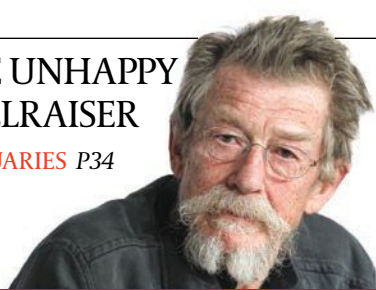


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IN PLATINUM

President Trump makes his mark

What happened

Donald Trump launched his presidency with a flurry of executive action, pulling the US out of a major trade agreement, ordering the construction of a Mexican border wall, and beginning the process of dismantling the Affordable Care Act. After the new president was sworn into office last Friday, his first full day in charge was marred by massive protests against his administration and his angry reaction to media reports about the modest size of his inauguration crowd. But Trump wasted little time in wielding his executive pen. He pulled the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – a 12-nation trade deal negotiated by the Obama administration that hadn't been ratified by Congress – and scheduled meetings with the premiers of Canada and Mexico to begin renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement. He directed the Department of Homeland Security to begin constructing a border wall and to strip funding for so-called sanctuary cities, which refuse to hand over undocumented immigrants to federal authorities. "Beginning today, the United States of America gets back control of its borders," Trump said.

In other executive orders, Trump directed federal agencies to "waive, defer, grant exemptions, or delay" any parts of the Affordable Care Act that it deems burdensome; cleared the way for the approval of the controversial Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil pipelines, which had been halted amid environmental concerns; reinstated the so-called Mexico City Policy, which prevents American foreign aid from going to organizations that offer women advice on health; and implemented a hiring freeze on all federal government workers except military personnel. His administration also instructed the Environmental Protection Agency to freeze all its grants and contracts. He was expected to issue another executive order temporarily banning refugees and



The president with his executive order on pipelines

immigrants from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. After repeating his unsubstantiated claim that millions of people voted illegally in November's election, the president said he'd launch a "major investigation" into the issue. "Depending on the results," he tweeted, "we will strengthen up voting procedures."

What the editorials said

Withdrawing from the TPP may end up benefiting "a sliver of US manufacturing workers," said USA Today. But the trade agreement was "America's best hope for expanding its influence in Asia and limiting the influence of China, which is not part of the deal." Without the US, the TPP's remaining 11 nations will likely join a rival trade group that "puts China at its centre."

Right from the start, our new president is doing "what he promised," said the Chicago Tribune – focusing on "creating jobs and boosting wages." The former businessman told a group of CEOs in the White House that he wants to reduce the top corporate tax rate from 35% to 15% or 20%, and to reduce business regulations by 75%. "Those are the kinds of moves that encourage companies to invest more and add jobs."

What next?

Trump will unveil his pick for the vacant Supreme Court seat next week, said Michael Shear and Adam Liptak in The New York Times. The three leading contenders – federal appeals court judges William Pryor, Neil Gorsuch, and Thomas Hardiman – all have legal philosophies similar to the late Justice Antonin Scalia's. But Democrats are still seeking to avenge Republicans' nine-month blockade of President Obama's nomination to fill the vacancy. The GOP, which holds 52 seats in the Senate, would need 60 votes to break a filibuster. They could change the rules so that only a simple majority is required – but that could come back to haunt them in future administrations. Either way, prepare for an "all-consuming political fight."

What the columnists said

During the election, journalists were mocked for taking Trump "literally," not "seriously," said Jamelle Bouie in Slate.com. Trump wouldn't literally build a wall or ban Muslims from entering the US, we were told – these were "statements of concern" rather than "guides to action." Now we know Trump really does think voter fraud is widespread; he genuinely intends to build a wall, and to block immigration and visitors from many Muslim-majority countries. His divisive campaign "was not an act."

It wasn't all bad

A Yorkshire sturgeon farm is producing the world's first ethically sourced caviar. Normally, the fish – which are endangered in the wild – are killed to get their prized eggs. But at KC Caviar, near Leeds, the sturgeon have their eggs pumped out using an apparently harmless massage technique. In later life, the fish – which live for 50 to 60 years, on average – will be sent to retire in lakes in Hungary and Bulgaria, while their offspring are raised in Yorkshire.

The astonishing story of a gorilla who was brought up in a Gloucestershire village a century ago has been uncovered by an amateur historian. The ape was captured as a baby in Gabon, and shipped to London. In 1918, Major Rupert Penny found him on sale in the London department store Derry and Toms, and bought him as a present for his sister, Alyce Cunningham. From then on, John Daniel – as he was known – spent much of his time at her home in the village of Uley. He had his own bedroom, made his bed, and helped with the washing-up. Beloved by the local children, who pushed him around in a wheelbarrow, he attended many of their lessons at the village school. He liked a cup of tea, and would also wait outside the pub for villagers to give him cider. But his story, pieced together by Uley resident Margaret Groom, has an unhappy ending: by 1921, John Daniel weighed almost 15st and was still growing, and Cunningham felt she could no longer cope. She sold him, thinking he was going to a home in Florida. Instead, he ended up in a circus. When she heard he was ill, she set sail straight away to tend to him – but he died, aged four, before she could get there.



Battle over Trump nominees

What happened

President Donald Trump made slow progress this week in filling out his administration, as several Cabinet nominees edged closer to confirmation but other candidates were grilled by Senate Democrats or had their committee votes delayed. By a 66-32 margin, the Senate confirmed former Kansas congressman Mike Pompeo as CIA director, while five nominees advanced through committees, including Rex Tillerson for secretary of state; Ben Carson for Housing and Urban Development; Elaine Chao for Transportation; and Wilbur Ross for Commerce. But Georgia Rep. Tom Price, Trump's nominee to head the Department of Health and Human Services, encountered fierce opposition. In a heated hearing, Democrats questioned Price about the discounted shares he was offered in an Australian biotech firm that was seeking FDA approval of a multiple sclerosis drug. Lawmakers also noted that Price had bought and sold some \$300,000 in health-care stocks – even though he voted on and sometimes sponsored legislation that could affect the value of his holdings. “It’s hard to see how this can be anything but a conflict of interest,” said Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.). Price denied any wrongdoing.



DeVos: In the hot seat

The Senate education committee postponed a planned vote for Betsy DeVos, a charter-school proponent strongly supported by conservatives but vehemently opposed by Democrats. Votes were also delayed for Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, Trump's nominee for attorney general; former Texas Gov. Rick Perry for energy secretary; and Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke, for Interior. Only two of 15 Cabinet nominees have been confirmed – Defense Secretary James Mattis and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly – and Trump has yet to make some 5,000 lower-level appointments.

What the editorials said

President Trump has “assumed office with the most incomplete team in recent history,” said The New York Times. Transition veterans recommend new presidents have nominees for the top 100 slots requiring Senate confirmation, but Trump only has one-third that number. So much for the canard that a businessman could “run government more efficiently than people with, you

know, experience in government.” Last week’s confirmation hearing for DeVos “alternated between interrogation and crass disparagement,” said the Chicago Tribune. In her home state of Michigan, she’s spent more than a decade fighting for greater school choice for mostly minority kids. Yet Senate Democrats tried to paint the billionaire “as an out-of-touch nincompoop whose goal was to destroy public schools.” Never mind that half those senators went to private schools themselves or have children or grandkids attending them. Why deny the same privilege to “families that need it most?”

What the columnists said

This could be “the worst Cabinet in American history,” said Paul Waldman in The Washington Post. DeVos “displayed shocking ignorance of basic issues in education policy” in her hearing –

including how student performance is measured, and that public schools are required by law to provide equal access to disabled children. Carson “has precisely zero experience in housing policy,” and Perry initially didn’t seem to understand that the energy secretary is guardian of the nuclear arsenal. “One can only imagine the damage they’re going to do.”

Democrats excoriate nominees like DeVos and Carson as unqualified, said Jim Geraghty on NationalReview.com. But candidates with the best résumés can be disasters. Former Army Gen. Eric Shinseki, Obama’s secretary of veterans affairs, “resigned in disgrace” after veterans’ care deteriorated drastically on his watch. And while supposed expert organizer Katherine Archuleta was in charge of Obama’s Office of Personnel Management, Chinese hackers stole the personal data of thousands of government employees. “At least no one in the Senate thought she was unqualified.”

Despite some bumps, Trump should “become the first president in decades to pull off a perfect nomination performance,” said Kimberley Strassel in The Wall Street Journal. “Barring some strange event,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer won’t claim a single scalp, mainly because Democrats scrapped the Senate filibuster for nominees when they were in the majority. With a 52-48 GOP edge in the upper chamber, Trump is free to fill his Cabinet with “the kind of picks that send liberals around the bend,” and there’s little Schumer can do about it.

THE WEEK

How long is a political career? Churchill was at it for more than 60 years: having first become an

MP in 1900, he retired in 1964, a year before his death. Macmillan managed 40. Thatcher was 66 when she left the Commons, in 1992. The big beasts of the Left were just as dogged. Harold Wilson was in the Commons for 38 years; James Callaghan for 42. The younger generation of politicians seems to have less of an appetite for politics, and its ups and downs. Tony Blair (24 years) retired as an MP when he stood down as PM. David Cameron (15 years) left Westminster within weeks of his resignation, and George Osborne has made £600,000 since leaving the Treasury. It seems that for many of today’s political leaders, politics isn’t a vocation so much as a starter job.

Jeremy O’Grady

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Controversy of the week

'Alternative facts': Is Trump at war with reality?

The first task of every autocrat is to "delegitimize facts," said Ezra Klein on Vox.com, and President Trump is off to a flying start. On his first full day in office, Trump sent an irate press secretary Sean Spicer to dress down the White House press corps and proclaim it was "shameful and wrong" of the press to have shown photos suggesting that the crowd at Trump's inauguration was two or three times smaller than the one at President Obama's in 2008. Spicer insisted – using a slew of easily disproved claims – that Trump's had been "the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration, period."

In a rambling, self-aggrandizing speech at CIA headquarters that same day, Trump also insisted the media had lied about his crowd size and had invented his blistering criticisms of the intelligence services – criticisms that could still be found on Trump's Twitter feed. The most chilling sound bite came from Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway, who on Meet the Press used the Orwellian phrase "alternative facts" to characterize Spicer's blatant falsehoods. "This is not a conventional dispute over facts," said Greg Sargent in WashingtonPost.com. Trump is trying to discredit not only the press's critical role in our democracy but also the idea of "factual reality itself." For at least the next four terrifying years, "the truth is what Donald Trump says it is."

The president must be held accountable for his falsehoods, said David French on NationalReview.com, but "those with no credibility make poor critics." The same reporters now apoplectic over Trump happily swallowed the Obama administration's serial deceptions for eight years – on Obamacare, Benghazi, the IRS investigation of Tea Party groups. Worse, said Sean Davis in TheFederalist.com, Trump had barely been sworn in before



Spicer: Trump's was bigger

mainstream outlets were circulating lies of their own, including that he removed a bust of Martin Luther King Jr. from the Oval Office, and "blew a kiss at" and "hugged" FBI Director James Comey at a meeting (it was actually a handshake and arm pat). This nation "desperately needs" a source of unbiased, credible information, but based on the media's overt hostility to Trump, "that institution does not currently exist."

The reporter who made the mistake about the King bust issued a correction and an apology, said Jennifer Rubin on WashingtonPost.com. Compare that with President Trump, who this week yet again insisted on the dangerous falsehood that up to 5 million illegal immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton in November. Clearly,

"Trump cannot help himself. He lies because reality won't conform to his narcissistic view of the world." Trump's insecurity-driven "war with math" goes back to his days as a TV star, said James Poniewozik in NYTimes.com, when he would insist The Apprentice was the "No. 1 show on television," even though ratings showed it was the 67th. The fact that he lost the popular vote to Clinton by nearly 3 million votes rankles him deeply, as did the fact that his inaugural crowd was smaller than both Obama's turnout and the Women's March. These facts can't be true and must be denied, because "Donald J. Trump is not a loser."

The press faces a real danger here, said Ross Douthat in The New York Times. It serves Trump's interests to portray his disregard for facts as a partisan war with the press, and he has a gift for dragging his opponents down to his level of venom and hyperbole. If the president provokes journalists into "a kind of hysterical oppositionalism, a mirroring of Trump's own tabloid style," they will delegitimize themselves, and do the "demagogue's work for him".

Spirit of the age

Doctors have been urged not to refer to pregnant women as "mothers," to avoid offending men who become parents, and to "celebrate diversity." A leaflet issued by the British Medical Association suggests NHS doctors should adopt the gender neutral term "pregnant people" instead.

Taking cakes to work could be a "public health hazard," civil servants have been told. An official responsible for "well-being" advised Treasury staff to only bring in cakes occasionally – so as to be "mindful" of colleagues who have "difficulty resisting" processed sweet treats.

Good week for:

George Orwell, after his dystopian novel 1984 reached No. 1 on Amazon's bestsellers list. Donald Trump's election is believed to have led to renewed interest in the book, which features a Ministry of Truth, responsible for distorting facts, and introduced the concept of Newspeak, a language "designed to diminish the range of thought".

Philip Green, who learned he is likely to hold onto his knighthood, at least for a while. The Honours Forfeiture Committee, the Whitehall panel responsible for such matters, has indicated it won't make its decision until two investigations into the retailer's actions have been concluded – and that isn't likely to be for years.

Bad week for:

Diesel drivers, who are going to face higher parking charges in central London. The scheme is being piloted in Westminster from April, to curb air pollution. Meanwhile, councillors in Birmingham have revealed that they are considering levying a charge on diesel drivers who enter the city centre.

Clubland, with news that London's Reform Club is being closed to its members for a month this summer, while it is let to a luxury goods firm. Cartier is believed to have paid £1.175m to rent the building, in Pall Mall, which it plans to use to showcase around 20 exclusive pieces to its high-rolling clientele.

3D TV, which appears to be joining Betamax on the scrapheap of technologies that never took off. The last two major manufacturers of the TVs – Sony and LG – have decided to stop producing the sets, citing dwindling consumer interest.

Poll watch

68% of British people think Nato still has an important role to play in defending Western countries. **62%** of Germans and **52%** of French people think the same. In the US, the figure is **46%**. **46%** of Americans also think the US has a duty to protect Europe; however, only **33%** of British adults and **25%** of French adults do. YouGov

45% of women surveyed in 23 countries believe they have equal opportunities to men; **60%** of men agree. In the UK, **51%** of women think opportunities are equal, as do **67%** of men. India ranks highest: **68%** of women think they have equal opportunities, and **76%** of men. Japan ranks bottom: just **25%** of women and **24%** of men agree with the statement. Ipsos Mori/The Observer

Baghdad, Iraq

Travel ban: Iraq's parliament voted to impose travel restrictions on US citizens on Monday in response to the blocking of travel of Iraqis to the US in an executive order enacted by President Donald Trump. Iraqi citizens, alongside those from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen were banned from entering the US for at least 90 days under the January 27 order. It also put a four-month hold on refugee arrivals to the country. However, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said the country would not vote against the suspension as it did not want to lose American backing in its battle against Daesh. "We are studying [possible] decisions, but we are in a battle and we don't want to harm the national interest," he was quoted as saying.

Tehran, Iran

Missile test: Iran carried out a medium-range missile test on Sunday, prompting a strong response from the US. The test, which US officials said had failed, was the first to have been carried out since new US President Donald Trump took office. Trump's national security adviser, Michael Flynn, said on Wednesday the US was putting "Iran on notice" following the action, which the country said did not breach its nuclear deal. Reuters reported that the rhetoric could be backed by more sanctions and raised doubts about the future of the nuclear agreement, which Trump heavily criticised during his campaign. Flynn said the deal had emboldened Iran and said a Monday attack on a Saudi naval vessel by Iran-allied Houthi militants off the coast of Yemen "highlighted Iran's destabilising behaviour across the Middle East".

Kuwait City, Kuwait

Development plan: Kuwait announced its 2035 development plan on Monday, which includes plans to boost foreign direct investment, make the country a petrochemical hub and develop infrastructure through public-private partnerships. The 'Vision 2035' includes 164 programmes, projects and initiatives designed to make the country into a regional financial, cultural and institutional leader. Among the short-to-medium term objectives are to position Kuwait as a global hub for the petrochemical industry, boost foreign investment by 300 per cent and attract more than KD400m (\$1.3bn) of investment in IT services and renewable energy. The country also intends to develop its tourism sector to generate new revenues and create jobs, invest in infrastructure projects and develop its transport and power sectors using the independent water and power producers (IWPP) and public-private partnership (PPP) models.

Bilad al-Qadeem, Bahrain

Policeman shot: An off-duty policeman was shot dead in Bahrain on Sunday in what the interior ministry called a "terrorist act," state news agency BNA reported. The shooting followed increased unrest in the kingdom after the execution of three Shi'ites convicted of killing three policemen in a bomb attack in 2014. The January 15 executions were Bahrain's first since 2008. "The Interior Ministry mourns with great sadness and sorrow the martyr Lieutenant Hisham Hassan Mohammed al-Hammadi, who was shot and killed in the Bilad al-Qadeem area," southwest of the capital Manama, the interior ministry said. "Initial indications suggest that it was a terrorist act and that he was not on duty." The authorities crushed Shi'ite-led Arab Spring demonstrations in the country in 2011 with help from Gulf Arab neighbours, deepening sectarian tensions in the country.

Dubai, UAE

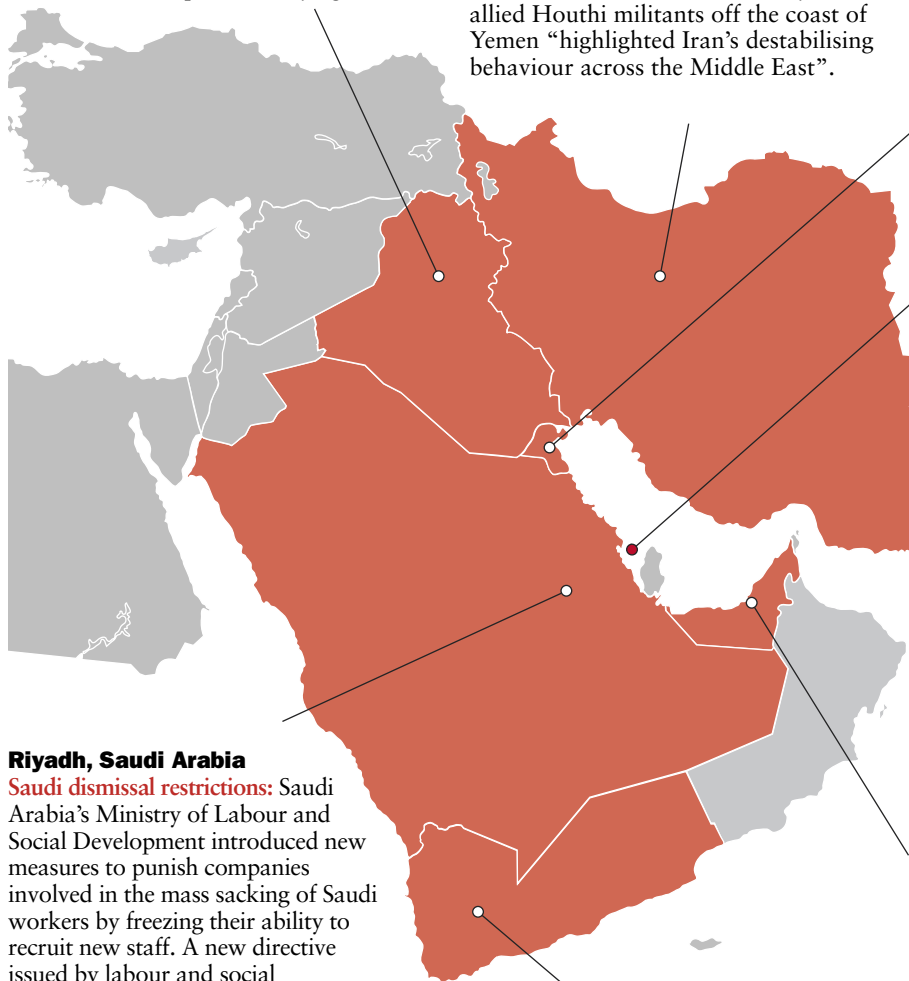
New telecoms operator: Emirates Integrated Telecommunications (EITC), the parent company of UAE telecoms operator du, announced plans to launch the Virgin Mobile brand in the UAE on Tuesday – the first new brand to enter the UAE telecoms market since 2007. EITC has entered into a brand licensing agreement with Virgin Mobile, and will have the complete ownership, management and operation of the brand in the country. No financial details of the deal were disclosed. Just like du, Virgin Mobile will use the network, IT and other infrastructure of EITC. All customer contracts and regulatory obligations will also be on EITC, Sultan said. A "small" internal business unit has been created within EITC to handle Virgin Mobile, which will have a "digital business model" and not target the mass market.

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi dismissal restrictions: Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Labour and Social Development introduced new measures to punish companies involved in the mass sacking of Saudi workers by freezing their ability to recruit new staff. A new directive issued by labour and social development minister Ali Al-Ghafis allows only companies in a "dire financial state" or on the verge of closure to be exempted from the penalties, Saudi Gazette reported on Tuesday. The publication cited ministry spokesperson Khaled Abal Khail as saying the directive would be applied to all large and medium companies. A mass sacking is considered the dismissal of at least 1% of Saudi employees or 10 or more individuals. Firms that fail to inform the labour ministry of cuts to their Saudi workforce two months prior to the action will be unable to obtain visas or transfer sponsorship.

Baihan, Yemen

US attacks: A suspected US drone strike killed two men believed to be Al Qaeda militants in central Yemen, local officials said early on Monday. Reuters reported the attack occurred hours after American commandos carried out the first military operation authorised by President Donald Trump. The drone targeted a vehicle travelling in Baihan in the province of Shabwa. Al Qaeda has exploited Yemen's civil war to recruit more followers and enhance its influence. It has been blamed for several attacks since the conflict between the Iran-aligned Houthi movement and the Saudi-backed government of president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi began.



Washington, DC**Alarm over Bannon's security role:**

President Trump's unprecedented decision to exclude the chairman of the US military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the director of national intelligence, from the small committee that decides US security policy – but to include Steve Bannon, his chief strategist and political advisor – has caused anger and alarm in parts of the Washington security establishment. Bannon (right), a former executive of the alt-right Breitbart news website, who has repeatedly been accused of racism, misogyny and Islamophobia, has been given a permanent seat on the “principals committee” of the National Security Council. By contrast, the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the director of national intelligence have been told their presence will only be required when “issues pertaining to their responsibilities and expertise are to be discussed”. Susan Rice, national security advisor in the Obama administration, called the move “stone cold crazy”, and tweeted, sarcastically, “Who needs military advice or intel to make policy [on Daesh, Syria, Afghanistan, or North Korea]”. Eliot Cohen, a security advisor to the last Bush administration, called the move “abnormal” and “dangerous”.

**Québec City, Canada**

Terror attack: A 27-year-old French-Canadian student, with no previous history of violence, entered a mosque in Québec City last Sunday during evening prayers and opened fire on worshippers, killing six and wounding 19 others. He was arrested after calling police and identifying himself as the killer. According to fellow students, Alexandre Bissonnette had never revealed an interest in extremist politics until Marine Le Pen visited the city last March: he was known to be quiet, shy and interested in chess, and combined his studies with working in a call centre for a blood donation agency. After Le Pen's visit, however, he had taken to extreme online activism, spewing hatred about refugees and feminism. His attack came shortly after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had voiced his strong opposition to Donald Trump's controversial immigration ban on Muslim refugees, declaring that “Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith”.

Seattle, Washington

Businesses attack travel ban: Major US businesses and Wall Street banks – including Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft, Google, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, Ford, Goldman Sachs and Citigroup – have attacked President Trump's controversial ban on travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries. Jeff Bezos, chief executive of the Seattle-based Amazon, said he was backing a legal challenge to the ban by the attorney-general of Washington state; Microsoft said the same. Google co-founder Sergey Brin, who came to the US as a refugee from the Soviet Union, delivered an address to employees holding placards with messages such as “refugees welcome here” and “no ban; no wall”.

**Money, Mississippi**

Lynching admission: The white woman at the centre of the Emmett Till case – one of the most notorious race crimes in US history – admitted that she fabricated her testimony, it has emerged. Till (left), a 14-year-old black boy, was visiting segregated Mississippi from Chicago in 1955 when he went into a shop in the town of Money to buy gum, and briefly met Carolyn Bryant, then 21. Days later, he was abducted by Bryant's husband and his brother, beaten, shot and mutilated. In

court, Bryant testified that Till had grabbed and threatened her – and the two men were acquitted, by an all-white jury. They later admitted they'd killed Till to teach black people a lesson, but couldn't be retried under double jeopardy laws. Now, a historian has revealed Bryant confessed in 2007 that she lied about Till's advances. “That part isn't true,” she told Timothy Tyson.

Santiago, Chile

Killer fires: More than 40 people have been detained in Chile for their “possible responsibility” for some of the 130 forest fires that have killed at least 11 people, and left thousands homeless, in the past two weeks. The wildfires – described by President Michelle Bachelet as the “greatest forest disaster” in Chile's history – have raged across central and southern parts of the country since the middle of January, fanned by strong winds and high temperatures. An entire town, Santa Olga (pop. 6,000), was burnt to the ground late last week. “This is an extremely serious situation – of horror, a nightmare without end,” said Carlos Valenzuela, the mayor of the neighbouring city of Constitución. By Wednesday – with 11,000 people fighting the fires, aided by supertanker planes from Russia, Brazil and the US – around 50 blazes were under control.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Billionaire arrested: The Brazilian billionaire Eike Batista, who not long ago was Brazil's richest man, has been arrested on corruption charges after flying home to Rio de Janeiro to “clear his name”. He is accused of paying \$16.5m (£13m) in bribes to Sérgio Cabral, the former governor of Rio state who was arrested last year. Their arrests are part of a sweeping investigation into corruption inside two of Brazil's biggest businesses: state-owned oil company Petrobras and the construction firm Odebrecht. Odebrecht executives have testified that the firm has been running a “massive” bribery scheme, paying \$788m (£624m) in bribes across a dozen countries. It's expected they will implicate several top politicians, including Michel Temer, Brazil's president.



Kolbio, Somalia

Al-Shabaab attack on Kenyan troops:

Islamist militants from the al-Qa'eda-linked group al-Shabaab have killed dozens of Kenyan soldiers in an attack on a Kenyan military base in southern Somalia. Al-Shabaab began life as the radical youth wing of the now-defunct Islamic Courts Union, a federation of local clan-based courts that controlled southern Somalia until late 2006, when they were forced out by Ethiopian forces. It has been conducting a separatist insurgency in Somalia ever since. About 3,600 Kenyan troops are now in Somalia as part of a 22,000-strong African Union military mission, supported by the US, to counter al-Shabaab and stabilise the country. Kenyan authorities would not confirm casualty figures in last week's attack, but maintained that their soldiers had repulsed the militants.

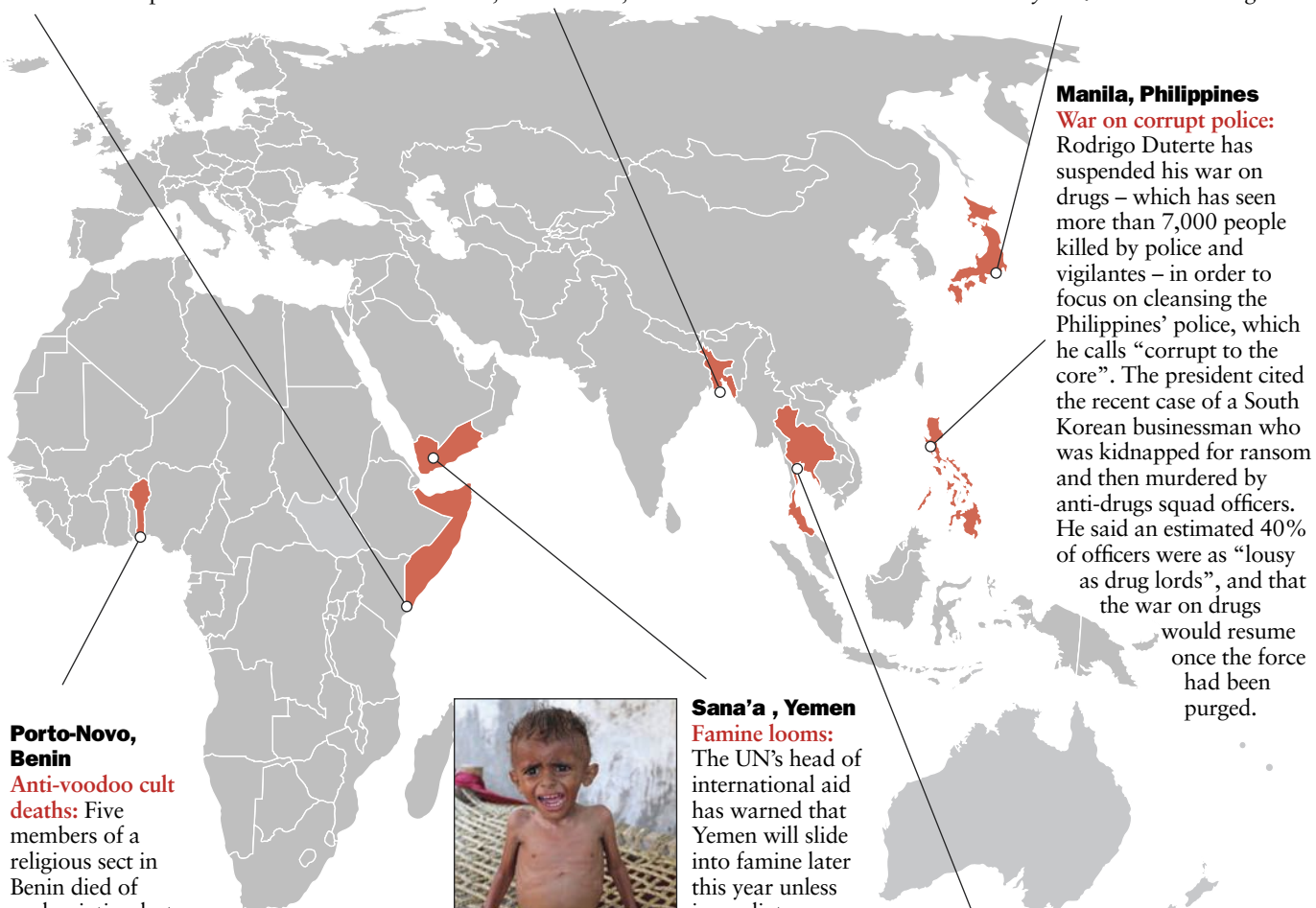
Thengar Char, Bangladesh

Island plan for Rohingya: The Bangladesh government has ordered officials to relocate tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees, who have fled from neighbouring Burma, to Thengar Char – an island in the Bay of Bengal which is submerged under water in monsoon season, and has no roads or flood defences. Bangladesh first proposed the relocation plan in 2015, but dropped it in the face of international criticism. It has reinstated the plan since a brutal crackdown by Burma's army led to the arrival of a further 65,000 Rohingya. Burma's government makes the hotly disputed claim that the Rohingya are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, who arrived in Burma after the country attained independence. The number who have fled to Bangladesh is estimated at between 200,000 and 500,000.

Tokyo, Japan

Big in Japan:

Japan's long wait for a homegrown sumo *yokozuna* (grand champion of sumo wrestling) has finally come to an end: 30-year-old Kisenosato was awarded the ranking, the sport's highest honour, after winning a grand tournament last week. The wrestler (above), who weighs more than 27st, is the first Japanese-born *yokozuna* since 1998. In recent years the ancient Japanese sport has been dominated by wrestlers from Mongolia, Hawaii and Samoa: the three other current *yokozuna* are all Mongolian.



Manila, Philippines

War on corrupt police:

Rodrigo Duterte has suspended his war on drugs – which has seen more than 7,000 people killed by police and vigilantes – in order to focus on cleansing the Philippines' police, which he calls "corrupt to the core". The president cited the recent case of a South Korean businessman who was kidnapped for ransom and then murdered by anti-drugs squad officers. He said an estimated 40% of officers were as "lousy as drug lords", and that the war on drugs would resume once the force had been purged.

Porto-Novo, Benin

Anti-voodoo cult deaths:

Five members of a religious sect in Benin died of asphyxiation last weekend, and several more required hospital treatment, as a result of following their leader's instruction to seal themselves into prayer rooms, burn incense and charcoal, and await the end of the world. The group, which calls itself the Very Holy Church of Jesus Christ of Baname, is known for its sometimes violent opposition to the traditional religion of Voodoo. Thousands of Baname followers across the country regard their young, female leader, Vicentia Chanvoukini – known as "Lady Perfect" – as a living god. About 40% of Benin's population follow Voodoo, and many incorporate elements into their faiths.



Sana'a, Yemen

Famine looms:

The UN's head of international aid has warned that Yemen will slide into famine later this year unless immediate action is taken. The country, one of the poorest in the world, and

long reliant on imports for 90% of its staple foods, has been devastated by two years of civil war, and by an ongoing blockade of its main ports by Saudi Arabia. An estimated 14.4 million people, almost 50% of the population, are now dependent on food aid for survival. According to the UN's Stephen O'Brien, 2.2 million children in Yemen are acutely malnourished: every ten minutes, on average, a child under the age of five dies of preventable causes.

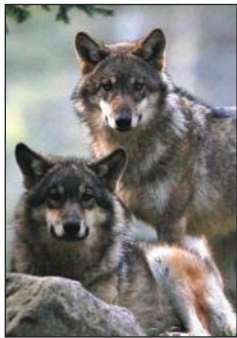
Bangkok, Thailand

Jailed for insult:

A Thai welder has been jailed for more than 11 years for insulting the Thai royal family in an (undisclosed) Facebook post and a private online message. Burin Intin has admitted the crime of *lèse-majesté* and a second charge of putting "false data" on a computer. Had he pleaded "not guilty", he would have faced a 22-year sentence. His lawyer said Burin would not appeal the sentence, but would instead ask for a royal pardon. The woman to whom Burin sent the offending message, Patnaree Chankij – whose son is a political activist – has been arrested for not denouncing Burin.

Venice, Italy

African refugee drowns: An investigation has been opened into the shocking death of a young Gambian man, who drowned in Venice's Grand Canal last week as scores of onlookers watched – some of them filming him on their mobile phones, laughing or making racist remarks. In video footage of the incident, one person is heard to shout “Go on, go back home”, as the man flails in the water. Another voice says, “Let him die at this point”. Three lifebelts were thrown to the man, named as Pateh Sabally, 22. But after rising to the water's surface, he appeared to make no effort to grab them, raising speculation that he may have intended to take his own life. He was then caught by a current and pulled under for the final time. Groups of African asylum seekers have become a common sight in towns and villages across Italy; having been denied access to France and Switzerland, many arrivals are effectively trapped inside the country.

**Pitigliano, Italy****Wolves killed:**

Wolves in Italy are being illegally shot dead, mutilated and left outside villages and towns by enraged farmers protesting against the damage done to livestock by the resurgent

predator. In the latest incident, a decapitated wolf was found dumped outside the medieval ridgetop village of Pitigliano in Tuscany. In the 1970s Italy declared wolves a protected species, and since then the country's wolf population has grown from about a hundred animals to an estimated 2,000, reports The Daily Telegraph. The government is now considering a limited cull of the animal.

Barcelona, Spain

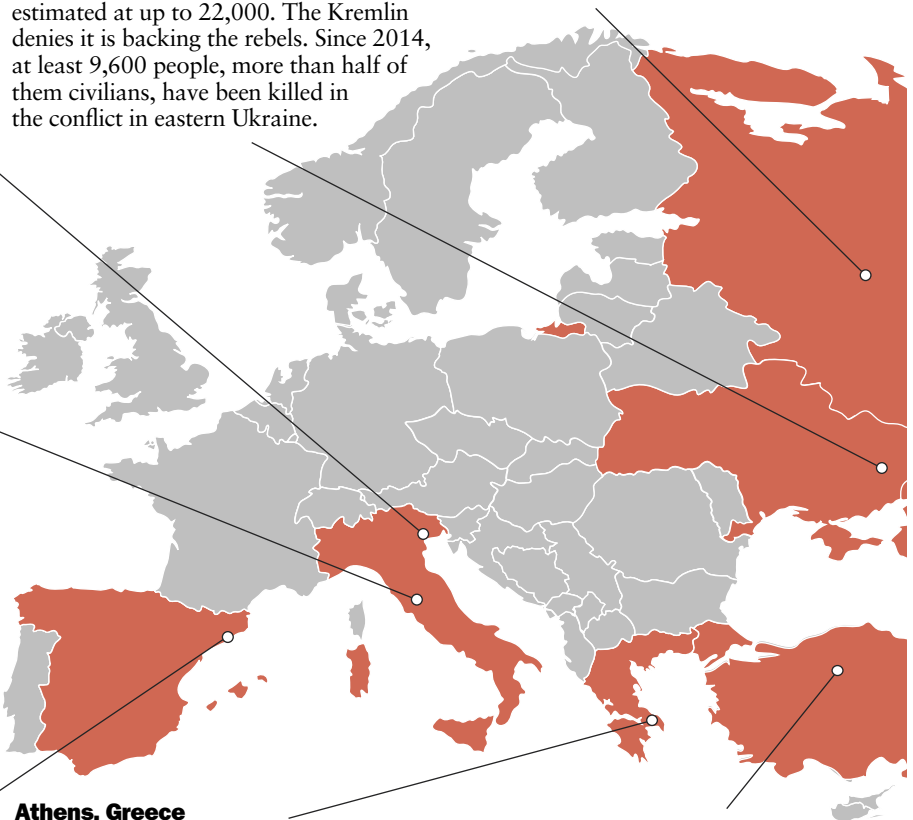
Tourism law: In an attempt to curb the number of visitors to Barcelona, the city authorities have passed a law banning the building of new hotels or tourist apartments in the city centre. And if an existing hotel or apartment closes, its capacity cannot be replaced. The number of tourists visiting the Catalan capital has surged over the past 25 years, leading to growing complaints from residents about overcrowding, noise and soaring rents, as speculators focus on lucrative holiday lets instead of housing for locals. In 2016, the city – which has 1.6 million inhabitants – was visited by an estimated 32 million tourists, more than half of whom stayed there overnight. Last weekend several thousand locals joined a protest on the famous central boulevard, La Rambla, bearing banners saying, “Barcelona is not for sale”. The tourist industry accounts for about an eighth of Barcelona's income.

Avdiivka, Ukraine

Surge in violence: Ukrainian troops have been desperately trying to stop Russian-backed separatist rebels in the east of the country seizing control of the industrial town of Avdiivka, a Ukrainian army stronghold. At least 13 civilians and fighters were killed in fighting this week – the worst violence since a new truce was agreed on 23 December. The town, a few miles north of the rebel-held city of Donetsk, is home to one of Europe's largest coking and chemical plants, and its capture by the rebels would cut off supplies to Ukraine's steel industry. The fighting has left residents without power and heating, and has led to bread queues: Ukrainian officials are preparing for a possible evacuation of the town's population, estimated at up to 22,000. The Kremlin denies it is backing the rebels. Since 2014, at least 9,600 people, more than half of them civilians, have been killed in the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow, Russia

Gorbachev's warning: Donald Trump spoke to Vladimir Putin over the phone for an hour on Saturday, his first call to his Russian counterpart since his inauguration. Both sides described it as a constructive conversation, in which they discussed “mutual cooperation” on issues including the fight against terrorism, the Ukraine conflict and restoring trade ties. They did not discuss alleged Russian cyberattacks. Earlier, Putin's predecessor, Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union, had voiced the fear that the world seems to be “preparing for war” – and urged Putin and Trump to unite to reduce the world's nuclear arsenal. “Politicians and military leaders sound increasingly belligerent,” he wrote in Time magazine.

**Athens, Greece**

Turkish officers won't be extradited: The Supreme Court in Athens has rejected a Turkish request to extradite eight Turkish officers who fled to Greece in the aftermath of the failed coup against President Erdogan last July, on the grounds that returning them to Turkey would threaten their “fundamental human rights”. The verdict, which followed two rounds of appeals by the Turkish authorities, was greeted with anger in Ankara, and is likely to further worsen the fractious relations between the two countries, both Nato members. The eight officers – two majors, four captains and two NCOs – fled by helicopter to Greek territory hours after the coup attempt, but deny being involved in it. They have applied for political asylum in Greece, and say their lives would be in danger if they returned. Ankara has now threatened to end its migrant deal with Greece if the officers are not sent back.

**Ankara, Turkey**
May in Turkey:

Theresa May has become the first Western leader to visit Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan since the failed military coup last July. May

flew direct to Ankara from Washington DC, arriving last Saturday. During her trip she hailed Turkey as an “important Nato ally”, endorsed a UK-Turkish deal (worth an initial £100m) to build a new fighter jet, and discussed the potential for a post-Brexit free trade deal. She didn't refer directly to Erdogan's intensive clampdown on dissent since the coup, but urged him – as he looked on stony-faced – to sustain democracy and maintain “the rule of law”.

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The fighting sisters

Geeta and Babita Phogat are suddenly famous twice over, says Amrit Dhillon in *The Guardian*. The sisters, who grew up in the rural Indian state of Haryana, are both world-class wrestlers. They are also the subject of a new film, *Dangal*, which has already become the highest-grossing Bollywood movie of all time. It tells the story of how their father – himself a former amateur wrestler – defied social convention to train the girls in this traditionally male sport. In reality, says 26-year-old Babita, “the hostility towards us was far worse than what is shown in the film. We were two girls who, according to custom, should have been draped in loose clothes to disguise our curves, but instead we were running around the wheat fields in shorts and Lycra tops and cropped hair”. Other villagers would whisper insults to their father: “May insects eat your insides.” “You are spoiling your girls.” “They will turn wild and bring shame on you.” And it wasn’t just the neighbours. “All the men in our family swore at him for training us,” says Geeta, 28. “His parents said he was mad. But he didn’t listen.”

Instead, he banned his daughters from wearing make-up or jewellery, and made them train for hours every morning and evening. “He never let up,” says Babita. “If he caught us arguing at home, he’d be livid: ‘You can’t have trained enough, because if you had, you wouldn’t have the energy to argue.’” It was “torture”, she

admits, but it paid off: Geeta won a gold at the 2010 Commonwealth Games, and Babita pulled off the same feat in 2014. But perhaps most important, says Geeta, is what this upbringing did for their souls. “My father gave us inner confidence. He taught us, as young girls, never to be scared. I feel that Indian women are too frightened. They all say, ‘I can’t do this, I can’t do that.’ Things are not going to change until Indian women, and their parents, stop being afraid of what society will say.”

Thatcher’s biggest hater

Tosh McDonald is a trade unionist of the old school. The 56-year-old president of Aslef has worked on the railways since 1979, as a freight guard and now as a train driver.

“I first started on the railways a month after Thatcher came to power,” he told Danny Scott in *The Sunday Times*. “I was a gobby lad and couldn’t wait to join the union. My politics came from my grandad. He was a miner and was involved in the 1926 general strike. He never forgave the Salvation Army for driving trucks during the strike. Called them scabs.” McDonald believes the current government has it in for the transport unions (“They look at us like Thatcher looked at the miners – they want to break [us]”), but he doesn’t loathe them like he did the Iron Lady. “I hated Thatcher so much that I used to set my alarm an hour earlier, just so I could hate her for an extra hour!”



Stevie Nicks has survived more than four decades in rock’n’roll – both as part of Fleetwood Mac and as a solo artist, says Will Hodgkinson in *The Times*. And now the 68-year-old singer-songwriter is attracting a whole new generation of fans, including young stars such as Adele and Ariana Grande. “Maybe they like my dogged determination to stay in the business,” muses Nicks. “Christine McVie [the only other woman in Fleetwood Mac] and I made a pact that we would never be treated like second-class citizens in a man’s world. We would never be in a room with Eric Clapton or Steve Winwood or Robert Plant and be made to feel we weren’t as good as them.” Did those 1970s rock gods try to lord it over them? “Never. Because we were gorgeous, we were smart, we were a force of nature. It didn’t matter if the room was filled with politicians or movie stars or musicians. When we walked in, the focus was on us. And we made that happen. Now these young girls see me up on stage in chiffon and leggings, not looking ridiculous but age-appropriate, and they think, ‘This is what I could do one day!’” Indeed, Nicks has no intention of ever retiring. “A friend told me that when you retire, you get smaller. Small means old, so I fight it with a sword. I’ll be on stage, dancing around, thinking, ‘Now, let’s see... how old am I again? 110?’”

Castaway of the week

This week’s edition of Radio 4’s Desert Island Discs featured the former England football captain David Beckham

- 1* *Every Time We Say Goodbye* by Cole Porter, performed by Ella Fitzgerald
- 2 *What a Fool Believes* by Michael McDonald and Kenny Loggins, performed by Michael McDonald and the Doobie Brothers
- 3 *I am the Resurrection* by Ian Brown and John Squire, performed by The Stone Roses
- 4 *Something About The Way You Look Tonight* by Elton John and Bernie Taupin, performed by Elton John
- 5 *No Es lo Mismo*, written and performed by Alejandro Sanz
- 6 *Wild Horses* by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, performed by the Rolling Stones
- 7 *The Girl is Mine* by Michael Jackson, performed by Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney
- 8 *Si Tu Vois Ma Mère*, written and performed by Sidney Bechet

Book: *Mallmann on Fire* by Francis Mallmann

Luxury: His England caps

* Choice if allowed only one record

Viewpoint:**Marching against Trump**

“I like to prance around in hats as much as the next broad, but there were several reasons why I chose not to join the Women’s March. For one thing, I was sure it would be full of ‘Strong Women’, a phrase I hate at the best of times – and feel should only be used if the lady in question can tear a telephone directory in half with her bare hands – and which seems strangely inappropriate to describe a bunch of overgrown Violet Elizabeth Botts having a collective temper tantrum because their side lost. Once again, we saw the regressive Left repeating the same behaviour that lost it power in the first place – namely, childishly demonising any opponent as Hitler With Funny Hair.”

Julie Burchill in The Spectator

Farewell

Sir Christopher Bland, former BT and BBC chairman, died 28 January, aged 78.

Alexander Chancellor, editor of *The Spectator* and *The Oldie*, died 28 January, aged 77.

Mary Tyler Moore, actor and comedian, died 25 January, aged 80.

Brunhilde Pomsel, former secretary to Joseph Goebbels, died 27 January, aged 106.

Emmanuelle Riva, Bafta-winning star of *Amour*, died 27 January, aged 89.

Utopia in Middle England

Milton Keynes celebrates its 50th birthday this year. Though often derided, Britain's biggest new town is arguably a great success

Who has been nasty about it?

For its entire half-century of existence, Milton Keynes has been disparaged and ridiculed. In the early days, the local press mourned the desecration of north Buckinghamshire. In 1974, the journalist Christopher Booker called it an “utterly depersonalised nightmare” reminiscent of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* – a “sea of mud” dotted with “hundreds of grim little misshapen boxes, in brick or corrugated metal, turned out by machine”. Town planner Francis Tibbalds described it as “bland, rigid, sterile and totally boring”. Milton Keynes, said Patrick Barkham in *The Guardian*, has been continually derided as a “soulless suburb or ‘non-place’... inconsiderately plonked in the centre of olde worlde Middle England”. Yet it has thrived: it’s the biggest and most successful of the postwar new towns; polls and anecdotal evidence suggest that the locals love it.



Milton Keynes in 1972: sterile and totally boring?

down it at midsummer, as at Stonehenge. Roads and roundabouts were lined with grassy banks and trees. It was to be the “city in the forest”; even now, you can drive around it and hardly see any buildings. The planners were far-sighted, designing car parks that seemed laughably huge at the time. Extensive paths for pedestrians and cyclists – known as “redways”, for the red tarmac used – were designed to go under or over the roads, to avoid accidents.

Was it an immediate success?

No. Progress was initially slow, thanks to builders’ strikes and lack of government investment. Some of the first public housing estates were grim and poorly constructed. Many of the early arrivals – about half of them from London – were “disadvantaged”, according to the Development Corporation’s 1977 report. “Disorientation, loneliness and the breakup of marriages are frequent features in the accounts of the pioneers,” writes Andy Beckett, a historian of the 1970s. The drought of 1976 killed 200,000 saplings. But, unusually for a large public housing development of the time, the obligation to consult and respond to residents was a central element of the project. Residents said they wanted privacy and a “villagey” feel, and in later “grid-square” developments, they got it. “The public voted with their feet,” said Derek Walker, the chief architect of Milton Keynes. So did business. More jobs were created there between 1971 and 1981 than in any other UK city except Aberdeen.

What do they like about Milton Keynes?

It just seems to be an excellent place to live – an “urban Eden”, in the words of one local conservation group, with 22 million trees and shrubs, extensive parks, lakes and rivers, 186 miles of cycle paths, and a great deal of public art, including its famous concrete cows. Traffic jams are rare on its well-planned roads; you can usually drive from end to end in ten minutes. It has also been Britain’s fastest-growing urban centre outside London, exceeding its target population of 250,000 and attracting such companies as Volkswagen, Mercedes and Santander, along with the Open University and Wimbledon FC (since 2004, the Milton Keynes Dons). Even its architecture is now fashionable. The Grade II listed shopping centre in Central Milton Keynes (CMK) is often described as the most beautiful in Britain. Town planners from around the world, particularly China, visit to take inspiration.

How did the town come into being?

Milton Keynes was originally a small village surrounded by poor farmland – gently rolling and prone to floods. But on 23 January 1967, Harold Wilson’s Labour government formally earmarked the village and surrounding 34 square miles for a new town; the site was strategically placed halfway between London and Birmingham, and Oxford and Cambridge, just off the new M1. They envisaged a futuristic “linear city”, a long rectangle of tower blocks served by a looping monorail. But its architects pushed for it to be taken in a very different direction.

What was their plan?

Inspired by Los Angeles, they designed a town based on the growing dominance of the car: a US-style grid of big roads spaced about 1km (0.6 miles) apart, with each “grid square” containing a residential, recreation or business district. But the practical infrastructure was overlaid with a pastoral, utopian vision. The river valleys were labelled “linear parks”, with lakes for floodwater. The central Midsummer Boulevard was laid out to ensure the rising sun shone straight

New towns and garden cities

Milton Keynes was partly inspired by Ebenezer Howard’s garden cities in Hertfordshire – Letchworth (founded in 1903) and Welwyn (1920). Dismayed by crowded, unhealthy Victorian cities, Howard designed green belt settlements where houses were interspersed with parks and boulevards. Those garden cities have been copied across the world, but the new towns designated by the Attlee government in 1946, from Stevenage and Crawley to Corby, Peterborough and Telford, are mostly a byword for poor planning: the term “new town blues” was coined to describe the dismay of urban populations “rescued” from poor, bombed-out housing to find themselves in a world of concrete precincts, grim underpasses and depressing flat-roofed houses. Milton Keynes came in the third and final wave of new towns, which ran from 1967-70.

Politicians have recently tried to revive the idea of new settlements – without much success. In 2007, Gordon Brown vowed to build ten new “ecotowns” to ease housing demand. Only four were approved, amid much local opposition; progress has been slow. The current government has announced a plan for 14 new “garden villages”, and three “garden towns” – one to be built on green belt land on the Essex-Hertfordshire border.

How has it fared since then?

Its demography has changed: middle-class escapees from London now dominate. In the early days, planners aimed at a 50:50 split between public and private housing. In 2016, 74% of homes were owner-occupied. In the 1980s, radical housing experiments lost out to the suburban semi-detached (Bill Bryson called it an “endless Bovisville”). Today, the town has a relatively young, diverse population (26% ethnic minority); employment is above the national average. Yet though it is now around the 35th biggest urban centre in the UK, its attempts to be officially designated a city have been repeatedly rebuffed.

How does its future look?

Rosy. It’s well adapted to current economic realities – to the dominance of the tech and service industries – and well positioned in the thriving “brain belt” between Cambridge and Oxford. In fact, Milton Keynes is a victim of its own success: the Government wants the local authority to build 28,000 new houses by 2026, but all the original squares in the grid have now been filled. New estates are being plonked down inside that do not respect the “original vision”: the town’s green spaces – still around 40% of the total area – are being eaten away. Grid roads are being blocked off, or built over to create narrow streets fringed by bog-standard housing in place of grassy banks. There is even a plan under consideration to build on the open spaces of Midsummer Boulevard.

Rising importance of UAE-India relations

Salah Subuh

Al-Bayan Newspaper

In light of the visit of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, to India, Salah Subuh said in Al-Bayan: "In a joint statement released less than a year ago, UAE and India intended to strengthen bilateral relations into a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement and create a road map to reinforce this co-operation at the highest level. The last visit proves that big steps have already been achieved." According to monitors, the language used in the statement differs from the usual protocols for talks, indicating a strong intent by the leadership of both countries to make progress with the bilateral bonds. Subuh points out that India's economy has recorded the second highest growth rate globally behind China, which would make it the third biggest economy by 2030. India is the biggest trading partner of the UAE.



Trump, Israel and radical Islam

Khair Allah Khair Allah

Al-Arab Newspaper

The first thing the current Israeli government did was create a new settlement scheme in Eastern Jerusalem and occupied West Bank, to ultimately infuse the occupation; now Trump's invitation to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit the White House on February 15 contravenes international legitimacy including UN Security Council resolutions, writes Khair Allah Khair Allah. The Lebanese columnist believes that with Trump in the White House, the resolution regarding Israeli settlements in the West Bank is in the past now. "The Palestinian side cannot count on it when Trump's administration decided to completely turn against not only the political class based in Washington and everything Obama ever did, but also the whole Middle East, as well as the traditional policy of the US on settlements." Like many, he wonders the extent of Trump's vicissitudes and whether Israel will pursue its "exploitation" of the new American president? "It doesn't seem that the Palestinian party has anything that would stop settlements or make Trump gain some balance in his policy," observes Khair Allah. The only sure thing is that the new American policy won't provide stability in the Middle East, he adds. "Even worse, it will provide radicals with weaponry, regardless of the sect or side they are affiliated with. By supporting the terrorism Israel practices, Trump is giving the best present to radical Islamic terrorism he professes to fight."

Nurturing Gulf-Iran dialogue

Turki Al-Dakheel

Asharq Al-awsat Newspaper

The message from Khaled Subuh, HH Foreign Minister of Kuwait, to Iran "was clear and wise," writes Al-Dakheel. Essentially, Gulf-Iran relations have to be based on the Charter of the UN and principles of international law governing relationships between states. "The message states that all parties are partners in the region with common interests, meaning dialogue and relationship normalization should be tapped into by both sides," he wrote. "Iranian President Rouhani welcomed the initiative and deemed it a positive step to improve relations, which is good and digestible." However, Al-Dakheel notes the reality is somewhat different. "Let's remind ourselves of the testimony by Rafsanjani himself, a part of the established Iranian regime, that talked about breaching the agreement Iran and Saudi Arabia through blunt interventions in the internal affairs of the Gulf." While dialogue with Iran should be integral to the political system, the writer is pessimistic about its chances. "The claws of Iran have reached Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq," he writes.



Jordan joins Astana process over Syria

Fahd Al-Khaytan

Al-Ghad Newspaper

Following the summit meeting involving King Abdullah and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, Fahd Al-Khaytan concluded in an article published in Al-Ghad newspaper that Jordan is "officially a part of the Astana process" to contain the repercussions of Syria's crisis and reach a political solution. It also underlines Russia's pivotal role containing the crisis and King Abdullah reaffirmed that without Russia in the picture, there is no solution to the ongoing suffering in the region. Al-Khaytan is convinced that Jordan's role won't be limited to political support of the Astana statement; it will go further by building upon the previous co-operation to dismantle terrorist groups and armed opposition in Syria and classify them, as well as establishing operational and on field co-ordination to maintain the ceasefire across parties. "This open war in Syria has posed security threats on Jordan, leading it to take an approach unprecedented in the history of Jordan's diplomacy and politics," writes Al-Khaytan. "Jordan has guaranteed support of its strategy of tackling radical groups by both opposing Russia and America. Amman can now make plans with American and Russian sides against terrorist groups in Syria at the same time." This proves that the King's visit to Washington will be as significant as his visit to Moscow. "Perhaps this visit is the most necessary visit of the King to the American capital," he added.

GERMANY

We're too nice:
time to go for
the US jugular

Der Spiegel
(Hamburg)

It's not just China that Donald Trump has in his sights over trade; Germany is in the firing line too, says Jan Fleischhauer. The new US president is upset that Americans happily drive imported German cars, yet we Germans don't reciprocate. Since there's zero chance of German drivers exchanging their BMWs and Audis for Chevrolets, he says he'll slap a stiff 35% tariff on our car imports to even things up. But two can play that game. It just happens that the most valuable US companies aren't carmakers; they're giant technology firms such as Apple, Google, Amazon and Facebook – all hugely profitable in Europe, and therefore vulnerable. Apple pays less than 2% corporate tax for its sales in Europe, thanks to its “sweetheart” deal with Ireland, and there's plenty of scope for hitting it with a huge increase. You don't need “punitive” tariffs to make trouble for Facebook – we'd merely force it to observe existing German laws on protecting minors by imposing penalties on content that glorifies violence or incites crime. If the company carried on offending, it could be blocked. Draconian? Of course. But we Germans are far too “soft” for the new world that Trump is ushering in. “Do not hesitate... go for the jugular” is advice Trump gives in his book *Think Big*. We need to follow it.

INDIA

This sacred
tradition is a
load of bull

Livemint.com
(Delhi)

Appealing to tradition in a country like India can be dangerous, says Rajyasree Sen. And so it is proving in Tamil Nadu, where students, media folk and celebrities have been furiously protesting a recent court ban on *jallikattu* – the sport in which young men run with a stampeding bull and try to bring it to a stop. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has now rushed to placate them by overturning the ban. But why should the degrading spectacle of a mob pulling the ears and tail of a terrified animal be reprieved just because it's a Tamil tradition? Dowry, marital rape and honour killings are also Indian traditions: does that make them acceptable? Besides, this isn't just about sport, it's about reinforcing the old patriarchal and caste system – *jallikattu* is practised only by upper-caste men. In scrapping the ban Modi may have won new votes, but only at the cost of reinforcing old prejudices.



Jallikattu: a “degrading spectacle”

THE GAMBIA

The dictators'
club won, not
democracy

Independent Online (IOL)
(Durban)

There was dancing in the streets when The Gambia's long-time ruler, Yahya Jammeh, finally left for exile, says Azad Essa. He'd been digging in his heels after being soundly beaten in elections, but with troops in neighbouring Senegal poised to invade, he bowed to the inevitable. Bigwigs in the UN and the African Union were ecstatic. Democracy had triumphed, they tweeted: it's a signal to other African dictators that “their time is over”. Nonsense. There's nothing to rejoice about in this sorry story. Jammeh will never pay back the millions of dollars he looted before leaving; nor will he pay for his crimes against civilians, journalists and politicians. And he left because he was pressured to by his neighbours. But that didn't happen with Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, who refused to step down after losing elections in 2008, nor Burundi's Pierre Nkurunziza, whose contested decision to seek a third term in 2015 triggered widespread bloodshed. Both stayed because no one in the African Union or its regional bodies objected. Events in The Gambia merely confirm that power in Africa rests with cliques, not the people. “Democracy didn't win, but rather a man just got away with murder.”

Will Putin turn out to be the great peacemaker?

Russia's bombing of Aleppo may have been akin to war crimes, said *Le Monde* (Paris), but we should nevertheless applaud its efforts to bring Syria's warring parties together. The rebels have been gravely weakened by the city's fall, but so too, politically, has Syria's President Assad: his depleted forces could never have triumphed without Russia's help. And now that Vladimir Putin holds the upper hand with his ally, he and Turkey's President Erdogan are pushing for a peace deal; together with Iran, they sponsored two days of talks in Kazakhstan last week. The Turks persuaded the various rebel factions to attend, while Moscow practically forced the Syrian regime participants to sit at the same table with them – if only for the opening ceremony. The West was hardly represented: the new Trump administration had been invited, but having yet to clarify its aims, it declined. The outcome was modest: the co-sponsors will set up a trilateral body to enforce the ceasefire. Yet even that is progress of a sort – more than any UN-brokered talks in Geneva have achieved.

Russia is showing a new, flexible attitude, said Maxim A. Suchkov in *Al-Monitor* (Washington DC). It dropped its opposition to participation by the more militant rebels, and is cooperating closely with Turkey: jets from both countries have hammered Daesh targets. It is also the first time it is showing anger at ceasefire violations by the Syrian regime, a sign Putin may be open to the idea of Assad standing down; doubtless one

reason the rebels have been participating. But that's enraged the Iranians, who have invested in keeping Assad in power, said Heshmat Alavi in *Al Arabiya English* (Dubai). The mullahs are alarmed at having to play second fiddle to Russia and Turkey, and terrified by the thought of a rapprochement between Russia and Trump's US, which could result in a deal “vastly” against their interests. The “harsh” reaction by Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, to the revelation that the US had been invited shows he thinks Putin is “throwing Iran under the bus”.

The test of success will be whether the ceasefire holds, said *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. A likely flashpoint is the Wadi Barada, a valley west of Damascus held by rebels, who have cut off the water supply to five million of the city's people and who regard the Syrian regime's efforts to dislodge them as a violation of the truce. If they're pushed out of the valley, the ceasefire will be dead. But if it holds, the Kazakhstan talks will strengthen the prospect of a settlement when negotiations resume in Geneva this month, said Martin Jay in *Daily Sabah* (Istanbul). We know what must be done. Now that Turkey has dropped its obsession with toppling Assad, it needs to convince the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia to do likewise; to stop pouring money into a “black hole”, with arms supplies to the rebels. And the UN and EU must outline a humanitarian and restructuring programme to enable the rebels to “swallow the bitter pill of defeat”.

Our surgeries are woefully underfunded

Prit Buttar

The Daily Telegraph

A bold plan to help damaged women

Janice Turner

The Times

Restoring full employment is a fantasy

John Harris

The Guardian

A tax hike that could cripple corner shops

Dominic Lawson

Daily Mail

If you're wondering why GPs like me are struggling to provide a decent level of care, says Prit Buttar, look no further than this striking statistic: over the past decade, the number of times the average patient visits his or her GP each year has doubled. That's right: doubled. Yet the funding that doctors' practices receive has "barely risen". There's the problem in a nutshell. Unlike hospital doctors, GPs aren't usually employed by the NHS. Their practices work like businesses: they get a set sum of money per patient (a mere £146 a year, on average) from which to pay all costs and wages. That's nowhere near enough to deal with current levels of demand. GPs used to get small extra payments for minor procedures such as removing warts or skin tags. Not any more: they now have to do them for free or not at all. So fewer get done. No matter that many patients would happily pay their GP for such non-urgent procedures, the rules forbid GPs from accepting payments. It's unsustainable. If ministers won't fund GPs properly, patients must be allowed to help fund the system themselves.

Can it ever be right to stop women having children? The charity Pause certainly thinks so, says Janice Turner. Over the past three years it has arranged for 137 women to get contraceptive implants – women who between them have 497 children who were taken into care. One such woman is Lisa, a homeless addict, who's seen four of her children put into care – the last two removed days after birth – and who would have gone on having babies because, as she notes, "men are nicer when you're pregnant, don't hit you so much. And social workers look after you". So Lisa was offered a deal: put your fertility on hold for 18 months with an implant and receive intense therapy for mental illness, and advice on housing and finding a job. Many think that removing people's fertility in this way, even if only temporarily, smacks of eugenics; and clearly, this is "tricky ethical territory". But when you see how this project allows these damaged women to regain control of their lives, and when you consider how much misery can be averted, it's surely an initiative worth supporting.

You'd have thought US union bosses – Hillary Clinton backers to a man – would have been seething after meeting Donald Trump in the White House last week, says John Harris. Not a bit of it. "The respect that [Trump] just showed us," said the head of the North America's Building Trades Unions, "was nothing short of incredible." And that's because something truly radical, obscured in the fog created by his bigotry and lies, stands at the heart of Trump's agenda: a bold project to restore full employment. He is setting out to "eat the American Left's lunch". Protectionism, threats to errant companies, appeals to patriotism, a level of "fiscal activism not seen since the 1930s" – Trump is ready to try anything to lure manufacturing firms back to the US. And he may succeed: indeed, many have returned already. But here's the rub. They're doing so precisely because the rapid advances in automation enable them to shed labour: "a robot is even cheaper than a Chinese worker, so 'reshoring' is a rational choice". The notion that our political leaders have the power to restore old-fashioned, secure jobs is one that unites voters of the hard-right and the Left. Trump "may be about to test that idea to destruction".

Mrs Shah, who runs my local corner shop, is furious, says Dominic Lawson. Who can blame her? She and her husband have had their small store in Pimlico, Westminster, for the past 27 years. But the Government may be about to put it out of business. On 1 April, there is to be a "revaluation" of business rates around the country, the first for seven years. And as the rates are based on property values, the tax hike for businesses in central London will be "dramatic": the Shahs' bills will rise by £20,000 over the next three years. Supermarkets and big chain stores will be able to absorb the extra cost, but for those like the Shahs, who already work long hours, seven days a week, on slender profit margins, the change will be crippling. These family shops are hubs of their local community – places where the owners know your name, offer you credit if you forget your wallet, hold a set of your house keys to give to a plumber if you're out. They'll disappear and be replaced by yet more charity shops, which are exempt from business rates, or by Tesco stores. And we'll all be worse off for it.

IT MUST BE TRUE... I read it in the tabloids

The Large Hadron Collider is the most powerful particle accelerator in the world, but it only took a small, weasel-like animal to shut the research centre down. A stone marten jumped over a substation fence near the Swiss facility last November, and was hit by 18,000 volts of electricity, knocking out power to the site. The animal's singed corpse is now on display at the Rotterdam Natural History Museum, as part of its Dead Animal Tales exhibition. Other exhibits include a sparrow that was shot after it sabotaged a world record attempt by knocking over 23,000 dominoes.



A photo of 80 birds of prey on a plane went viral. A Saudi prince is believed to have bought tickets for the feathered passengers on a Qatar Airways flight. The transportation of falcons on Middle Eastern airlines is fairly commonplace, albeit not in these numbers. The birds are often flown abroad to take part in hunts, and are allocated a seat – subject to the necessary paperwork – and placed on cloths in case of any accidents.

A Russian tank-maker has published a book aimed at children of preschool age. The illustrated story, *Adventures of the Little Tank*, follows a toy that spends the night in the museum of defence manufacturer UralVagonZavod, meeting the full-size machines and hearing about their "adventures" in foreign lands. The company says the book tells children about "awe-inspiring combat vehicles in an accessible and absorbing way", and will help instil patriotism.

The folly of Trump's "big beautiful wall"

Donald Trump is a real estate developer by trade, said the **Chicago Tribune**, but his "most creative talent is the construction and sale of myths". And they don't come bigger than his pledge to build a "big beautiful wall" between America and Mexico – and make Mexico pay for it. This promise was a centrepiece of his campaign, and he has stuck to it, causing a "diplomatic dust-up" with America's southern neighbour. By long-standing tradition, incoming US presidents meet their Mexican counterparts soon after assuming office. But a scheduled meeting last week between Trump and Enrique Peña Nieto was called off after Trump tweeted that if the Mexican president wasn't ready to commit to pay for the wall, he might as well not come. Nieto promptly cancelled. Hours later, the White House floated the idea of imposing a 20% tax on imports from Mexico to pay for the wall.



Obrador: Mexico's Hugo Chávez?

isn't practical. You can't build a wall through the Rio Grande, for instance, and would it really be worth erecting a 10ft barrier on top of a 10,000ft mountain? There are also legal hurdles: much of the land is tribal territory, or privately owned.

The wall plan doesn't make sense, agreed Mona Charen in **National Review**. Illegal crossings have actually been falling for a decade, and more Mexicans are heading south over the border today than north. Trump's insistence that Mexico pay for a wall may play well with his supporters, and satisfy his "penchant for humiliating others", but it's storing up trouble. It has caused fury in Mexico, already under stress due to falling oil prices, a faltering economy and corruption. Mexico is not going to pay "for that wall", fumed former president Vicente Fox in a tweet last week. If relations remain this bad, it will increase the odds of next year's Mexican presidential election being won by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a populist rabble-rouser in the mould of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez. "Good fences may make good neighbours. But this wall, and particularly the way Trump has rubbed Mexicans' noses in it, may turn a good neighbour bad fast."

This is an absurd bit of posturing by Trump, said Juliette Kayyem on **CNN.com**. "There already is a wall – 700 miles of it – along the roughly 1,900-mile US-Mexico border." The rest is policed by border control agents, drones and surveillance technology. Creating a continuous ocean-to-gulf wall simply

Is Obama "this generation's JFK?"

Rich Lowry

National Review

Barack Obama's legacy is being erased, says Rich Lowry, but his reputation will survive. Indeed, the mythology surrounding his presidency will only grow in the years ahead. He is destined to be "remembered – and revered – by his admirers as his generation's JFK". But not so much for what he accomplished, as for what he stood for. A young, photogenic African-American man with impeccably liberal values, he was a symbol of generational and cultural change. His election was a genuine "milestone" in America's history, and his two terms of office saw some big shifts in public attitudes. "In the space of about seven years, [Obama] went from some definitions of marriage to lighting up the White House in rainbow colours to celebrate the Supreme Court's marriage decision." If and when America's liberals return to the political ascendancy, Obama will be remembered as the architect of the progressive revival. And in the meantime, he's not going anywhere. He'll remain in the public eye as a memoirist, lecturer and talk-show guest, "representing enlightened liberalism in exile, stoking nostalgia and yearning among his supporters". Obama's substantive legacy may be crumbling, but his "apotheosis" has only just begun.

Trump's use of Twitter is a security risk

Joseph Bernstein

BuzzFeed

"The most powerful publication in the world today," says Joseph Bernstein, "is Donald Trump's personal Twitter account." It can move financial markets, provoke foreign powers and set off media firestorms – and, like all Twitter accounts, it's "shockingly insecure". Hacking a Twitter account doesn't require the "resources of a nation state". In the past year, the accounts of Mark Zuckerberg, Keith Richards and the foreign minister of Belgium were among those hacked: a number of high-profile hacks were traced to a Saudi teenager. Indeed, Trump's own account has been hacked before: in 2013 a prankster tweeted Trump's followers a rude rap lyric. That incident caused no great harm, but imagine what someone could do today if they seized control of Trump's account and posted messages in his name. They could provoke an international incident, or earn a fortune by influencing stock prices, or unleash the rage of Trump's 23 million followers on an individual. If Trump stuck to the official @POTUS account, which has extra security protocols, such as multiple password layers, it would lessen the danger. But he's still using his personal @realDonaldTrump account, reportedly on an old, unsecured Android phone. It's a "security disaster waiting to happen".

A city with as many dogs as children

Thomas Fuller

The New York Times

Where have all the children gone? That's what San Francisco has been asking itself lately, says Thomas Fuller. The city used to be alive with children and families, but they've become increasingly rare since the technology boom. Today, San Francisco has the lowest percentage of children of any big US city: just 13% of its residents are under the age of 18, compared with 21% in New York, and an average of 23% across America. The city has roughly the same number of dogs as children, and in many areas "pet grooming shops seem more common than schools". For every 100 apartments sold in the city at market rate, the San Francisco school district expects to enrol just one extra pupil. Walking through the growing number of neighbourhoods colonised by employees of Google, Twitter and other tech firms, you'd think "life started at 22 and ended somewhere around 40". San Francisco is trying to make itself more family-friendly. It has invested millions in upgrading its parks, and last month became the first US city to require employers to offer six weeks of fully paid leave for new parents. But its prohibitive housing costs suggest it's likely to remain a place for the young, single and rich. The question is, can such a "one-dimensional" place retain its allure and vibrancy?

What the scientists are saying...

High costs of overseas patients

A Public Accounts Committee report says the system for recouping costs from overseas patients is “chaotic” – a fact that was starkly illustrated when a Nigerian woman, Priscilla, ran up a £330,000 bill for NHS treatment after she gave birth prematurely to quadruplets in a London hospital. The woman was taken ill on a flight from the US to Nigeria via Heathrow (she had been due to give birth in the US but was turned back due to paperwork). She gave birth to one baby who died, while she and her three children were all placed in intensive care. Another of her children died and her two surviving children remain in intensive care which costs £20,000 a week per child. In October, it was revealed the government was expected to fall short of its target of recovering £500m a year from overseas visitors and the Department of Health “refined” its target for 2017-18 to £346m. Hospital trusts in England are legally obliged to check whether patients are eligible for free non-emergency NHS treatment and to recover any costs. The report identifies the biggest challenge to recovering costs as the lack of a single easy way to prove whether patients are entitled to healthcare.

Handy guide to health

Since everyone's handwriting is unique, it could contain clues about your health. Graphologists are now studying the size and shape of letters to see whether people are susceptible to ailments such as high blood pressure, Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, and Parkinson's disease, reports the Daily Mail, quoting The National Pen Company. It says writing with variable pressure is one possible indicator that you have high blood pressure and irregular or altered letters may be a sign of Alzheimer's. Critics decry it a “pseudoscience” casting doubts surrounding



How you write may reveal health risks

letters' ability to indicate physical and mental health problems. In a digital age, any use of pen and paper should be encouraged – studies have shown people who jot things down tend to have more effective memory recall, sharper critical thinking and stronger conceptual understanding (Richard Branson, for one, always carries a notebook around with him).

Vaccinate against fake news

Sorting out the authentic wheat from the fabricated chaff is becoming increasingly difficult on the internet, and now it's taxing the minds of scientists from the University of Cambridge, according to a BBC report. Researchers suggest “pre-emptively exposing” readers to a small “dose” of the misinformation can help organisations cancel out bogus claims. “Misinformation can be sticky, spreading and replicating like a virus,” said the University of Cambridge study's lead author Dr Sander van der Linden. “The idea is to provide a cognitive repertoire that helps build up resistance to misinformation, so the next time people come across it they are less susceptible.” The study, published in the journal *Global*

Challenges, was conducted as a disguised experiment. Fabricated stories alleging the Pope was backing Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton sold weapons to Daesh were read and shared by millions of Facebook users during the US election campaign.

Prostate scans improve diagnosis

Survival rates for prostate cancer would improve if all men suspected of having the disease were given MRI scans, a new study suggests. Currently, men with clinical signs of cancer (such as raised PSA levels) are usually given a biopsy: more than 100,000 a year are carried out in the UK. But as a diagnostic test, this exploratory surgery is far from ideal. Biopsies can have painful, and sometimes serious side effects. Being based on samples taken from various parts of the prostate, they're also not very accurate: biopsies can miss the cancer altogether, and do not reliably distinguish between aggressive forms of the disease that require immediate treatment and those that require only monitoring. To test whether using advanced MP-MRI scans would be more effective, a team from University College London arranged for 576 men with signs of prostate cancer to be given both scans and biopsies. Their results suggest that if all patients were given an initial MRI, one in four could safely be spared having an immediate biopsy; that using the scans could reduce rates of overdiagnosis – when patients are given treatments for cancers that later prove harmless – by 5%; and that carrying out biopsies guided by scan findings could lead to up to 18% more cases of clinically significant cancers being detected. “This is the biggest leap forward in prostate cancer diagnosis in decades, with the potential to save many lives,” said Angela Culhane, chief executive of Prostate Cancer UK.

A unique 100 million-year-old “alien”

Scientists have discovered an insect so weird and rare, they have placed it in its own insect “order”. Found preserved in amber down a mine in Myanmar, the tiny wingless creature has a triangular head and bulging eyes – features that lend it a slightly alarming “E.T.-like appearance”, and that have not been seen in any other species.

There are about one million known species of insects, which are categorised into 31 orders; *Aethiocarenum burmanicus* is so unusual it now sits alone in the newly created 32nd order. It is likely to remain alone there, as it lived some 100 million years ago and has long been extinct; and though one other ancient specimen of this species has been found (also preserved in amber in Myanmar), it resembles nothing living on Earth today, or ever seen before. “This insect has a number of features that just don't match those of any other insect species that I know,” said Dr George Poinar Jr, an emeritus professor of entomology at Oregon State University. It is believed to have been an omnivore that scuttled around in the bark of trees, feeding on mites, worms and fungi.



Rationing hip operations

The NHS is under such financial pressure that some hospitals may have to start rationing hip and knee replacements, an NHS official admitted last week. Three clinical commissioning groups in the West Midlands are drawing up plans to limit the operations to people who are in such agony that they cannot sleep or carry out daily tasks. They think this restriction will reduce the number of hip operations by 12%, and knee replacements by 19%. “Clearly, the NHS doesn't have unlimited resources,” Julie Wood, chief executive of the NHS Clinical Commissioners, told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme. “And it has to ensure that patients get the best possible care against a backdrop of spiralling demand and increasing financial pressures.” The Royal College of Surgeons has condemned the proposal as “alarming” and “arbitrary”.

Apps: A selfie app from China goes viral

America has discovered Meitu, said Lisa Eadicicco on Time.com. Even if you've never heard of the Chinese photo-editing app, "chances are you've seen its work on Instagram or Facebook." Meitu's glossy, gaudy filters can make any old selfie look like "it could have been ripped from an anime cartoon," which may explain why your friends' eyes are looking so much bigger these days. The app has been available for years in China and other Asian countries, where it's wildly popular with tens of millions of users. But it's only just catching on in the U.S., rocketing last week into the top 100 free iPhone apps seemingly overnight, beating out more-established apps like Yelp and SoundCloud.



An anime makeover

Meitu goes way beyond the flattering filters available on Instagram and Snapchat, said Amie Tsang and Emily Feng in The New York Times. "Cheeks can be stretched and pinched. Chins can be shaved off. Eyes can be contoured." The result is a window into female beauty standards that have become common in countries like China, South Korea, and Japan: "pale skin, elfin features, skinny limbs, eyes wide and guileless as a baby seal's." Meitu's parent company said more than half of the photos circulated on Chinese social media in June were filtered using its app. Some users even turn to Meitu to touch up their résumés, since in China's emerging service sector, job postings for

women often set height or appearance requirements. Now that it's everywhere, "the question is whether the world wants Meitu's idea of beauty."

Stay far, far away from Meitu, said Jeff John Roberts in Fortune. Sure, it may be fun to make yourself look airbrushed and beautiful, but you have to "send a boatload of your personal information to China" in the process. Many photo-editing apps access data like your location or picture roll, but Meitu taps everything from information about your phone calls to your internet and Wi-Fi activity. "One must sacrifice for beauty, but this is going too far."

"Responsible apps ask for the fewest number of 'permissions' possible so they don't have access to anything they don't absolutely need," said Lily Hay Newman on Wired.com. Meitu certainly overreaches, but it's hardly alone in this regard. Pokémon Go had to rush out an embarrassing update not long after it launched because its iOS app demanded almost unfettered access to users' Google accounts. If you're worried about what Meitu can see, you can use your mobile device's settings to control what each app has access to. "It's no fun letting a meme pass you up because you're worried about privacy, but it's even worse to have your personal data taken for who knows what without you realizing it."

Innovation of the week



Tiny surgical robots "are revolutionising eye surgery," said Simon Parkin on TechnologyReview.com. The Robotic Retinal Dissection Device, known as R2D2, allows surgeons to make minuscule incisions, shift membranes as small as a hundredth of a millimetre thick, and perform other incredibly precise maneuvers on patients' eyes using "a joystick and a camera feed." The device was designed in part to eliminate tremors in a surgeon's hand, and last September doctors at Oxford University used R2D2 to perform the first ever operation via robot inside a human eye. Since then, doctors have conducted five more surgeries, including one in which a virus used in gene therapy was planted on a patient's retina. Robots are already common in operating rooms, "but until now surgical robots have been too bulky to be used in certain procedures" on such a small scale.

Bytes: What's new in tech

The flying-car dream is still alive



Airbus wants to put a flying-car prototype in the air by the end of this year, said Jason Abbruzzese on Mashable.com. Speaking at a tech conference

in Munich last week, Airbus CEO Tom Enders outlined the European aerospace giant's vision for flying vehicles using technology similar to that of self-driving cars. "One hundred years ago, urban transport went underground," Enders said. "Now we have the technological wherewithal to go above ground." The small craft would "take off and land vertically like a helicopter, but take advantage of the efficiency of winged airplanes while in flight." Airbus plans to have a prototype this year, but it doesn't expect to have a model ready for public demonstration until 2020.

China orders app store registration



The Chinese government is tightening its control over mobile apps, said Paul Mozur in The New York Times.

Beijing last month ordered the registration of app stores across the country with a vague item posted to the website of the Cyberspace Administration of China. "Many apps have been found to spread illegal information, violate user rights, or contain security risks," the post read,

suggesting that the country's app stores could be held responsible for offering apps that run afoul of the government. China passed a law last year barring apps from "engaging in activities deemed to endanger national security or disrupt social order," often a euphemism for discussing politically sensitive topics. Chinese apps often host content that would be strictly blocked on the internet, because they are harder to monitor and suppress than websites.

Google's advertising conflicts



Google products enjoy a serious home turf advantage on the company's search engine, said Jack Nicas in The Wall Street Journal. Ads for products sold by Google and its Alphabet-owned sister companies snagged top billing in 91 percent of 25,000 recent searches analysed by search-ad-data firm SEMrush – from Chromebook laptops to Nest smoke detectors. The results highlight "a rarely discussed" conflict of interest in the online ad industry. Google runs millions of auctions for search ads every minute, using a secret algorithm to determine placement and price. "Google said that when it competes for ads, other advertisers are charged as if it weren't bidding." However, because advertising slots are limited, "Google's ads can prompt others to increase their bids to compete for the remaining slots."

May in Washington: a dangerous liaison?

He called her “my Maggie”, and held her by the hand. He assured her that he was “100% behind Nato” (days after declaring it obsolete) and reaffirmed his commitment to striking a trade deal with the post-Brexit UK. Theresa May and Donald Trump are an “oddly matched pair”, said Heather Stewart in *The Observer*, but the flamboyant billionaire and the vicar’s daughter seem to have found surprising common ground during their meeting at the White House last week. At a press conference, the normally abrasive president was calm and even playful. And over their private lunch, the conversation was said – by Downing Street – to have been “warm, free-flowing and unscripted”. Trump declared that Brexit was going to be “a fantastic thing” for the UK, and that “our relationship has never been stronger”. He showed off the bust of Winston Churchill that Barack Obama had removed, now restored to the Oval Office; and told the PM that when he comes to Britain for a state visit later this year, “I want to see you first”.



Trump with May: “my Maggie”

And then May found out “what it’s like to be Tangoed”, said Alex Massie in *The Spectator*. No sooner had she left the building than her new friend signed an executive order banning the residents of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US temporarily, and Syrian refugees indefinitely; and overnight, her visit – “hailed a ‘triumph’ by friendly newspapers” – became a liability. As anger grew around the world, in Britain more than 1.78 million people signed a petition calling for Trump’s state visit to be cancelled; and the PM’s critics demanded that she denounce the man she had just wooed. Had May not been in such an unseemly rush to be the first foreign leader to visit Trump at the White House, she’d have seen this coming. Allies need to be reliable: the new US president has done nothing to suggest that he might be a partner this, or indeed any, country could rely on.

The PM no doubt thought she was “doing her pragmatic duty” by going to the White House, said *The Guardian*. But in currying favour with Trump, a president she cannot control, she’s in danger of making the same mistake Tony Blair did with George W. Bush. When Trump was merely a candidate, she condemned his anti-Muslim plans as “divisive, unhelpful and wrong”. She must stand alongside Britain’s allies, in France, Canada, Germany

and elsewhere, and speak as plainly now. It is not in Britain’s interest “to be, or to be seen as, a lackey of possibly the worst president the US” has ever had.

Yet there is something hysterical about the current outcry, said *The Daily Telegraph*. If the British government does not like US policy (and evidently, in this case it does not), it should let its feelings be known – through diplomacy, not the kind of “frenzied virtue-signalling and phoney outrage” we’ve seen this week. To snub Trump by ripping up his invitation would be a “monumental exercise in national self-harm”, agreed Robert Hardman in the *Daily Mail*. And those who demand it are being “wilfully naive”. Trump’s policy was a manifesto promise; he is doing what he was elected to do. Moreover, Obama also restricted travel to the US from these same countries. As for the claim that it’s wrong to

drag the Queen into this, she’s had far worse visitors foisted on her – including the Romanian tyrant Nicolae Ceausescu – and she has taken them in her stride. She knows it’s a “mucky old world”. May’s job is to represent our national interest, and it’s in that interest to have the US on our side.

“Overnight, her visit – ‘hailed a triumph by friendly newspapers’ – became a liability”

Brexit is the problem, said *The Economist*. May rushed to Washington because she is desperate to sign a trade deal with the US that can be closed as soon as Brexit takes place. The irony is that leaving the EU was supposed to

give Britain more control, to restore its autonomy and independence. Instead, it is forcing our leaders to prostrate themselves before a foreign ruler they find odious, a ruthless dealmaker who knows he has the upper hand. Britain, post-Brexit, finds itself in a strange place, agreed Anne Applebaum in *The Washington Post*. Isolated, and desperate for trading partners and political friends, it is rushing into the arms of a president who is “drifting away” from transatlantic institutions. Searching for a positive message about Britain’s future at Davos, May lit upon the idea of a “global Britain” that is an advocate of global free markets, and the “rule-based global order”. But if these are British ideals, why is Britain leaving the wealthiest free trade zone in the world, and cosying up to a protectionist for whom the international rules mean nothing? She may or may not be able to strike a trade deal with the US, but while Britain is tied to the US president, her broader vision is doomed.

Pick of the week’s

Gossip

Donald Trump’s aides confused the Prime Minister of Britain with a retired model. Theresa May’s name was misspelt three times on the official White House schedule for her visit last week. Spelt without an “h”, it is the stage name of a 50-year-old glamour model. Teresa May (pictured) is mistaken for the Tory leader so often that her Twitter profile reads: “I am a UK glamour model, not the



prime minister.” As for Theresa May, back in 2000 she told Radio 4’s **John Humphrys** that she sometimes received strange requests because of the confusion: “We do get the [odd] telephone call from people wanting to book me to do programmes and so forth which perhaps are not about politics, let’s just put it like that”.

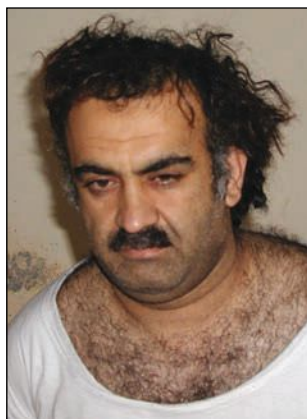
Prince Charles had his own hand towels brought in to save him having to use a hot-air dryer at a community centre. The heir to the throne – who is known to be fastidious about personal hygiene – was on a visit to the Mountsorrel and Rothley Heritage Centre in

Leicestershire last week. After travelling on a restored steam train and visiting the museum, he availed himself of the facilities. Aides had already requested that a section of the lavatories should be cordoned off, and brought along some clean towels from Clarence House, explaining that the Prince doesn’t like hot-air dryers. Studies have shown that the dryers pick up germs from around the room and blow them around. “Staff wanted it to be perfect”, said a spokesman for the heritage centre, and were “more than happy” for the Prince’s own hand towels to be used.

Torture: does it work?

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President Bush took the “fateful decision” to allow the use of “enhanced interrogation techniques”, said *The Times*. This meant, essentially, authorising forms of torture that didn’t cause death or organ failure: waterboarding (simulated drowning), beatings, confinement in coffin-sized boxes, painful stress positions, sleep deprivation, and the humiliation of suspects. Today, the consensus in Washington, and across the free world, is that the Bush administration’s turn to what vice-president Dick Cheney called the “dark side” was “morally unacceptable, strategically self-defeating” and “of limited, if any, use”. So it is “troubling” that Donald Trump declared in his first TV interview as president that he believes torture “absolutely” works. He said that he would defer to his defence secretary, James Mattis, and the director of the CIA (both of whom oppose it); but that if his staff sought to use torture, he would “work for that end”.

Trump is clearly not swayed by the moral arguments, said Joshua Stewart in *The Daily Telegraph*. So it is important that we emphasise “the business side of the issue – which is that torture simply doesn’t work”. It has consistently failed to produce decent intelligence, as the Senate’s five-year inquiry into CIA methods



Mohammed: 183 sessions

confirmed. Tortured suspects tend to release “torrents of useless and made-up information in an attempt to appease their captors”. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the 9/11 mastermind, who was waterboarded 183 times, admitted: “I gave a lot of false information in order to satisfy what I believed the interrogators wished to hear.” Abu Zubaydah, another al-Qa’eda operative, was “broken” under torture, and invented a “kaleidoscope” of plots and fabricated names. One intelligence official said: “We spent millions of dollars chasing false alarms.”

“Torture isn’t merely ineffective,” said Zack Beauchamp on Vox. “It’s also vicious and deeply corrosive.” Another Senate committee found that legal authorisation for CIA torture led directly to the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib. The CIA continues to insist that enhanced interrogation has been helpful in some cases, said Jason Burke in *The Guardian*. But even if you accept that – and the Senate inquiry rejected it outright – torture has “immense costs” that clearly “outweigh any tactical gain”. America’s image suffered “massive” damage as a result of George W. Bush’s decision. Trump may believe that “torture works”. “It is unlikely he has the slightest idea of how expensive that thinking may prove to be.”

Wood burners: poisoning our air

London achieved an unwanted record last month, said Robin McKie in *The Observer*. Air pollution in the capital reached its highest level since the current system of measurement was introduced five years ago. But here’s the strange thing: the toxic smog reached its peak on a Sunday night – a time when most people are out of their cars and pollution is usually at a low ebb. So how did levels of nitrogen oxides and particulates – tiny specks of soot that can get into our lungs, blood and even brains – reach such unprecedented levels?



London smog in 1952

wood burning stoves have soared in the past decade: 175,000 units were bought in Britain last year. But it is now clear that these stoves are “highly polluting”. A recent Danish study found that even the cleanest wood burner produces 500,000 particulates per cubic centimetre of smoke – compared to 1,000 per cm³ in the fumes of a modern lorry. In Copenhagen, just 16,000 wood burners produce more PM_{2.5} particulates (the most dangerous kind) during winter than traffic in the Danish capital produces all year round.

Diesel fumes and lack of wind were partly to blame, said *New Scientist*. But scientists at King’s College London also identified a “surprising culprit”: half the particulates came from wood smoke. Under the Clean Air Act of 1956, urban householders are banned from burning wood in open fires; but there is a loophole that allows logs to be burnt in appliances that meet environmental guidelines. These include most modern wood burning stoves, as well as biomass boilers – both of which are widely seen as eco-friendly. Sales of

This isn’t just an urban problem, said Ross Clark in the *Daily Mail*. Last year, 39 UK towns and cities exceeded the official “safe” levels for PM_{2.5} emissions, including Saltash in Cornwall and Chepstow in Monmouthshire. The effects of this pollution can be devastating: in children, it has been shown to impair lung and brain development. Yet the loophole for wood burners remains wide open, and the Government is still offering generous subsidies to householders who switch to biomass boilers. Thanks to old science and bad policy, “British homeowners are being encouraged to poison our own air”.

Wit & Wisdom

“Without music, life would be a mistake.”
Friedrich Nietzsche, quoted in The Sunday Telegraph

“A man who has committed a mistake and doesn’t correct it is committing another.”
Confucius, quoted in The Times

“No man ever listened himself out of a job.”
Calvin Coolidge, quoted in The Daily Telegraph

“I don’t remember anybody’s name. Why do you think the ‘darling’ thing got started?”
Zsa Zsa Gabor, quoted on BBC News online

“Everything has already been said, but since nobody was listening, we have to start again.”
André Gide, quoted on The Browser

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”
Anthropologist Margaret Mead, quoted in The Times

“You do not get a man’s most effective criticism until you provoke him. Severe truth is expressed with some bitterness.”
Henry David Thoreau, quoted on Forbes.com

“People always ask me how long it takes to do my hair. I don’t know, I’m never there.”
Dolly Parton, quoted in Vogue

“All looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.”
Alexander Pope, quoted in The Washington Post

Statistics of the week
More than 40% of children have their own mobile phone by the time they leave primary school.
The Times

Ten drones were involved in “category A” near misses with passenger jets at Heathrow last year.
The Daily Telegraph

Tennis: the two best players of all time

It wasn't meant to be Roger Federer, said Martin Samuel in the Daily Mail. Not at the age of 35; not after a six-month layoff while he recovered from knee surgery; not in this "golden age for men's tennis". But on Sunday, the Swiss player confounded the doubters to beat Rafael Nadal and win the Australian Open. It was his 18th Grand Slam, four more than any other male player. Federer's claim to greatness has "never been in question", said Kevin Mitchell in The Guardian. But this victory confirmed that he is "peerless in the history of his sport". Even now, he is playing remarkable tennis: "only the freakishly powerful Ivo Karlovic hit more than Federer's 108 aces" in Melbourne; and "only Kei Nishikori bettered his 21 winning returns off serve".

It goes without saying that Federer is a player of "great beauty", who turns tennis into "something resembling advanced choreography", said Matthew Syed in The Times. Less appreciated, however, are his extraordinary "resolve and self-belief". Since 2012, the year of his last Grand Slam win, he had been urged to "hang up his racket". Yet he kept going, because he believed he could "triumph once again". He tried everything, adjusting his technique, "with all the accompanying



Serena Williams: leads the field

rigmarole and agitation, in the noble cause of finding a fresh edge". On Sunday, Federer finally prevailed – joining the likes of Jack Nicklaus, who won the Masters at 46, and Bernard Hopkins, who unified boxing's middleweight titles at 39.

Serena Williams has earned her own place in that lineup, said Bryan Armen Graham in The Guardian. Just one month younger than Federer, she beat her sister, Venus, last Saturday to win her 23rd singles Grand Slam – finally overtaking Steffi Graf's record for the most majors in the professional era. Like Federer, she is now undoubtedly "the best there has ever been". Venus, a year older, made it to the final as the oldest player in the top 300; she defeated opponents barely half her age, despite battling the autoimmune disease that has "hamstrung" her game for years. But, as in so many previous matches between the sisters, she was no match for Serena. Nor is anyone else, said Oliver Brown in The Sunday Telegraph. "Where, exactly, is the competition?" Maria Sharapova is serving a 15-month doping ban; Angelique Kerber, who briefly "usurped" Serena as World No. 1, failed to win a single tour event during her 20 weeks at the top. Serena is "so far out on her own" that her rivals "should feel ashamed".

The FA Cup: victorious minnows

"Don't mess with the world's oldest club competition," said Henry Winter in The Times. That was the moral of the FA Cup's fourth round last weekend, when Championship clubs were humbled by minnows from the lowly Vanarama National League: first Lincoln City beat Brighton and Hove Albion 3-1; then, the next day, Sutton United shocked Leeds United with a 1-0 victory. Sutton sit 16th in the National League, a staggering 83 places below Leeds. Their stadium, Gander Green Lane, boasts "two meat roll concessions and a mix of low structures, some resembling bus shelters"; one of the clearances on Sunday disappeared into a nearby park, the other "rattled a Portaloo". For six months, the side have had to put up with a leak in the changing room ceiling; now, some of their FA Cup windfall will be spent on fixing it. With average wages of just £500 a week, many players have to take a day job: captain Jamie Collins works as a builder. But it would be wrong to underestimate the club, as



Sutton's Jamie Collins

Leeds manager Garry Monk discovered: he fielded a weakened team and was "deservedly punished".

Liverpool walked into the same trap, said Ian Ladyman in the Daily Mail. The team for their FA Cup tie against Championship club Wolves wasn't merely "under-strength" – it was a side of "prospects and fringe players". So it was no surprise when they were beaten 2-1. Jürgen Klopp, the Reds' manager, is preoccupied with his team's title challenge. But a club that have won just one trophy in the past decade can't afford to pooh-pooh the FA Cup – they desperately need silverware, and any will do. Don't blame Klopp, said Chris Bascombe in The Daily Telegraph. Blame the FA's packed winter schedule.

The Wolves game was Liverpool's tenth in a month; at such a hectic time, managers have no choice but to write off certain games. The Premier League, with its TV money and Champions League places, takes priority – the FA Cup is "collateral damage".

Reading Boris Becker's tongue

Poker players are always on the lookout for an opponent's "tell", said Mike Atherton in The Times – for an unconscious, almost imperceptible tic that gives away the strength of the opponent's hand. And occasionally the same occurs in the world of sport, as the US tennis star Andre Agassi discovered in the course of his encounters with the great German tennis player Boris Becker.

The first time Agassi came up against Becker – in 1988 – he lost the match. He lost the next one too, and the one after that. But after that, in a decade-long rivalry which "became increasingly personal and bitter", Agassi dominated "time and again", losing just once to his nemesis. His secret? He had figured out Becker's "tell", enabling him to handle his "booming" serve.



Becker lines up a wide serve

All he had to do was look at Becker's mouth, said Emily Benammar in the Herald Sun (Melbourne). Agassi noticed that just before the German tossed the ball, he'd stick out his tongue. If it went to the left of his mouth, he'd serve wide; if it stayed in the middle, he'd serve straight. But now that he'd found out how to nullify Becker's greatest strength, Agassi had a new problem: he couldn't let Becker know he'd been rumpled. So he would let Becker win the odd service point, to allay

his suspicions. Even then, Becker had a nagging feeling something was up. But it was only when he retired, in 1999, that Agassi finally confessed. "I used to go home and tell my wife, 'It's like he reads my mind,'" Becker told Agassi. "Little did I know you were reading my tongue."

Sporting headlines

Horse racing Many Clouds, the winner of the 2015 Grand National, died from bleeding on the lung. It collapsed during the Cotswold Chase at Cheltenham.

Football In the Premier League, Chelsea drew 1-1 with Liverpool to extend their lead at the top of the table to nine points. Watford beat Arsenal 2-1. Marseille bought West Ham forward Dimitri Payet for £25m. Southampton signed Manolo Gabbiadini from Napoli for £14m.

Boxing In the first loss of his professional career, Carl Frampton was defeated on points by Léo Santa Cruz.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

The Way of the Strangers

by Graeme Wood

Allen Lane 352pp £20

Repulsion and ridicule are two common reactions to Daesh, said Christina Lamb in *The Sunday Times*. Yet according to the US journalist Graeme Wood, both are inadequate (if understandable). Instead, he claims, we should strive to understand the group's "theological underpinnings". In *The Way of the Strangers*, Wood sets out to do this by talking to some of its "chief apologists". Though he doesn't go to Raqqa – such a trip would "almost certainly be fatal" – he tracks down sympathisers in Cairo, London, Melbourne and Tokyo.

Generally, Daesh ideologues are happy to talk to him, offering him pizza, or lamb, while "smilingly" describing the "coming apocalypse". Wood emerges convinced that it "makes no sense" to dismiss their followers as thugs who use religion as a fig leaf. On the contrary, many are clever, and most are genuine believers who strive to follow radical Islamic teachings "in the strictest way". This is an "important" work. Daesh may be losing much of its territory, but as the "zeal" of Wood's interviewees makes "scarily clear", its military defeat "will not be the end".

Most people who read or argue about radical Islam have encountered "what I would call the Karen Armstrong school of



religious apologetics", said David Aaronovitch in *The Times*. This holds that "malign religious practice" is always the product of "politics or social structures or personal inadequacies", not of religious belief. In Daesh's case, such a view is especially attractive, because the "last thing the world needs is to lump in 1.6 billion Muslims with a few tens of thousands of murderous zealots". Yet, as Wood's "indispensable" book makes clear, "such scruples" have "led to a fundamental misunderstanding" of Daesh. All the evidence

suggests that those who travel to fight for it are inspired by a coherent, almost respectable, ideology.

As well as being "sobering and gripping", this book also "ranks as the funniest yet written on Daesh", said Tom Holland in the *New Statesman*. In Australia, Wood visits Musa Cerantonio, the country's "highest-profile sympathiser", who interjects appreciative comments about Monty Python and Stephen Fry into a discussion of "immolation as a method of execution". Though darkly comic, the scene is also "terrifying" because, as Wood makes clear, views not unlike Cerantonio's are shared by "large numbers of people across the world".

Once upon a time in the East

by Xiaolu Guo

Chatto & Windus 336pp £16.99

Ever since Jung Chang's *Wild Swans* became an international bestseller in the early 1990s, memoirs of exiled Chinese women and their "wrenching journeys" from East to West have been one of publishing's "holy grails", said Richard Lloyd Parry in *The Times*. The latest addition to the genre is *Once upon a time in the East*, novelist Xiaolu Guo's account of her turbulent upbringing in southeast China and her later move to Britain. This, however, is no rehash of *Wild Swans*: Guo is a "bolder, angrier" figure than Chang, who came from a privileged Party background. Guo, by contrast, was raised mainly by her impoverished grandparents and, as an "undesired girl", was always "the last to be fed, educated and given love". In adolescence, she was "first groped, then raped" by a family friend, who told her: "Stop crying! Every girl has to go through this". But, desperate to make a mark, she escaped to Beijing, where she studied film, and later to Britain, where she forged a successful writing career, publishing a well-received novel, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary For Lovers*, in 2007.

This "extraordinary memoir" will only enhance its author's "burgeoning" reputation, said Ian Critchley in *The Sunday Times*. Though "often shocking in its descriptions of violence and deprivation", Guo also writes with "wry humour", particularly about her early disillusionment with Britain, which she expected – from watching *The Forsyte Saga* – to be full of "fancy houses and rich people dressed in elegant costumes riding about on white horses". Unlike many other memoirists of exile, Guo "neither romanticises her past nor glorifies her new home", said Megan Walsh in the *New Statesman*. Written in an "audacious, restless" style, this is a work of "fiery, artistic defiance".



Novel of the week

4321

by Paul Auster

Faber 864pp £20

Paul Auster's latest novel tells the story of Archie Ferguson, an American of Jewish-Russian heritage born, like his creator, in Newark, New Jersey, in 1947. At first, *4321* seems "engagingly old-fashioned in spirit", said Blake Morrison in *The Guardian*. But this being Auster, it "can't be that simple" – and soon enough, it veers off into experimentation. Auster lays out four parallel lives for his protagonist, all resembling each other but differing in certain details. Odd that he should make his four Fergusons so similar – all are baseball-obsessed, Paris-loving writers – yet even so, this is an engrossing, expansive work.

While Auster appears to be trying new things, his ego looms as large as ever, said Tim Martin in *The Daily Telegraph*. "As the books goes on, the sense grows of being drawn further into the Austerverse", a strange place "where everything orbits the author's self-regard". The sheer level of detail, too, is a problem, said Anthony Cummins in *The Observer*. There are lengthy disquisitions on, for instance, a "first taste of couscous" and parallel parking. "You can fill up 864 pages pretty quickly writing like this."

Theatre: Us/Them

Dorfman, National Theatre, London SE1 (020-7452 3000). Until 18 February Running time: 1hr ★★★★★

A boy and a girl are drawing a series of square shapes on the floor. They look like battlements. Or perhaps a map. "These are the outbuildings," says the girl. And then: "That's where the toddlers were". Carly Wijs' two-handed play, first seen last year at Edinburgh, and performed by Belgian theatre company Bronks, is – quite remarkably – a family show about the 2004 Beslan school siege and massacre in North Ossetia, said Claire Allfree in *The Daily Telegraph*. Always compelling, at times heart-breaking, and at others

mordantly funny, it "provides a child-sized view, beautifully recreated here", on an atrocity in which at least 330 of the 1,100-plus hostages were killed – among them 186 children.

A terror attack by Chechen separatists targeting schoolchildren sounds like an unlikely basis for a piece of theatre, said Paul Taylor in *The Independent* – especially one recommended for audiences from the age of 12 upwards. However, "any misgivings about potential insensitivity or exploitation" are quickly and decisively allayed by this "startlingly powerful" show. Wijs' "masterstroke" is to imagine the ordeal entirely from the perspective of two of the children (the only characters we see), played here by young adult actors Gytha Parmentier and Roman Van Houtven. In "expertly choreographed" performances, the



Parmentier and Van Houtven: "expertly choreographed" performances

pair "capture the moment-to-moment intentness of childhood without ever condescending to the characters by being cloyingly cute". Looping string like a cat's cradle across the stage, the pair poignantly convey the horror of the school gymnasium being rigged with explosives, said Patricia Nicol in *The Sunday Times*. Most upsetting of all is their description of the delicate procedure by which the guards pass between themselves control of the foot-activated detonator.

What's most "remarkable" about this "special" show is the lack of "sentimentality, emotion

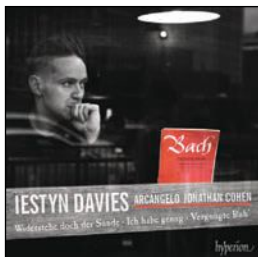
or Hollywood hype", said Ann Treneman in *The Times*. There are a few moments when it all gets a little confusing (multiple possible endings are presented), but it soon sorts itself out. This is "inventive storytelling at its best" – and it "stays with you".

The week's other opening

Educating Rita Bolton Octagon (01204-520661) until 11 Feb, then Derby Theatre (01332-593939) 17 Feb-11 Mar
Elizabeth Newman's classy production of the Willy Russell play has an "imposing visual impact", cleverly evoking academia as a "seductively erudite alternative universe". Great performances, too, from Jessica Baglow and David Birrell (*Guardian*).

CDs of the week: three new releases

Bach: Cantatas 54, 82 and 170 – Iestyn Davies, Arcangelo, Jonathan Cohen
Hyperion
£13



The harpsichordist and conductor Jonathan Cohen and his first-rate period ensemble Arcangelo have shaped this engrossing disc, of three Bach cantatas and two instrumental sinfonias, around the British countertenor Iestyn Davies. And although it is early in the year, says Fiona Maddocks in *The Observer*, it will surely prove a contender for one of the records of 2017. Davies' "singular gifts of open-hearted expression, reined in to perfection and with no excess or indulgence, are expertly balanced" by Arcangelo's soloists.

It is an "ideal and rewarding" programme for Davies' beautifully vivid countertenor, said Hugh Canning in *The Sunday Times*. If his German is "not entirely idiomatic, his words are invariably clear, and he relishes the interplay" with the soloists; oboe in the "ravishing opening" aria of BWV 170, and organ in *Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel* in BWV 54. "Best of all is the rapt singing" of *Schlummert ein* (Go to sleep), in the well-known BWV 82 (*Ich habe genug*). "A lovely disc."

Eliza Carthy & The Wayward Band: Big Machine
Topic
£9.99



The "last exhalation" of contemporary folk collective Bellowhead in 2016 has left a gap in the market for a "full-on Brit-folk big band", said David Honigmann in the FT. And it seems Eliza Carthy is the woman to fill it. *Big Machine* is Carthy's "best in years – a varied whirl of Manchester ballads", swaying funky compositions, such as *Hug You Like A Mountain* with Teddy Thompson, and "Weimar oompah", as on *The Fitter's Song* and *Great Grey Back*.

This is the kind of folk album that will "appeal to people who think they don't like folk", said Clive Davis in *The Sunday Times*. There's a hint of Bellowhead about the "kaleidoscopic mini big-band arrangements", but Carthy's commanding voice, and her embrace of everything from the "relatively decorous" rapping of MC Dizraeli (on *You Know Me*), to "raucous folk-rock and subtle Moorish rhythms", give this "captivating" record "a rambunctious character all of its own. Past and present, innovation and tradition, are woven into a glorious tapestry."

The xx: I See You
Young Turks
£11



From the first moments of the opening track *Dangerous* – a "blast of dancehallsque synthesised horns" over a thudding bass beat – the Mercury prize-winning group's third album manages "to sound both exactly like The xx and unlike anything they have done before", said Alexis Petridis in *The Guardian*. Sure, the lyrical mood remains "yearning and fragile". But the band's sound has become broader and richer, more adventurous and dance-influenced, and the results are thrilling.

It feels like the Londoners have "relaxed" into their success, said Greg Cochrane on NME.com. This is a new, tactile, self-confident version of The xx, and much of the music is warm, joyful even. *Say Something Loving* is lush and glowing. And the lead single, *On Hold*, which samples the 1980s hitmakers Hall and Oates, is going to "sound huge in the festival fields" come summer. It all feels like "the moment where The xx stop glancing shyly at their reflection and confront themselves in the mirror. What they discover is infectious."

Stars reflect the overall quality of reviews and our own independent assessment (4 stars=don't miss; 1 star=don't bother)

Hacksaw Ridge

Dir: Mel Gibson
2hrs 19mins (15)

A gruelling but gripping war movie

★★★

Having long been out of favour in Hollywood, Mel Gibson has found a perfect directorial comeback vehicle in *Hacksaw Ridge*, said Robbie Collin in The Daily Telegraph. This “fantastically moving” WWII movie tells the true story of Desmond Doss, a Seventh-day Adventist from rural Virginia whose religious beliefs precluded him carrying a weapon in battle. He did, however, serve as a medic in the fighting against the Japanese at Okinawa, where he saved dozens of his wounded comrades. The film’s first half is a bit “soapy”, as we watch Doss (Andrew Garfield) bid farewell to his winsome sweetheart (Teresa Palmer) and then endure the traditional sadism at boot camp, said Phil de Semlyen in Empire. Yet the battle scenes are superb. Well, yes, but be warned, said Geoffrey Macnab in The Independent, the director has lost none of his “fascination with violence”: there are endless shots of soldiers having limbs blown off, or being torched by flamethrowers. It’s decidedly odd to find a film about a pacifist that is quite so in love with violence, said Richard Lawson in Vanity Fair. Yet in the context of Doss’s extraordinary courage and humanity, it does in fact prove “incredibly effective”.



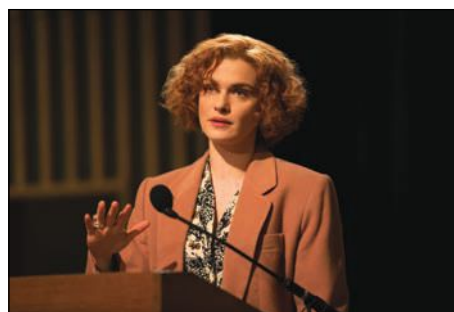
Denial

Dir: Mick Jackson
1hr 49mins (12A)

True-life drama with Timothy Spall

★★

How could anyone deny the Holocaust? Or more to the point, how do you prove it took place in the face of insidious pseudo-historical refutations? That’s the question at the heart of this “solid, satisfying” dramatisation of the late-1990s libel case in which the notorious Holocaust denier David Irving sued Penguin Books, and the American academic Deborah Lipstadt, for having accused him of falsifying history, said Allan Hunter in the Daily Express. Alas, though boasting a script by playwright David Hare, and an impressive cast that includes Rachel Weisz as Lipstadt, and an on-form Andrew Scott as her abrasive solicitor, *Denial* is a terribly unsubtle movie, said Tom Huddleston in Time Out. At one point, Lipstadt declares that her first name, Deborah, means “warrior” in Hebrew; at another, she gazes meaningfully at a statue of Boadicea. The film’s “ace in the hole” is Timothy Spall’s “impish” turn as Irving, which is disturbingly compelling, said Tim Robey in The Daily Telegraph. Yet not even Spall can save this film from its general air of being made for TV. Best see it on the small screen.



Sing

Dirs: Christophe Lourdelet
and Garth Jennings
1hr 48mins (U)

An energetic animated musical

★★★

This “fun, toe-tapping” animated musical takes a conventional idea – a comedy set around a talent contest – and turns it into something “winning”, said Dave Calhoun in Time Out. Our hero is a koala bear and theatrical impresario (voiced by Matthew McConaughey) who seeks to revive his fortunes by hosting a singing competition. A clerical error leads to his \$1,000 prize money being advertised as \$100,000, and soon every animal in town is queuing up to try their luck. With a host of celebrities contributing vocal talents, including Reese Witherspoon and Seth MacFarlane, it’s hard not to enjoy *Sing*, said Geoffrey Macnab in The Independent. Yet it doesn’t bear comparison with recent animated gems such as *Zootopia*. True, it’s not “particularly original”, said Wendy Ide in The Observer, yet this new film is “fizzing” with energy. And I “challenge you not to well up” when Meena, a painfully shy elephant, belts out a magnificent rendition of Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*.



Why Brexit has been good for British film

The markets were uncertain, the future unclear. Yet somehow 2016 proved to be a bumper year for the British film industry, said Alex Ritman in The Hollywood Reporter. According to new figures published by the British Film Institute (BFI), last year the industry saw its second-highest UK box office takings ever. And it hasn’t just been a question of financing films: an impressive £1.6bn was spent on making films here in Britain. That’s a rise of 13% on 2015, and the highest such figure since the BFI began compiling their statistics back in 1994.

Oddly enough, the spike in spending may partly have been driven by Brexit. The fall in the value of the pound following the EU referendum in June has made it tantalisingly cheap for foreign studios to make films here. Some of the credit must also go to George Osborne, said Catherine Shoard in The Guardian. As chancellor, he set up a tax relief scheme in 2014 designed to lure Disney to



A Star Wars wedding

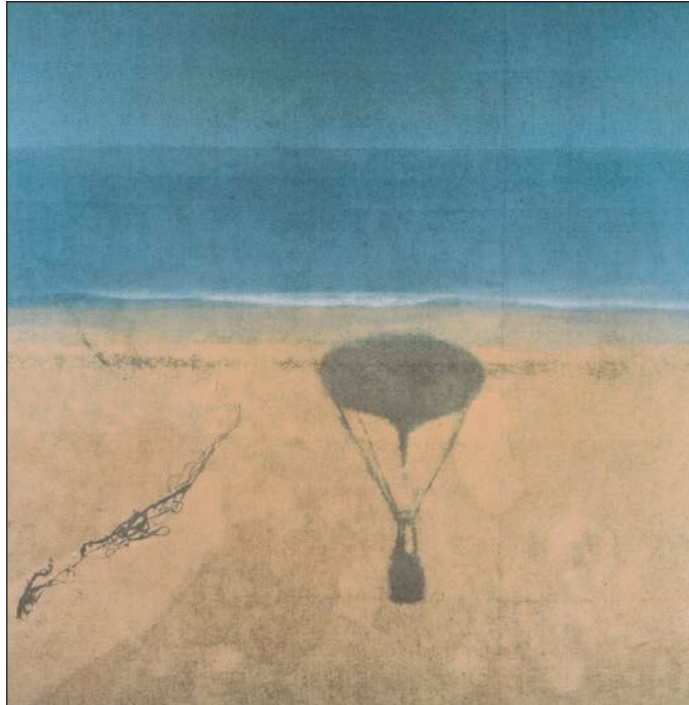
cross the Atlantic to shoot their mega-budget Star Wars reboot, *The Force Awakens*. This set a trend for other major Hollywood studios to follow suit.

The BFI report also revealed that the UK’s independent cinemas are thriving, said Rob Walker in The Observer. Just a few years ago many small local cinemas were on the verge of folding, yet last year they accounted for 23% of screens nationwide – up from 17% the previous year. Some, such as the Duke of York’s Picturehouse in Brighton, have found a new revenue source in live-streaming plays and operas. Others have diversified in more eccentric and extravagant ways. For example, the Electric Cinema in Birmingham was last year the venue for a Star Wars-themed wedding: Lyndsey Holden and James Burrows exchanged vows there, flanked by six stormtroopers and a 6ft 7in Chewbacca. “Even the registrar did his reading in a Yoda voice,” the bride recalled. “It was fab.”

Exhibition of the week **Michael Andrews: Earth Air Water**

Gagosian, London W1 (020-7495 1500, www.gagosian.com). Until 25 March

You have probably never heard of the late English painter Michael Andrews, said Michael Glover in *The Independent*. He died “relatively young”, “eschewed publicity”, and “produced very little” in the course of his career – sometimes no more than two paintings a year. But Andrews (1928-1995) was one of the most “emotionally substantial and intellectually adventurous” English painters of the postwar era – a status confirmed by this new exhibition at London’s Gagosian gallery. The show is the first “substantial” retrospective of his work in 15 years, bringing together 64 paintings – incredibly, about a quarter of his total output. From views of Ayers Rock and English country landscapes to portraits of 1950s Soho bohemians, the works in this “breathtaking” show have a “joyous lift” to them.



Lights VII: A Shadow (1974): Andrews’ “masterpiece”

Raised in rural Norfolk, Andrews spent his early adulthood in London’s “artistic bohemia”, said Martin Gayford in *The Spectator*. Appropriately, the show opens with a 1962 depiction of *The Colony Room*, the “celebrated Soho watering hole” where the likes of Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud (both of whom are clearly recognisable here) would frequently gather. But where Andrews’ early work tended to depict “people and parties”, he later became influenced by Zen Buddhism and worked “almost

“dazzling array” of works conclusively proves that he was Bacon and Freud’s “poetic equal”. His 1980s paintings of “strange and colossal” rock formations in the Australian outback, for example, “do justice to nature at its wildest in a way that bears comparison with Turner”. Even better is his “masterpiece”, *Lights VII: A Shadow* (1974), which depicts the shadow of a hot air balloon moving “gently” across a beach. This is “the rare kind of show that changes a reputation for ever”.

exclusively” as a landscape artist. From the 1970s onwards, he turned his hand to a number of unlikely subjects: tropical fish in his private aquarium; Scottish moors; and shortly before his death, the Thames Estuary at low tide. He was forever trying out new techniques, using spray paint and, in one instance, a hairdryer to blow paint across the canvas. But such experimentation meant that his work was occasionally “uneven”. A case in point is 1975’s *A Cabin*, in which we see a plane flying over a city. The “uncharacteristically clunky” depiction of the aircraft means that the work “doesn’t quite come off”.

Nevertheless, the exhibition corrects the idea that Andrews was merely a “bit player” in the story of British art, said Jonathan Jones in *The Guardian*. Indeed, this

Where to buy...

The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery

Djordje Ozbolt

at Hauser & Wirth Somerset

It is unlikely that this show will get the thumbs up from all who visit. It is gaudy, brash and vulgar, quite literally packed to the rafters with sculptures, paintings and unusual *objets trouvés*. Amorphous, torso-sized sculptures crafted from builders’ materials are placed on plinths in several rooms, their aggressively bright colours enough to give one a migraine. Outside, Djordje Ozbolt, a Yugoslavian-born, London-based artist, has arranged dozens of sinister garden gnomes in a long line, looking for all the world like a column of prisoners on a forced march. Meanwhile, bafflingly energetic paintings that draw from street art clichés, pop culture and – improbably – 17th century still life, ring the walls of the gallery. It would be easy to write all



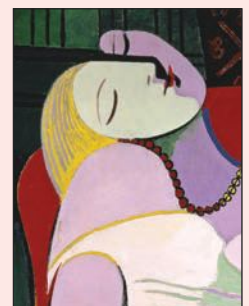
Moral Dilemma of a Confused Mind (2016), acrylic on canvas, 152cm x 122cm

this off as so much banal dross, were it not so unrelentingly menacing, if not actively terrifying. For better or for worse, this is not a show you will forget. Prices start at £14,000.

Durslade Farm, Bruton, Somerset (01749-814060). Until 7 May.

Picasso’s year of wonders

Many of Picasso’s greatest works of art are being brought together for a “once-in-a-lifetime exhibition” in London and Paris, says Mark Brown in *The Guardian*. The show, a collaboration between Tate Modern and the French capital’s Picasso Museum, will feature some 100 paintings, sculptures and drawings all produced in 1932 – the artist’s “year of wonders”. It was the year he created such masterpieces as *Le Rêve* (pictured), an “erotic, desire-filled” portrait of his young lover Marie-Thérèse Walter, as well as a host of “surrealist works, drawings of the crucifixion and voluptuous sculptures”. It was the year the then 50-year-old artist held his first retrospective, cementing his status as the world’s most influential living artist. And it was a year of high drama in his personal life: he was torn between his wife, Olga, and Marie-Thérèse, who towards the end of 1932 fell ill after almost drowning in the River Marne. *Picasso 1932* will run at Tate Modern from March to September 2018.



Best books... Jodi Picoult

The bestselling American novelist Jodi Picoult picks her five favourite books. Her latest novel, *Great Small Things*, about an African-American midwife accused of killing a white supremacist's baby, is published by Hodder & Stoughton at £14.99



Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell, 1936 (Pan £9.99). I read this for the first time when I was 13, and it came alive for me. I could smell Georgia burning; I could imagine the sounds and sights of the American Civil War. Here was an author creating an entire world out of words and I thought, "I could do that too". It's the book that made me want to become a writer.

Out of Africa by Karen Blixen, 1937 (Penguin £8.99). I discovered Blixen's gothic fairy tales (written under the pen name Isak Dinesen) while I was at Princeton. Lush and over-written, they're quite different to her memoir. I was fascinated by the way her writing became

stripped down the closer the tale was to her own life: describing her relationship with her lover Denys Finch Hatton, the sentences are almost simplistic. It was as if words failed her, because they could not contain all the emotions she had for this man.

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, c.1594-95 (OUP £6.99). Sadly, I think this kind of guy went out of fashion with doublets and hose, but as long as there are adolescents who believe that they are the first to invent true love, and as long as there are parents to stand in their way, the story is relevant.

Hills Like White Elephants by Ernest Hemingway, 1927

(in *The First Forty-Nine Stories*, Arrow £7.99). I discovered Hemingway in college. I didn't understand the wow factor until I read this short story. It's a piece about an act that is never actually mentioned – in fact, the omission (and its reason for never being uttered) is the most critical element in the story.

Turtle Moon by Alice Hoffman, 1992 (Vintage £8.99). My favourite contemporary novelist. Hoffman's work lies in the dreamy world where love collides with magical realism, reminding me of Gabriel García Márquez. She has a startling, beautiful turn of phrase that takes my breath away.

For out-of-print books visit www.bibliofind.co.uk

The Week's guide to what's worth seeing and reading

Showing now

Art at The Old Vic, London SE1 (0844-871 7628). Rufus Sewell stars in this "very funny and exquisitely calibrated" revival of Yasmina Reza's comedy about the complexities of male friendship (Independent). Ends 18 February.

Book now

Damian Lewis plays a middle-aged man who falls in love with a goat in Edward Albee's **The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?** Sophie Okonedo is his appalled wife. 24 March-24 June, Theatre Royal Haymarket, London SW1 (020-7930 8800).

Before Stalin clamped down on them, Soviet artists were some of the most experimental in the world. The RA's **Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932** features work by leading artists of the era, including Kandinsky, Chagall and Malevich. 11 February-17 April, Royal Academy, London W1 (020-7300 8090).

The mammoth line-up for the 15th edition of **Glasgow International Comedy Festival** features Frankie Boyle, Bridget Christie, Rich



Malevich's *Peasants* (c.1930) at the RA's Revolution Hall, Stewart Lee, Josie Long, and many more. There's also a staging of the hit comedy *The Play That Goes Wrong*. 9-26 March, various venues, Glasgow (0844-873 7353).

Just out in paperback

The North Water by Ian McGuire (Scribner £8.99). A "blood-soaked narrative" about a 19th century whaling voyage to the Arctic that ends in disaster, McGuire's brutal second novel has "exceptional power" (Sunday Times).

Television

Programmes

SAS: Rogue Warriors

Ben Macintyre is given rare access to SAS secret files, and interviews some of its founder members, for this series about the extraordinary fighting force. Mon 6 Feb, BBC2 9pm (60mins).

Confessions of the Paparazzi

Notorious freelance photographer George Bamby reveals the tricks of his seedy trade. Mon 6 Feb, C4 9pm (60mins).

The Moorside

Sheridan Smith stars in this two-part drama based on the 2008 disappearance of nine-year-old Shannon Matthews from a Dewsbury council estate. Tue 7 Feb, BBC1 9pm (60mins).

Timeshift – Flights of Fancy: Pigeons and the British

This documentary looks at the achievements of the humble pigeon and meets the pigeon fanciers striving to breed the perfect bird. Narrated by Miles Jupp. Tue 7 Feb, BBC4 9pm (60mins).

Roots Acclaimed US remake of the seminal 1970s historical drama. Adapted from Alex Haley's book, this four-part series tells the story of Kunta Kinte, a proud African slave, and his descendants. Wed 8 Feb, BBC4 9pm (95mins).

Alone with Chrissie Hynde

Arena spends the summer with The Pretenders' founder, as she visits her home town in Ohio, hangs out with Sandra Bernhard, and gigs in London. Fri 10 Feb, BBC4 9pm (60mins).

Films

In Darkness (2011) Drama based on the true story of Leopold Socha, a sewer worker who hid Jews in secret underground passageways in Lviv during WWII. Sat 4 Feb, BBC2 1.20am (135mins).

Coming up for auction

At Christie's **Interiors** sale, Chesterfield sofas, card tables and Persian rugs are going under the hammer alongside a number of more quirky items, including a collection of eight red ministerial dispatch boxes (est. £1,500), a glass table with a scorpion-shaped base (est. £1,500), and a slipper and other items believed to have belonged to Queen Victoria. 22 February, London SW7 (020-7930 6074).



◀ **Dubai:** This luxurious family villa set on the beachfront of Dubai's Palm Jumeirah overlooks the Gulf and the marina skyline. The 7-bedroom villa has been recently renovated and tastefully furnished. There is a fine balance of indoor-outdoor living with the property's large living and dining rooms opening out on to the patio and pool deck area. Facilities include two allocated parking, private games room and barbeque area. The property lies within easy reach to beach clubs, shops, restaurants and five star hotels. \$17m; Luxhabitat (971 4) 432 7972.



UK houses in conservation areas

▶ **East Sussex:** Maltravers Street, Arundel. A Grade II cottage with many original features, in a sought-after location in the heart of the historic town. Master bed with iron fireplace, guest bed, family bath, kitchen, breakfast/dining area, sitting room with slate fireplace, bifold doors to courtyard garden. £435,000; Sims Williams (01903-885678).



▲ **London:** Fournier Street, E1. A Grade II, five-storey Georgian townhouse on one of the most desirable streets in the Spitalfields conservation area. Built in the early 1700s, the house has sash windows and high ceilings throughout. 3 beds, 1 further bed/recep, 2 baths, kitchen/recep, 1 further recep, WC/cloakroom, vault, purpose-built studio, garden. £2.5m freehold, no onward chain; Savills (020-7578 6200).



▶ **Gloucestershire:** 40 and 42 Long Street, Tetbury. An exceptional Grade I listed Elizabethan townhouse with retail space, thought to be the oldest house in Tetbury, with parts dating back to the 15th century. Set over 3 floors with a cellar below, the house has been comprehensively renovated by the current owners. Master suite, 2 further beds, family bath, shower, breakfast/kitchen/recep, 1 further recep, office/showroom, 6 further showrooms, utility, cloakroom, study, courtyard garden, outbuildings. £1.25m; Knight Frank (01285-659771).



▶ **East Sussex:** Osborn House, Bexhill-on-Sea. A Grade II listed Georgian townhouse in the conservation area of Bexhill Old Town, a short walk from the seafront and the De La Warr Pavilion. Master suite, 4 further double beds, family bath, breakfast/kitchen with Aga, 3 receps, private walled garden, cobbled patio, vegetable patch. £600,000; Fine & Country (01580-715000).





► **Mumbai:** Heaven Hills, billed as a 'five-star exotic weekend home', is spread over two acres on Manor Road, off the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway. Alongside 140 fully furnished apartments are amenities including a swimming pool, 12,000sq ft club house, gym, 24-seater full HD movie theatre, parking plaza, landscaped garden, and indoor/outdoor play areas for children. From \$135,000. XL Realtorz (+91) 8793 110022.



► **Kent:** Aylmer House, Tumblers Hill, Sutton Valence. A Grade II house with a terraced garden and direct access to the Greensand Way and other lovely country walks. 5 beds, family bath, WC, shower, kitchen, 2 receps, utility/study area, hall, cellar, garden, orchard, garden stores. OIEO £600,000; Jackson-Stops & Staff (01580-720000).



► **Herefordshire:** Coed Lank Farm, Broad Oak. A Grade II, 16th century farmhouse on the outskirts of Garway, with two detached 2-bed holiday homes, plus a range of outbuildings and 4.5 acres of mature grounds and gardens. Master suite, 3 further suites, 1 further bed, family bath, kitchen, 3 receps, boot room, attic, garage, manège, paddock, stabling. £950,000; Roscoe Rogers Knight (01600-772929).

LEISURE

Food & Drink

What the experts recommend



Morah: Med-meets-Middle East

Morah JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai, Business Bay, Dubai (04-5601799)

Hidden sky-high on the 71st and 72nd floors of the JW Marriott Marquis is Morah, an opulent space that looks like a blend between a Floridian oil tycoon's retirement home and chic North African riad. The flavours from the kitchen are Med-meets-Middle East. The dinner started with a creamed spinach and feta pide (AED40) – this crispy, naughty carb canoe was the most intensely fried pide we've ever had – which was followed by the fried chicken (AED80), soft and juicy but we'd have loved a bit of citrus or vinegar to add oomph. That said, the dish was proof that everything tastes better with a touch of Levant seasoning (sprinkled with za'atar). The Spanish octopus (AED80) transported us back to the streets of Barcelona with its red pepper flavour, but the star savoury offering was the lamb ribs (AED90). The dish had a pleasant, mouth-warming spice, and the meat didn't have that cloying taste lamb is prone to. Instead, it just tasted of barbecue, in a good way. The fried rice with sujuk, shrimp, green peas and crispy chicken skin (AED85) was a pleasant side, but it needed more moisture. We ended up combining it with the yoghurt from the mini Turkish manti dumplings (AED60), which was a success. If you're full from all the pide and rice (which we were), round off by sharing the banana peanut butter parfait (AED45). This tropical dessert, featuring coconut flavours, is a touch crunchy and yet light as air, making it a textural smash hit. Daily 6pm to late.

Passione e Tradizione 451 West Green Road, London N15 (020-8245 9491)

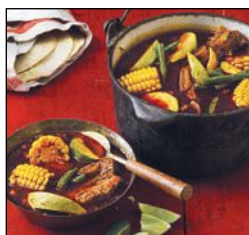
After a few years living in Harringay, says David Sexton in the London Evening Standard, even the most grateful connoisseur of the area's many excellent Turkish grill houses (in fact, mostly Kurdish) might wish for "a little more variety to be dotted among them". So the opening just before Christmas of this "little Italian gem, at the rougher end of the patch" comes as "a total delight". The Italian-raised chef-owner, Mustapha Mouflih, is the man behind the raved-about Anima e Cuore in Kentish Town, and his new place is just as admirable. Our starters of fresh pasta were "as good as any ever" – one with a deep partridge ragu, the other with an "incredibly generous grating of profoundly aromatic truffle". Together with gorgeous home-made puddings (cherry semifreddo and sorbets), the whole meal was such a success I've been back twice since. Other treats have included savoury smoked tomato *arancini*, rich Gorgonzola and radicchio-stuffed *crespelle* (crêpes), perfectly lemony veal *scaloppine*, and another amazing pasta dish, this time with a long-simmered lamb ragu. By our third visit, the place was rammed, mostly with Italians. About £60 for two, with wine.

Jihwaja 353 Kennington Lane, London SE11 (020-7582 4680) I emerged from this "hilariously brilliant" new Korean restaurant in Vauxhall feeling as if I had been "glazed inside and out by their sweet-salty chilli sauce", and with my ears "echoing from the crunch" of their "completely outrageous" fried chicken, says Jay Rayner in The Observer. You pay £16.90 for the "whole bird", cut into pieces and "battered and battered again", then drenched in a "sweet and fiery" sauce of *gochujang* (hot pepper paste), soy, honey and more chilli; or a soy garlic version. Both are a joy – and "crisp in a way that echoes through your jaw". Other delights included "utterly compelling" seaweed rice balls, "laced with the iodine-rich tang of the shore"; and a *bibimbap* (rice bowl) piled with lightly spiced braised meat belly, sautéed vegetables and fried egg, with more *gochujang* on the side. "Dig in." Meal for two, with drinks, £50.

Recipe of the week: Mole de olla

Not all Mexican *moles* are thick sauces ladled over meat, says Lesley Téllez. This "mole in a pot", popular across central Mexico, is a richly full-bodied, chilli-accented broth combined with chunks of stewed beef, corn on the cob, squash and green beans

Serves 4-6 For the meat: 900g beef chuck steak or short ribs, cut into large pieces 450g veal or marrow bones ¼ large onion 2 garlic cloves, peeled 2 sprigs of fresh thyme 5 black peppercorns 1 celery stick, roughly chopped 1 carrot, roughly chopped *For the sauce:* 8 costeño chillies 2 guajillo chillies 2 pasilla chillies rapeseed oil, for frying 4 black peppercorns 2 cloves ½ tsp aniseed ½ tsp Mexican oregano 2 heaped tsps finely chopped fresh ginger scant ½ tsp ground nutmeg 2 plum tomatoes, quartered 4 small garlic cloves, peeled ¼ medium onion salt 2 tsp lard or rapeseed oil 2 corn cobs, husked and each cut into four pieces 110g green beans, cut into 5cm lengths 1 chayote, unpeeled, sliced pole to pole and thinly sliced 1 large Mexican squash or courgette, cut into 1cm-thick half-moons 5-8 sprigs of epazote, to taste 12 warmed corn tortillas 4 limes, cut into wedges



• To prepare the meat, place all the ingredients in a large, deep saucepan. Cover with water, bring to the boil and skim off any surface scum. Reduce heat and simmer gently, partly covered, for about 1 hour 45 minutes, until

tender. Transfer the meat to a bowl and strain the stock, discarding the aromatics. Skim off any large pools of fat. You can refrigerate the meat and stock for up to 2 days.

• For the sauce, snip the stems off the dried chillies and shake out the seeds (if the chillies are too brittle, toast them first in a comal griddle or non-stick frying pan to soften). Fry the chillies in the oil in batches, one variety at a time, and stirring constantly to avoid burning for about 10 seconds, until they change colour and emit a spicy aroma. Set aside.

• Grind the peppercorns, cloves and aniseed in a mortar. Transfer to a blender with the oregano, ginger, nutmeg, tomatoes, garlic, onion and a pinch of salt, along with the fried chillies and 120ml of the reserved stock. Blend on high until smooth.

• Heat the lard (or oil) in a medium frying pan over a medium heat. Add the chilli sauce in one quick pour (stand back, as it may splatter). Cook for 8-10 minutes until the sauce darkens, stirring often so it doesn't stick on the base of the pan.

• Put the rest of the stock and the meat in a large saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer. Pour in the chilli sauce and add the corn, green beans and 1 tbsp salt. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes, until the beans are almost tender. Add the chayote, squash and epazote and cook for 10 minutes, or until the squash is tender. Taste and add more salt or epazote, if desired. Serve in deep bowls with the warmed tortillas and lime wedges.

Taken from Eat Mexico: Recipes from Mexico City's Streets, Markets & Fondas by Lesley Téllez, published by Kyle Books at £19.99.

New cars: "a colossal amount of fun"

A lot has changed in the past six decades, said Jonathan Burn in Auto Express, "but with the exception of a new name, the Caterham Seven really hasn't". Originally known as the Lotus, this open-top, two-seat roadster is celebrating its 60th birthday – and to mark the occasion, Caterham has launched the Seven Sprint, based on a mid-1960s design that "never made it past the drawing board". Just 60 models have been produced, at what is a "huge price" for a Caterham, but that hasn't deterred buyers: the Seven Sprint sold out within a week of being announced.

The car "recaptures the mood of the Swinging Sixties", said Ben Whitworth in Car magazine – while avoiding "the slightest whiff of retro cheesiness". Outside, there are front wings, chromed wheel caps and bubbled rear lamps, "wrapped up in



Caterham Seven Sprint

£27,995

a choice of yesteryear hues". Inside, the cabin is an old-fashioned treat, with a "delightfully thin" wooden steering wheel and a red leather dash. Don't be fooled by that "heritage styling", however – the car is underpinned by an up-to-date, albeit "dinky", turbocharged Suzuki engine.

Still, the Suzuki "does its best to emulate an ancient motor", said Will Beaumont in Evo. It's very noisy, though it feels more powerful than its 80bhp would suggest, and does 0-60mph in 6.5 seconds. The car doesn't cope well with rough or bumpy roads; elsewhere, however, it offers a "delicate and entertaining" drive. It feels most at home on smaller roads, where you can revel in its impressively precise steering. Although a lot of effort has gone into its "retro" looks, the Seven Sprint isn't a triumph of style over substance; "it's a colossal amount of fun".

The best... smartphone accessories



► **Griffin Survivor Extreme** Put your iPhone 7 or 7 Plus in this protective case and it'll withstand even a 10ft drop onto concrete. Relatively slim, it seals your screen, too, shielding it from mud and water (£40; www.griffintechnology.com).

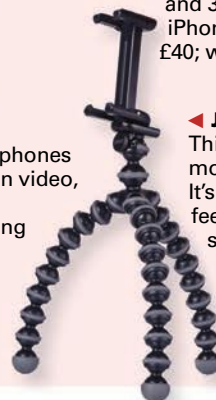


◀ **Roland Go:Mixer** Smartphones can produce high-resolution video, but their microphones leave something to be desired. Plugging in the Go:Mixer (which is being dispatched from next month) improves sound quality by letting you record and mix in stereo (£85; www.gear4music.com).



▲ **Estream** If you're heading into the wilds, this charger could come in handy. A portable hydroelectric generator, it uses any moving water source to produce energy, which can then power a USB-connected device (pre-order for £189, dispatched next month; www.energynomad.com).

► **Meem** This clever device distinguishes itself from other portable chargers by doubling as an external hard drive – ensuring your phone is backed up automatically every time you charge it. There's a 16GB version for Android devices, and 32GB for iPhones (from £40; www.amazon.co.uk).



◀ **Joby GripTight GorillaPod Stand** This tripod will help you get the most out of your phone's camera. It's impressively adaptable: rubber feet keep it stable on uneven surfaces – and you can use the bendy legs to tie it to railings, say, or hang it from a tree (£15.59; www.viking-direct.co.uk).

Tips of the week... how to look after your car

- Some fuel pumps can overheat if they're not submerged in petrol, so to make your pump last longer, aim to keep your tank at least a quarter full.
- If you have the time, let your car sit for a minute after it starts so the oil can circulate, lifting the engine's temperature. Don't be tempted to rev: it won't speed up the process, and it could cause damage, as abrupt changes in temperature can create stress between engine components.
- Always use the handbrake when parked, even if the surface is level. Otherwise, the vehicle's weight rests on a piece of metal that can break – and is costly to replace.
- When backing out of a parking space, make sure the car has fully stopped before flicking from reverse to drive. Switching while you're still rolling backwards can harm the engine and transmission.
- Don't rest your hand on the gear lever. It puts strain on the transmission's bushings (bearings), wearing them out prematurely.

SOURCE: POPULAR MECHANICS

And for those who have everything...



The Full Stop Bowl is designed to stop you eating too much. It's modelled on the volume – and shape – of a human stomach, and the idea is that you only eat what it can hold (which isn't all that much).

£18; www.fullstopbowl.com

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

Where to find... food and drink subscriptions

Cocoa Runners sends four new bars of small-batch, single-estate chocolate a month – along with tasting notes on each one. You can choose between dark chocolate or a mixture of dark and milk (£19 a month; www.cocoarunners.com).

The Cheese Society offers an ever-changing roster of five cheeses a month, all of them from small producers. Totalling around 1kg, the options tend to include a blue cheese and a goat's cheese (from £31 a month; www.thecheesesociety.co.uk).

Cure and Simple produces traditionally cured meat from Suffolk, in a range of flavours – including Thai and bourbon. You can stick with the same kind every month, or get a different one each time (from £6 a month; www.cureandsimple.com).

Pact roasts coffee beans – sourced directly from farmers – and posts them to you. Subscriptions are easy to customise, with a choice of up to three varieties per delivery (from £7 a month; www.pactcoffee.com).

SOURCES: THE SUNDAY TIMES/THE INDEPENDENT

This week's dream: a tour of Germany's great church organs

To experience the music of Bach, Mozart and Handel in the way they expected it to be heard, travel to Germany – home to some of Europe's most magnificent church organs, says Akhil Sharma in the FT. The Germans have a particular passion for organ music (the country still has around 120 organ makers), and many churches hold regular recitals and offer public tours. But for more “exclusive” access, contact London-based travel firm Brown and Hudson. They specialise in tailoring trips to clients' interests, and can arrange a tour featuring concerts, private visits to organ makers' workshops and meetings with experts.

The centuries-old Ottobeuren Abbey, in Bavaria, has three organs, including a double organ, built by Karl Joseph Riepp and completed in 1766, that is one of the most treasured in Europe. To hear the great works played on this instrument, in the basilica's soaring rococo interior, surrounded by worshippers – many in Bavarian costume – is overwhelming.



The rococo interior of the basilica at Ottobeuren Abbey

Listening to an orchestral work, the sound often seems to be coming from one direction. Organ music, by contrast, completely occupies the church. After the service, Ottobeuren organist Josef Miltschitzky will take you on a tour of the organ loft, during which you can climb in among the pipes while he explains their workings.

At the Jehmlich Orgelbau workshop in Dresden, you can get a fascinating insight into how these machines are made, and see dismantled parts usually hidden inside – a huge bellow dating from the 1600s, a pipe wide enough for a man to crawl inside, another the size of a pencil. Head to Dresden Cathedral to hear the last organ made by

Gottfried Silbermann, “the Antonio Stradivari of organ makers”, whose work Mozart declared “magnificent beyond measure”. Even a recording of its silvery notes “can make one's hair stand on end”. *A bespoke four-day tour with Brown and Hudson costs about €6,500 (020-3358 0110, www.browndanandhudson.com).*

Hotel of the week



Amangiri, Utah, US

This elegant, polished-concrete wilderness resort in Utah's Navajo country is “a luminous place of startling beauty”, says Condé Nast Traveller – and also “ridiculously” enjoyable. Run by the Aman group, it offers endless activities – from hiking and horse riding to “doughnutting behind speedboats” on nearby Lake Powell – that make it “brilliant for families”. But it is also “absurdly romantic”, with rooftop beds for stargazing, a pool built around a 164-million-year-old rock, and private terraces with fireplaces outside every room. The New-American cuisine is zingy, too, and the service is “superlative”.

Doubles from about £1,375, full board, including transfers. +1 435 675 3999, www.amangiri.com.

Getting the flavour of...

Family sailing lessons in Croatia

Learning the basics of sailing a catamaran in just a week is hard work. But do it as a family among the islands of Croatia's Dalmatian coast and you'll find it's “terrific fun” too, says Fiona Bruce in The Sunday Telegraph. That's not only thanks to the sunshine, the long lunches on tiny wild islands, and the chance to dive into the “clear, lapis-blue” sea whenever the fancy takes you. It's also because working together as a family (under the skipper's instructions) is surprisingly joyful. There's a “tremendous” sense of freedom as you sail around, and you have a good chance of passing the exam for an International Certificate of Competence at the end – qualifying you to sail within about five miles of the coast in daylight hours. *Sunsail (020-3468 9205, www.sunsail.co.uk) has a one-week flotilla holiday with training from £1,582pp.*

Blood and beauty in South Africa

The province of KwaZulu-Natal in eastern South Africa is known for its amazing beaches and safari reserves, but it has another, lesser known tourist draw, says Jon Stone in The Independent – the starkly beautiful battlefields of the Anglo-Zulu war. Sparked by the British invasion of the Zulu Kingdom in 1879, this bloody and hard-fought conflict is remembered chiefly for the battle of Rorke's Drift – featured in the 1964

film *Zulu* – in which around 140 British soldiers held off up to 4,000 warriors of the Zulu king. More significant, however, was the Zulu victory at Isandlwana, nearby. There, white cairns marking mass graves dot the plain, which stretches out toward distant “blue-grey” mountains. It is a “stunning” landscape, made more moving by its dark history. Many details of the battle are remembered in oral traditions which the best local guides can recount. *Isandlwana Lodge (+27 34 271 8301, www.isandlwana.co.za) has rooms from £208pp per night, full board.*

A taste of old Arabia

For “a short break with a big perspective”, head to the ancient desert sultanate of Oman, says Lydia Bell in The Times. Beyond the country's beach resorts lies a heady dose of old Arabia, free of Dubai's shiny malls and high-rises. Take cooking classes with local women at Bait Al Bilad, a beautifully restored old house in a traditional fishing village. Go snorkelling with hawksbill turtles in the turquoise seas of the wild Daymaniyat Islands. And retreat to a luxury desert camp in Sharqiya Sands, where you can swim in the “crystalline” waters of lonely oases where the ivy-hued palms have an “unreal, cinematic beauty” under the piercing blue sky. *Original Travel (020-7978 7333, www.originaltravel.co.uk) has a five-night trip from £4,420pp, including flights.*

Last-minute offers from top travel companies

Walk Hadrian's Wall

Set in glorious countryside, just a stone's throw from Hadrian's Wall, three nights at Peel Bothy cottage (sleeps 2), in Hexham, are just £416. 0344-800 2070, www.nationaltrustholidays.co.uk. Arrive 17 February.

Wine, food and science

Tour Galileo's Italy with stops in Florence, Pisa and Bologna – a 7-night trip, with breakfast and 3 dinners, costs £1,795pp, including flights. 020-7251 0045, www.traveleditions.co.uk. Depart 9 March.

Viva Las Vegas

Live it up in Las Vegas with five nights at the Circus Circus hotel, room only, from £540pp (two adults sharing), including flights and car hire. 0344-557 6965, www.travelcitydirect.com. Depart 12 March.

A tropical getaway

Bask in the sun at the Lux* Belle Mare hotel in beautiful Mauritius. From £1,675pp for 7 nights' b&b, including return flights. 01293-765003, www.sovereign.com. Depart 6 March.

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Versatile actor who specialised in playing outsiders

Sir John Hurt
1940-2017

John Hurt, who has died aged 77, specialised in playing characters on life's margins, said the Daily Mail: he was the emaciated heroin addict locked up in a brutal Turkish jail in *Midnight Express*; the outrageous "stately gent of England" Quentin Crisp; and the grotesque but tender-hearted John Merrick in *The Elephant Man* (a role that required him to spend eight hours in make-up every day, sustaining himself by drinking raw eggs mixed into orange juice through a straw). Yet with his expressive eyes, and rich, instantly recognisable, voice, Hurt could be as imperious as he was vulnerable, said The Independent. He played an astonishing variety of roles: he was often cast as chancers and rousers (he was a brilliant Alan Clark), and was very much at home in John le Carré's "seedy double-dealing world", yet he was just as convincing as a kindly wandmaker (in three Harry Potter films), and as the voice of a plucky rabbit (*Watership Down*). There is even a sporting biopic in his filmography: he played Bob Champion, the jockey who beat cancer to win the Grand National, in *Champions* (1984).



A reformed hellraiser

St Martin's that he first set eyes on Quentin Crisp, working as a model. Living on a pittance in a basement in Earls Court, Hurt was miserable, until a friend persuaded him to defy his parents, and audition for Rada. He won a scholarship, and joined a class that included Sarah Miles and Ian McShane. "You want to act in order to show people that you are more than you appear to be," he later said, "that you have more to offer than had been allowed at school or within the vicarage. It's down to a desire for love, and all those, er, tricky things to talk about." He was signed by an agent before graduating, and was soon making his name in the West End. In 1966, Fred Zimmermann saw him in David Halliwell's *Little Malcolm And His Struggle Against The Eunuchs*, and cast him in his film version of *A Man for All Seasons*. After that, Hurt was rarely out of work, said The Daily Telegraph. People warned him not to play Crisp, but it won him a Bafta. He was the astronaut who dies when an alien bursts out of his stomach in Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979), and in 1984, played Winston Smith in Orwell's *1984*.

Born in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, John Hurt was the son of a vicar and an engineer. His mother dabbled in amateur dramatics and the family's home was opposite a cinema, but he wasn't allowed to go, nor to mix with the children who did – they were regarded as too common. Aged eight, he was sent to a prep school in Kent, where he was (along with many other boys) abused by the headmaster. It was, he said, a brutal experience, and scarring. "Anyone who started off there has got a story in terms of life," he told The Independent in 2005. His next school, he said, was merely "ghastly". He loved acting as a child, but his parents wouldn't countenance a career on the stage, and insisted he go to art school, with a view to becoming an art master. It was at

For many years, Hurt was almost as famous for his drinking as he was for his acting, and his personal life was consequently ractety. His first marriage, in the early 1960s, lasted just two years. He later lived for 16 years with the French model Marie-Lise Volpeliere-Pierrot – and was devastated when she was killed in a riding accident in 1983. He began to drink even more heavily, which put paid to his second marriage; his third, to Jo Dalton, produced two sons, but ended in 1995. Finally, he found lasting happiness with Anwen Rees-Myers. After their marriage, in 2005, he gave up drinking and smoking. People like hearing stories about hellraisers, he observed, but though "wacky behaviour may seem like a lot of fun, it usually isn't. It's usually the sign of a very distressed person looking for something they can't find."

Principled MP who was never afraid to be "a bore"

Tam Dalyell
1932-2017

He was the Old Etonian with an ancestral pile who ended up representing a mining constituency; the former Tory who moved to the left-wing of the Labour Party; the self-described "single issue" politician whose persistence could exasperate even his friends. In short, Tam Dalyell was different, said Brian Taylor on BBC News online. He was a maverick and such a thorn in the flesh of the Establishment, he never once held ministerial office during his 43 years at Westminster (he was Father of the House by the time he retired, in 2005). But it was not a role he sought out. The MP for West Lothian – famed for framing the so-called West Lothian question – genuinely believed in the rightness of his causes, and in pursuit of them, he was willing to risk unpopularity; as he said, if your campaign is worth fighting, "you must not be afraid to be thought a bore".



A reluctant Father of the House

Labour candidate by the National Union of Mineworkers, but a unionist whose troubled grandson he had taught put in a good word for him, and he was duly selected to fight a 1962 by-election. He fought off a strong challenge by the Scottish National Party candidate William Wolfe – whom he would stand against a further six times. A committed opponent of devolution, Dalyell first asked his question in 1977: why should Scottish MPs be able to vote on matters that pertain only to England, when English ones cannot vote on areas that are devolved? Enoch Powell dubbed it the West Lothian question.

In the 1960s, Dalyell fought a long campaign to stop Aldabra, an unspoilt coral atoll in the Indian Ocean, from being turned into an air base. In the

Born in Edinburgh in 1932, Tam Dalyell was educated at prep school in Cumbria, and then at Eton, where his fag was Jacob Rothschild. At King's College, Cambridge, he was chairman of the Conservative Association, but had a change of heart after the Suez Crisis of 1956. Returning home to West Lothian and the House of the Binns (the Dalyell family seat, inherited from his mother's family), he became a teacher at a local secondary school. With his background, he had little chance of being endorsed as a

early 1980s, he became known for his opposition to the Falklands war, and his relentless pursuit of Margaret Thatcher over the sinking of the Argentine warship the General Belgrano. New Labour's election victory in 1997 didn't quiet him: a former member of the left-wing Campaign Group (probably the only one, it was memorably observed, "to own peacocks"), he described himself as "Ancient Labour". He voted against the intervention in Kosovo in 1999; and opposed the Iraq invasion of 2003. One of his final acts as an MP, said The Daily Telegraph, was to table fresh questions about the Belgrano, "the last of thousands". He is survived by his wife, Kathleen, and their two children.



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Companies in the news ...and how they were assessed

Nakheel: record net profit

When you consider Nakheel's assets halved in 2009 after the global financial crisis and it posted an AED4.96bn net profit last year, the highest in its history and 13% jump on 2015, the Dubai developer has achieved a remarkable turnaround. Gazing across the building-crammed skyline of Palm Jumeirah from the 15th floor penthouse of the new luxury Viceroy hotel, due to open at the end of March, the man-made island has certainly come of age – and the early day spats over service fees and beach and gym access seem a distant memory. So what has prompted the resurgence? From a pure real estate and land reclamation focus, debt-free Nakheel now has a diversified portfolio incorporating retail, hospitality and residential leasing. Year-on-year retail revenues grew by more than 70% in 2016, while revenues from hospitality, now rapidly expanding in the run-up to Expo 2020, jumped by 50%. Nakheel Malls expanded its operating portfolio by opening its phase one extension at Ibn Battuta Mall, neighbourhood Pavilions at International City and Al Furjan and the Club Vista Mare restaurant plaza on Palm Jumeirah. The hotel focus has been on the underserved mid-market, with new properties in Dragon Mart (ibis Styles, operated by Accor) and Ibn Battuta Mall (operated as a Premier Inn), which have 623 rooms between them.

Volkswagen/Toyota: purring again?

Volkswagen has earned the dubious honour of being named as one of the ten “most controversial” companies in the world in 2016, according to a list put together by the business intelligence firm RepRisk, said Jack Torrance in Management Today. The German carmaker still faces “several ongoing investigations and legal challenges” as a result of its emissions scandal. But all is not lost. It has just claimed the crown of “the world's largest carmaker” by sales – ending Toyota's four-year reign. The VW Group, which includes the Audi, Porsche and Skoda marques, recorded an overall 3.8% rise from 2015, said Gwyn Topham in The Guardian. Clearly, the brand wasn't as “seriously damaged in the eyes of consumers” as feared. Still, the key driver was China, where VW sells very few diesel vehicles; it saw booming sales growth of 12% in a year. Dieseltgate was a “non-issue” there, and the Audi brand is very popular. Toyota took its dethroning on the chin, claiming airily that it is no longer “focused on chasing volume”. But although sales in its home market of Japan grew, it suffered a setback in the, much larger, US market. Following a barrage of presidential tweets over its plans to locate factories in Mexico, Toyota's troubles in Trumpland “may be growing”.

Novo Nordisk: Oxford investment

Who says Brexit Britain can't attract investment from mainland Europe, asked Julia Bradshaw in The Daily Telegraph. In a “vote of confidence” for the UK's life sciences sector, the Danish pharma giant Novo Nordisk has “brushed aside concerns” to invest £115m in a new research centre in Oxford employing 100 scientists. The focus is on finding novel treatments for Type-2 diabetes. The company's chief science officer, Mads Krogsgaard Thomsen, takes a long view. “Obviously, we think the Brexit decision was unfortunate”, but “Oxford University has been around for 800 years, so the academic excellence and our company's ability to turn that into medicines hasn't really changed”.



Seven days in the Square Mile

US stocks posted their biggest drop so far this year after President Trump's curb on immigration raised fears over the impact of his policies. The **FTSE 100** fell to its lowest level of 2017. Trump continued his attack on countries with weak currencies, criticising China and Japan for “play[ing] the money market”. He had earlier accused Germany of using a “grossly undervalued” **euro** to “exploit” other economies. The **pound** enjoyed its best January against the dollar in six years, rising above \$1.25.

RBS set aside a further £3.1bn to cover fines relating to its sale of toxic mortgage investments in America. Ministers have shelved plans to sell shares in the lender, which is 72% state-owned, because of uncertainty over the scale of the US Department of Justice fine. **Deutsche Bank** was fined £500m by US and UK authorities for its failure to crack down on money laundering.

Apple's latest quarterly results beat expectations on virtually every measure, thanks to record iPhone sales: revenue rose 3.3% to \$78.35bn. **Toshiba** was “reviewing the future” of its nuclear businesses outside Japan, after incurring billions in losses, throwing a planned £10bn development in Cumbria into doubt. **TalkTalk** shares jumped 8% on news that CEO Dido Harding is quitting: Sir Charles Dunstone is taking over as executive chairman. **Sir Ken Morrison** – who parlayed a small family grocery chain into one of the UK's largest supermarkets – died, aged 85.

Tesco/Booker: an even bigger slice of the pie?

In his first two years as Tesco chief executive, “Drastic” Dave Lewis earned his nickname by “scything through” the supermarket's empire, said the Financial Times. Now Tesco is looking to grow again. In a move that will tighten its grip on Britain's food market, it has agreed a £3.7bn deal to buy Booker, the country's biggest food wholesaler, which is also the giant behind the Londis and Budgen convenience store chains. Analysts reckon the deal could add another 2% to Tesco's existing 28% grocery market share. Since Booker also supplies restaurants, including Wagamama, Carluccio's and Byron, it would also give it a big slice of the booming catering supplies market.



Londis: part of the Booker group

The surprise deal cheered the City: Tesco's shares jumped 9%, Booker's by 16%. But it is undeniably controversial, said Oliver Shah in The Sunday Times. The move prompted the resignation of Tesco's senior non-executive director, Richard Cousins, after

a heated boardroom clash. He won't be the only one complaining. Thousands of independent shopkeepers running Booker's convenience stores could now “find themselves at the mercy of their worst enemy”.

“The wons fussed enough over Poundland buying 99p Stores, so they're not going to nod through a pair of companies with leading positions in the £195bn UK food market,” said Alistair Osborne in The Times. A possibly “interminable” Competition and Markets Authority inquiry looks inevitable. A good

thing too, said Simon Watkins in The Mail on Sunday. This deal may be “a potential boon to consumers” if it results in slashed prices, but it's a nightmarish prospect for smaller suppliers, squeezed between rising input costs, thanks to the falling pound, and weaker bargaining power. “In the end, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Somebody must pick up the bill.”

Issue of the week: #DeleteUber

The campaign against Uber for “collaborating” with President Trump highlights the battle lines being drawn up in corporate America

“In an effort to understand their new reality” under President Trump, many American bosses have been studying *The Art of the Deal* – Trump’s autobiography published in 1987, said Schumpeter in *The Economist*. It begins by describing his working week, “which mainly consists of frequent calls with his stockbroker”, and “sitting in his office as other business people pay him lavish tribute”. If Trump’s routine is anything like the same today, he must be delighted: stock markets have jumped since his election, and many of the same executives who lambasted him “as a menace to capitalism” before his election have been publicly lavishing praise. Maybe some are excited by his pro-business stance; others are probably just “terrified”.



Kalanick: feeling the force of customer protests

campaign – giving its smaller rival Lyft the golden opportunity of presenting itself as the “good” ride-hail company. Uber CEO Travis Kalanick attempted appeasement by donating \$3m to a legal fund for drivers facing immigration issues. But the campaign continued – focusing on the fact that Kalanick continues to sit on Trump’s business advisory committee.

#DeleteUber offers a few lessons for Silicon Valley, said Brian Solomon on Forbes.com. “First and most obvious: having a good relationship with customers can prevent you from becoming the target of a backlash.” Tesla’s CEO, Elon Musk, also sits on Trump’s advisory council, yet he hasn’t faced any protests. “But the larger lesson is that tech companies are going to have to choose sides.” As worried as they are about angering Trump, customers are “a much more immediate problem”. And for firms such as Uber, mainly catering to a younger, urban crowd, these are “overwhelmingly likely to be liberal and anti-Trump”. If Uber – or any other company – is seen as a Trump “collaborator” in the protest war, it could soon show up “on their balance sheets”. Many companies have been making “anaemic efforts to triangulate” their relationship with the new administration and their customers. Events this week suggest they’ll need to up their game. Communications and PR teams must be working overtime.

Trump already had “corporate America walking on eggshells”, said Antony Currie on Reuters Breakingviews. But the public furore following last weekend’s travel ban has landed business leaders with a nasty dilemma. “Speaking out against an edict that is draped in the flag of national security may increase the level of Trump’s invective on Twitter and elsewhere.” Yet the risk of a backlash from angry customers opposing the ban is considerable. This week, the ride-hailing app Uber felt the full force of it. After failing to join a New York City taxi strike protesting against Trump’s order, it was hit by a furious #DeleteUber social media

Making money: populism and investment

● A new portfolio

Every time a “populist” political movement gets close to a whiff of power, the same warnings are wheeled out by fund managers, said Matthew Lynn in *The Daily Telegraph*: “sell while you still can”. The “Trump Bump” and “Brexit Bounce” have given the lie to that. And they’re not the only ones. Poland is “veering off to the populist Right”, yet the Warsaw index is “doing great”. So are Hungarian equities, despite the “nationalist posturing” of PM Viktor Orbán. “As populists come to power, there is always a dip in the markets – and the only lesson is to buy the shares.” A “populist portfolio” now would comprise the US, UK, Poland and Hungary; next year, maybe, the Netherlands and France. “True, you might have to hold your nose as you put in the buy orders. But it will almost certainly outperform any other investment you might make this year.”

● Get real about Trump

I doubt it, said Richard Beales on Reuters Breakingviews. When it comes to the Trump rally, “investors need to get real”. Witness the sell-off this week following



The Trump Bump

the sweeping executive order on immigration. Ray Dalio, boss of the hedge fund giant Bridgewater, wrote in December about the possibility of Trump’s policies igniting “animal spirits”, and creating “a virtuous cycle” of investment and returns. His caveat was to question “whether this administration will be a) aggressive and thoughtful or b) aggressive and reckless”. By now, investors should be starting to arrive at an answer.

● Guessing game

Should investors run for the hills in fear of 1930s-style protectionism, or hang around to enjoy the possible fruits of tax cuts and massive infrastructure spending? “Each twitch in the stock market is taken as support for one side of the argument or the other,” said Nils Pratley in *The Guardian*. It’s “a great guessing game”, but the investment implications are “clear as mud”. If there is a rough consensus, it’s that a big US fiscal stimulus will “eventually encounter the stiff breezes of a strong dollar and higher interest rates”, and that there is a serious risk of a bust if Trumpist protectionism becomes truly heavy. “That extremely loose working theory seems as good as any.”

HMRC harangue

In a damning report ordering the taxman to get tough with the super-rich, MPs on the parliamentary public accounts committee have claimed that HMRC’s failure to clamp down on rich tax dodgers is undermining confidence in the whole system, said Rajeev Syal in *The Guardian*. The report accused the Revenue of giving the impression that there was “one rule for the rich and another for everyone else”. HMRC countered that the rich get extra scrutiny, not special treatment; but MPs said that claim didn’t stack up.

They may have a point, said Andrew Ellson in *The Times*. Six years after giving Britain’s 6,500 richest people “customer relationship managers”, HMRC appears to have collected £1bn less tax from them. Meanwhile, the noose has been tightening on “middle-class taxpayers”: HMRC imposed 143,000 penalties last year for people filing inaccurate information on their self-assessment tax returns – up from 55,000 fines levied in 2012. And figures released under Freedom of Information laws showed a sixfold increase in the number of fines for “deliberate understatement of income”, to nearly 30,000 last year. The spike suggests “a marked change in attitude at HMRC”, said George Bull of RSM Accounting, which obtained the figures. “It is clear that inspectors are now taking a much harder line. However, the taxman needs to be wary of the perception that he is engaging in ‘penalty farming’”

Shetland's unlikely property boom

Editorial

The Economist

The Shetland Islands can sometimes seem “more Scandinavian than Scottish”, says *The Economist*. Yet they are “experiencing a very British phenomenon”: a booming housing market. Prices have doubled in real terms since 2003 – a larger rise than in any other part of Scotland, and more akin to the inflation seen in London’s “poshest borough”, Kensington and Chelsea. In contrast to other rural hot spots such as Cornwall, the Shetlands boom isn’t down to second-home ownership, which has actually fallen in the past decade. The more likely cause is oil. Aberdeen is Scotland’s oil and gas capital, but the Shetlands aren’t far behind, and “oil workers are a handsomely paid lot”. Between 2006 and 2016, wages on the islands rose three times as fast as in Britain as a whole; and “as islanders’ purchasing power has risen, so has competition over housing”. Will the boom last? Oil prices have tumbled and the Scottish economy has slowed, but Shetland “appears to have weathered the storm quite well”, and now hopes to cash in on “the next big thing”: the decommissioning of old oil rigs. “House prices may stay frothy for some time yet.”

Trump's token attack on red tape

Gina Chon

Reuters Breakingviews

Donald Trump is “talking a big game” about reducing business red tape, says Gina Chon, but on the evidence to date, his attack is “more PR than a purge”. The US president has ordered a cap on all new regulations by establishing a “one in, two out” rule – a nod to the system established in Britain in 2013, which required removing £2 of red tape for every £1 of new regulatory costs. Trump has hailed the UK experiment a success – a 2014 government report claimed it had saved businesses £2.2bn a year. But judging by Britain’s continued “uneven performance” in the World Bank’s annual “ease of doing business” survey, the edict’s efficacy has been “mixed”. Action is certainly needed in the US, which has fallen in the World Bank’s ratings. Yet Trump’s directive “is so general that it’s hard to decipher”, and omits crucial details such as how regulatory costs are measured. US firms are already “scrabbling” to assess the impact of the visa ban and likely changes to taxes and tariffs. “Rather than simplifying matters, the two-for-one order could sow more confusion.”

The Fred Goodwin problem

Nils Pratley

The Guardian

Glaxo chairman Sir Philip Hampton recently argued that highly-paid business people shouldn’t be given knighthoods, insisting it would be better to reserve the honours system for those who don’t get big bucks, says Nils Pratley. “Well said.” But Hampton (who got his own gong for “public service”) could have made a second point: you can’t judge a business career properly until it is over – and often only some time after that. Jumping the gun risks perpetuating the “Fred Goodwin problem”: the former RBS chief had to be stripped of his knighthood when the bank sank. Topshop owner Sir Philip Green still has his (for now), but even if he “eventually coughs up” for the BHS pension fund, it’s hard to imagine it would be awarded today. “Handing out mid-career gongs is like awarding medals for a marathon while the race is still in progress.” Most FTSE 100 directors’ contracts acknowledge the point; bonuses are subject to clawback clauses. But the idea of routinely clawing back knighthoods is absurd. Better just to drop gongs for business leaders completely.

Embracing mess in the office

Tim Harford

Quartz

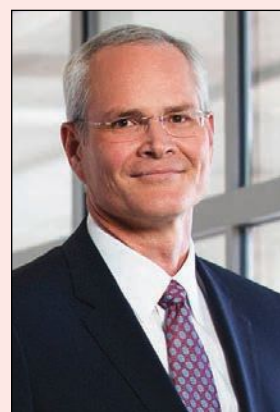
Many of us are embarrassed by our cluttered desks, seeing them as “an externalisation of our internal chaos”, says Tim Harford. But productivity research has long shown that “pilfers” frequently do better than “filers”. Tidy people tend to suffer from “premature filing” – their aversion to mess means they carefully stow away every document before they’ve understood what it means. The result? Filing cabinets that serve as “highly structured” rubbish bins, whose “useless” contents are valued mainly because the owner has “spent such a lot of time getting them organised”. Pilfers, paradoxically, tend to have “lean, practical and well-used archives”, because they’re more likely to throw away paperwork (eventually). Their system is messy, but it works. The same is true of how we schedule work. The assumption is often that “well-structured daily plans” work better than “amorphous” monthly ones. But studies have shown the former to be “demotivating”; they’re often derailed by unexpected events. The bottom line is that any “rigid structure is inherently fragile”. It’s “better for both your peace of mind and your productivity to improvise a little”.

City profiles

Sir Christopher Bland

The former chairman of both the BBC and London Weekend Television, who has died aged 78, became “one of the big beasts of British broadcasting” – despite failing to land a job as a journalist on graduation, says *The Guardian*. He opted for business instead, joining first Currys and then the sewing machine company Singer, before becoming a managing director at management consultants Booz Allen Hamilton. When Bland – who fenced for Ireland at the 1960 Olympics, and later wrote a novel based on his Anglo-Irish family history – moved into TV, he was admired for his “brave, decisive” and “good-humoured” management. His “direct approach” contrasted with the “more ruminative” style then prevalent at the BBC.

Darren Woods



The new ExxonMobil boss’s task isn’t quite so daunting as that now facing his predecessor, Rex Tillerson – Trump’s nominee for US secretary of state. But it’s challenging enough, says Ed Crooks in the FT. Woods’ first set of results, delivered this week, featured “lower than expected earnings” and a sizeable asset write-down. Exxon’s size makes it “the apex predator” of oil giants, but Woods faces a dilemma. With growth sluggish, he has to decide if it’s worth doing “a transformational deal” like the one Exxon did with Mobil in 1999. Pouncing “would mean taking a risk” – possible targets including BP, Anadarko and Occidental are no longer the “bargains” they were. But the risk of standing still is another ten years of underperformance. Over to you, Darren.

Who's tipping what

The week's best buys

BlackRock World Mining

The Daily Telegraph

With a highly experienced management team and a decent record, this commodities trust looks to be a good way "to play a metals and mining theme". It could benefit from a US infrastructure boost. Buy. 372.5p.

Hargreaves Lansdown

The Daily Telegraph

The wealth manager is a high-quality business with a reputation for excellent service. Cash-generative and exceptionally profitable, with an improving dividend – and it should benefit from changes to pension rules. Buy. £13.21.

Headlam Group

Investors Chronicle

Strong trading (with rising sales of 4.7% in the UK, and 3.6% in Europe) has prompted the floor-covering specialist to upgrade its revenue and profit forecasts. There's a cash pile, and shares are cheap. Buy. 521p.

South32

Investors Chronicle

This Australian metals and mining group, spun out of BHP Billiton in 2015, has a spread of essential steel-making niche commodities, and good nickel exposure. A cash pile and decent dividend prospects add to the appeal. Buy. 155p.

Unilever

The Times

The household goods giant has been hit by weak consumer demand in Europe and problems in India and Brazil. But Unilever is resilient, margins have advanced and the share falls look overdone given its strengths. Buy. £32.27.

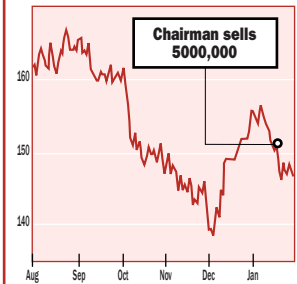
WHSmith

The Times

WHSmith continues to grow and is opening new overseas airport shops. The travel division is up by 5%, boosted by the lower pound and store openings. Strong cash generation is funding a share buy-back scheme. Buy. £15.84.

Director's dealings

LondonMetric Property



This FTSE 250 REIT specialises in distribution warehouses and is enjoying high occupancy rates and rising rental income. Non-executive chairman Patrick Vaughan has pocketed £754,581 from share sales. He retains 13.3 million shares.

SOURCE: INVESTORS CHRONICLE

...and some to sell

Antofagasta

The Times

Shares in the Chilean copper group have soared in the last year. But, despite hopes of a Trump-led infrastructure boost, uncertainty persists owing to the construction slowdown in China. Take profits. Sell. 837p.

McBride

The Times

McBride supplies private-label household and personal care products to supermarkets across Europe and is benefiting from the weak pound. But revenues overall have shrunk, and import costs are set to rise. One to avoid. Sell. 161p.

N Brown Group

Investors Chronicle

The fashion retailer has had a better quarter, but this "does not make a turnaround". Promotions helped fuel growth, but margins are still in decline, and there's little clarity on currency impact. Sell. 211p.

Ocado

Risers & Fallers

HSBC analysts are still doubtful about prospects for the online grocer and have reiterated their "reduce" stock rating. The new target of 200p suggests a potential 18% decrease in market value. Sell. 244.7p.

Standard Life

Sharecast

UBS has downgraded the insurer, citing expected earnings pressure from increased outflows from Standard Life Investments, which will be difficult to reverse in the near term. Sell. 351.1p.

William Hill

Sharecast

UBS worries that the market has not priced in downside risk for the bookmaker's online business, which it views as "stretched". The bank notes that app downloads have fallen. There are also regulatory risks. Sell. 276.8p.

Form guide

Shares tipped 12 weeks ago

Best tip

Revolution Bars Group

Investors Chronicle
up 28.76% to 197p

Worst tip

Topps Tiles

The Times
down 17.94% to 83.5p

Market view

"The market narrative has shifted once again. For the past three months, a Trump presidency has been heralded as great for stocks. Now... a bout of selling has engulfed markets."

Chris Beauchamp of IG Group. Quoted on Citywire

Market summary

Key numbers for investors

	31 Jan 2017	Week before	Change (%)
FTSE 100	7099.15	7150.34	-0.72%
FTSE All-share UK	3858.26	3879.54	-0.55%
Dow Jones	19810.08	19863.28	-0.27%
NASDAQ	5577.92	5571.82	0.11%
Nikkei 225	19041.34	18787.99	1.35%
Hang Seng	23360.78	22949.86	1.79%
Gold	1212.80	1216.08	-0.33%
Brent Crude Oil	56.22	55.66	1.01%
DIVIDEND YIELD (FTSE 100)	3.68%	3.65%	
UK 10-year gilts yield	1.42	1.40	
US 10-year Treasuries	2.45	2.44	
UK ECONOMIC DATA			
Latest CPI (yoy)	1.6% (Dec)	1.2% (Nov)	
Latest RPI (yoy)	2.5% (Dec)	2.2% (Nov)	
Halifax house price (yoy)	+6.5% (Dec)	+6.0% (Nov)	
£1 STERLING \$1.262 €1.169 ¥143.026			

Best and worst performing shares

WEEK'S CHANGE, FTSE 100 STOCKS		
RISES	Price	% change
Paddy Power Betfair	8345.00	+5.10
DCC	6395.00	+4.49
Convatec Group	245.90	+3.54
London Stock Ex. Gp.	3171.00	+3.16
Ashtead Group	1606.00	+2.69
FALLS		
Hikma Pharmaceuticals	1824.00	-4.55
Barclays	219.45	-4.02
Associated Brit. Foods	2386.00	-3.98
Smurfit Kappa Gp.	2081.00	-3.92
Unilever (UK)	3227.50	-3.74
BEST AND WORST UK STOCKS OVERALL		
URU Metals	2.17	+89.13
Torotrak	0.86	-51.55

Source: Datastream (not adjusted for dividends). Prices on 31 Jan (pm)

Following the Footsie



6-month movement in the FTSE 100 index

How humanity got hooked on sugar

It produces a burst of energy and a feeling of profound pleasure, followed by a life-long craving for more. It is cheap, widely-available – and children love it. Gary Taubes reports on how sugar became the world's most popular drug

Imagine a drug that can intoxicate us, can infuse us with energy and can be taken by mouth. It doesn't have to be injected, smoked or snorted for us to experience its sublime effects. Imagine that it mixes well with virtually every food and particularly liquids, and that when given to infants it provokes a profound feeling of pleasure. In clinical trials, it is more effective in soothing the distress of infants than the mother's breast, and breast milk itself. Overconsumption of this drug may have long-term side effects, but there are none in the short term – no staggering or dizziness, no slurring of speech, no heart palpitations or respiratory distress. More than anything, it makes children happy, at least while they're consuming it. It calms their distress, focuses their attention and leaves them excited and full of joy until the dose wears off. The only downside is that children will come to expect another dose, perhaps to demand it, on a regular basis.

How long would it be before parents took to using our imaginary drug to calm their children when necessary, to alleviate discomfort, to prevent outbursts of unhappiness, or to distract attention? And once the drug became identified with pleasure, how long before it was used to celebrate birthdays, a football game, good grades at school? How long before no gathering of family and friends was complete without it, before major holidays and celebrations were defined in part by the use of this drug to assure pleasure? How long would it be before the underprivileged of the world would happily spend what little money they had on this drug rather than on nutritious meals for their families?

This is of more than academic interest, because the response of entire populations to sugar has been effectively identical to that of children: once people are exposed, they consume as much sugar as they can easily procure. The primary barrier to more consumption – up to the point where populations become obese and diabetic – has tended to be availability and price. As the price of a pound of sugar has dropped over the centuries, the amount of sugar consumed has steadily, inexorably climbed. The critical question, as the journalist and historian Charles C. Mann has elegantly put it, “is whether [sugar] is actually an addictive substance, or if people just act like it is”. This question is not easy to answer. Until recently, nutritionists studying sugar did so from the natural perspective of viewing it as a nutrient – a carbohydrate – and nothing more. They occasionally argued about whether or not it might play a role in diabetes, or heart disease, but not about



Happy to consume as much sugar as she can easily procure?

“In clinical trials, sugar is more effective in soothing the distress of infants than the mother’s breast”

sweetener to tea, coffee and chocolate, and prices allowed it, the consumption of these substances in Europe exploded. Sugar was used to sweeten spirits and wine in Europe as early as the 14th century; even narcotic preparations in India and opium-based

whether it triggered a response in the body that made us want to consume it in excess. That was not their area of interest.

Historians have often considered the “sugar as a drug” metaphor to be an apt one. “That sugars, particularly highly refined sucrose, produce peculiar physiological effects is well known,” wrote Sidney Mintz, whose 1985 book *Sweetness and Power* is one of two seminal English-language histories of sugar. Sugar is one of a handful of “drug foods”, to use Mintz’s term, that came out of the tropics, and on which European empires were built from the 16th century – the others being tea, coffee, chocolate, rum and tobacco.

Its history is intimately linked to that of these other drugs. Rum is distilled, of course, from sugar cane. In the 17th century, once sugar was being added as a sweetener to tea, coffee and chocolate, and prices allowed it, the consumption of these substances in Europe exploded. Sugar was used to sweeten spirits and wine in Europe as early as the 14th century; even narcotic preparations in India and opium-based wines and syrups contained sugar. As for tobacco, sugar was, and still is, a critical ingredient in the American blended-tobacco cigarette, the first of which was Camel. It’s this “marriage of tobacco and sugar”, as a sugar-

industry report described it in 1950, that makes for the “mild” experience of smoking cigarettes as compared with cigars, and perhaps more important, that makes it possible for most of us to inhale cigarette smoke and draw it deep into our lungs.

Unlike alcohol – previously the only commonly available psychoactive substance in the old world – sugar, nicotine and caffeine had at least some stimulating properties, and so offered a very different experience, one that was more conducive to the labour of everyday life. These were the “18th century equivalent of uppers”, writes the Scottish historian Niall Ferguson. “The empire, it might be said, was built on a huge sugar, caffeine and nicotine rush – a rush nearly everyone could experience.” What Oscar Wilde wrote about a cigarette in 1891 might also be said about sugar: it is “the perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want?”

The roots of the modern discussion on sugar and disease can be traced to the early 1670s. Thomas Willis, medical adviser to the Duke of York and King Charles II, noted an increase in the prevalence of diabetes in the affluent patients of his practice. “The passing evil”, he called it, and became the first European physician to diagnose the sweet taste of diabetic urine – “wonderfully sweet,

like sugar or honey". Willis's identification of diabetes and the sweetness of the urine coincided with both the first flow of sugar into England from its Caribbean colonies, and the first use of sugar to sweeten tea. In 1715 a rival physician, Frederick Slare, wrote his *Vindication of sugars against the charges of Dr Willis*. Slare did concede, however, that women who cared about their figures but were "inclining to be too fat" might want to avoid sugar, because it "may dispose them to be fatter than they desire to be". When Slare made his observation, the English were consuming, on average, perhaps 5lb (2.3kg) of sugar a year. Today we consume from 20 to 30 times as much, depending on what organisation is doing the estimate.

Research literature on the question of whether sugar is addictive is surprisingly sparse. Sugar does induce the same responses in the region of the brain known as the "reward centre" as nicotine narcotics and alcohol. Addiction researchers have come to believe that behaviours required for the survival of a species – specifically, eating and reproduction – are experienced as pleasurable in this part of the brain, and so we do them again and again. Sugar stimulates the release of the same neurotransmitters – dopamine, in particular – through which the potent effects of these other drugs are mediated. Because the drugs work this way, humans have learned how to refine their essence into concentrated forms that heighten the rush. Coca leaves, for instance, are mildly stimulating when chewed, but powerfully addictive when refined into drugs. Sugar, too, has been refined from its original form to heighten its rush and concentrate its effects.

"There is little doubt that sugar can allay the physical craving for alcohol," the neurologist James Leonard Corning observed over a century ago. The 12-step bible of Alcoholics Anonymous recommends the consumption of sweets and chocolate in lieu of alcohol when the cravings for drink arise. Indeed, the per capita consumption of sweets in the US doubled with the beginning of prohibition in 1919, as Americans apparently turned en masse from alcohol to sweets. Sugar and sweets came to saturate our diets as the annual global production of sugar increased exponentially. By the early 20th century, sugar had assimilated itself into all aspects of our eating experience, and was being consumed in breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Nutritional authorities were already suggesting what appeared to be obvious: that this increased consumption was a product of at least a kind of addiction – "the development of the sugar appetite, which, like any other appetite – for instance, the liquor appetite – grows by gratification".

A century later, sugar has become an ingredient in prepared and packaged foods so ubiquitous it can only be avoided by concerted and determined effort. There is sugar not just in the obvious sweet foods – ice creams, chocolates, fizzy drinks and breakfast cereals – but also in peanut butter, salad dressing, ketchup, barbecue sauces, canned soups, processed meats, bacon, hot dogs, crisps, roasted peanuts, pasta sauces, tinned tomatoes and breads.

From the 1980s onwards, manufacturers of products advertised as healthy because they were low in fat, or specifically in saturated fat, took to replacing those fat calories with sugar to make them equally, if not more, palatable – often disguising the sugar under one or more of the 50 names by which the combination of sugar and high-fructose corn syrup might be found. Fat was removed from candy bars so that they became "health-food bars", in spite of added sugar. Fat was removed from yoghurts, and sugars added, and these became "heart-healthy snacks". It was as though



Thomas Willis, the physician to the king

the food industry had decided en masse that if a product wasn't sweetened at least a little, our modern palates would reject it and we would purchase instead a competitor's version that was.

The common tendency is to think of this transformation as driven by the mere fact that sugars and sweets taste good. The alternative way to think about this is that sugar took over our diets because the first taste, whether for an infant today or for an adult centuries ago, is a kind of intoxication; it's the kindling of a lifelong craving, not identical but analogous to the effect of other drugs of abuse.

The traditional response to the how-little-is-too-much question is that we should eat sugar in moderation – not eat too much of it. But we only know we're consuming too much when we're getting fatter, or manifesting other symptoms of insulin resistance and metabolic

syndrome. Metabolic syndrome ties together a host of disorders that the medical community typically thought of as unrelated, or at least having separate and distinct causes – including obesity, high blood pressure, high blood sugar and inflammation – as products of insulin resistance and high circulating insulin levels. Regulatory systems throughout the body begin to misbehave, with slow, chronic, pathological consequences everywhere.

Once we have observed the symptoms of consuming too much sugar, the assumption is that we can dial it back a little and be fine – drink one or two sugary beverages a day instead of three; or, if we're parenting, allow children ice cream on weekends only, say, rather than as a daily treat. But if it takes years or decades, or even generations, for us to get to the point where we display symptoms of metabolic syndrome, it's quite possible even these apparently moderate amounts of sugar will turn out to be too much for us to be able to reverse the situation and return us to health. And if the symptom that manifests first is something other than getting fatter – cancer, for instance – we're truly out of luck.

We have to acknowledge that the evidence against sugar is not definitive. Let's say we randomly assigned individuals in our population to eat a modern diet with or without sugar in it. Since virtually all processed foods have sugar added, the population that is asked to avoid sugar would

simultaneously be avoiding virtually all processed foods as well. They would dramatically reduce their consumption of what food writer Michael Pollan has memorably called "food-like substances"; and if they were then healthier, there would now be a host of possible reasons why. Maybe they ate fewer refined grains of any type, less gluten, fewer trans fats, preservatives or artificial flavourings? We would have no practical way to know for sure.

Ultimately, the question of how much is too much becomes a personal decision, just as we all decide what level of alcohol, caffeine or cigarettes we'll ingest. Former cigarette smokers (of which I am one) will tell you that it was impossible for them to grasp intellectually or emotionally what life would be like without cigarettes until they quit; that through weeks or months or even years, it was a constant struggle. Then, one day, they reached a point at which they couldn't imagine smoking a cigarette and couldn't imagine why they had ever smoked, let alone found it desirable. A similar experience is likely to be true of sugar – but until we try to live without it, we'll never know.

Extracted from The Case Against Sugar by Gary Taubes, published by Portobello Books at £14.99.

"The British empire was built on a huge sugar, caffeine and nicotine rush – a rush nearly everyone could experience"

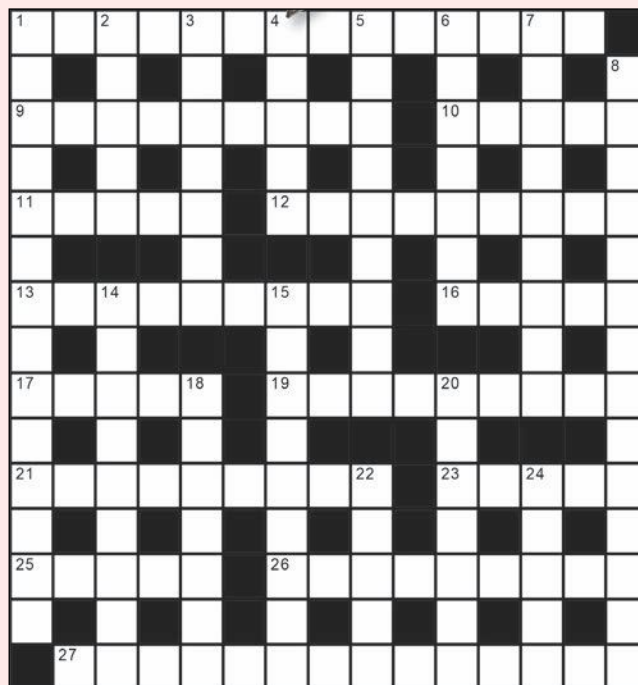
THE WEEK CROSSWORD 144

ACROSS

- 1 What's replaced a horse and cart etc. around west side of London? (7,7)
 9 Not working after taking tea stops (6,3)
 10 Chopper blade, whichever way round it goes (5)
 11 Succeed with girl after chaps missing opening (5)
 12 Mexican dish left in renovated hacienda (9)
 13 Stationer disturbed by attacks (5,4)
 16 Official at Chequers to some extent provides security on the door (5)
 17 Ultimately ass in America? (5)
 19 Amateur players on ground (9)
 21 Short supplement by Times upset immoderate politician (9)
 23 Bone one's found in watering holes (5)
 25 A test cut short in entrance halls (5)
 26 First and second in one large country and another (9)
 27 Defend liberty with onset of aggressive fighting or the opposite? (8,6)

DOWN

- 1 Asked for drinks, as lawyers may be (6,2,3,3)
 2 Name seen on back of Flintshire vehicles? (5)
 3 Drills used in coniferous trees spoken of (7)
 4 Single bitter cases about... (5)
 5 ...iron found in minister's house, communal dining room (9)
 6 Warm, soft drink (7)
 7 Unpopular Hindus tout cases for Reformation (9)
 8 About to enter swimming area for a pause (9-5)
 14 Queen repeatedly behind grown-up man of affairs? (9)
 15 Position unfilled outside one declared invalid (9)
 18 Anger shown in the loos, Ladies? (7)
 20 Cost of former vice-president reportedly (7)
 22 Present time with Dad mostly surrounded by child's gift (5)
 24 Talk sheepishly about senior Middle Eastern port (5)



Solution to Crossword 142

ACROSS: 1 Gaucho 5 Nightcap 9 Chitchat 10 Lets go 11 Considerable 13 Semi 14 Huntsman 17 Dismount 18 Ales 20 Vin ordinaire 23 Banner 24 Idolater 25 Leapfrog 26 Totter

DOWN: 2 Ache 3 Catechism 4 On hand 5 Notwithstanding 6 Galleons 7 Tetra 8 Angel cakes 12 Legitimate 15 Spare part 16 Murderer 19 Hit out 21 Own up 22 Cede

Clue of the Week: What arrives as August ends? Touch of autumn colour (5, first letters SE)

Solution: SEPIA (Sep 1 + A)

Sudoku 144



Fill in all the squares so that each row, column and each of the 3x3 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9

Solution to Sudoku 143

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

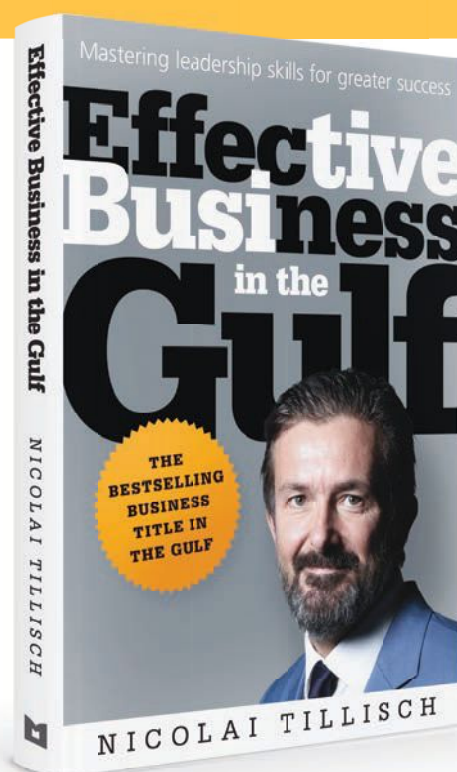
Charity of the week



Adopt-a-Camp

Adopt-a-Camp (AAC) is an initiative designed to improve the lives of the thousands of migrant labourers who live and work in the UAE. It has been working for eight years and currently has 50 camps and more than 50,000 men under its wing. Programmes offered by AAC include English language lessons for labourers and the delivery of Ramadan care packages. Visit www.adoptacamp.ae to find out how you can help.

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**Don't treat
yourself to
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The self-prescription of antibiotics is leading us into a post-antibiotic era, in which common infections could once again be fatal.