sheku!

Words: David Fay @themerelister

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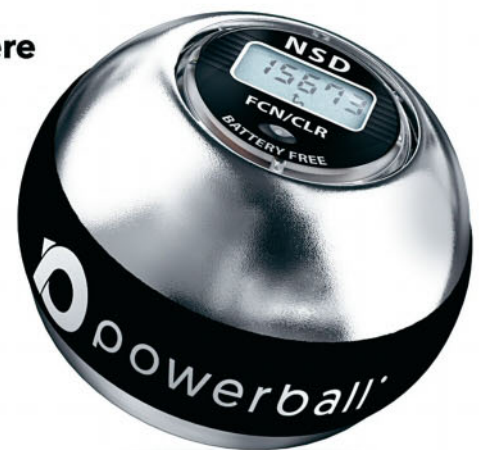
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COMPETITION

WIN!



BAFTA AWARD-WINNING KEN LOACH FILM *I, DANIEL BLAKE*



After scooping the Best British Film award at the Baftas for the remarkable *I, Daniel Blake*, director Ken Loach launched into a speech almost as powerful as the movie itself, taking the UK Government to task on poverty and hunger, and the "brutality" of its clampdown on child refugees. The speech earned Loach almost as many plaudits as the film itself.

The story of Daniel Blake (played by Dave Johns), a 59-year-old joiner trying to navigate the nightmare twists of the British benefits system after his income is suddenly halted and he must repeatedly jump through hoops, has reaffirmed Loach as one of Britain's most potent and listened-to film-makers.

Available now on digital download and released on DVD and Blu-ray on February 27, **we have three copies to be won on Blu-ray.**

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Which director made *I, Daniel Blake*?**



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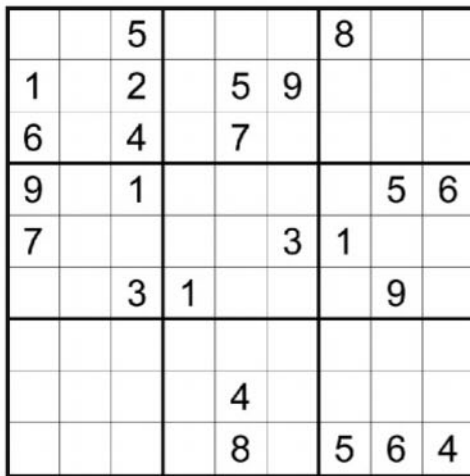
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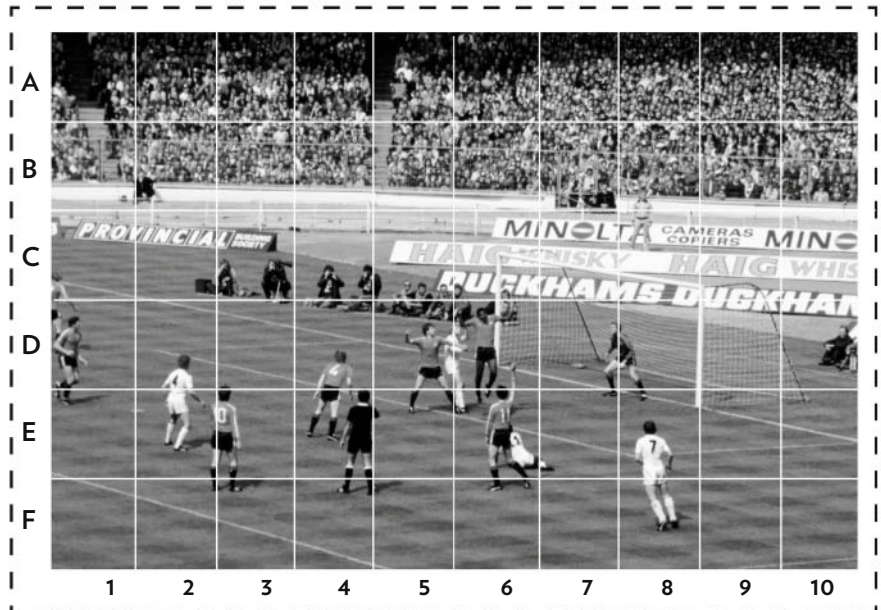


There is just one simple rule in sudoku: each row, column and 3 x 3 box must contain the numbers one to nine. This is a logic puzzle and you should not need to guess. The solution will be revealed next week.

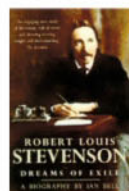
ISSUE 1243 SOLUTION

2	7	3	1	8	6	9	5	4
1	9	6	2	5	4	8	3	7
8	5	4	3	9	7	6	1	2
4	1	9	8	6	5	7	2	3
6	8	5	7	3	2	1	4	9
3	2	7	4	1	9	5	8	6
5	4	2	6	7	8	3	9	1
7	3	8	9	2	1	4	6	5
9	6	1	5	4	3	2	7	8

SPOT THE BALL



Photos: Action Images

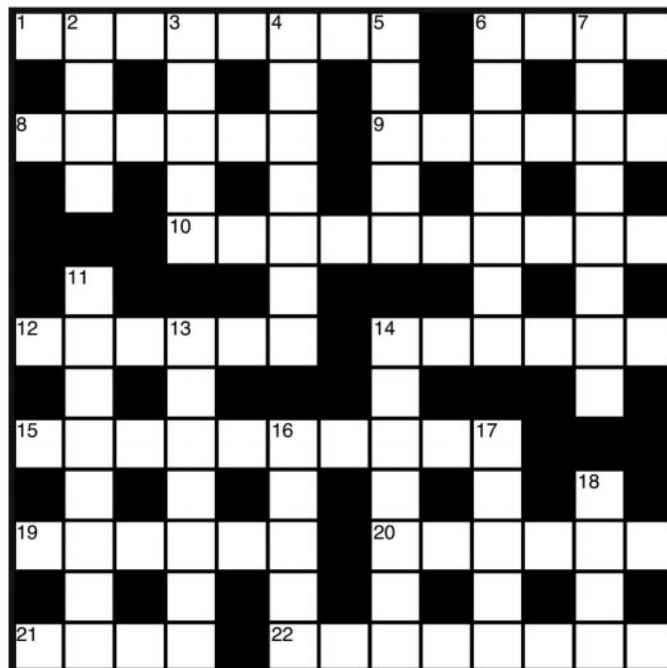


To win the biography *Dreams of Exile: Robert Louis Stevenson* by Ian Bell, mark where you think the ball is, cut out and send to: Spot the Ball (1244), 2nd flr, 43 Bath St, Glasgow, G2 1HW, by February 28. Include name, address, phone no. Enter by email: send grid position (eg A1) to competitions@bigissue.com.

(Last week's Spot the Ball revealed: Liverpool v Everton, 1984)



PRIZE CROSSWORD



CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

- As much as the sink will hold (8)
- Comfortable but shy about Sunday opening (4)
- Bird that makes a timely appearance (6)
- Welcome Sarah before Tuesday possibly shortly (6)
- Oust impromptu forces in a Norfolk town (10)
- Model of parts of a tree? (6)
- Top style (6)
- Large wave holds Devon river back - it forms a barrier (10)
- Attribute to losing a biblical teacher (6)
- Empty valley (6)
- He is not accompanied by a wild animal (4)
- Corny treatment? (8)

Down

- Lily has a drink (4)
- Annoyed when I find king overdrawn! (5)
- Father gives a shout of pain at dirty place that's stuffy (7)
- A loss-making way of catching horses (5)
- Coils so twisted on gigantic statues (7)
- Reserve even at tennis (3,5)
- Wound where the weapon penetrated (5,3)
- Unpleasant sound coming from grille (7)
- Developed some of that Cheddar (7)
- Open window before giving assistance to puppy (5)
- About to be left in charge of the memento (5)
- Open space with room to manoeuvre (4)

QUICK CLUES

Across

- Wrestling hold (8)
- Foot covering (4)
- Card game (6)
- Castle keep (6)
- Uncultivated region (10)
- Flower part (6)
- Eyewash (6)
- Not profitable (10)
- Assert (6)
- Not transparent (6)
- French cheese (4)
- Route again (8)

Down

- Fried potato (4)
- American Indian woman (5)
- Species of bunting (7)
- Grassy plant (5)
- Word having the same meaning (7)
- Delete (5,3)
- Tolerate (5,3)
- Artificial contrivance (7)
- Hanging bed (7)
- Town in Belgium (5)
- Series of links (5)
- Seabird (4)

To win a Chambers Dictionary, send completed crosswords (either cryptic or quick) to: The Big Issue Crossword (1244), second floor, 43 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 1HW by February 28. Include your name, address and phone number. Issue 1242 winner is Fiona Livingstone from Oxfordshire.

Issue 1243 solution

CRYPTIC: Across - 1 Man in charge; 7 Soft soap; 8 Orgy; 9 Rhyl; 11 Islander; 13 Olive; 14 Anjou; 16 Shortage; 18 Thud; 21 Chum; 22 Factotum; 23 In a flat spin.

Down - 1 Mushrooms; 2 Nifty; 3 Nose; 4 Hoarse; 5 Groundnut; 6 Ogle; 10 Liverymen; 12 Roundsman; 15 Agnail; 17 Ha-ha; 19 Het up; 20 Stot.

QUICK: Across - 1 Spontaneity; 7 Jealousy; 8 Rosy; 9 Used; 11 Tasmania; 13 No way; 14 Vital; 16 Doghouse; 18 Glut; 21 Yoga; 22 Befuddle; 23 Omnipresent.

Down - 1 Sojourner; 2 Orate; 3 Trot; 4 Nassau; 5 Threading; 6 Asti; 10 Diaphragm; 12 Allotment; 15 Asleep; 17 Oboe; 19 Ledge; 20 Fuse.

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MY PITCH



Martin Hawes, 57

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"I'm interested in aeroplanes and jet engines. I like seeing how things work"

FACTS ABOUT ME...

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

The best place I ever went to was Ko Phi Phi Le, the beach in Thailand featured in the Leonardo DiCaprio film *The Beach*. But like he says in the film: "I still believe in paradise. But now at least I know it's not some place you can look for. Because it's not where you go – it's how you feel for a moment in your life when you're a part of something. And if you find that moment, it lasts forever."

ON MY PITCH...

I'm outside Marks & Spencer on Regent Street in Swindon, 9am to 5pm

I started selling The Big Issue a few days before Christmas. It's been going well – I've been selling a lot and chatting to customers. Swindon has grown an awful lot over the past few decades but people are still friendly.

My problems started back around 2010. I had a house, I had money, I was doing fine. But because of work and then changes to the welfare system, I began to struggle. I had been working at a Honda plant but I was laid off – I couldn't keep working there, on the grounds of my medical problems.

I went through the Atos tests the DWP insisted on and I had benefits cut back. My doctor wrote on my behalf about six times – but they didn't care, they decided to override that. In July last year I was given a section 21 notice on

my house. By September I was out of there. Things can spiral quickly. I'm not the only one who has gone through these things. The Tory government have a lot to answer for – many more people are struggling now than before the Tories got back in. The way the safety net is getting cut back, it's like we're going back to the 1930s.

I have become political. I like Jeremy Corbyn. The Big Issue had the idea of being a "poverty-fighting machine" on the cover recently. I reckon Corbyn is a poverty-fighting politician. It would be great if the country gave him a chance to change things. I'm trying to work to improve my own situation. Although things have been difficult and uncertain, I'm glad to have council accommodation now. Selling the magazine has helped

me reconnect with people, as well as earn some money.

There are some interesting places in the city – the Swindon Steam Railway Museum, for instance. I'm interested in aeroplanes and jet engines – I like seeing how things work. Britain has a long history of being great at engineering, of course, but that was before Thatcher put paid to the heavy industries across the country.

When I was younger I did quite a bit travelling – Dubai, Singapore, Thailand. People might not expect someone who has been to these places to be on the streets selling The Big Issue. But I suppose it shows it can happen to anyone. The main thing is how you adjust and try to cope with it all.

Words: Adam Forrest
Photo: Elizabeth Donovan



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My business is founded on the principle of 'quality'. Using FSC® certified wood, premium fillers, skilled craftsmanship and efficient delivery staff, we offer you a 'quality' service from start to finish. We make and deliver all of our products to the room of your choice within days. With free assembly and packaging recycling, we offer an old bed and mattress recycling service too; still the same great service and quality since 1978. We hope that you can visit one of our 14 showrooms or shop online at warrenevans.com during our bed & mattress sale which is now on.

Warren

0% | Interest free credit† No deposit



Which? members
'Best Mattress Retailers'
2015

Warren Evans
— HANDMADE IN LONDON —
warrenevans.com | 14 showrooms

† Credit prices shown are 9.9% APR interest bearing credit † Loan amount £298, 48 monthly payments of £7.49, zero deposit, Total amount payable £360. Total cost of credit £62. Minimum spend £250 © 2016 Designer Ideas Ltd t/a Warren Evans reg co No. 4308080. Reg office: 3a Prowse Pl, London NW1 9PH. Credit products from Secure Trust Bank PLC t/a as V12. Interest free credit available, starting from £700 minimum spend. Credit subject UK residents, age and status.