

Should we
be scared of
Zuckerberg?

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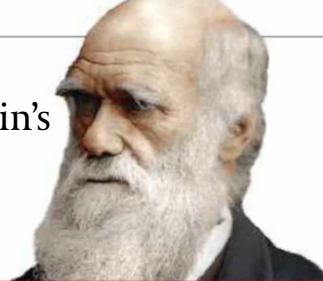
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MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

THE WEEK

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THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

He's back! Blair takes on Brexit

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What happened

The future of Nato

US Vice-President Mike Pence pledged America's "unwavering" support for Nato last weekend, but warned other Nato members that they had to make "real progress" this year on boosting defence spending. Speaking at a security conference in Munich, Pence said his countrymen could lose patience with the alliance if others failed to share the burden. Nato leaders agreed in 2014 that members needed to start spending at least 2% of GDP on defence by 2024. Only the US, Britain, Poland, Estonia and Greece currently do so. Germany spends 1.2%, France 1.8%, Italy 1.1%, and Spain 0.9%.

EU leaders rattled by Donald Trump's rhetoric welcomed Pence's more emollient tone – as well as his promise to hold Russia to account for its aggression in Ukraine. But the call for more defence spending met with some resistance. Germany insisted it would not accelerate its plans, but would stick to its aim of meeting the 2% target by 2024. Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, complained that the US focus on defence spending overlooked the humanitarian and aid contributions that European nations made to security.



Pence: "damage control"?

What the editorials said

"This is not a new plea," said The Guardian. Six years ago, Barack Obama's defence secretary, Robert Gates, warned that Nato would collapse if other members didn't start pulling their weight. Since then, the European states and Canada have made progress: their "defence spending has risen collectively by 3.8% above inflation in the last year". But there's no doubt that Europe needs to "do more, and be better coordinated, for its own defence needs within Nato". The alliance is supposed to be a collective defence pact, not an "American policing operation", said The Sunday Telegraph. The US spends 3.6% of its vast GDP on defence, yet several European countries spend "less on defence than the budget of the New York police department".

The other 27 members of Nato should heed the US message, said The New York Times. But at a time when the alliance is "facing an assertive and aggressive Russia", it's irresponsible to hint, as Secretary of Defence Jim Mattis did last week, that the US might reduce its commitment to Nato if members don't pay up. The US should use carrots rather than sticks, said the Boston Herald. "An offer to include members meeting their 2% goal in a future anti-missile system (perhaps sea-based) could be fruitful."

What happened

The burden on business

Business leaders and MPs from all parties have condemned a planned hike in business rates, warning that it would devastate the high street and force thousands of small businesses to close. Critics claim some firms could face rises of up to 400% over the next five years. It will be the first revaluation of business rates in seven years: the increases are scheduled to take effect in April. More than 500,000 enterprises will be affected, including shops, pubs, restaurants, nurseries and GP surgeries.

Attempting to head off a backbench revolt, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid told Tory MPs that the Government's critics were peddling "distortions and half-truths". Average bills, he said, would actually fall by up to 11% everywhere outside London. But his own figures have under fierce attack, with allegations that he had overstated the number of council districts where rates would drop.



Winterson: forced to close

What the editorials said

The business rate is an indefensible tax system, said the Daily Mail. Based solely on the value of a company's floor space, it's an archaic levy that takes no account of income flow. The revaluation will be a huge blow to high-street businesses, while favouring out-of-town hypermarkets and giant online retailers who don't need expensive town-centre sites – they are in line for a £200m tax cut. It's "madness". The hikes make a nonsense of the government policy of fostering our struggling villages and urban communities, said The Daily Telegraph. They may bring in an extra £1bn for the Treasury, but they will hurt the very people – the "just about managing" – whom the Prime Minister claims to champion.

The Government has only itself to blame for this upheaval, said the Daily Mirror. The revaluation should have occurred two years ago – there's meant to be one every five years. But in 2015, the Tories cynically postponed it to avoid angering voters before the election. So the hike is far swifter than it need have been, and our leaders must face the consequences.

It wasn't all bad

A record-breaking number of tourists came to the UK last year. Confounding expectations, there were 37.3 million visitors – up 3% on 2015 – who took advantage of the weak pound to spend a whopping £22.2bn. Britain proved a particularly popular destination with Americans: they accounted for 4.3 million of the visitors. Early indicators suggest tourists will keep flooding in this year: bookings for February to April are up 16% compared with the same period in 2016.

An architectural historian claims to be the owner of Britain's oldest plastic shopping bag. Sue O'Dowd, 65, was given the bag while shopping at Tesco in 1981. Part of a batch produced to mark the supermarket's 50th anniversary, it has survived five house moves, travelling from Birmingham to Much Wenlock in Shropshire. A keen knitter, O'Dowd now uses it to store her spare wool. "It's really been a bag for life," said her daughter Frankie, who was born shortly before the bag was acquired. However, O'Dowd has competition: one Martin McCaskie claimed last year to also have a Tesco bag dating from 1981 – and to have used his some 2,000 times.



A two-year-old girl could be the first person in the world to have been cured of cancer by gene editing. The patient, Layla Richards, was diagnosed with acute lympho-blastic leukaemia when she was three months old. Using groundbreaking methods that had only been tested in a lab, doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital took a donor's healthy immune cells and added new genes to arm Layla against the cancer. Now, 18 months later, she has been clear of the disease for so long that doctors think the treatment could amount to a cure.

What the commentators said

The mood was anxious at the conference in Munich, said Matthew Kaminski on Politico. "It felt like the first date of an arranged coupling, not the natural renewal of a now 70-year-old vow." One cause of the discomfort is that European officials still feel unsure about the direction of US foreign policy. Is it the vision sketched out by the "grey-haired, experienced, boring Americans" in their speeches last week? Or the less friendly one communicated by their boss, who calls Nato "obsolete", takes "potshots" at the EU and praises Brexit?

It's hard to tell who speaks on behalf of the administration these days, said David Osborne in The Independent. Such are the chaotic workings of the White House that the president and his officials often articulate contradictory positions. Pence has been engaging in "damage control" in Europe, but his efforts could "be undone with a single visit by the president to his Twitter account". The White House is at war with itself over foreign policy, with different sides vying for supremacy, said Shashank Joshi on CapX. The radicals, such as chief strategist Steve Bannon, have Trump's ear. But moderates like Pence and Mattis, while "further from the apex of power", lend the administration crucial credibility. Were they to be sacked – or to resign en masse – it would risk "a serious breach". So they do wield considerable power.

Be that as it may, said Anne Applebaum in the FT, it's pretty clear that America's "political commitment to European security is waning rapidly". The UK now has a choice: it can either "join others in pretending this is not happening", or reinvent its security policy. It's a perfect moment to take the latter course. "Britain is leaving the EU, but it still wants a European role." So why not help launch a new European security pact – one that is compatible with Nato but better designed to address the threats facing the continent today: "terrorism and chaos in the south; and hybrid warfare from Russia – a vicious mix of political influence operations, targeted corruption, cyberthreats and now a new generation of cruise missiles"? It's time to start "preparing coldly for the day when the US security umbrella might be withdrawn".

What the commentators said

"Shock, horror and outrage." That has been the press response to the revelation that business rates for Amazon will dip as those for high-street retailers climb, said Tim Worstall on CapX. But why all the bleating? It may be an imperfect form of tax but at least it reflects the inexorable law of supply and demand. "The reason land in Oxford Street is expensive is that there's not that much there." And if high rents persuade businesses to "sell out of a shed in Burnley" rather than central London, we all profit: lower costs are passed on to the consumer. In any case, as Javid says, there'll be more winners than losers, said Philip Aldrick in The Times. Business rates will fall for 920,000 companies, stay unchanged for 420,000, and rise for 510,000. As usual "a vocal minority", using the media as foghorn, has "drowned out a silent majority".

But what can't be denied, said Jim Armitage in the London Evening Standard, is that we're stuck with a tax that penalises success. London is the economy's powerhouse, yet owing to its steeply rising property values, it will suffer most if the hikes go ahead. And if we persist in levying the highest property taxes of any major developed country, companies will think twice about expanding here, while overseas investors, the very people we'll need most in a post-Brexit world, will stay away. London also faces the prospect of a "species wipeout" of its small private businesses, said Jeanette Winterson in the FT. I know this from bitter experience. For 13 years I've owned a small deli in Spitalfields that has become an "icon for tourists and neighbours alike". It's made "no big profits, but we paid our way". Now, faced with a spike in business rates that reflects the leap in local property prices, we must close. Like so many others, we've been bashed by a tax based on neither profit nor turnover. There are no easy alternatives to a tax that raises £28bn a year, said Nils Pratley in The Guardian. But unless Philip Hammond can come up with a better system, the resentments and distortions will continue to grow.

What next?

Trump's appointment of a Russia hawk as his new national security adviser (see page 6) has raised hopes that the White House is rethinking its friendly stance towards Moscow, reports The Times. Lt General Herbert McMaster oversaw a Pentagon study last year on how the US army could best counter the threat from Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Trump himself will attend the next Nato summit in Brussels, scheduled for 25 May. David Cameron, meanwhile, is reportedly being lined up as a contender to be the next secretary general of Nato. The current Nato boss, former Norwegian PM Jens Stoltenberg, will finish his term in either 2018 or 2019.

What next?

Some Tory MPs are now saying they will seek to derail Hammond's budget on 8 March if he fails to lessen the impact on small- and medium-sized businesses. But though the Chancellor professed to be "in listening mode", he also made clear that any extra spending for business rate relief would necessitate higher taxes elsewhere.

But the Government did make clear that enterprises with a rateable value below £12,000 will pay no business rates at all. It also promised "transitional" relief to spread the effects of the hikes over several years for those worst hit.

THE WEEK

What is the secret fuel that propels people like suicide bomber Jamal al-Harith (see p7)? What makes them devote their lives to an extremist cause? At a marginally less frenzied level, what makes people almost come to blows about whether or not to quit a customs union? Why does such a dry, complex issue as Brexit induce passion rather than perplexity? As Freud's children, we assume that deep, powerful convictions must have equally deep and powerful causes – if not rooted in sex (unlikely in the case of attitudes to the EU), then in suffering. But is it really so? In the new Channel 4 documentary series *Extremely British Muslims*, two white brothers from Birmingham seek to explain how, after a youth spent "getting wrecked" on drink and drugs, they each went to different extremes. Shaun became a devout Muslim; Lee went on rallies organised by the anti-Muslim English Defence League. "I didn't really have a bad view of Muslims," he says. "It was something for me to do when I was bored."

That escape from boredom could be a root of deep hatreds and tribal fury isn't an original idea, but as an explanation it's so drab and workaday it has invariably been kitted out in more glamorous garb. Medieval monks called it *accidie*, "the noonday devil"; Durkheim *anomie*. But in the end, it just boils down to the thirst for excitement, as the shopkeeper in Beirut tried to tell The Independent's Robert Fisk when explaining why he felt so low that peace had returned after 15 years of war. "It's so boring, Mr Robert." Yet we resist such explanations, because sex is so much sexier.

Jeremy O'Grady

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Controversy of the week

Blair's call to arms

"In a time of division and dissension, it's comforting to know that there's one thing around which Britain can unite," said Robert Colville on CapX – "namely, hating Tony Blair". The former PM made a speech last week urging the nation to "rise up" against Brexit, on the grounds that people had voted with "imperfect knowledge" of the costs of leaving the EU. Safe to say it "didn't go down well." Boris Johnson called on the British people "to rise up and turn off the TV the next time Tony Blair comes on with his condescending campaign". Jeremy Corbyn said the intervention was "not helpful" on the eve of this week's by-elections in two Eurosceptic constituencies, Copeland and Stoke-on-Trent Central. "The brass neck of Tony Blair," said Brendan O'Neill in *The Spectator*. The vote was based on imperfect knowledge, says the man who waged war in Iraq "on the basis of a student dissertation he printed off the internet". "Does he simply believe voters are complete idiots," asked the *Daily Mail*. Or "was he so busy hoovering up money from despots that he missed Project Fear"?

"Hear this," said Alex Massie in *The Spectator*: "Some things can be true even when they are said by Anthony Charles Lynton Blair." For instance, how can anyone seriously disagree with him when he says: "How hideously, in this debate, is the mantle of patriotism abused." Brexiteer rhetoric condemns 48% of the electorate "as nothing more than lickspittle sellouts". Since the referendum, dissent seems to have been outlawed: "Brexit means Brexit, so pipe down at the back there. Don't you realise you lost? So shut up, you, you, you *Remoaner* you." All Blair has done is to suggest that those who think Brexit represents a "rush over the cliff's edge" should continue to make their case. "There should be nothing terribly controversial about this." Trying to convince the public to change their minds "is a perfectly respectable thing to do," said *The Independent*. "Politicians have to do it all the time after they lose elections." It does not imply any "contempt for the voters".

The former PM is free, like any citizen, "to campaign for any cause in which he believes," said *The Times*. "But he is not the right person to issue this clarion call." After Iraq, the Chilcot Inquiry, the financial crisis, and a decade spent lining his pockets, "his credibility is shot". The "Brexit deniers" need to face reality, said Daniel Finkelstein in *The Times*. Theresa May's Brexit Bill will be passed, whatever happens in the Lords this week, and Article 50 will be triggered. The idea that Brexit can be stopped is "delusional". For canny Remainers, the goal now is to "shape Britain after exit," said Janan Ganesh in the *FT*: to ensure that the nation remains as close as possible to Europe, and its markets, regulations, labour laws and policing agreements. "The idea is to keep post-exit Britain so enmeshed in the EU as to cast doubt on the wisdom – or the point – of remaining outside."



The voice of reason?

Boring but important

Civil partnership ruling

A heterosexual couple have lost their legal battle to be allowed to enter into a civil partnership. Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan – who regard marriage as "patriarchal", but want their relationship to be formalised – argued that in making civil partnerships open only to homosexuals, the current law is discriminatory. Court of Appeal judges agreed that there had been a potential violation of their human rights, but opted to give ministers more time to complete a review into whether civil partnerships should be opened up. Steinfeld and Keidan plan to appeal to the Supreme Court if the law isn't reformed.

Criminal Finances Bill

MPs have voted to give the Government the power to freeze the UK assets of human rights violators from anywhere in the world. The amendment to the Criminal Finances Bill expands the definition of unlawful conduct to include human rights abuses, and extends its application to anyone who has profited from the abuses or participated in them. Security Minister Ben Wallace said the measures would send a "major signal" that the UK could not be used to hide ill-gotten gains.

Spirit of the age

Councils have been told not to name streets after local heroes – in case they are one day exposed as paedophiles. The new guidelines, issued by local government quango Geoplace, are intended to avoid "costly street rename procedures" in the event that "inappropriate activities" come to light. Hundreds of streets had to be renamed after Jimmy Savile was revealed to have been a paedophile, in 2012.

An "army" of nine million grandparents is saving UK families £16bn a year in childcare costs, a survey has found. Yet some find the work so overwhelming that they hire someone else to do it: almost a quarter of grandparents say they have paid for a babysitter, rising to 60% among those who are called upon most often.

Good week for:

Snitches, after Liverpool's elected mayor promised residents a year's council tax holiday in exchange for evidence leading to the prosecution of dog owners who don't clear up after their pets, and other "environmental criminals". Joe Anderson said the smell of dog mess in some parts of the city had become "totally unacceptable" – and that the policy would pay for itself through the £1,000 fines levied on offenders.

Lincoln City, which became the first non-league football team to reach the quarter-finals of the FA Cup in more than a century (see page 22).

Bad week for:

Homegrown, with a report suggesting that only 23% of the fruit and vegetables eaten in Britain are produced in this country. The research, conducted by a team at the University of Leeds and commissioned by Morrisons, found that, overall, only 52% of the food eaten in Britain comes from local sources.

The "roly-poly goalie", who was forced to resign for eating a meat pie during a match. Pictures of Sutton United's 23rd reserve goalie Wayne Shaw tucking into the pie while on the bench caused merriment at first; then it emerged that he'd been aware that bookies had placed odds on him snacking during the match against Arsenal – putting him in potential breach of FA rules.

Southern rail passengers, after drivers rejected, by 54% to 46%, a proposed deal brokered by their union, Aslef, to end the long-running dispute. Strikes were due to resume this week, creating further misery for commuters in the southeast.

Poll watch

40% of Americans approve of the job Donald Trump is doing – **11 points** lower than any of his predecessors' ratings a month into their presidency. The average rating for a president at this point is **61%**.

Gallup/The Independent

Labour is on **26%**, just one point above its lowest ever rating in an ICM poll. The Tories are **18 points** ahead, on **44%**. UKIP is on **13%**, the Lib Dems **8%**.

ICM/The Guardian

35% of Remain voters trust economists, compared with only **14%** of Leave voters. **83%** of Remainers trust scientists, compared with **63%** of Leavers. On politicians, however, the sides are almost aligned: just **6%** of Remainers and **4%** of Leavers trust politicians. *YouGov*

Spijkenisse, Netherlands

Far-right in front:

The leader of the far-right Party for Freedom, Geert Wilders, launched his election campaign last week by claiming that some Moroccan immigrants are “scum” who “make the streets unsafe”. Canvassing in his party’s stronghold of Spijkenisse, he called on voters to “make the Netherlands ours again”. Wilders (pictured), who was convicted of inciting racial discrimination in December, is ahead in the polls; but even if his party gains the most seats in next month’s elections, he will almost certainly be unable to form a government as no significant party is willing to go into coalition with him.



Stockholm

Trump “predicts” riots: A riot broke out in a mainly immigrant suburb of Stockholm this week – days after Donald Trump was ridiculed for implying, at a rally in Florida, that the US needed to avoid the kind of immigrant violence plaguing Sweden. At the time, Trump was thought to be suggesting that there had just been a terrorist attack in Sweden, which caused considerable bafflement. Later, he said he had been referring to a wave of immigrant-related crime that he’d seen reported on Fox News, a story that the “fake news” media was suppressing. Sweden accepted more migrants in 2015 per capita than any other EU nation. This has caused relatively few problems, and officials angrily denied that there has been any surge in crime – but on Monday, a drug-related arrest in Rinkeby, in northern Stockholm, triggered a riot in which half a dozen cars were burned and several shopfronts vandalised.

Donetsk, Ukraine

Rebel passports recognised: Vladimir Putin has ratcheted up tensions in the Ukrainian conflict by declaring that Russia will temporarily recognise as valid passports and other ID papers issued by the rebel republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Donbas region. The Donbas has seen heavy fighting between the Ukrainian army and Russian-backed rebel forces in recent weeks. Ukraine’s government denounced the move as a “deliberate escalation” and further evidence of Russian violation of the Minsk peace deal. But the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, claimed the decision was made for humanitarian reasons and that, in line with the Minsk agreement, heavy military equipment would soon be withdrawn from the region.

Paris

“Penelopegate”: François Fillon, the centre-right candidate in France’s presidential election, has announced he will remain in the race, even though he is being investigated for the possible misuse of state funds. Fillon, who was prime minister under Nicolas Sarkozy, is accused of paying his wife, Penelope, and two of his children nearly €1m for parliamentary work they never performed. Fillon had previously vowed to quit the race if charged in an ongoing inquiry, yet he now insists that to do so would be letting down the French people. His ratings have plummeted, and the lead he once enjoyed has been taken by Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front. Polls give her 27% of the vote – but she isn’t expected to win the second round. Her main rival, Emmanuel Macron, was in London this week trying to drum up support among the 300,000 French expats living in the UK.



Palma

Princess acquitted:

The sister of the King of Spain, Princess Cristina, was cleared of being an accomplice to tax fraud this week, at the end of a year-long trial. However, her husband, the



former Duke of Palma, Iñaki Urdangarin (pictured, with Cristina), was found guilty of embezzling some €6m in public funds and sentenced to more than six years in jail. The court fined the princess €265,088, as she had benefited from his fraud. King Felipe VI stripped Cristina – the first royal to stand trial since the monarchy was restored in 1975 – of her noble title in June 2015 after she was indicted.

Nuremberg, Germany

Speaking up for Hitler: Members of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party were at each other’s throats last week over an investigation into pro-Hitler comments made online. The trouble began when Elena Roon, an AfD parliamentary candidate and the party’s leader in Nuremberg, was found to have circulated photos of Adolf Hitler on WhatsApp. One was captioned: “Missed since 1945. Adolf please get in touch! Germany needs you!”; another had Hitler saying, “Islamists... I forgot them!” Roon admits posting the images, but insists she does not condone their messages and “in no way” wants Hitler to return. But party officials say they’re taking the case very seriously and, to the fury of many AfD members, have formed a panel to investigate Roon. The controversy comes a month after another AfD official called the Berlin Holocaust memorial a “monument of shame”.

Podgorica

Failed Russian coup: Montenegrin prosecutor Milivoje Katnic infuriated Moscow this week by claiming that “Russian state bodies” were involved in last October’s assassination attempt on Montenegro’s then prime minister, Milo Đukanovic. Đukanovic had been keen for Montenegro to join Nato, and the failed plot – foiled mere hours before it was due to be carried out on the eve of Montenegro’s elections – was apparently an attempt to stop the country joining the military alliance, of which it is due to become a member this spring. More than 20 suspects, mostly Serbian nationals, were arrested, but Interpol is still searching for two Russian men, originally thought to be Russian nationalists but now identified as military intelligence officers. The Kremlin has vigorously denied allegations that it was involved in the attempted coup, dismissing them as “absurd”.

Washington DC

New security advisor: Donald Trump has selected a highly respected military strategist as his new security advisor, replacing Michael Flynn, who was ousted last week over his pre-election contact with officials in Moscow. Lt General Herbert Raymond McMaster (right, with Trump), 54, commanded troops in both wars in Iraq, and later led an anti-corruption task force in Afghanistan. Known as a soldier-scholar, he was awarded a PhD in US history in 1996 and, a year later, published a history of the Vietnam war that was highly critical of Washington's handling of the conflict. This week, one of Trump's more outspoken Republican critics, Senator John McCain, described his appointment as an "outstanding choice".

By contrast, commentators reacted with dismay to the confirmation of Scott Pruitt – a seasoned opponent of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – as its new head. Senators voted 52 to 46 to appoint Pruitt, a climate change cynic with close ties to the fossil fuel industry who, as attorney general of Oklahoma, spent years trying to block the EPA's regulations to limit environmental pollution. Two Democrats from coal-rich states crossed party lines to support his nomination. On the campaign trail, Trump vowed to "get rid" of the EPA "in almost every form"; critics described Pruitt's appointment as a "hostile takeover".

Oklahoma City

Abortion laws: A bill that would force women seeking abortions in Oklahoma to get the consent of the foetus' father passed its first hurdle last week, when legislators agreed to put the measure to a full vote. The state already has some of the strictest abortion laws in the US: women must undergo a 72-hour waiting period, and have counselling about a supposed link between abortion and breast cancer. The new bill – part of a wave of anti-abortion laws being introduced across the US – would make it illegal for doctors to perform abortions without the father's permission, except in cases of rape or incest, or where the mother's health is at risk. Even its author, Justin Humphrey, who refers to pregnant women as "hosts", has acknowledged it might be unconstitutional: the Republican says he wants to start a debate about fathers' rights.

Washington DC

"Ugly" anti-Semitism: President Trump has condemned a spate of "very ugly" bomb threats levelled against Jewish community groups. Federal authorities were this week investigating 11 new threats made to Jewish centres in Alabama, New York and elsewhere, bringing the total reported by Jewish groups since January to around 70. No bombs have been found, and they are believed to have been hoaxes. Speaking during a visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC, Trump described anti-Semitism as "horrible", and denounced all forms of racism as "just terrible". He'd earlier faced criticism for failing to speak out against the bomb threats.

**Quito**

Knife-edge vote: Presidential elections in Ecuador looked set to go to a run-off following a knife-edge first-round vote this week. On Tuesday night, Lenin Moreno (pictured) was declared to have 39.2% of the vote counted; just shy of the 40% needed to win outright. He will now face the centre-right former banker Guillermo Lasso, who came second with 28.3%, in a second round, on 2 April.

The opposition is expected to rally around Lasso, giving him a good chance of emerging victorious – and ending ten years of leftist rule in Ecuador. One person watching the race closely will be Julian Assange: Lasso has vowed that, if elected, he will expel the WikiLeaks founder from Ecuador's embassy in London.

Washington DC

Expedited deportations: Most of the 11 million illegal immigrants in the US could face immediate deportation under new guidelines released by the Trump administration. Under Barack Obama, only illegal immigrants convicted of serious crimes, or considered a threat to national security, were actively pursued. If enforced (and the cost alone may prove prohibitive), the new measures mean that anyone charged with a crime – even a traffic violation – could face expedited deportation, along with those who cannot prove they have been in the US for more than two years. Only "dreamers" – people who were brought into the country illegally as children – are to be shielded from deportation. The White House was forced to deny reports last week that the National Guard was going to be deployed to round up illegal immigrants.

**Butner, North Carolina**

"Blind sheikh" dies: The blind fundamentalist cleric believed to have masterminded the 1993 World Trade Centre (WTC) attack has died, aged 78, in jail in Butner. Known in the US as the "blind Sheikh", Omar Abdel-Rahman was originally from Egypt, where he led the militant al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya group. Expelled from Egypt in the 1980s, he went to Afghanistan, where he forged links with al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Despite being on a terror watch list, he was given a tourist visa to enter the US in 1990 and later gained residency. In 1995, he was convicted of conspiring with the perpetrators of the WTC attack, in which six people died, and of plotting to blow up the UN building and other New York sites. He had been suffering from diabetes and heart disease.



Mosul, Iraq

Offensive to rout Isis: The Iraqi military, backed by British and US special forces, launched a fresh offensive aimed at retaking western Mosul, Isis's last major stronghold in the country, on Sunday. Eastern Mosul was liberated last month after a gruelling three-month battle; now, Iraqi forces are trying to wrest the remainder of the city from the militants. Coalition forces took 15 villages on the first day of the campaign. However, their advance has since been slowed by rocket fire and improvised explosive devices planted along the route, and the most intense fighting is yet to come. Some 650,000 civilians are thought to remain in Mosul; aid workers have warned of a growing humanitarian crisis, with severe food shortages and no medical supplies. Meanwhile, it was reported that an Isis suicide bomber who was filmed blowing himself up outside Mosul on Monday was a British-born Muslim convert and former Guantánamo Bay detainee. Jamal al-Harith (pictured), 50, was seized in Afghanistan in 2002, and spent two years in the US facility, before being released as a result of lobbying by Tony Blair's government. He alleged that he had been mistreated, and was later paid £1m in compensation.

Sehwan, Pakistan

Terror crackdown: Dozens of suspected terrorists have been killed by Pakistani security forces, in response to a suicide bombing that killed more than 80 worshippers at a Sufi shrine in Sehwan last week. Isis claimed responsibility for the assault – the largest in a recent spate of attacks in the country by the Taliban, Isis, al-Qa'eda and other groups. The following day, the government launched a crackdown in which it claims to have killed more than 100 militants; and tweeted that terrorists would be targeted "ruthlessly, indiscriminately, anywhere and everywhere". Pakistan has accused Afghanistan of sheltering militant leaders, and demanded that it hand over 76 of its "most-wanted" terrorists. This week the Pakistani army chief, Qamar Javed Bajwa, accused India of fostering terror in its region.



South China Sea

Naval manoeuvres: Just days after China warned the US against challenging its sovereignty over the South China Sea, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier the USS Carl Vinson this week began "routine" patrols in its waters. The Vinson is accompanied by a guided missile destroyer, and carries 60 aircraft, including F/A-18 fighter jets. Whereas Barack Obama's administration adopted a relatively neutral stance on the ownership of the contested islands in the area, President Trump has said he will take a stand to curb Beijing's ambitions.

Juba

Famine declared: Famine has been declared in parts of South Sudan. Aid agencies warned that more than 100,000 people are facing starvation, and a million more are on the brink of famine, owing to the catastrophic effects of three years of civil war, and a collapsing economy. The "man-made" crisis, affecting northern-central parts of the country, is the first to be formally declared a famine – a classification which means people are already dying of hunger – since Somalia in 2011. It is estimated that 4.9 million people – some 40% of the population of South Sudan – are in urgent need of assistance. According to the UN, the government is blocking aid to some areas. There are also famine warnings in parts of Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria.



Tel Aviv, Israel

Divisive verdict: An Israeli army medic who shot a Palestinian in the head as he lay immobile on the ground has been sentenced to 18 months for manslaughter, following a ten-month trial that has divided the country. Abdel Fattah al-Sharif, 21, was suspected of stabbing an Israeli soldier, and had already been shot once when Elor Azaria (pictured), 20, shot him as he lay on the road in Hebron, the Tel Aviv court heard. Azaria claimed al-Sharif remained a threat, and thousands of Israelis called for him to receive a bravery medal; others said he should have faced murder charges.



Melbourne, Australia

Plane crash: A twin-engine aeroplane crashed into a shopping centre in Melbourne last week, killing four US tourists and their Australian pilot. The charter plane, which was taking its four passengers to play golf on Tasmania's King Island, is believed to have suffered catastrophic engine failure shortly after taking off from Melbourne's Essendon Airport at around 9am. Rescue workers said it was astonishing that no one in the shopping mall was injured: the impact created a huge fireball that destroyed a storage area at the rear of the building.

A loud and out there MP

Being ordinary is Jess Phillips' raison d'être. The 35-year-old lives in a messy terraced house in her home town of Birmingham, with her two kids and husband Tom (a former lift engineer – “much more working class than me”). But then, two years ago, she decided to go into politics. “I had one goal and purpose when I stood,” she told Decca Aitkenhead in *The Guardian*. “I wanted to be an MP who was normal.” Her parents had been staunch socialists, and Phillips spent much of her childhood making protest banners and pamphlets. But she could see how disengaged most people felt from the political scene. “I believe in politics, I'm a proud parliamentarian, and I want people to want parliamentarians again,” she says. “I think the most important thing I can do in my time there, which may well be very short, is for people to say, ‘Oh look, they are just like us.’ So I decided I would stand, and just say and do exactly what I actually thought.”

Her plain speaking – especially about women's rights – has won her many enemies, both on social media (“I enjoy taking people on on Twitter, because often I'm cleverer and funnier”) and in Parliament. “They say, ‘I never hear you speaking about such-and-such,’” she mimics in a prissy voice. “Hmm, well, I never hear you speaking about *anything* interesting.” But it has also made her the rising

star of the Labour Party, tipped by some for the leadership. “I'm just not sure it's a great job,” she muses. “I like going out dancing to R&B with my mates, without a security force with me. My ambition is to make people feel like the Labour Party represents them again. If that's being leader – or just being loud and out there – I'm not sure.”

Tennant's pet peeve

David Tennant doesn't want to fall into the celebrity trap of giving opinions on everything. “I do think there's a danger in going, ‘Because you've seen me in a television programme, my views are more important than someone else's,’” the *Broadchurch* star told Charlotte Edwardes in *The Times*. But there is one thing he wants to get off his chest. “You know when they give you the news and then they say, ‘Text us your thoughts,’ and then they read them out? That makes me furious,” he says. “I mean, it's like the comments below articles – full of lunatic gibbering. People howling at the Moon, people sitting at home, hammering their keyboard in their underpants. But when the BBC starts doing it – no!” Interactivity is a modern plague, he says. “There's the Twitterverse, full of people screaming at each other. Everyone gets cross and loses perspective. We need places where there is calmness and coolness and bloodlessness... Otherwise where do you look to really understand what's going on?”



Samantha Cameron is quietly relieved to be out of No. 10. Last summer, when David Cameron resigned as PM, she endured her last official photocall. “It's extraordinary having all those lights in your eyes. I won't miss that; it's almost blinding. All the photographers shouting, it goes on for minutes but it's an eternity. You are trying not to pick your nose and you think of something else,” she told Alice Thomson in *The Times*. Her new career as a fashion designer is, in part, the result of being closely scrutinised for six years. “I couldn't wear black with [David] as it looked as if we were going to a funeral, and I kept merging into the No. 10 door. If I wore my favourite navy blue trouser suit, we looked like Thing One and Thing Two.” Even holidays were a sartorial nightmare. “At the last minute we'd think, ‘Oh God, it's the holiday photo,’ and I'd rush to Uniqlo. I hated the holding hands thing because it looked too romantic, so we overdid the cups-of-coffee-looking-wistful pose.” And then there were unexpected mishaps. “When we went to Washington to visit the Obamas, the weather was unbelievably hot for March. Watching our husbands give speeches, I could feel the sweat pouring down my legs and I worried everyone would think I'd wet my pants.” All of which leaves her feeling only sympathy for Melania Trump. “I see world leaders' families in human terms now. I don't think ‘What are your politics?’ but, ‘Poor you.’”

Castaway of the week

This week's edition of Radio 4's Desert Island Discs featured the historian Sir Antony Beevor

- 1* *Concerto in C major* by Vivaldi, performed by Crispian Steele-Perkins, Alison Balsom and The Parley of Instruments
- 2 *Union City Blue* by Debbie Harry and Nigel Harrison, performed by Blondie
- 3 *Trumpet Voluntary* by Jeremiah Clarke, performed by the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble
- 4 *The Regimental Slow March of the Royal Hussars* by Haydn, performed by The Regimental Band of the Royal Hussars
- 5 *Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11* by Chopin, performed by Elizabeth Sombart and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
- 6 *Dreaming* by Chris Stein and Debbie Harry, performed by Blondie
- 7 *Mandolin Concerto in C major* by Vivaldi, performed by Christian Schneider, Danielle Meyer and the Ensemble Instrumental de Grenoble
- 8 *Trumpet Concerto in E flat* by Haydn, performed by Alison Balsom and the Bremen German Chamber Philharmonic

Book: *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev

Luxury: a fishing rod and tackle

* Choice if allowed only one record

Viewpoint:**Addicted to Trump**

“Trump, let's face it, is an addiction. Nothing will ever trump it. We all now need our evening fix – a mad press conference, laws hurled out of court, a square-jawed general brought low by an inane conversation with a Russian spy – just one more shot in the arm till the morning. That's what disqualifies all the Hitler parallels, even the Mussolini comparisons, although the comical side of Italian fascist imperialism is there. It's not that Trump is no longer terrifying. He should be. Nor that he is not mentally unstable. It's that his performances are so rivetingly zany, so absolutely inside the prison of the absurd, that I swear some [people] will commit suicide when he's gone.” *Robert Fisk in The Independent*

Farewell

Steve Hewlett, writer and broadcaster, died 20 February, aged 58.

Peter Skellern, singer-songwriter, died 17 February, aged 69.

Sara Coward, actress who starred in *The Archers*, died 13 February, aged 69.

Dick Bruna, Dutch author and illustrator who created the little white rabbit Miffy, died 16 February, aged 89.

Professor Richard Pankhurst, historian of Ethiopia, died 16 February, aged 89.

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The billionaires' apocalypse

Some of the richest people in America are getting ready for the end of the world, according to a report in The New Yorker

What sort of plans are they making?

Evan Osnos, a journalist at The New Yorker, talked to a range of super-rich Americans, most of them Silicon Valley tycoons and East Coast financiers, who are all preparing for the apocalypse. The most basic plans involve stockpiling guns, ammo, tinned food and gold coins, and keeping motorcycles (believed necessary to bypass the sort of gridlocked traffic seen in disaster movies). The more ambitious “preppers” have bought rural land and equipped it with water supply systems and electricity generators. For the truly wealthy, the sky’s the limit. “I keep a helicopter gassed up all the time, and I have an underground bunker with an air-filtration system,” said one entrepreneur. Another has had corrective eye surgery, explaining: “If the world ends – and not even if the world ends, but if we have trouble – getting contacts or glasses is going to be a huge pain in the ass.” But some are making even more extreme preparations.



The armed guards of the Survival Condo Project

of disaster planning. This doesn’t necessarily mean they think civilisation will collapse. “They consider it a remote event,” writes one tech CEO, “but one with a very severe downside. So, given how much money they have, spending a fraction of their net worth to hedge against this is a logical thing to do.” “A less flattering theory,” suggested Tom Leonard in the Daily Mail, is that “they’re simply bored nerds who long for adventure” and fantasise about a future in which they’ll be a cross between Mad Max and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. Prepping for the end of the world is a minority pastime among many Americans (see box); perhaps the super-rich can just afford to act out their fantasies on a more impressive scale.

So what are the top-of-the range options?

The most elaborate of all is the Survival Condo Project, a 15-storey luxury apartment complex built underground in a disused nuclear missile silo in Kansas. It contains 12 apartments and can support 75 people, with enough food and fuel to last for more than five years. In a crisis, the project’s armed guards will pick up any of the owners who are within 400 miles, in armoured cars. The complex is protected by blast doors, walls thick enough to withstand a nuclear strike, and a guard tower. The \$3m flats are luxurious, with leather sofas and LED “windows” showing video footage of the prairie above; there is a medical wing, a gym, a swimming pool, a prison cell and an armoury. However, many looking for “apocalypse insurance” prefer to go further afield, particularly to New Zealand – where the likes of tech billionaire Peter Thiel are snapping up estates with their own water supplies, power and ability to grow food. “Saying you’re ‘buying a house in New Zealand’ is kind of a wink, wink, say no more,” says Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn. Remote, agriculturally rich and politically stable, it is considered the ideal location for a getaway.

What are they worried about?

A whole range of potential disasters: a giant earthquake under California; nuclear war; a tsunami; catastrophic climate change; civil war; a pandemic; a terrorist dirty bomb. Zombies are sometimes mentioned. But in recent years, many have become particularly alarmed about the political situation in America. They fear that as technology eats up jobs, and wealth is concentrated among the tech and financial elite, things could turn nasty. “I’ve heard this theme from a bunch of people,” says Hoffman. “Is the country going to turn against the wealthy? Is it going to turn against technological innovation? Is it going to turn into civil disorder?”

How serious are they about this?

Hoffman thinks that “fifty-plus per cent” of his fellow Silicon Valley billionaires have done some sort

But why is it techies and financiers who are prepping?

Utopian and dystopian thinking is common in Silicon Valley: the technology industry rewards the ability to imagine very different futures, and recent years have shown how easily the status quo can be disrupted. More generally, tech and finance executives are two of the richest groups in America; and Osnos diagnoses a generalised “elite anxiety” among the very rich. As the former hedge fund MD Robert Johnson told him, “25 hedge fund managers make more money than all of the kindergarten teachers in America combined. Being one of those 25 doesn’t feel good. I think they’ve developed a heightened sensitivity”. Osnos suggests that planning for the apocalypse is a sort of reverse philanthropy: instead of trying to make the world better with their wealth, they are withdrawing from it altogether.

Will their emergency plans actually work?

The problem is that the more complicated your plans, the more difficult they are to execute. If society is beginning to crumble, firing up your private jet and making for your ranch or silo or New Zealand bolthole may be tricky. Certainly, some of the more traditional survivalists are unimpressed by the high-tech preppers. “Despite their virtually unlimited budgets, none of these guys is doing it right,” said Wes Siler on OutsideOnline.com. “What if

the earthquake damages the airport where you keep your private jet? What if your pilot can’t get through traffic? What if he decides to fly his family to safety instead of his employer?” Siler suggests that they’d be better off learning how to shoot, hunt and build shelters.

Is this just an American thing?

Primarily, but there are some preppers in Britain. Europe’s only prepping shop is situated on a farm in Bedfordshire; it sells everything from crossbows to survival clothes and even Confederate flags. Super-rich options are also becoming available. Vivos Europa One, a vast former Soviet bunker in central Germany, is currently seeking “members”. Successful applicants will be allowed to buy a shelter, where they could “survive virtually any catastrophe or disaster for several years without needing to return to the surface”.

Bugging in and bugging out

The vogue for survivalism dates back to the Cold War, with its fallout shelters and civil defence programmes. But the word itself was apparently coined during the 1970s oil crisis by the far-right writer Kurt Saxon, who believed that contemporary America – a “Disneyland for dummies”, in his view – was facing collapse. His quarterly newsletter, *The Survivor*, encouraged readers to learn self-sufficiency and the use of improvised weapons. He and other writers such as Howard Ruff, author of *Famine and Survival in America*, inspired the popular image of survivalism: extremists hiding out in the woods and stockpiling “Bibles, beans and bullets”.

In recent years, though, the survivalist has evolved into a more acceptable figure – the prepper. He or she is more likely to be a normal person with a regular job, but with deep-seated fears about the future. Preppers, on websites and TV shows, promote “readiness”, using their own specialised vocabulary. The coming catastrophe is referred to by the acronym SHTF, meaning when the “s**t hits the fan”. “Bugging in” is staying in your house when the SHTF; “bugging out” means moving to a safer location. A BOB is a “bug out bag”, a bag containing everything you need to survive. The unprepared masses are referred to as “zombies”.

The cracks in the global food chain

Felicity Lawrence

The Guardian

The great lettuce panic is over, says Felicity Lawrence. Emergency shipments from the US have made up for the vegetable shortages caused by poor weather in Europe. So we can all relax, right? Not really. For this “blip” is an indication of how vulnerable the global food chain is to disruptions caused by things such as climate change, Brexit and migration. It wasn’t like this 40 years ago. But then came the “third industrial revolution” – the great leap in information technology that enabled big retailers to dispense with stocking food at the back of the store, and instead electronically order it from centralised warehouses whenever needed. So we’ve grown used to buying any food we want at any time of year: our supermarkets operate on “Permanent Global Summer Time”. But a system reliant on “profligate use of finite resources” is showing the strain. Supermarket buyers are considering dropping lines – such as asparagus from Peru – that are environmentally unsustainable. We’ve put our faith in the global market to provide our food: now we’re learning the market may not always deliver.

If you feel offended, face up to it

David Aaronovitch

The Times

If you go to the website of London’s Royal Court Theatre, you’ll find a paragraph headed “Trigger Warnings”, advising that some plays contain material “that can be particularly distressing for some individuals”. If you’re an author who thinks your new book may cause offence, you can get a “sensitivity reader” to vet it. We now spend a lot of time agonising over people’s feelings, says David Aaronovitch. Hardly a day goes by without someone trying to ban something: students at a US university have just banned the “alt-right” provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos from giving a talk, fearing he’d create an “unsafe space” for people on campus. Such moves, however well-intentioned, are based on the flawed assumption that people are so fragile they must be shielded from things that may upset them. Wrong. As the eminent psychiatrist Sir Simon Wessely discovered after the 7/7 London bombings, the counselling given to the survivors actually made many feel worse. “People are tougher than we think,” and it is by facing up to our fears that we overcome them. Instead of searching out sources of offence, we must trust in people’s adaptability and resilience.

When the Nazis ruled a bit of Britain

Dominic Lawson

The Sunday Times

It’s one of the big “what ifs” in British history: how would the British have behaved had Britain fallen to the Nazis? The subject has intrigued authors from Robert Harris to Len Deighton, whose novel *SS-GB* has just been adapted by the BBC. But we don’t need to imagine a Nazi invasion, says Dominic Lawson: there actually was one. From 1940 until 1945, the Channel Islands were occupied by the Wehrmacht. And far from boldly resisting the occupying force, the British Crown’s designated authorities were “extraordinarily friendly”. Victor Carey, then bailiff of Guernsey, did whatever they asked. He encouraged the island’s inhabitants to inform on each other, posting a £25 reward for information about anyone daubing a V for victory sign (a gesture of resistance). Many took the bait, and their victims were deported. The island’s Jews suffered an even worse fate: the authorities readily shared their names with the Nazis. Yet when the War finally came to an end, the British government was keen to sweep all this under the rug. Many of the island’s officials were honoured. Carey was knighted. They “closed the book” history itself had written.

The virtue of not sharing your pain

Paul Bloom

The Observer

It’s good to put yourself in others’ shoes. It helps you understand their problems, and to fix them. That’s the received wisdom, says psychologist Paul Bloom. But it’s wrong. Empathy is actually a terrible guide to moral decision-making. The trouble with it is that it “works like a spotlight”, focusing attention on individuals at the expense of the bigger picture. Studies show it does indeed “make you kinder to the person you’re empathising with”, but all too easily it sets up a “perverse situation in which the suffering of one can matter more than the suffering of a thousand”. Empathy encourages an emotional, subjective response, often based on what the sufferer looks like: that’s why people’s desire to give help to abused dogs often exceeds their desire to help the “suffering millions in other countries, or the ethnic minorities in their own”. In the face of suffering, mere reasoning and compassion, which don’t require us to feel others’ pain, may seem cold. But it’s a better response than empathy if our prime concern is not to make ourselves feel good, but to make the world a better place.

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

A workmen’s cafe in central France was inundated with bookings last week, after it was awarded a Michelin star. Reporters, TV crews and gourmets who turned up to Le Bouche à Oreille, in the small town of Bourges, were amazed to find a cheerful eatery with plastic tablecloths, serving charcuterie, home-cooked lasagne and boeuf bourguignon to a loyal clientele largely made up of local tradesmen, many of them wearing high-vis vests. The guide later rang the owner to apologise, saying it had mixed up her café with a restaurant of the same name in Boutervilliers, near Paris.



A Russian model, who posed dangling from one of Dubai’s tallest buildings for a video, has been asked to sign a pledge promising not to risk her life again. Viktoria Odintcova, 23, was held only by the hand of a male assistant as she lent backwards off a girder, 1,000ft above the ground at the top of the Cayan Tower – before also being dangled off the edge of the structure. Odintcova, who has 3.3 million Instagram followers, was later summoned by local police, and asked not to do anything like that again.

A man spent two days standing under a loose supermarket sign, hoping it would fall on his head. The unnamed Texan apparently noticed that one of the letters fixed to the wall of his local Walmart was wonky, and figured that if it fell down and hit him, he could take the retailer to court for damages. But his scheme failed as the lettering stayed put.



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Can one of the EU's most corrupt nations be reformed?

Western leaders love to lecture Eastern Europeans about democracy and the rule of law, said Norbert Mappes-Niediek in *Südwest Presse* (Ulm). But recently everything has been turned upside down: America is being led by a “Balkan chieftain”, while Romania is engulfed in “a passionate struggle for Western values”. Since late January, thousands of people have turned out nightly in Bucharest and other cities to protest against government corruption – the biggest protests since the end of communism. Good for them. It’s time to give Romania its due as a thriving, forward-looking place that shows none of the resurgent nationalism seen elsewhere in eastern Europe.



Condruța Kővesi: “Laura is coming for you”

or already in jail. The figure was specifically calculated to get the PSD leader, Liviu Dragnea, off the hook, allowing him to take over from his henchman, Sorin Grindeanu, as PM. (Dragnea is on trial for fraudulently arranging for two PSD colleagues to be paid state salaries.) There can’t be many countries where a public prosecutor is a national heroine, said Mirel Bran in *Le Monde* (Paris). The famously determined Laura Codruța Kövesi was appointed to run the national anti-graft agency, DNA, in 2013; since then her team has prosecuted thousands of politicians. Their zeal has struck a chord: one of the protesters’ favourite slogans is “Laura is coming for you”.

Romania is still one of the most corrupt nations in the EU, said *The Wall Street Journal*. Transparency International estimates that 6% of all transactions there are affected by graft. The issue that sparked these demonstrations was a “stunning” example of official corruption, said Anna Nemtsova on *The Daily Beast* (New York). After barely two months in office, the left-leaning Social Democratic Party (PSD), attempted to decree immunity for those accused in corruption cases involving sums of less than 200,000 lei (£38,000). It was effectively a “get out of jail free” card for hundreds of PSD members who are under investigation

Public fury ensured the decree was dropped, said Horatiu Pepine in *Deutsche Welle* (Bonn) – and the justice minister, Florin Iordache, resigned. But that hasn’t ended the protests: they’re part of a wider struggle between young city dwellers and the PSD, which represents older, provincial voters. Last month Romania’s president, Klaus Iohannis, proposed a referendum on anti-corruption laws. The PSD has supported the plan; it could hardly oppose it. But the government has yet to confirm exactly what Romanians will vote on, and there are fears that it may manipulate the process. This battle is far from won.

GREECE

Don’t be so sniffy about Gucci’s money

To Vima
(Athens)

Greece is bankrupt and needs all the help it can get, says Notis Papadopoulos. But when the Italian fashion company Gucci proposed to pay €2m for permission to mount a 15-minute catwalk show at the Athens Acropolis, the Central Archaeological Council turned it down flat. It was inconsistent with the monument’s “unique cultural character”, it sniffed. Other critics railed at the idea of something so “indecent and profane” sully the “sacred space” of the Parthenon. What were they thinking? National pride is all very well, but it shouldn’t mean turning a blind eye to the “third-world” condition of so many Greek archaeological sites, abandoned for years to looters and the weather. The Gucci millions would have paid for the hiring of more guards, or for urgently needed restoration work; the Temple of Apollo at Bassae in the Peloponnese, for instance, remains hidden behind plastic sheeting even though it’s a World Heritage site. Besides, the event could have brought €50m worth of global advertising to our tourist industry. We’ve a duty to protect these monuments for all mankind. Shouting “sacrilege” at people who offer to help is hardly the way to go about it.

SWEDEN

Wearing a scarf is the price of doing business

Nyheter24
(Stockholm)

Is it really so wrong for Western feminists to wear a headscarf when visiting a Muslim country, asks Rebecca Weidmo Uvell. Left-wingers in Sweden are furious with our trade minister, Ann Linde, for covering her hair during a signing ceremony in Tehran. A photo of Linde’s team filing past Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani, the female members all clad in headscarves, has been dubbed the “Walk of Shame”. Pure hypocrisy, splutter the critics, for the self-proclaimed “world’s first feminist government” to bow to “patriarchal oppression”. But what choice did Linde have? To go bare-headed would have meant breaking Iranian law, hardly a good idea for officials on a mission to drum up business. Many Swedes believe we should never pass up a chance to tell other people how to behave. But how would we like it if, say, Poland’s right-wing leaders came to Stockholm and denounced us as “child murderers” for our liberal abortion policies? Don’t get me wrong – Iran is a harsh dictatorship with a horrendous record on women’s rights. But if we only do business with countries that think like us, we’ll be stuck with Norway and Denmark. There are plenty of important feminist battles that we should fight vigorously. Let’s not waste our time on rows that will do no good at all.

GERMANY

The European Court puts the EU in jeopardy

Die Welt
(Berlin)

There are few greater threats to the EU than the European Court of Justice (ECJ), in Luxembourg, and its blithe disrespect for national laws, says Jacques Schuster. At present, its judges are hearing a case that could have truly catastrophic consequences for the Union. Belgium is being sued by a Syrian Christian family that fled from Aleppo to Lebanon, after one family member was kidnapped and tortured, and that sought asylum at the Belgian Embassy in Beirut. When Belgium rejected the application, the family launched a legal challenge that has worked its way up to the ECJ. Now the court’s advocate general, Paolo Mengozzi, has offered his opinion: that any EU embassy “must issue a visa” to any such persecuted persons. The opinion is not binding, and optimists say there’s no cause for alarm. Really? In the past the ECJ has routinely overridden national security needs in such cases. And a judgment in favour of the family would leave Europe’s entire refugee policy “in ruins”; EU embassies around the world would be inundated, dwarfing the migration crisis of two years ago. That, in turn, would risk bringing anti-immigrant extremists to power in upcoming elections across the continent. Let’s hope the judges have the sense not to set another fire under the “European ideal”.

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UNITED STATES

Say goodbye to small-town America

National Review
(New York)

If US conservatives want to help the white working class, says Kevin D. Williamson, they need to get over their sentimental nostalgia for small-town America. They're trying to think up ways of reviving dying rural communities in Appalachia and the Rust Belt, when what they should be doing is persuading people in those communities to leave and "seek a better life for themselves elsewhere". After all, it was only by moving out of crumbling inner cities, and escaping their awful schools and social chaos, that the "ambitious poor" created the black and Hispanic middle classes. "Mobility works." Despite what protectionists tell you, no federal policy can bring back factories to blighted communities with few skilled workers. "If the work isn't coming to the people, then the people have to come to the work." How can the government help? Republicans should encourage the creation of affordable housing in and around thriving cities; more immediately, they should use tax credits and benefits to "pay people to move" to where the jobs are. We can't revive devastated towns, but we can try to make sure that, for those who want better lives, "geography is not destiny".

INDIA

Vulgar displays of wealth are a citizen's right

Hindustan Times
(New Delhi)

India is known for its extravagant weddings, says the *Hindustan Times*, but they could soon be a thing of the past. The country's parliament is set to debate a bill next month that would cap spending on weddings, by limiting both the number of guests the dishes served. Anyone spending over Rs. 500,000 (about £6,000) on a function would have to contribute 10% of the total cost to poorer brides to help them pay for their marriages. The idea is to rein in vulgar, wasteful displays of wealth. India witnessed a prime example of such behaviour last November, when the mining baron and former minister Gali Janardhan Reddy laid on a five-day wedding for his daughter that some claimed cost as much as £60m.

No fewer than 50,000 guests attended. Faced with such obscene displays, it is tempting to legislate in favour of simpler ceremonies... tempting, but wrong. Much as we might disapprove of tasteless, over-the-top functions, the state can't start taking upon itself the role of telling citizens how much they can spend on parties, or forcing them to pay for other people's weddings.



The Reddy wedding: an "obscene display"?

ZIMBABWE

Time to end the Little England mindset

The Herald
(Harare)

Zimbabweans have internalised racism so much that we no longer recognise it, says Joram Nyathi. Howls of outrage have greeted the introduction of a new school curriculum by the education minister, Lazarus Dokora of the ruling Zanu-PF party. Critics are calling the curriculum jingoistic as it requires students to take part in "mass displays" and to pledge allegiance to the state – and because it includes more Zimbabwean history. Apparently, these critics want to keep us forever as "Little England", our students mindlessly parroting the history of our former colonial master and reciting the dates and causes of the French and American revolutions. Because of course the only "authentic history is that of Europe. That makes us cosmopolitan. African history is boring". What nonsense. We're not pushing "Zanu-PF propaganda" if we teach children the story of our land, from its occupation in the 1890s, to its independence in 1980 and subsequent land reforms. We must give up our unconscious "urge to be white", not least because "it will never be required". It's time Zimbabweans started feeling proud of their black, African heritage.

How long will the US-Israeli "love-in" last?

"In diplomatic speak, nothing says 'I love you' more than telling a right-wing Israeli leader that perhaps a Palestinian state isn't necessary after all," said Tovah Lazaroff in *The Jerusalem Post*. Donald Trump could have chosen roses or another typical Valentine's Day present when he met Benjamin Netanyahu in the White House last week. Instead, he appeared to disavow the two-state solution, the foundation of US Middle Eastern policy for the past generation. "I'm looking at two states and one state," he told journalists at a joint press conference with the Israeli prime minister. "I like the one that both parties like. I can live with either one." It seems a "glib" answer at first glance, said Benny Ayni in the *New York Post*. "But the self-styled artist of deals has long championed non-commitment and unpredictability as a bargaining tactic. Why stake out a firm position when a nonchalant 'whatever' would do?"

It certainly makes a refreshing change to have a friendly meeting between a US president and an Israeli PM, said Adam Chandler in *The Atlantic* (Washington DC). Netanyahu had a notoriously "frosty" relationship with Barack Obama, but he and Trump – two Ivy League-educated, thrice-married heads of state – appear to have a "budding bromance". During the campaign, Trump vowed to be the "most pro-Israeli president ever", and since his election he has appointed as US ambassador to Israel a

staunch supporter of the settlement movement. But, ironically, Trump's friendly stance might cause difficulties at home for Netanyahu by setting up "an expectation that the fantasies of the Israeli Right will finally be realised". He won't be able to use the White House as a handy foil any more, agreed *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv). "From now on, responsibility for the nature of the policy and achieving the deal rests on Netanyahu alone."

Don't count on the US-Israeli love-in lasting all that long, said Aaron David Miller on *Politico* (Arlington). For now, it's all sweetness and light, helped by the fact that Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner is a family friend of Netanyahu, and also because President Trump is keen to be a peacemaker: for the professed master dealmaker, the thought of achieving peace in the Middle East – "the ultimate deal" – no doubt has a powerful appeal. But the "political laws of gravity" are already asserting themselves: it is rumoured that Trump has decided to put on hold his provocative plan to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and he has now begun calling for a temporary halt to new settlements. As time goes on, it's hard to see him and Netanyahu – two prickly, "combustible", mistrustful personalities – remaining on such good terms. My bet is that within a year or so, or possibly less, the two men "will be annoying the hell out of each other. And then what?"



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What the scientists are saying...

Does football damage your brain?

Heading a football day after day could raise the risk of dementia, scientists have warned. Researchers at University College London carried out a small-scale study, performing post-mortems on the brains of six former professional footballers with a history of dementia. All six had signs of Alzheimer's disease; and four were found to have chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a pattern of brain damage linked to repeated blows to the head that can only be diagnosed posthumously. The condition, whose symptoms include behavioural changes, memory loss and impaired motor skills, has previously been found in athletes who played sports where heavy blows to the head are common, such as boxing and American football. In their study, published in the journal *Acta Neuropathologica*, the researchers suggest that repetitive sub-concussive blows of the kind caused by heading a ball – an action performed thousands of times by a professional footballer during their career – could be sufficient to bring on CTE. At present, however, the claim is speculative: the study was too small to prove that heading footballs can cause CTE. Nor is it known whether footballers, as a group, are unusually vulnerable to dementia.

Vitamin D “cuts flu risk”

Vitamin D, best known for strengthening bones and teeth, also increases resistance to colds and flu, a study has suggested. Scientists at Queen Mary University of London carried out a meta-analysis of 25 clinical trials, involving some 11,000 patients worldwide, and found that a daily dose cuts the risk of common respiratory tract infections by an average of about 10%. Among people with the lowest baseline vitamin D levels, the risk was



Could headers have long-term effects?

halved. Scientists have long suspected that colds and flu are more common in winter partly because people take in less of the “sunshine vitamin” – so-called because it is synthesised by the skin in response to sunlight – but attempts to establish this have proved inconclusive. According to the new report, published in the *British Medical Journal*, that failure is due to participants in many earlier studies being given monthly doses, which are now understood to be largely ineffective. Where doses were more regular, the benefits were much clearer. The report calls on the Government to consider fortifying common foods with vitamin D – as in the US, where it is added to milk.

The ocean’s toxic depths

Crustaceans retrieved from the deepest reaches of the Pacific Ocean have been found to contain “sky-high” levels of industrial pollution, reports *The Guardian*.

The tiny shrimp-like creatures, known as amphipods, were captured by a robotic submarine from the seven mile-deep Mariana Trench, the lowest natural point on Earth. When examined, their levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) were found to be 50 times higher than those of crabs from one of China’s most polluted rivers. POPs, which can damage wildlife in a variety of ways (they have been linked to miscarriages in killer whales), were banned in the 1970s, but levels remain high because they can’t be broken down. They would have found their way to the trench, the researchers believe, in animal carcasses that floated to the ocean floor, or by becoming attached to tiny pieces of plastic. “We still think of the deep ocean as being this remote and pristine realm, safe from human impact,” said lead researcher Dr Alan Jamieson, of Newcastle University. “But our research shows that, sadly, this could not be further from the truth.”

First-born children have the edge

First-born children really do seem to have it better than their siblings – at least when it comes to academic abilities. When researchers from Edinburgh and Sydney universities examined data from a US survey that tracked almost 5,000 children from birth to age 14, they found that first-born siblings consistently did best in tests for reading, maths and comprehension. The study also found that while parents tended to give each sibling the same level of emotional support, they typically provided more mental stimulation for first-born children during their early years, and more support in developing their thinking skills. The findings, say the scientists, help explain why other studies have shown that first-borns generally do slightly better in life than their younger siblings.

The death of a star far, far away

Supernovas – or the death throes of giant stars – are the biggest explosions in the universe. Though the light they cast is so brilliant that it can often be detected from Earth, the challenge has always been to detect them in their earliest phases: unable to predict the whereabouts or times of the explosions, astronomers have tended to chance upon them only days or weeks later. But now, for the first time, a supernova has been captured in its infancy. Scientists at an observatory near San Diego, California, spotted the flash – caused by the detonation of a star some 160 million light years away – within three hours of it reaching Earth.

They immediately sent an alert to astronomers around the world, who were able to follow events in unprecedented detail. Their observations revealed that, prior to its final demise, the red giant – thought to be several hundred times larger than the Sun – ejected a six-billion-mile-thick cloud of dense gas. In the final, cataclysmic explosion, this gas “shell” would have been obliterated, as several suns’ worth of matter, including everything in the star’s core, blasted outwards at 6,200 miles per second.



Cassiopeia A: a supernova remnant

Churchill: we’re not alone

In 1939, a year before he became prime minister, Winston Churchill found time to write an 11-page essay outlining his thoughts on that most urgent of topics: alien life. For decades, the unpublished essay gathered dust, first in the home of his publisher, Emery Reves, and then in the US National Churchill Museum in Missouri, where it was recently rediscovered. Writing in the journal *Nature*, astrophysicist Mario Livio, the first scientist to scrutinise the essay, praises Churchill for his “logic” and “healthy scepticism” about the (then common) belief that the universe contained few other planets. Churchill’s reasoning, he writes, “mirrors exactly what we think today when we think about this question”. Churchill, who read keenly on science throughout his life, concluded that Earth was unlikely to be the “only spot in this immense universe which contains living, thinking creatures”.

Pick of the week's *Gossip*

Until this week, nobody knew that **Sir Mick Jagger** had written a memoir – including the man himself. Publisher **John Blake** has revealed that he is in possession of a 75,000-word autobiography penned by the Rolling Stone in the early 1980s. It was handed to Blake three years ago by a mutual friend. When Blake contacted Jagger, the singer admitted he had no memory of writing it. Jagger later confirmed it was his work, but declined to have it published. In an article for *The Spectator*, Blake says his favourite anecdote from the book “is of Mick returning unannounced to Dartford to see his parents after two years of chaotic world tours, debauchery, mayhem, riots and goodness only knows what else. ‘Oh, Michael,’ says his horrified mother on opening the door. ‘Your hair...’”



Lindsay Lohan has offered to help **Donald Trump** get to grips with the migrant crisis. The actress, who recently visited refugee camps in Turkey, says the president should host a round table discussion on the issue. “**Angelina Jolie**... **Donald Trump**... **Putin** – the more strong figures we have [the better],” she told the *Daily Mail*. “**Brad Pitt**... maybe someone like **Rachel McAdams** – the more the merrier in that situation.” Lohan (pictured) appears to have forgiven Trump for making coarse remarks about her when she was 18. “She’s probably deeply troubled and therefore great in bed,” he told shock jock *Howard Stern* in 2004. “How come the deeply troubled women, you know, deeply, deeply troubled, they’re always the best in bed?”

Death of a playboy: the airport assassination

“Grabbing the attention of the world is North Korea’s strong suit,” said **John Nilsson-Wright** in *The Independent*. It managed it twice last week, first with a ballistic missile test and then with the apparent assassination of **Kim Jong Un**’s half-brother, **Kim Jong Nam**. The 45-year-old father of three was killed at **Kuala Lumpur International Airport** with what police believe was a fast-acting poison. The full details of the incident have yet to be established, but **Jong Nam** seems to have been ambushed by two women, one of whom, dressed in a white top emblazoned with the letters “LOL”, covered his face with a spray or toxic cloth. He sought medical help from airport staff before collapsing. Malaysian police have arrested four people, including the two women, one Indonesian and one Vietnamese, who have reportedly both claimed that they thought they were taking part in a prank for a comedy TV show.



Kim Jong Nam: “a bit of a loser”?

According to “South Korea’s spooks”, Pyongyang has been trying to kill **Jong Nam** for some time, said *The Economist*. Exactly why is unclear, but it’s most likely just because he has “irritated his half-brother by criticising him”: he once derided North Korea’s dynastic succession as a “joke”, and predicted that the regime wouldn’t last long without reform. **Jong Nam**

was the oldest son of the country’s previous leader, **Kim Jong Il**, who doted on him as a child: he apparently had a 10,000-square-foot playroom filled with toys. But as the product of a frowned-upon extramarital relationship, he was kept behind closed doors and subsequently sent away for a decade to study in Russia and Switzerland. He has spent the last 15 years in exile in Macau, a semiautonomous enclave within China. He is thought to have been living under the protection of the Chinese security services, so his murder will irk Beijing.

“By all accounts, [Jong Nam] was a bit of a playboy and a bit of a loser,” said *The Observer*. Despite his occasional criticisms of Pyongyang, he clearly posed no real threat to the regime. The fact that he nevertheless appears to have been assassinated speaks volumes about the “paranoid, insecure, delusional and ruthless” nature of **Kim Jong Un**’s regime. Since taking over as dictator little more than five years ago, the 33-year-old has reportedly executed 140 senior officials, including his own uncle. The killing of his half-brother should be seen “not as the latest bizarre quirk of a comical Chaplin-esque dictator, but as another egregious example of the willingness of a very dangerous man to flout international law and human decency”.

President Trump: savaging the media

Donald Trump has had arguably the worst start to any US presidency in modern times, said **Todd S. Purdum** on *Politico*. He has “hung up on the Australian prime minister, cancelled a summit with the Mexican president”, and initiated worrying rows with both China and Nato. He has sparked “global chaos” by banning the nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US, and has viciously turned on the federal judges who struck down the ban. Last Thursday, he rounded it off with a staggering 77-minute press conference, in which he insisted his administration was “running like a fine-tuned machine”; claimed that America’s intelligence agencies were conspiring against him; and argued that he’d won the biggest Republican victory since **Ronald Reagan**’s. When a reporter pointed out that the last point was plain wrong, he breezily replied: “Well, I don’t know, I was given that information.” He went on to launch an unprecedentedly ferocious attack on the US media. “Many of our nation’s reporters will not tell you the truth,” he declared. “The press honestly is out of control.”

“For months, cool, responsible heads have been counselling hot, impulsive heads to avoid overreacting to Trump,” said **David Remnick** in *The New Yorker*. But by now, the scale of the danger is all too clear. “The attacks on the

legitimacy of the courts, on the intentions of the intelligence agencies, and on the patriotism of the press have become too evident, too repulsive, to be discounted.” Trump is behaving like “an old-fashioned autocrat”. Last week he actually branded the media “the enemy of the American people”. It’s not surprising that, after a disastrous few weeks, Trump has turned on the media, said **Chris Cillizza** in *The Washington Post*. It is, for him, “the perfect scapegoat”. The media represents everything that his supporters dislike about America. It is composed, they think, of “Ivy League-educated coastal elites, who look down their noses at the average person” – who said that Trump couldn’t win, and are now concealing all the good he’s doing.

Trump has a point, said **Michael Goodwin** in the *New York Post*. Much of the media is deeply opposed to his presidency (just as the intelligence agencies have indeed been leaking against him). The newspapers have given scant publicity to the successes of the past month: the green-lighted pipeline projects and the booming stock market. The press conference was his version of a “reset”. He was “serving notice that he, and not the media, sets the nation’s agenda”. Trump isn’t a threat to free speech; he’s embracing it. The president has every right, “like all Americans, to speak his mind”.

Facebook: Zuckerberg searches his soul

“What is Facebook?” It’s a question that is becoming ever harder to answer, said Will Oremus on Slate. Almost exactly 13 years after its birth, Mark Zuckerberg’s social network is now used by 1.86 billion people – a quarter of the global population – and has evolved into the world’s biggest media platform. It is also – as the 2016 US election demonstrated – “a vector for fake news and sensationalism and a force for ideological polarisation”. This appears to have prompted a bout of soul-searching by Zuckerberg. He has embarked on a “listening tour” of America (seen by many as a sign that he is planning to one day run for office); and last week he published a 5,700-word open letter, laying out his vision for Facebook’s future.



A constituency of 1.86 billion?

organising more “meaningful groups” (those where people with similar interests, such as knitting, or politics, can arrange to meet in the real world); and using Facebook to register voters. Recent elections, he boasts, have shown that “the candidate with the largest and most engaged following on Facebook usually wins”; but he never stops to ask whether that is a good thing. (“Marine Le Pen, with her 1.2 million Facebook followers, might have an answer.”)

It makes for chilling reading, said Carole Cadwalladr in *The Observer*. The central thrust of Zuckerberg’s manifesto is that humans fare best when they come together. Facebook, he says, will provide the “social infrastructure” to build a stronger “global community”. He wants his company – a “surveillance machine” which already harvests your data, owns your baby photos, and keeps you in a “filter bubble” of news tailored to match your prejudices – to get more involved in both regional and global democracy. He proposes, for instance,

Zuckerberg’s vague, jargon-filled letter reveals “an astounding lack of self-awareness,” said Danny Fortson in *The Sunday Times*. He proposes to counter the spread of fake news on Facebook by supporting (he doesn’t say how) the “vital social function” of the news industry. This is the same industry that Facebook and Google are in the process of “gutting”: together, they gobble up 85% of online ad revenue, leaving a mere 15% for actual news organisations to fight for. This means there is no money to pay for investigative reporting, just when we need it most. Zuckerberg clearly aspires to be a great thinker. But his manifesto is nothing more than “the stump speech of a chief executive seeking to expand his empire while studiously avoiding the very large herd of elephants loitering in his living room”.

Lloyd’s: calling time on the boozy lunch

Winston Churchill drank with virtually every meal, and still won the War – so clearly midday boozing doesn’t have to be a barrier to achievement, said Dan Jones in the *London Evening Standard*. Yet at Lloyd’s of London, they have decided to call time on the alcohol-fuelled lunch: last week, the insurer’s 800 staff were told that they are not to drink a drop between the hours of 9am and 5pm, on pain of dismissal. The pubs around Leadenhall Market, which throng with City workers clutching pints of lager, will be a bit more peaceful for everyone else – but will it be good for Lloyd’s? The insurer introduced the ban after noting that roughly half of disciplinary cases were alcohol related. The new “zero limit”, reads a corporate memo, is “in line with the modern, global and high-performance culture we want to embrace”.



Building trust over a drink

Lloyd’s workers are up in arms, said Esther Addley in *The Guardian*. “Will I be asked to go to bed earlier soon,” asked one disgruntled employee. Others pointed out that it is over a convivial drink that they build trust with clients, and strike their best deals. (Though in fact, the

ban applies mainly to “back-room” staff, and not the brokers and underwriters, who work at Lloyd’s but not for it.) In any case, the days when City workers would go out for what former trader Nigel Farage terms a PFL – a “proper f***ing lunch” – are long over: they might like a pint, but in today’s unforgiving market, few City workers would risk being found slumped over their desk. It’s after work that the alcohol flows.

Still, they’d never dare to attempt a ban like this in France, said Victoria Coren Mitchell in *The Observer*. The French consider a long lunch (followed by a nap and an early finish) a basic human right. They’d blockade the streets at the first hint of their traditions being so imperilled. And why not? It’s nice to relax. By contrast, in Britain it’s all about hard work and profits; no one is allowed to want a pleasant life. When transport or medical workers strike against long hours, they can only talk about the threat to public safety. “They’d be ripped apart” if they said they wanted to get home in time to see their children. We don’t defend our quality of life; we toe the corporate line, and put the market first.

Wit & Wisdom

“Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it.”

Federal judge Learned Hand, quoted in The Washington Post

“Autobiography is probably the most respectable form of lying.”

Humphrey Carpenter, quoted on Forbes.com

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.”

President Calvin Coolidge, quoted in The Guardian

“Technology is the knack of arranging the world so that we need not experience it.”

Max Frisch, quoted on The Browser

“The day I realised it can be smart to be shallow was, for me, a deep experience.”

Donald Trump, quoted in The Guardian

“I tell you, we are here on Earth to fart around, and don’t let anybody tell you any different.”

Kurt Vonnegut, quoted in The Spectator

“The main business of a lawyer is to take the romance, the mystery, the irony, the ambiguity out of everything he touches.”

Antonin Scalia, quoted in The Economist

“The child is a sort of vicious, innately cruel dwarf.”

Michel Houellebecq, quoted in The Guardian

Statistic of the week

Nearly half of all ready meals eaten in Europe last year were consumed in the UK. On average, people in this country consume at least one ready meal a week – twice as many as the French, and six times the number consumed by the Spanish.

Daily Mail

Football: is Wenger's time up?

Whatever has happened to Arsène Wenger, asked Henry Winter in *The Times*. In his early years at Arsenal, he changed the face of English football: all those “radical changes to diet”; all those “flowing moves” that made Arsenal “champions of England and champions of good football”. But the memory of those heights underlines just how far the Frenchman has fallen. It's strange to think that Arsenal used to be terrified by the prospect of “life after Wenger”, said Oliver Kay in the same paper. Now, it's the possibility of him sticking around that's frightening. He must depart this summer.

That's a lot more likely after last week's result, said Daniel Taylor in *The Guardian*. Once again, Arsenal “flatlined” in the final 16 of the Champions League: in the first leg, they were hammered 5-1 by Bayern Munich, conceding three goals in ten minutes. A collapse of “rare proportions”, it leaves the Gunners all but certain to go out in the first knockout stage for the seventh successive season. It was the latest evidence – “the most conclusive evidence” – that they are too vulnerable, too fragile. Never, in the manager's 20 years at the club, have Arsenal looked “so far removed from the elite”. If Wenger does leave, no doubt he'd like to “stand down with grand dignity”, said Martin Samuel in the *Daily Mail*. Unfortunately, few managers are ever that lucky. Brian Clough retired after Nottingham Forest were



Wenger: total control of the club

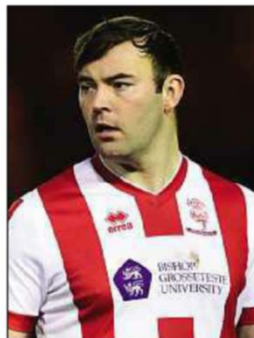
relegated; Bobby Robson was sacked two weeks into his final ever season. Alex Ferguson, who retired in 2013 after winning the league with Manchester United, was a rare exception.

Arsenal fans can moan all they want, said Taylor. But they should be careful what they wish for. Things are certainly bad under Wenger; they could get a great “deal worse” under a new manager. Just look at Manchester United: only now, four years on from Ferguson's exit, are they “on their way back” to their old winning ways – and they're still outside the top four. The “Wenger out” brigade should heed United's “cautionary tale”. Besides, anyone who expects Wenger to get the push is kidding themselves, said Toby Moses in *The Guardian*. The winner of three Premier League titles, and two doubles, he's one of the outstanding managers of his era. And, more than any other manager in world football, he is in total control of his club: he oversees everything from the grass on the training pitches to “the size of the contracts”. Crucially, by leading his side to Champions League qualification for the past 19 seasons, he has ensured that Arsenal is profitable – much to the delight of the club's owner, Stan Kroenke, who bought it as an investment and cares little about football. As long as the money keeps rolling in, why would Kroenke rock the boat?

The FA Cup: Lincoln make history

“There was a breathless hush as Sean Raggett's header floated towards goal”, said Jonathan Liew in *The Sunday Telegraph*; a few “excruciating” seconds before the referee confirmed that it had crossed the line. “And then pandemonium.” With that 89th-minute goal last Saturday, Lincoln beat Burnley 1-0, becoming the first non-league side to reach the FA Cup quarter-finals since 1914. Turf Moor is Burnley's fortress: they have the fourth-best home record in the Premier League. Yet that was no help against a National League side 81 places below them, who did what Burnley have themselves done to so many teams this season: “sat deep, dug their heels in and turned it into a scrap”.

Lincoln has “always been regarded as a footballing backwater”, said Joe Bernstein in *The Mail on Sunday*. But under manager Danny Cowley – and his brother Nicky, the assistant manager –



Lincoln's talismanic Rhead

the club have been “transformed”: top of the National League, they're in pole position for promotion to League Two. Until they joined Lincoln last summer, both Cowleys were PE teachers who managed part-time, said Paul Joyce in *The Times*. Workaholics who live off Marmite on toast, they make exhaustive use of video analysis software – unusual among non-league coaches – and take fitness very seriously indeed. Lincoln's players are a motley crew, said Paul Rowan in *The Sunday Times*. Most have been at the club for just a year or two; they earn less in a month than the £5,000 they will each receive as a bonus for last week's win. Their “talisman”, 32-year-old forward Matt Rhead, only turned professional four years ago. He doesn't look much like a star footballer: a former factory worker at JCB, he is “built like an earth mover”. But if his side beat Arsenal in next month's quarter-final, Rhead and his teammates will become “legends”.

The record-breaking veterinary student

You may not have heard of her, but Laura Muir is probably Britain's finest female track athlete, said Martha Kelner in *The Mail on Sunday*. Every time she has raced in 2017, she has set a new record. Last month, it was the British record in the indoor 5,000m; then she went one better, setting a European record in the indoor 3,000m; and in Birmingham last weekend, she smashed the 1,000m British indoor record. Remarkably, it was Muir's first race at 1,000m – yet she is already the second-fastest woman of all time over that distance. The 23-year-old Scot isn't satisfied with records, however: she's intent on winning a first senior international title at next month's European indoor championships.



Muir: military precision

Muir does not come across like a “superstar”, said Ben Bloom in *The Daily Telegraph*. Softly spoken and “ever so slightly nervous”, she cuts an unimposing figure. A veterinary student at the University of Glasgow, one year away from graduating, Muir schedules her life with “military precision”: since secondary school, she has spent every minute away from the track with “her head in a book”. Tipped for a medal in the 1,500m at the Rio Olympics last summer, she could only come seventh; but her winning streak began two weeks later, and she finished 2016 as world No. 1. Muir continues to insist that her veterinary career will always come first – but it looks like this will be the year that she is “thrust into the limelight”.

Sporting headlines

Rugby league Wigan Warriors beat Cronulla Sharks 22-6 to win a record-breaking fourth World Club Challenge.

Rugby union Sale Sharks beat Premiership leaders Wasps 34-28. Bath beat Harlequins 22-12. Gloucester beat Saracens 31-23.

Golf American golfer Dustin Johnson won the Genesis Open to become world No. 1 for the first time.

Cricket Ben Stokes was bought by Rising Pune Supergiants for £1.7m, making him the most expensive foreign player in the Indian Premier League.

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Pick of the week's correspondence

A world-class narcissist

To The New York Times

Fevered media speculation about Donald Trump's psychological motivations and psychiatric diagnosis has encouraged mental health professionals to disregard the usual ethical constraints against diagnosing public figures at a distance. They have sponsored several petitions and written to The New York Times suggesting Mr Trump is incapable, on psychiatric grounds, of serving as president.

Most amateur diagnosticians have mislabelled President Trump with the diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder. I wrote the criteria that define this disorder, and Mr Trump doesn't meet them. He may be a world-class narcissist, but this doesn't make him mentally ill: he does not suffer from the distress and impairment required to diagnose mental disorder. Mr Trump causes severe distress, rather than experiencing it, and has been richly rewarded, rather than punished, for his grandiosity, self-absorption and lack of empathy. It is a stigmatising insult to the mentally ill (who are mostly well behaved and well meaning) to be lumped with Trump (who is neither). Bad behaviour is rarely a sign of mental illness, and the mentally ill behave badly only rarely.

Psychiatric name-calling is a misguided way of countering Mr Trump's attack on democracy. He can, and should, be appropriately denounced for his ignorance, incompetence, impulsivity and pursuit of dictatorial powers. His psychological motivations are too obvious to be interesting, and analysing them will not halt his headlong power grab. The antidote to a dystopic Trumpian dark age is political, not psychological. *Allen Frances, professor emeritus of psychiatry at Duke University School of Medicine*

Cut out the fat

To The Times

Apropos the new £5 notes, and the proposed £10 and £20 notes, there is opposition and disquiet from vegans, vegetarians, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others about the use of animal fats in their manufacture. I

Exchange of the week

Europe's child refugee crisis

To The Times

Melanie Phillips is quite right: we cannot compare today's child refugees with Holocaust refugees. The former are passing through safe countries that are not at war nor likely to be so; nor are these states likely to be invaded in the near future. Further, these children are not in danger of being killed for religious reasons, as was the case in the 1940s. Why then do they not want to live in any of the European nations through which they passed to reach Calais?

Andrew Edwards, London

To The Times

Melanie Phillips acknowledges that the *Kindertransport* went alongside more restrictive measures in Britain during the 1930s limiting the entry of Jewish refugees, but she should realise that those who fought against the victims of Nazism coming to this country used exactly the same arguments as she does. First, she denies that those today are genuine refugees, and second, she argues that charity begins at home. This is an insult to the memory of the Holocaust and those who might have been rescued but were not through meanness of spirit and prejudice.

Professor Tony Kushner, University of Southampton

To The Times

During my military service in Sudan, Chad and Sierra Leone, I saw various refugee camps: they were appalling places where I would not leave my dog, let alone any children. I have also seen numerous internally displaced person camps, where people wait either because their border is too distant to cross or because they are nursing the vain hope that they will one day return home. Having seen the pictures coming out of Syria, what hope is there for these people to return and revive their former lives; and hence what is there for the unaccompanied children now in Europe, other than being dragged into prostitution, slave labour or used as drug mules?

Lt-Col R.D. Symonds (ret'd), Finstock, Oxfordshire

seem to remember that the last protest about the use of animal fats, in India in 1857, led to a rather nasty little mutiny. I hope the Bank of England has read up on British history. *Martin Morris, Shillington, Hertfordshire*

Let's remain reasonable

To The Guardian

People who would like Britain to remain in the EU should not try, as Tony Blair now plans, to persuade those who voted Leave in June that they made a mistake. They should acknowledge that Leavers have some well-founded concerns, and should try to persuade our European partners to introduce the reforms that would overcome them. The UK is already experiencing rapid natural growth. According to the Office for National Statistics, on present trends, net immigration from the EU would lead to a three million increase in the population of

the UK by 2039. Most of the increase would take place in England, which is already the most densely populated country in the EU after Malta.

It is not reasonable to force the UK to accept an unlimited number of immigrants from a rich region that is much less densely populated, whose population is growing only slowly if at all, and where no one is experiencing persecution. I doubt if David Cameron ever tried to explain this point during his negotiations, but it should not be too difficult to do so. The EU has many valuable features, but none depend on allowing the citizens of any EU country to settle in any other regardless of the consequences for the people already living there.

Stephen Plowden, London

A misfired bullet

To The Sunday Telegraph

Professor Jeremy Ramsden, in his critique of HS2, referred to Japan's railways – but did not mention the “bullet train” linking Osaka to Tokyo. The intention was to encourage investment and prosperity in Osaka, but the result was that it encouraged commuting, and the major Osaka-based companies moved their head offices to Tokyo. A lesson here for the Northern Powerhouse? *Paul Knocker, Bembridge, Isle of Wight*

A taxing question

To The Daily Telegraph

I wonder how many people are aware that hospitals and schools are subject to business rate taxes. I cannot understand how they can be grouped together with the likes of McDonald's, M&S and Next, which are profit-making organisations that rightly pay business rate taxes. The situation is all the more bizarre given that profit-making private schools and hospitals get reductions because they have charitable status. *Alan Bradshaw, Burgess Hill, West Sussex*

Lenin's immortal tache

To The Times

It was interesting to read that a team of “specialists” attend to, among other things, trimming the moustache of Lenin's embalmed corpse. That his facial hair is still growing nearly 100 years after his death is remarkable, and gives all follically challenged males reason to believe in a more hirsute future, even if post-mortem. However, I do hope that they are not too busy with that to attend to his toenails.

Gary Clark, London



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Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Fragile Lives

by Stephen Westaby

HarperCollins 340pp £14.99

The Week Bookshop £12.99

The distinguished cardiac surgeon Stephen Westaby has “touched more hearts than the average modern poet laureate”, said Oliver Moody in *The Times*. In a career spanning 35 years, Westaby performed around 12,000 operations, and was a pioneer in the development of artificial hearts – including one, the Jarvik 2000, that pushes the blood through the body without creating a pulse. In *Fragile Lives*, a memoir based around 15 case studies, Westaby looks back on a career devoted to the “business of fixing hearts”. He recounts miraculous life-saving feats (flying from Australia to Oxford to perform open-heart surgery on an emaciated baby girl), as well as harrowing failures (after one patient, a young Saudi Arabian boy, died, his mother “bundled his corpse to her chest and jumped from the top of a nearby building”). This is not a book for those who like poetic writing, or meditations on the “evanescence of life”; Westaby’s prose is “bluff” and “workmanlike”. Yet this is a “frank and absorbing memoir” by someone who has done “about as much direct good” as is possible in one lifetime.



Westaby: an “unabashedly old-school” surgeon

Westaby, who retired last year, was an “unabashedly old-school” surgeon, the kind who simply wouldn’t give up until the job was done, said Gabriel Weston in *The Daily Telegraph*. His blow-by-blow accounts of his triumphs in theatre are “nail-biting”. But there’s a “stern political message” underpinning this book. Westaby was successful because he was allowed to take risks – and occasionally to fail. In his view, this is no longer possible: the medical profession is being killed by “pointless targets and a climate of blame”. As a result, in future there may be “precious few surgeons left” to perform “life-saving operations”.

All surgeons can tell hair-raising stories, but what makes this book unusual is the “brutal candour” of Westaby’s writing, said James McConnachie in *The Sunday Times*. Hearts are described as being like a “dog’s dinner”, or “tenderised steak”; another, put on bypass, “flapped around at the bottom of the pericardial sac like a wet fish”. Westaby himself emerges as a contradictory figure. A Jaguar-driving ex-rugby player with a German shepherd named Max, he sometimes seems no more than a cliché of masculinity. Yet at other times, the “emotions break through the professional carapace”, and he reveals a more reflective side. “Surgeons are meant to be objective, not human,” he writes. What makes *Fragile Lives* “so fascinating, and so moving, is the terrible tension between those necessary qualities”.

Wonderland

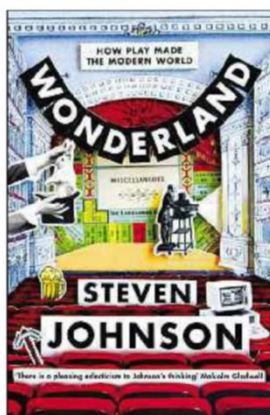
by Steven Johnson

Riverhead Books 304pp £16.99

The Week Bookshop £13.99

In *Wonderland*, Steven Johnson advances a “slickly counter-intuitive hypothesis”, said Sam Leith in *The Spectator*. It is usually assumed that humanity has been driven forwards by necessity, commerce and war. Johnson claims that, more often, advances have been inspired by fun, leisure and novelty – “aka, mucking around”. With this as his starting point, Johnson “hares off” through chapters, looking at fashion and shopping, music, food, illusions, games and public spaces. Music, he points out, is strictly “useless” – yet bone flutes were among humanity’s earliest inventions, designed “for nothing more than the delight and surprise of harmony”. Globalisation originated in our craving for spices; 18th century phantasmagorias and magic-lantern shows led to cinema and the modern concept of celebrity. Johnson indulges in a certain amount of “cherry-picking”, and some of his links feel far-fetched. (Was a miniature computer used for cheating at roulette in the 1960s really the forerunner of the iPhone and Fitbit?) Yet this “salmagundi of anecdotes and examples” ensure that *Wonderland* is never less than entertaining. This is a “book about delight that is itself delightful”.

Johnson has a knack for making the familiar fresh, and his ideas “squirm into your brain”, said Hugo Rifkind in *The Times*. Yet he has perhaps had “a little too much fun” writing *Wonderland*: “so clear are the lines he draws that you end up suspecting that he could draw them from almost anywhere to anywhere else”. This book is rather like a compendium of all those histories such as Dava Sobel’s *Longitude*, or Mark Kurlansky’s *Cod*, that focus on a single product or invention, said Tim Adams in *The Observer*. A “speed-read history of the serendipitous and the entertaining”, it is a “seductively erudite” 300-odd pages.



Novel of the week

First Love

by Gwendoline Riley

Granta 176pp £12.99

The Week Bookshop £10.99

Gwendoline Riley is a “fascinating novelist who has spent the last 15 years relaying the inner lives of disaffected women”, said Joanna Kavenna in *The Guardian*. Neve, the narrator of her fifth novel, *First Love*, is a writer in her mid-30s who marries, largely for convenience, an older man called Edwyn. As is true of all of Riley’s novels, nothing much happens. Instead, Neve describes the “teeming acrimony of her marriage” while reminiscing about her parents’ “diabolical” relationship. The “deceptively simple” prose draws the reader “further and further into the labyrinth” of Neve’s self. This is “an exquisite and combative piece of news from nowhere – which is everywhere, too”.

It’s hard to say exactly how autobiographical Riley’s fiction is, but it’s clear that, largely, “she writes what she knows”, said Anthony Cummins in *The New Statesman*. The results are “impossible to turn away from”. Bleak as her vision may be, Riley is an expansive and often painfully funny writer, said Francesca Wade in *The Financial Times*. *First Love*, like all her work, is “bittersweet and highly affecting”.

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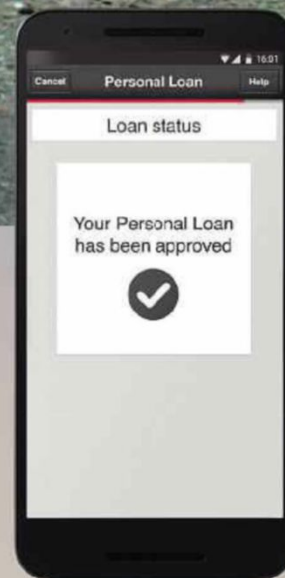


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Theatre

The Winter's Tale

Playwright:

William Shakespeare

Director: Max Webster

Royal Lyceum Theatre,
30b Grindlay Street,
Edinburgh
(0131-248 4848)
Until 4 March

Running time:
2hrs 35mins
(including interval)

★★

Whenever I see a production promising “a uniquely Scottish take” on a play, it “fills me with dread”, said Simon Thompson on WhatsOnStage.com. It’s often shorthand for “lowest-common-denominator cliché”. Thankfully, Max Webster’s production sidesteps that trap, but his Scottish interpretation still falls short. Webster has transposed the action of Shakespeare’s play from “urbane” Sicily and “rustic” Bohemia to modern-day Edinburgh and Fife – the former full of “minimalist furnishings and refined conversation”, the latter a “technicolour riot”. The contrast works well, highlighting the Scottish capital’s “self-important view of itself”. However, Webster’s other major change – “translating” the Fife dialogue into Scots – is less successful. The Scots language it employs veers “dangerously far from Shakespeare”, and jokes about Nicola Sturgeon and the posh Edinburgh suburb of Morningside “would be more at home in the annual panto”.

“The contrasts drawn between the two settings are too crude to be especially illuminating,” agreed Allan Radcliffe in The Times. So credit to the leads, who manage to “restore emotional integrity to this notoriously fragmented tale”. John Michie brilliantly conveys Leontes’ “agonising transition from jealous tyrant to remorseful penitent”, and



The brilliant Michie and Grey

Maureen Beattie is on top form as Paulina, the noblewoman who stays loyal to Hermione (Frances Grey) in the face of Leontes’ false accusations of adultery. The only “sour note”, said David Kettle on TheArtsDesk.com, is the “unpleasant whiff of urban disdain” for Jimmy Chisholm’s “tracksuited, shopping trolley-pushing peddler Autolycus”. “We’re definitely laughing at him, not with him.”

I found the whole production “rich and rewarding”, said Mark Fisher in The Guardian. By making the nobleman Camillo a female character, Webster sets up a fascinating “head-and-heart battle between the masculine and feminine”, as “all the forces lined up against Leontes” are women. And with Leontes stuck in his own “personal echo chamber”, hearing “only what he wants to hear”, it all feels strikingly relevant for today’s political climate.

The week’s other opening

The Pirates of Penzance London Coliseum, London WC2 (020-7845 9300). Until 25 March
If Mike Leigh’s 2015 production of the comic opera was “splendid”, his latest revival is even better. The new cast has far more energy and conductor Gareth Jones “keeps the livelier numbers bubbling along” (Daily Mail).

Opera

Le Vin herbé

Composer: Frank Martin

Director: Polly Graham

Conductor: James Southall

Milton Keynes Theatre,
Marlborough Gate
(0844-871 7652),
21 March, then touring
until 25 April

Running time:
1hr 50mins

★★

“Early 20th century composers fled from Wagner’s monstrous shadow in many different ways,” said Richard Morrison in The Times, “but no reaction was more symbolic than Frank Martin’s”. At a time when Wagner’s work was being “appropriated and warped by the Nazis, and the Nazis themselves were invading France”, the Swiss composer released a new, French-language setting of the Tristan and Isolde story. “Martin’s version is chalk to Wagner’s cheese.” It is based on a different account of the medieval “love-triangle tragedy”. The action lasts just shy of two hours, rather than five. And whereas Wagner’s opera requires a “gargantuan orchestra”, Martin’s uses only seven strings and a piano – a model of Swiss economy.

In this Welsh National Opera production, director Polly Graham has “come up with the appealing idea of placing the musicians centre stage”, said Kate Kellaway in The Observer. It may be a tacit admission that “it’s the music that counts the most” (*Le Vin herbé* is technically an oratorio, not an opera) and the mini-orchestra, together with a chorus that chants the story, is certainly “marvellous to listen to”. But the “central island of musicians” can make the action feel “marginalised”, and conductor James



Hulcup: sings arrestingly

Southall’s “animated presence” creates a strange contrast with the “static” chorus. Well, I loved it, said Rian Evans in The Guardian. The music – “never indulgent” – allows “the ritual of life, love and death” to unfold “with a quiet but unerring monumentality”.

The two leads certainly don’t disappoint, said Stephen Walsh on TheArtsDesk.com. Tom Randle puts in a “thoughtful and touching” performance as Tristan. Opposite him, Caitlin Hulcup is “unflatteringly ward-robed”, but sings so arrestingly that “the music blots out the visual image”. Yet as good as this production sounds, it lacks “emotional variety”. With all the emphasis on the tragedy and almost none on the love story, the whole thing is utterly gloomy from start to finish. “It’s not one for faint hearts.”

CD of the week

Ryan Adams: Prisoner

Virgin £9.99

Full of “clanging power chords” and “big choruses”, Adams’ latest album doesn’t break new ground. But the US rock star’s “heart-on-sleeve lyrics” are refreshingly ambiguous and leave “ample space for intimacy” (Guardian).

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Moonlight

Dir: Barry Jenkins
1hr 51mins (15)

Beautifully shot gay coming-of-age drama

★★★★

The “greatest films” are those that exploit the power of the image, said Nigel Andrews in the FT. And *Moonlight*, nominated for eight Academy Awards, is a case in point. A coming-of-age saga, its meaning is conveyed less by its stark dialogue than by looks, gestures and gorgeous photography. Its protagonist, a gay black man called Chiron, is played by three different actors, each representing a different period of his life: a poverty-stricken childhood in Miami; adolescence, during which he learns to take on the local bullies; and adulthood, when he adopts a macho image in order to disguise his homosexuality. Writer-director Barry Jenkins skilfully avoids the stereotypes we associate with this kind of gritty narrative, said Geoffrey Macnab in *The Independent*. And the cast – in particular Naomie Harris as Chiron’s crack-addicted mother – is superb. It’s all very well to gush about “the cinematography, dahling”, said Camilla Long in *The Sunday Times*, but beautiful images aren’t enough to compensate for a skimpy plot and thin dialogue. I couldn’t disagree more, said Robbie Collin in *The Daily Telegraph*. Through small but “perfectly crafted” scenes, *Moonlight* presents a “piercingly specific” portrait of life as a gay man in a homophobic culture. Its emotional power is “overwhelming”.



The Founder

Dir: John Lee Hancock
1hr 55mins (12A)

The man who made McDonald’s massive

★★★

In this age of post-truth politics, *The Founder* is a “timely” film about “a lie running around the world while the truth wonders who stole its boots”, said Helen O’Hara in *Empire*. In the 1950s, a middle-aged milkshake-machine salesman named Ray Kroc (Michael Keaton) meets two brothers (Nick Offerman and John Carroll Lynch) who own a wholesome restaurant that prides itself on speed of service. Their names? Dick and Mac McDonald. Kroc persuades them to let him turn their business into a franchise, creates a global brand, steals all the credit and, in the process, loses his soul. Following his acclaim in *Birdman* and *Spotlight*, Keaton delivers another “barnstorming performance” in this “barbed look at the American Dream”, said Geoffrey Macnab in *The Independent*. It’s hard to know whether to like or loathe him, which is what makes the film so “intriguing”. The cast is “uniformly superb”, but there’s little that isn’t predictable, said Tom Huddleston in *Time Out*. “Like the product that inspired it, *The Founder* is tasty enough while it lasts but it never quite fills you up.”



The Great Wall

Dir: Zhang Yimou
1hr 43mins (12A)

Silly but entertaining blockbuster with Matt Damon

★★

If, as has been claimed, *The Great Wall* “heralds a new era of artistic collaboration between Hollywood and China”, I fear for the future, said Robbie Collin in *The Daily Telegraph*. This “fantastically tedious” English-language fantasy adventure stars Matt Damon as a mercenary roped into a war between a medieval Chinese army and a horde of dragon-like creatures attacking the Great Wall. Directed by the acclaimed Zhang Yimou, it’s the most expensive film ever made in China, yet one has to wonder where all the cash went, said Brian Viner in the *Daily Mail*. Even the CGI is “iffy”. Meanwhile Willem Dafoe pops up in a villainous supporting role and looks anxious throughout – no doubt because he has cast his eye over the script, which requires Damon to keep a straight face while intoning lines such as, “The moon is strong. When the horses are fresh, we move.” But what did you expect from a fantasy action flick, asked Tom Huddleston in *Time Out*. Movie is “undoubtedly ‘good value’”, and the martial arts choreography is terrific. This may not be a good movie but it’s “a pretty enjoyable one”.



Hidden Figures

Dir: Theodore Melfi
2hrs 7mins (PG)

Three black women rock Nasa

★★★★

At a time when the US “is locked in turmoil, its racial divisions widening, misogyny rife and science itself under fire”, along comes a film that addresses all those themes, said Rebecca Williams in *Empire*. A “thunderously effective feel-good experience”, *Hidden Figures* tells the incredible true-life story of three female African-American mathematicians who played key roles at Nasa in the 1950s – Mary (Janelle Monáe), a feisty engineer; Dorothy (Octavia Spencer), an aspiring supervisor; and the quietly brilliant maths whizz Katherine (Taraji P. Henson). Each has to overcome prejudice, from the casual to the aggressive, in order to succeed. The film is huge fun but no one can deny that it’s swamped by cliché, notably in its handling of supporting characters, said Peter Bradshaw in *The Guardian*. Kevin Costner fares better than most as a Nasa boss who doesn’t give a damn about anyone’s background as long as they can do their job. The film may be “simplistic and sentimental”, said Allan Hunter in the *Daily Express*, but it tells such a great story you don’t care. “Its Oscar nomination for best picture is well deserved.”



Exhibition of the week **Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932**

Royal Academy, London W1 (020-7300 8090, www.royalacademy.org.uk). Until 17 April

The Royal Academy's survey of Russian art in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution is an "epic" and "ambitious" undertaking, said Alastair Sooke in *The Daily Telegraph*. A century on from the storming of St Petersburg's Winter Palace and Lenin's seizure of power, the exhibition explores the brief period in which the Russian Revolution seemed to herald a "brave new world" for artists, ushering in a flowering of creativity that was crushed in 1932, when Stalin issued a decree imposing "Socialist Realism" – figurative propaganda – as the USSR's only acceptable

artistic style. Heavy on "posters, photographs, film clips, food coupons, printed textiles and other artefacts", this show is "a history lesson first and foremost". Nevertheless, it features more than a few "mesmerising" paintings, including works by Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinsky and Vladimir Tatlin, as well as a host of works by lesser-known artists. It's a "groundbreaking" exhibition that makes this most "tragic" and "turbulent" period of modern history feel "resonant and relevant".

The Russian avant-garde of the period included some of the most "innovative" artists of the 20th century, said Sarah Kent on *TheArtsDesk.com*. Figures including Kazimir Malevich and El Lissitzky "devoted their energies to promoting the Bolshevik



Isaak Brodsky's *V. I. Lenin and Manifestation* (1919)

cause", turning their pioneering abstract styles to the service of the new regime. Unfortunately, the "incredible outpouring of creative genius" that initially followed the Revolution is "scarcely visible" amid the lesser talents on show: key works are missing, and "powerful images" by Kandinsky and Lyubov Popova seem to drown in the "sea of mediocrity" that surrounds them. Even a room devoted to Malevich is a disappointment. Elsewhere, there is a lot of "dreary" socialist realism, including portraits of Lenin and Stalin, as well as much propaganda "at

its most leaden". This may well be "the most depressing show I have ever seen".

True, the exhibition is "more intellectually fascinating than aesthetically gratifying," said Rachel Campbell-Johnston in *The Times*. Nevertheless, visitors will find much visual stimulation here. Highlights include Alexander Deineka's "haunting" painting, *The Defence of Petrograd* (1928), Tatlin's prototype for a glider – a "worker's flying bicycle", and a full-scale recreation of an apartment Lissitzky designed for communal living. Even "apparently insignificant" objects like a Trotsky coffee cup have an "evocative" pull. Revolution is "vivid and varied – and often viscerally moving".

Where to buy...

The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery

Frank Bowling

at The Arts Club

It is one of the stranger twists of modern art history that the painter Frank Bowling has never truly become a household name. Bowling, a friend and art college contemporary of David Hockney in the 1960s, is arguably one of the best abstract painters of his generation. Yet where Hockney has a major retrospective at Tate Britain, Bowling fans must for the moment make do with this small but deeply satisfying show that covers work created throughout the last 50 years of his career. Bowling was born in Guyana, studied in London and moved to New York in 1966; the best of his paintings channel abstract expressionism, and the more serious American pop artists, to create pulsing collisions of colour that give the illusion of bottomless depth. The most



Gooding's choice (2014)
acrylic on canvas, 199.3cm x 189cm

impressive works here are a group of tall, rectangular canvases from the late 1970s, in which cascades of paint crash down into effervescent chaos at the foot of the images. Stare at them long enough, and they may appear to start vibrating. Prices on negotiation.

40 Dover Street, London W1
(020-7499 8581). Until 23 April.

Where the rainbow ends

The most striking feature of John Constable's masterpiece, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (1831), is its rainbow. But according to research published last week by an art historian and a meteorologist, the feature may have been added 15 months after the work (pictured) was first shown at the Royal Academy in May 1831, says *The Sunday Times*. As Amy Concannon, a curator at Tate Britain, points out, none of the reviews from 1831 mentions a rainbow, even though many dwelt on the way Constable had painted the sky. What's more, the rainbow ends just above the house of Constable's friend John Fisher, a canon of Salisbury Cathedral, who died on 25 August 1832. John Thorne, professor of meteorology at Birmingham University, speculates that in a posthumous tribute to his friend, Constable used his considerable meteorological knowledge to represent the solar geometry on the very afternoon of Fisher's death.



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Best books... Sarah Moss

Award-winning author Sarah Moss picks her six favourite books. Her latest novel, *The Tidal Zone* (Granta £12.99), has been longlisted for the 2017 Wellcome Book Prize, which celebrates books that engage with topics of medicine or health



The Grasmere Journals, 1800-1803 by Dorothy Wordsworth (The Folio Society £25.95). I repeatedly reread this because it offers a radical model of the writer's life; one where domestic labour, reading, writing and outdoor exercise are mutually sustaining and all part of the work of literature.

Findings by Kathleen Jamie, 2005 (Sort of Books £6.99). How to write beautifully and accurately about nature and place without a trace of self-aggrandisement or nostalgia. Not many can do it. I love Jamie's insistence on the small-scale, her rigorously intelligent attention to particular artefacts, moments and places.

Passage to Juneau by Jonathan Raban, 1999 (Picador £12.99). Raban's account of navigating a 35ft sailboat up the Alaskan coast, thinking about memory, loss and the idea of writing a life. This is a beautifully written book about a place of my dreams, but also about lived and remembered histories, national and personal.

All My Puny Sorrows by Miriam Toews, 2014 (Faber £7.99). I love all of Toews' fiction but this is my favourite; about a woman trying to persuade her suicidal sister to stay alive in modern-day Canada. When confronted with structural social injustice, I quote it to myself: "We have

rage and we will build empires with that, gentleman."

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë, 1847 (Penguin £5.99). One of the voices in the head of every English novelist, and a book that changes every time you reread it: as a child I read a school story with a romance tacked on the end; as a student it was about how a woman could live with intelligence and sexuality; now it's about the possibility of a feminist happy ending.

The Sculptor's Daughter by Tove Jansson, 1968 (Sort of Books £9.99). A memoir in which every story is perfectly simple and simply perfect. My compliments to the translator.

Titles in print are available from The Week Bookshop on 0843-060 0020. For out-of-print books visit www.bibliofind.co.uk

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

Last Chance

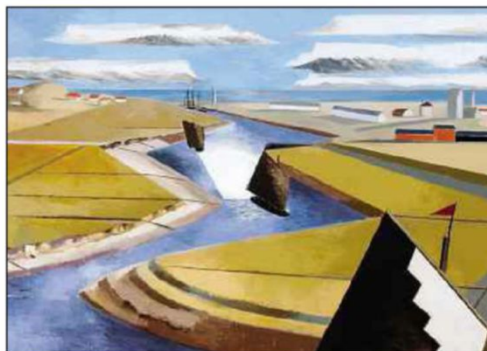
Paul Nash at Tate Britain, London SW1 (020-7887 8888). This retrospective affirms Nash "as the greatest British landscape painter of the 20th century", tracing the development of his painting from the 1910s until his early death, in 1946 (Sunday Times). Ends 5 March.

Book now

Sherlock star Amanda Abbington stars in a 40th anniversary production of **Abigail's Party**, Mike Leigh's play about a drinks party from hell. 1-11 March, Theatre Royal Bath (01225-448844), then touring, ending at Richmond Theatre, 24-29 April (0844-871 7651).

Grange Park Opera kicks off its first season at its new home in Surrey with Puccini's *Tosca*, featuring star tenor Joseph Calleja. There's also an evening with Bryn Terfel and Wagner's *Die Walküre*. 8 June-15 July, The Theatre in the Woods, West Horsley Place, Surrey (www.grangeparkopera.co.uk; 01962-737373).

Jez Butterworth's new play, **The Ferryman**, sold out in a single day for its run at the Royal Court (24 April-20 May). If you missed the



Paul Nash's *The Rye Marshes* (1932)

boat, a West End transfer has been announced for this family drama, directed by Sam Mendes and set during the Troubles. 20 June-7 October, Gielgud Theatre, London W1 (0844-482 5138).

Just out in paperback

Days Without End by Sebastian Barry (Faber £8.99). A "deservedly popular" Costa book of the year winner, this novel about two young men in 1850s frontier America is both epic and "touching", with vivid battle scenes (Times).

Television

Programmes

Meet The Lords In a TV first, this series goes behind the scenes at the House of Lords, following some of the larger-than-life characters that inhabit the upper chamber. Mon 27 Feb, BBC2 9pm (60mins).

Broadchurch Olivia Colman and David Tennant return for a third and final series of the whodunnit drama. Mon 27 Feb, ITV1 9pm (60mins).

The Replacement Morven Christie and Vicky McClure star in a three-part thriller about a woman who fears that her maternity leave replacement is trying to steal her life. Tue 28 Feb, BBC1 9pm (60mins).

1066: A Year to Conquer England In this three-part docudrama, Dan Snow explores the manoeuvrings between Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Normans that led to the Battle of Hastings. Tue 28 Feb, BBC2 9pm (60mins).

Catastrophe Sharon Horgan and Rob Delaney's brilliant no-holds-barred sitcom about relationships and parenthood returns for a third series. Tue 28 Feb, C4 10pm (35mins).

Imagine... Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise Portrait of the trailblazing activist and author, with contributions from Bill and Hillary Clinton, and Quincy Jones. Tue 28 Feb, BBC1 10.45pm (95mins).

Prime Suspect 1973 Stefanie Martini plays WPC Jane Tennison in this *Prime Suspect* prequel. Thur 2 March, ITV1 9pm (60mins).

Films

Zero Dark Thirty (2012) Jessica Chastain stars in Kathryn Bigelow's gripping drama about the hunt for Osama bin Laden. Fri 3 Mar, C4 12.55am (155mins).

Coming up for auction

Christie's sale **Handpicked: 100 Artists Selected by the Saatchi Gallery** will see 100 artworks by 100 contemporary artists go under the hammer, to help fund the gallery's free entry policy. Fifty works, including Conrad Shawcross's *Light Perpetual* (est. £10,000), go on sale on 10 March at Christie's South Kensington, London (020-7930 6074). The rest will be auctioned in New York.

Colourful houses



◀ **Norfolk:** The Bath House, Cromer. This sympathetically restored family house sits on the seafront at the centre of Cromer, with outstanding views of the Victorian pier and out to sea. Master suite, 3 further suites, 2 receps, study, library, kitchen, 3 cloakrooms, cinema room, spa with steam room and sauna, 2 pantries, store room, cellar, balcony garden, garden terrace and permit-holder parking. £1.1m; Savills (01603-229229).



▲ **Powys:** Pen-y-Pentre, Llangattock, Crickhowell. Found in a pretty village surrounded by lovely countryside, this house dates back to the 17th century and has gardens on three sides. 3 beds, 2 baths, 3 receps, kitchen, cloakroom, utility, stone outbuilding and gardens. £498,000; Knight Frank (01432-273087).



◀ **Essex:** High Street, Mistley, Manningtree. This former 18th century tea house is believed to have been visited often by the artist John Constable, whose brother Abram later owned the property. Set over three floors, it retains many period features, including exposed beams, wooden flooring and a large fireplace. Master suite, 4 further beds, family bath, kitchen, 2 receps and a garden. £500,000; Fenn Wright (01206-397222).





▲ **Essex:** The Market Cross, 25 Town Street, Thaxted, near Great Dunmow. A large house in a pretty market town, with a master suite, 4 further beds, bathroom, kitchen, 4 receps, cloakrooms, cellars, separate coach house/studio and garden. £995,000; Mullucks Wells (01799-520520).

◀ **Suffolk:** Commerce House, Wickhambrook. Situated in a secluded position in a rural village, this timber-framed, 18th century house has many fine features, including herringbone maple flooring and inglenook fireplaces. Master suite, guest suite, 5 further beds, family bath, kitchen, 4 receps, utility, outbuildings, heated outdoor swimming pool, and a garden and grounds of approx. 5 acres. £1.375m; David Burr (01638-669035).



◀ **Cambridgeshire:** 7 The Quay, St Ives. A charming cottage on the quayside of St Ives, a pretty market town on the banks of the river Great Ouse – and the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell. The carefully restored property has wonderful views over the river and is surprisingly generous inside, being spread over three floors. 3 beds, 2 baths, kitchen, 2 receps, attic, WC, utility and courtyard. £400,000; Savills (01223-347000).



◀ **Kent:** Court House, 14 Rectory Road, Deal. A three-storey town house dating from the 16th century – originally a poor house, it has many original features, including exposed beams, wood panelling and an inglenook fireplace. 5 beds, 2 baths, kitchen/breakfast, 3 receps, study, utility, cloakrooms, double garage, and walled gardens of approx. a third of an acre. £725,000; Colebrook Sturrock (01304-381155).



◀ **Devon:** Forder Lane, Bishopsteignton. An elegant Regency villa with views of the Teign Estuary and Dartmoor National Park. Master suite with dressing room, 6 further beds, 3 baths, 3 receps, study, kitchen/breakfast room, sun room, cellar, conservatory, leisure complex, two-bed coach house, garage, lawned gardens and approx. 1.66 acres of grounds. £1.6m; Strutt & Parker (01392-215631).



▲ **London:** Courtnell Street, Notting Hill, W2. A recently redeveloped triplex, which has its own street entrance and is near the shops and cafés of Westbourne Grove. Master suite with dressing room, guest suite, 1 further bed, family bath, kitchen/breakfast/recep, utility, plant storage, 2 roof terraces. £3.75m; Strutt & Parker (020-7221 1111).

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What the experts recommend

Cabotte 48 Gresham Street, London EC2 (020-7600 1616)

If you love Burgundy wines as much as I do, then get along to Cabotte, says Fay Maschler in the London Evening Standard. This warm and friendly French restaurant is named after the word for the stone huts that provide shelter for vineyard workers. The blokes behind the venture are two master sommeliers; a dozen Burgundy vintners have backed it, and “all the staff seem to possess the soul” of a wine expert and are keen to advise. I’m a lover of white Burgundies in particular, and was much taken with the Puligny-Montrachet we went for. But Cabotte is not just notable for its great wine list; the food is first-rate, too. Confit veal breast with squash purée, sweet and sour cabbage, and shiitake mushrooms was vividly colourful and full of flavour. Potato gnocchi with lobster, pak choi and lime “dances skittishly away from the land of boeuf bourguignon”, but was delectable nonetheless. And a dessert of crumbly pear sponge cake with almonds was perfect (and, as a bonus, “calls out for a glass of Burgundian pinot noir”). *Meal for two about £140, with wine and service.*



Cabotte: first-rate food

O’Loughlin in The Guardian. There’s the Michelin-starred Casamia, the “permanently rammed” Pi Shop pizzeria, and now this fabulous tapas bar – a “wholly successful return” to the family’s roots. This is Spanish food as cooked by “perfectionists”. The “proletarian patatas bravas, for instance, is here elevated to aristocracy”, the spuds double-fried until “hypnotically crisp”, the chilli sauce sweet and ripe, the aioli yellow with good egg yolks and “pugnacious” with garlic. The *cazon en adobo* – meaty dogfish in the lightest of batters, and just touched with herbs and a sprightly vinegar – “whisks me straight to a summer’s day in Sanlúcar de

Barrameda”, that beautiful coastal town not far from Jerez. And *calçots*, those “recherché Catalan alliums, come beautifully blackened from the grill with the best romesco I’ve ever tasted”. *About £40 a head, plus drinks and service.*

Frank’s Restaurant and Mussel Bar 53-57 High Street, West Malling, Kent (01732-843247)

At one point during my hearty dinner at Frank’s, says Michael Deacon in The Daily Telegraph, a waitress asked the couple at the next table whether they had room for pudding. “She was met with little wails of anguished protest. The pair of them looked a breadcrumb away from spontaneous combustion.” Still, I soldiered nobly on, and ordered the toffee and ice cream waffle – an “obscenely sweet wedge of heart-stopping, artery-clogging wickedness”. I loved it, but the minor tragedy of this place is that most diners will never get to try this “stupendous” waffle, because they’re so stuffed after their starter and main. I had breaded Brie, a “luscious, rich conglomerate of hot melting goo”. And then a gut-bustingly vast “cauldron” of mussels, with a sauce of “succulent and fat” bacon, wine, cream and blue cheese. Don’t come to Frank’s for small portions and fine-dining pretension. Come here for “top grub”. Lots of it. *Three-course meal for two, about £55, plus drinks.*

Paco Tapas 3a The General, Lower Guinea Street, Bristol (0117-925 7021)

This “little slice of Andalucía” is part of the Sanchez-Iglesias family’s small empire of three restaurants perched in a row on Bristol’s waterside, says Marina

Recipe of the week

If you’re looking to try something a bit different on Shrove Tuesday next week, these traditional German pancakes are a wonderfully indulgent treat

Baked caramelised apple pancake

Serves 4 50g butter 4 large eating apples (Braeburn are good), peeled, cored and sliced 4 tbsps light soft brown sugar, plus 30g for the cream topping 1 tsp ground cinnamon 125g plain flour, sifted 3 tbsps golden caster sugar ¼ tsp salt 175ml semi-skimmed milk 50ml Greek yoghurt 3 large eggs, beaten 1 tsp vanilla extract 2 tbsps Calvados or kirsch (optional) 300ml whipping cream

- Preheat the oven to 230°C. Melt the butter in a 24cm ovenproof, nonstick frying pan over a medium heat. Add the sliced apples and sprinkle over the 4 tbsps of brown sugar and the cinnamon. Fry the apples for 8-10 minutes, until they are just starting to soften and caramelise, then transfer to a plate. Set aside.



- Mix the flour, sugar and salt in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk the milk, yoghurt, eggs, vanilla and alcohol (if using). Add to the flour mixture and whisk again to get rid of

any lumps – the batter should have the consistency of double cream.

- Put the apples back in the frying pan and pour over the batter. Cook in the oven for 15-20 minutes, until the batter has puffed up and just started to set in the centre, and the edges are beginning to turn golden. Meanwhile, put the cream and 30g of brown sugar in a bowl and whip gently. When the pancake is cooked, turn it out of the pan, cut into wedges and serve with the whipped cream (or nutmeg ice cream, if preferred).

Taken from Flipping Good! by Sudi Pigott, published by Kyle Books at £12.99. To buy from The Week Bookshop for £9.99, call 020-3176 3835 or visit www.theweek.co.uk/bookshop.

Wine choice



Hardly had the 2015 grapes been picked when Burgundy producers began talking up the vintage, says Jane MacQuitty in The Times. Alas, having tasted hundreds of examples, I can’t say that it’s destined to be a great vintage. The finest reds are “a joy, with pure, intense, velvety” brilliance.

But the quality of the whites is variable, and they lack the “thrilling minerally zing” of a truly great year such as 2014.

My advice, if you are a confirmed Burgundy fan, is to stock up now on the lesser wines from the great 2014 white vintage and the early, excellent 2015 reds. Good white Burgundies include the gorgeous, nutty, toasted almond-ish **2014 Rully Blanc, Remoissenet Père et Fils** (Oddbins, £21.50), and Brocard’s racy, herbaceous **2014 Chablis Premier Cru** (Sainsbury’s, £18).

If it’s one of those top-notch 2015 red Burgundies you want, snap up the last of Marks & Spencer’s ripe, gamey, beetrooty **2015 Hautes-Côtes de Nuits, Maison du Tastelune** (£16.50), or its rich, red berry-laden **2015 Savigny-les-Beaune, Vieilles Vignes, Christian Bellang et Fils** (£18).

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New cars: what the critics say



Honda Civic
from £18,335

Autocar

The last Civic was “classic Honda”. With oddball looks and a petrol engine that “dated like cottage cheese”, its “also-ran” status was guaranteed. A big fix was required, and the Japanese firm have done exactly that: this latest model of their family hatchback is “wholly new and enhanced”. Built in Swindon, it’s quite a bit longer and at least 91kg heavier – the equivalent of a hefty extra passenger.

The Daily Telegraph

The car’s design is something of an “acquired taste”. Put frankly, it looks rather weird: the exterior is “muscular, yes, but distorted”, like an oiled bodybuilder. The cabin is more sober than in past models – despite boasting a “riot” of different materials – and more comfortable, too, with extra headroom and “a tad more” legroom in the back. And at 478 litres, the boot is sizeable.

Auto Express

On the road, the Civic is “barely recognisable” from its predecessor. It’s now an impressive long-distance cruiser, with “consistently weighted” steering and good body control. The 127bhp, 1.0-litre turbo petrol engine (one of three options) is a “gem”, accelerating punchily – although there is lots of wind and road noise. Relatively economical as well, this is now one of the best cars in its class.

The best... kitchen gadgets



▶ **Tefal ActiFry Smart XL** This handy machine can cook chips, stir-frys or risottos for you, stirring ingredients and controlling the temperature. You just have to fill it with food and pick a recipe on the accompanying smartphone app (£300; www.lakeland.co.uk).

▶ **Kenwood Electric Spiraliser** Manual spiralisers can be hard work – but this electric model slices vegetables into ribbons at the press of a button. It comes with a range of cutting cones, so you can choose the thickness of your spirals, too (£39; www.tesco.com).



▶ **Anova Precision Cooker** The Anova makes it easy to use sous vide techniques – in which food is vacuum-sealed and cooked slowly and evenly in water. Just pop the gadget in any pot to heat the water; put the food in a resealable bag and then clip to the side of the pot (from £169; www.anovaculinary.com).

▶ **Morphy Richards Sear and Stew Compact**

Relatively small for a slow cooker, this machine still holds enough stew for four people. If you want to fry ingredients or brown the meat beforehand, you can remove the lightweight pot and use it on the hob (£50; www.argos.co.uk).



▶ **Smeg Retro Citrus Juicer** The juicing cone in this stylish machine starts turning automatically when you press fruit onto it. There’s a sieve-like tray to catch the thickest bits of pulp, and it’s easy to take apart and clean (£110; www.johnlewis.com).



Tips... how to improve your posture at work

- If you work on a laptop, make sure you use a separate keyboard and mouse. That will allow you to raise the screen – by placing the computer on a pile of books or a stand – so the top of it is at eye level. Place the mouse as close to the keyboard as you can: reaching too far to the side can give you neck, shoulder and arm problems.
- When seated at a desk, you should be aiming for something that resembles your standing posture as much as possible. Adjust your seat so your pelvis is raised slightly higher than your knees, with your feet flat on the floor; if your feet don’t touch the floor, use a foot rest.
- Your wrists should be resting lightly on the desk, with your elbows bent slightly more than 90 degrees.
- Stretch regularly to relieve tightness in your shoulders and neck. Try lifting both of your arms, imagining there’s a ledge above you just out of reach. Stretch each hand, one at a time, trying to reach the ledge. Repeat several times.

SOURCE: THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THE WEEK 25 February 2017

And for those who have everything...



If you’re not keen on the current occupant of the White House, you can now replace him with your cat. Made from strong cardboard, you can also get pet playhouse versions of the Kremlin and the Taj Mahal.

£35; www.poopycat.com

SOURCE: THE SUNDAY TIMES

Where to find... off-grid holidays

Rockcliffe Hall, in Darlington, locks away your phone during its overnight “digital detoxes”. Enjoy the sauna and take a yoga class – both are included in the price (£190 for a double; www.rockcliffehall.com).

The Old Schoolhouse, a cottage on the Hebridean island of Eilean Shona, is truly off-grid: it hasn’t got electricity, let alone Wi-Fi. But there are still creature comforts, including a wood burning stove and a Victorian bath (£1,250 a week – sleeps four; www.eileanshona.com).

White House Hotel is on Herm, a car-free Channel Island. You’ll feel like “you’ve gone back 50 years” – particularly if you hand over your devices on arrival (£295pp for two nights; www.herm.com/hotel).

Isle of Eriska Hotel, on a private island off Scotland’s west coast, has 300 acres of grounds. A digital detox stay includes a spa treatment; there’s also a Michelin-starred restaurant and golf course (from £410pp for two nights; www.eriska-hotel.co.uk).

SOURCE: THE SUNDAY TIMES

This week's dream: the world's most glamorous ferry ride

There is a new sea journey that takes you from "France's sexiest shore" to "Italy's coolest coast", says Tristan Rutherford in *The Times*. Yes, it's a ferry trip, but not as we know it. The vehicles rolling off the ramp of this vessel are Ferraris, not Ford Fiestas, on overnight hops from the Côte d'Azur to Sardinia's Costa Smeralda. "And the cruise-like views are first class." Departures for Golfo Aranci leave from the Port of Nice at 8pm, which means you're "sipping spumante on deck" as the sun dips beneath the French Riviera. The cabins are excellent, and there's a "cracking" Italian restaurant serving set meals for £19, including an aperitif.

Morning brings strong coffee and "dolphins off the prow" – a pod of about 50 swims in the protected waters off Cap Corse, the first land mass spied since Nice. The islands of Capraia and Pianosa – "frequented by wealthy yachties" – are visible in the distance, as are the seven Maddalena islands between Corsica and Sardinia. The rest of the



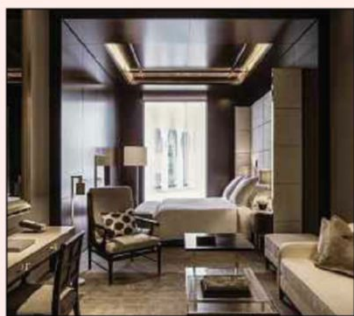
Dolphins swim in the protected waters off Cap Corse

journey skirts the latter's sparkling coastline until, at around 10am, "the ferry puffs into Golfo Aranci".

The road that runs north along the Costa Smeralda is the same one along which Roger Moore, as James Bond, was chased in *The Spy Who Loved Me*: there are "wild, white" beaches along the way. From Sardinia's northern tip, it's a 20-minute ferry to the Maddalena islands, home to around "a third of Sardinia's flora", as well as sea turtles and swordfish. Only three islands are inhabited, so you can hire a speedboat for the day and drop anchor on "footprint-free sands". On Capraia, walking trails wind through forests of umbrella pines to take you to yet

another "priceless" deserted bay. Despite the ferries, it's still satisfyingly exclusive and secluded. "Rare is the Brit who knows about this archipelago" of "beach-trimmed jewels". *Corsica Ferries* (+33 495 32 95 95; www.corsica-ferries.co.uk) run from 8 April. Tickets about £140 for a family of four with a car.

Hotel of the week



Ten Trinity Square, London

Back when the Thames was still the "lifeflood" of the capital, this "commanding pile of stone and marble" was the Port of London Authority's headquarters, says Simon Osborne in the *Financial Times*. Last month it reopened its doors as a luxury hotel and private members' club. Inside, it's a "fine space for afternoon tea or a cocktail", although the bedrooms, while impressive, "miss opportunities to celebrate the past". Still, where original features survive, the building's heritage "really sings". The old boardroom, with its elaborately carved walnut panelling, is "breathtaking", and the glorious restored facade, when illuminated, "is a gift to London".

Doubles from £390 per night. 020-3297 9200; www.fourseasons.com.

Getting the flavour of...

Cuba's changing face

It's three months since Fidel Castro died, and Cuba's reinvention continues apace, says John Arlidge in *The Sunday Times*. Thanks to the resumption of "full diplomatic relations" with the US, billboards advertise global brands; a Sheraton has opened in Havana; and Cubans are free to "watch cat videos" like the rest of us. Nightclubs cater to "Yummies" – young, upwardly mobile Marxists. "This is no good, no good at all." Who goes to Cuba for five-star service and edible food? If you look closely, though, not everything has changed: the "deathtrap" tuk-tuks still cost more than a London cab and shops still keep to their own mysterious timetables. Some of the old charm survives, "sunbaked into Cuban life like the pastel colours on an old Havana mansion". *Virgin Atlantic* (0344-874 7747; www.virginatlantic.com) flies to Havana from £599 return.

Foodies in the Faroes

Considering that merely a decade ago the Faroe Islands didn't have a single restaurant, it's remarkable that they're now a dynamic – if "underappreciated" – destination for Nordic cuisine, says Georgina Wilson-Powell in the *London Evening Standard*. A "mythical-looking" chain of rocks 250 miles north of Scotland, and home to just 50,000 people, the Faroes offer flavours that are "singular to these unique islands". Pickling

and preserving – so "trendy these days" – have always been integral to the Faroese diet, and delicacies include *skerpikjøt* (dried mutton, "fermented by the wind"). Cod and plaice are plentiful, but when fine-dining Scandi restaurant KOKS opened five years ago, chefs were amazed to find they couldn't buy fish for their menus: since locals all "fished for their own supper", it had simply never been sold there. *Atlantic Airways* flies from Edinburgh to Vágar from £200 return. *Hotel Hafnia* in Tórshavn (www.hafnia.fo) has doubles from £208 per night b&b.

Berwick's northern charm

Less than 40 minutes from Edinburgh by train, North Berwick is a "total escape from the city, with wide open skies and sea views that stop you in your tracks", says Susannah Butter in *The Independent*. In winter, seals "come to lounge on the rocks", while local bird colonies include gannets and "a circus of puffins (yes, that is the collective noun)". The town "does a fine line in crumbling fortifications", such as Tantallon Castle, a 14th century fortress on a headland. The beaches are wildly beautiful, too. In summer, the Lobster Shack in the harbour sells luxury seafood, while Alanda's Gelateria offers some of the finest ice cream in Scotland. *Trains* run from Edinburgh Waverley every hour, from £13 return. For houses from £275 for three nights, see www.gonetothesea.co.uk.

Last-minute offers from top travel companies

A country park retreat

Saltmarsh, a 16th century farmhouse in the South Downs, East Sussex, has a suite with 2 double bedrooms and a sitting room for £300 per night b&b. 01323-870218, www.saltmarshfarmhouse.co.uk.

Glamping in Morocco


Three nights at Morocco's Les Jardins d'Issil, staying in luxury tents with en-suite bathrooms, costs from £143pp b&b, excl. flights. 020-7112 0019, www.fleewinter.com. Arrive March or early April.

Beautiful Barbados

Spend a week at Sugadadeze, a 3-bedroom villa with a private pool. From £775pp (when fully occupied by 6 people); excl. flights. 0800-368 9626, www.hammertonbarbados.com. Until 31 March.

Singapore and Bali stay


Enjoy 3 nights at Singapore's Park Hotel Clarke Quay followed by 7 nights at the Bali Dynasty Resort. From £1,329pp, incl. flights. 01293-762456, www.hayesandjarvis.co.uk. Depart 26 April.



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Rock star statistician who devoted his life to fighting ignorance

Hans Rosling
1948-2017

"Lies, damned lies, and statistics," was how Benjamin Disraeli famously dismissed the application of quantitative data to political problems. But in the view of the statistician Hans Rosling, who has died aged 68, Disraeli had it completely wrong, said *The Economist*. As he saw it, statistics provide the best available guide to what's really going on in the world. Nor were they dry and unexciting; if properly presented, they could be nothing less than enthralling. They certainly were in Rosling's hands. His presentations were so entertaining that people dubbed him a "rock star statistician" and a "salesman for the truth". And the truth that Rosling sold was that the world, on almost every count, was in better shape than at any other time in history. That wasn't an opinion: it was a fact. Everyone was allowed their own opinion – but facts, as Rosling put it, were non-negotiable.



An apostle of fact-based understanding

Hans Gösta Rosling was born in the Swedish town of Uppsala in 1948, the son of a coffee roasting factory worker. He studied statistics and medicine at Uppsala University, and public health in Bangalore, India, where he got his medical degree in 1976. Shortly after, he moved with his wife and young children to a northern province of newly independent Mozambique, where he was the sole doctor to 300,000 people. Despite the abject poverty, he was enthused by seeing the improvements small changes could bring to village life, and his experiences in Africa would inform his positive outlook in later life, said the FT. Yet it wasn't until he was in his 40s, while teaching global health at Stockholm's Karolinska Institute, that he experienced the epiphany which brought his true vocation into focus. Fearing his graduate students might already know everything he was about to teach them, he had set them a test presenting them with five pairs of countries, and asking them which country, in each pair, had the higher infant mortality rate. Their answers were so hopelessly wrong that they scored lower, as

Rosling gleefully noted, than a bunch of chimps would have done if randomly pushing buttons. For Rosling, this was a eureka moment: it indicated how even highly educated people make judgements based on hearsay. Thenceforth, he would devote his energies to spreading what he termed "a fact-based world view".

To achieve this goal, Rosling put a premium on making data presentation clear and entertaining. He began by setting up a non-profit venture, the Gapminder Foundation, devoted to developing software that presented statistics in visually arresting ways. Thus he would use Lego bricks, say, or toilet rolls, to illustrate shifts in global demographics. His delivery, too, was infectious, and after he gave a riveting Ted Talk in 2006, the soft-spoken, bespectacled professor became an internet sensation. His delight at this turn of events was like that of a schoolboy, said his colleague Ann Lindstrand in *The Guardian*. It wasn't egotism; it was the

thrill of realising he could use his new celebrity to reach a wider audience. Some found his tone of authority a bit too blunt. Yet his point was that some areas of knowledge weren't up for debate. ("I don't debate," he liked to say. "There are too many debates. Too much Word, not enough Excel.") Among his favourite indisputable facts were these: contrary to popular belief, global population growth was slowing rapidly; the divide between rich and poor was blurring; life expectancy was rising; more young women than ever were receiving an education; and the number of people in extreme poverty had fallen by a billion since 1980.

In 2012, Rosling was included in *Time* magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world. Yet he would still lament that his impact had been minimal, said Lindstrand. This was typical self-deprecation: the truth is that his Gapminder Foundation continues his work, creating "a fact-based understanding of the world that will help us make the right decisions for our future".

The woman at the centre of a landmark abortion ruling

Norma McCorvey
1947-2017

Norma McCorvey, who has died aged 69, was better known to the world as Jane Roe, the plaintiff in "one of the most contested decisions in US legal history", said *The Daily Telegraph*. The verdict of the 1973 Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* (Wade was the name of the local district attorney) effectively legalised abortion in most of America's 50 states – a move hailed as a milestone in women's rights. McCorvey duly became a "poster girl" for the pro-choice movement. Or at least she did until 1995, when in a sensational about-turn she declared that she'd found God, and began fiercely campaigning for Christian pro-life organisations.



A "poster girl" for both sides

Born in Louisiana in 1947, McCorvey had a difficult childhood, said *The New York Times*. Her mother was an alcoholic and her father, a TV repairman, left when she was a girl. At 16, she married a man who beat her before and after the birth of their daughter, Melissa. McCorvey gave her mother custody of the child, and within a few years was single and living on the streets in Dallas, Texas, struggling with drink and drugs, and taking lovers of both sexes. She gave up another child for adoption, then fell pregnant again at the age of 21. At first she claimed to have been raped – which under Texas' restrictive abortion law would have allowed her to have an abortion – but

later admitted lying. Her case was taken up by the lawyers Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee, who had been searching for a plaintiff to challenge the Texan law. The process took three years, by which time McCorvey, who was never called to testify, had given up her third child for adoption. She learned of the verdict in the newspapers and later complained that her lawyers had exploited her, withholding information about how she might gain access to an abortion because they needed her pregnant for the trial to proceed.

McCorvey went on to work as a counsellor at several Dallas abortion clinics before becoming a born-again Christian. Having been baptised by the evangelical minister Flip Benham, an anti-abortion campaigner, she announced that she

was "dedicated to spending the rest of my life undoing the law that bears my name". Yet according to her former attorney Weddington, she was a deeply troubled person who "craved and sought attention". Even Pastor Benham publicly criticised her as someone who "just fishes for money". McCorvey's private motivations remained hard to unravel, said *The Washington Post*, and perhaps the most generous interpretation of her life would be to cast her as a victim. As she herself once said: "I wasn't the wrong person to become Jane Roe, I wasn't the right person to become Jane Roe. I was just the person who became Jane Roe."

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

Snap Inc: photo opportunity?

The company behind the disappearing-photo messaging app Snapchat is promoting its imminent float with “a daring proposition,” said Heather Somerville on Reuters Breakingviews. Snap has told investors it is morphing into “a camera company”: it will make its own “hot-selling hardware gadgets”, as well as maintaining its own software – which will enable it to “stay one step ahead of Facebook”. It’s a tough sell: there is “little precedent” for a company with similar roots “succeeding in the notoriously difficult consumer hardware business”. Investors buying into the IPO, which values Snap at up to \$22bn, are clearly taking a gamble, said Patrick Hosking in The Times. “Yet Snap does have a seductive story to tell.” It is “changing the way the young communicate”, with a “potent and addictive mix of self-destructing and manipulable videos, pictures, filters and emojis”. If it can keep increasing revenues and holding down costs, today’s “sizeable losses” could “soon turn into vast profits”. But the serious money has already been made. One early Snap backer was the UK’s biggest charity, Wellcome Trust, which is set to make \$100m in profit from the IPO. Wellcome, for the record, “is now starting to sell”.

RBS: off our backs at last?

Royal Bank of Scotland has just delivered a ninth consecutive year of annual losses, said The Observer. “The numbers are eye-watering”: the bank, which is still 73% owned by the taxpayer, “has sunk into the red by more than £55bn since taxpayers pumped in more than £45bn to keep it alive” in 2008. But the City seems to think the end is in sight. RBS shares “soared” this week on hopes that the bank may be moving towards privatisation and paying dividends, said Ben Woods in The Independent. The breakthrough is down to some successful manoeuvring by the Chancellor, Philip Hammond. One of RBS’s most intractable problems was the disposal of its Williams & Glyn business – demanded by the EU as a condition of its bailout. Various suitors took a look at W&G’s 300-plus UK branches, but no one wanted to buy, said Iain Dey in The Sunday Times. Now the Treasury has outlined an alternative plan to appease Brussels officials: if RBS shells out £750m to a fund for boosting competition in the banking market, the sale of W&G can be allowed to lapse. The deal is “an admission of failure” in a way. But in the wider context of RBS’s losses, a £750m exit plan looks like a snip.

Uber: sex problems

Less than a month after becoming embroiled in a row over President Trump’s migration ban, Uber is in the wars again, said Colm Gorey on SiliconRepublic.com. The taxi hailing firm is struggling to contain the fallout over its handling of a sexual harassment claim by a former staff member. In a blog post that quickly went viral, Susan Fowler described how Uber’s HR team had ignored her complaints about the advances of her manager because he was “a high performer” and it was his “first offence”. She claims she found out later that other women had previously made similar complaints. The incident has reignited the debate about the role of women in macho Silicon Valley, said Andrew Hill in the FT. Uber has launched a “full independent investigation”, placing its new board member, Arianna Huffington, in charge. Founder Travis Kalanick has praised her “emotional intelligence” – Uber’s going to need a lot of it “to avoid a car crash”.

Seven days in the Square Mile

Official statisticians revised up their estimate of **UK economic growth** in the last quarter of 2016, from 0.6% to 0.7%, citing faster than expected growth in manufacturing. MPs grilled experts from the Bank of England, including governor **Mark Carney**, about its forecasting record. Carney said the Bank had suspected that surveys before the EU vote were overly gloomy, and conceded that the Bank should have been bolder. He said it had taken serious steps to mitigate financial stability risks. “We just have to accept that we’re never going to get any credit for it.”

German short-dated bond yields fell to a record low of -0.92% on French election worries and concerns about the future of the **euro**. Investors are piling into the safety of German bonds as a hedge against the prospect of victory for Marine Le Pen, who has vowed to remove France from the euro.

Lloyds Banking Group reported a 158% rise in pre-tax profits last year, to £4.24bn, thanks to a reduction in PPI provisions. **HSBC** faces a probe over potential breaches of money laundering rules. J.P. Morgan and Morgan Stanley won the contest to underwrite the oil giant **Saudi Aramco**’s \$100bn public offering. **Debenhams** topped a government list of firms failing to pay the minimum wage; nearly 12,000 staff were short-changed. **Princess Beatrice** emerged as a market matchmaker: she is helping software firm **Afiniti** ahead of a hoped-for market debut.

General Motors/Peugeot: a deal that spells trouble for Britain

The French government “can usually be relied on to make an almighty racket” when there’s talk of a multibillion euro merger deal that could lead to thousands of job losses, said the Financial Times. Not last week. The mood in Paris was “relaxed – smug even” when General Motors revealed plans to sell its loss-making European operations to Groupe PSA, the owner of Peugeot and Citroën. For France, the move means creating a “larger French champion”. It’s the German and UK governments that have been left with the headache. They could be “left with thousands of angry workers” at GM’s Opel and Vauxhall plants, “at a time when anti-globalisation extremist parties are already on the rise in Europe’s former industrial heartlands”.



A worker at the Ellesmere Port plant

The outlook for some 4,500 Vauxhall workers looks precarious, to say the least, said Iain Dey in The Sunday Times. GM has racked

up €8bn in losses in Europe since 2010, making it all but “inevitable” that PSA’s swoop will mean “the eventual closure” of the Ellesmere Port and Luton plants. The Business Secretary, Greg Clark, flew to Paris last week, returning with what he called “reassurances”. But UK union leaders are pushing for “Nissan-style guarantees for UK car plants”, said Rebecca Smith in City AM. That could be a tall order.

Globally, car-making has been on a roll, said The Economist, but change is in the air. GM’s big divestment “suggests a shift from the industry consensus that ‘bigger is better’”. Up to now, it looked like PSA was heading in a similarly niche direction: CEO Carlos Tavares’ strategy was to sacrifice sales for profitability. If he goes ahead with this deal, it will “represent a screeching U-turn” for Peugeot. GM’s decision to sell has obvious merits. The advantages for Peugeot are “much less clear-cut”.

Growing prosperity

ISAs have become a British national institution – but why on earth are we so wedded to the cash variety?



The author Douglas Adams had an honest take on time management: “I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by.” Most of us can sympathise. But some deadlines really are worth meeting, and one you’ll certainly kick yourself for missing – if not now, then at some point in the future – is this year’s looming Individual Savings Account (ISA) investment cut-off date.

One of the great boons of making an ISA the central plank in your savings strategy is that you don’t pay tax on any gains you make from your money, whether it’s invested in cash, or in stocks and shares. But ISAs are run on a ‘use it or lose it’ basis – you can’t carry over any unused allowance to the following tax year. That means that you have until midnight on April 5 (the end of the financial year) to use up this year’s £15,240 tax-free allowance. Time to get your skates on. But, as ever, the perpetual question is where to put your cash.

Who wants to be..?

Since their introduction in 1999, ISAs have become something approaching a national institution – for good reason. Around this time of year, the financial press is full of stories of people who have become millionaires by gradually building up their wealth over time, taking full advantage of the tax breaks. A couple of years back, research suggested that Britain had around 200 ISA millionaires⁽¹⁾ – a figure that has almost certainly grown since then, and is set to mushroom further when the annual tax-free allowance increases to a generous £20,000 from this April.

The trick, as no-one needs reminding, is to start saving as soon as you can. Long-term capital growth is all about making the most of ‘compounding’. But this mathematical trick – where the returns on your investments themselves generate further returns – needs time. The standard assumption is that you might get to a million quid in around 30 years, assuming an average 5% annual return rate on your ISA stash.⁽²⁾ Great news. The problem is that the typical cash ISA has been returning less than 2% in recent years, meaning that the vast majority of ISA savers – most of whom choose to keep their money in cash – will fall well short of the magic million, even if they religiously set aside their full allowance every year.

The ‘curse’ of cash?

Just over £250bn has been saved in cash ISAs over the past decade.⁽³⁾ That says something about their popularity as a savings vehicle – around 19 million Britons are putting money in every year⁽⁴⁾ – but also a good deal about our national appetite for risk. In the years following the global financial crisis, the number of savers diverting their ISA money into cash rather than shares has leapt. And most have paid dearly for their caution. By one estimate, the average cash investor has forfeited around £5,000 in returns over the decade⁽⁵⁾ because of the collapsing return on cash caused by historically low interest rates. Meanwhile, looser monetary policy has helped the value of riskier assets, such as shares and property, rocket.

At Moneyfarm we understand why so many choose to err on the side of caution with their hard-earned money:

psychologically, cash feels safer than stock markets because we worry that the value of money invested could fall. Besides, investing requires making a decision – and sometimes, making no decision seems safer than making the wrong decision.

Yet the depressing point rammed home by the research is that cash ISAs can confer a false sense of security. In fact, the combination of ultra-low interest rates and rising inflation means that cash savings have actually gone backwards in real terms over the past decade, as the rising cost of living has eaten into paltry gains. A £1,000 deposit in cash ten years ago would now be worth less than £900, while the same £1,000, invested between company shares, bonds and property, would have grown to £1,500.⁽⁶⁾

Looking to the immediate future, there's not much sign of this cash rout ending. According to a round-up conducted by the consumer group Which? in early February, the top rate instant-access cash ISA was paying just 1%, with many more high-street offerings paying far less. True, you get slightly more bang for your buck if you agree to lock in your money over several years; but even the best five-year fixed ISA on the market is currently paying just 1.6%.

Meanwhile, headline inflation – currently hovering around the 2% mark – is picking up. The Bank of England forecasts it could hit 2.8% next year, well above the Bank's target of 2%⁽⁷⁾ However, some economists reckon that if a continuing weak pound, post-Brexit, continues to push up consumer prices, that may prove overly conservative. Some go so far as to predict that inflation could hit 4% this year⁽⁸⁾ – leaving an even bigger hole in ISA cash values.



Risk is an unavoidable part of investing – the one prediction that can safely be made about the stock market is that it will go up... and down. But it still remains the best place for long-term growth because – provided you're committed to ignoring short-term noise and staying in the market – returns from the 'good' years tend to smooth out losses from the 'bad'. It's an old investment cliché that what counts in investment is 'time in the market, not timing the market'. But it's true nonetheless. Cash savers are often nervous about equity investment for fear they will time the market wrongly and buy when shares are most expensive. But, if you drip-feed your money into the market regularly you can help prevent this by a process known as 'pound cost averaging' – you end up buying more shares when prices are low, and fewer when they're high, which helps cushion your portfolio from dips in the market.

"Given the difficult environment we see around the world, it's important to maintain a globally diverse portfolio with different asset classes and different geographies", concludes Richard Flax. Indeed, the art and challenge of building an ISA investment portfolio is finding the right mix of investments to generate consistent returns while reducing volatility. Easier said than done, of course. But our expertise at Moneyfarm lies in finding the optimum balance of asset allocation to suit your individual risk profile and life goals.

Everyone needs an emergency cash fund to see them through any unexpected life events. But when it comes to your long-term financial prosperity, all the evidence suggests that cash isn't king. You may not decide to entrust your entire ISA allowance to stocks and shares this year – but making that first move is a step worth taking.

To find out more about how to switch your Cash ISA to Stocks and Share ISA, visit Moneyfarm.com/switch

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¹ The Daily Telegraph, March 13, 2015

www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/investing/isas/11468220/How-to-join-Britains-200-Isa-millionaires.html

² City AM, March 5, 2014, quoting research by Fidelity and Brewin Dolphin

www.cityam.com/article/1393981968/how-isa-millionaires-make-it-five-steps

³ Royal London Asset Management paper, The Curse of Long Term Cash, January 2017

www.royallondon.com/Documents/PDFs/2017/Royal%20London%20Policy%20Paper%2010%20-%20The%20Curse%20of%20Long%20Term%20Cash.pdf

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Bank of England, Inflation Report, February 2017

www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/inflationreport/2017/feb.pdf

⁸ National Institute of Economic and Social Research report, November 2016

www.niesr.ac.uk/publications/uk-economy-forecast-summary#.WKV1czvuhPY

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RICHARD FLAX, MONEYFARM CIO

Taking the plunge

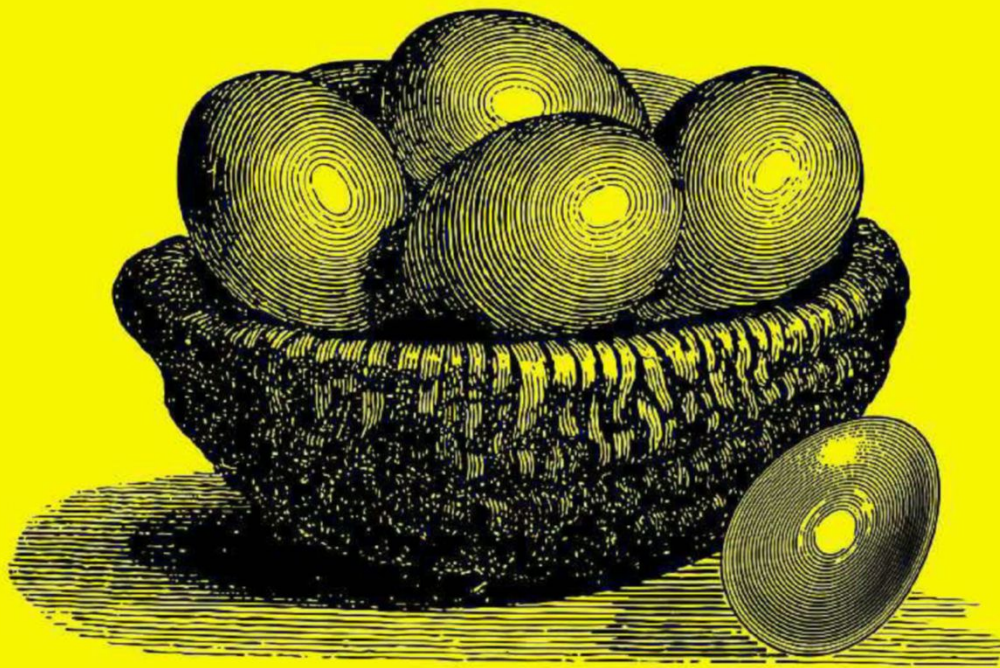
Of course, many will argue, with some justification, that the past decade has been exceptionally kind to investors in equities and bonds – in part because of the vast sums of cash that the world's central banks have pumped into the economy in the form of quantitative easing. Indeed, one reason to continue keeping at least some of your savings in cash is that this bonanza era is coming to an end – and there's a risk of faster-than-expected policy 'normalisation'. Arch-pessimists liken the removal of this support to the old Wile E. Coyote cartoons, arguing that markets have been running on thin air and that any loss of confidence could cause them to fall.

Well, it is a truism in investment that anything could happen. Given all the political uncertainty at the start of last year, few observers would have predicted that 2016 would deliver one of the best investment years on record, with indices on both sides of the Atlantic achieving record highs. 2017 has begun in much more encouraging fashion, but as Moneyfarm's chief investment officer, Richard Flax, notes: "For investors in 2017, the focus will still be on politics and policies." In Europe, a variety of events – notably the French elections – could cause 'volatility'. And a big debate continues to rage on whether the Trump-inspired stock market rally in the States will continue.

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CITYINDEX

Issue of the week: the botched Unilever bid

The Anglo-Dutch consumer goods giant has dodged a Kraft-branded bullet. Others may not be so fortunate

It was billed as the “second-largest takeover deal in history” – and it was also one of the most short-lived, said the Financial Times. Just two days after being launched last Friday, Kraft Heinz’s tilt at the consumer goods giant Unilever disintegrated into “a \$143bn [£115bn] flop”. Having badly underestimated the likely opposition within Unilever, and in Britain more widely, the cheese and ketchup conglomerate thought it wiser to withdraw “amicably” than to besmirch itself with a bloody takeover battle. It was “a rare public defeat” for the two “formidable dealmakers” who own 50% of Kraft Heinz – the US billionaire investor Warren Buffett, and 3G Capital’s Brazilian dynamo Jorge Paulo Lemann. Their modus operandi is “extreme aggression with a smile”, observed a source close to the Unilever board. “So we gave them extreme rejection with a smile.”



Paul Polman: “extreme rejection with a smile”

wonder Unilever’s CEO, Paul Polman, dug his heels in. Since taking over in 2009, Polman “has made a great virtue out of trying to do the right thing” at Unilever, winning plaudits for his long-term approach, brand investment and support for environmental sustainability. 3G’s ruthless cost-cutting model is the absolute antithesis of that. “Unilever has dodged a Kraft-branded bullet”, but with the pound so low, UK companies still look like bargains to foreign buyers. “Don’t expect this to be the last great British business to be propositioned in the coming months.”

Kraft’s \$50/share offer for Unilever’s “delectable smorgasbord of Magnum ice cream, Domestos and Dove Soap” was a piece of “cheeky opportunism”, said Alistair Osborne in The Times. The 18% premium offered was insultingly “thin”. The approach also had “a horrible whiff” of the hostile takeover of Cadbury by Kraft in 2010, said Management Today – which was “widely denounced at the time”, and “characterised by broken promises and a total disregard for Cadbury’s name and products”. No

Theresa May is hypersensitive about British companies being bought for knockdown prices because of the Brexit vote. Indeed, there’s “speculation” that the PM was “the hidden hand” behind the scuppering of Kraft’s bid, said Alex Brummer in the Daily Mail. The problem is that, for all the talk of fending off rapacious predators, “the Government lacks a consistent approach”. Quite right, said Nils Pratley in The Guardian. “The time is ripe to insist that mega-bids of this type should pass a public interest test.” The PM suggested as much last summer, but foreign takeovers were completely ignored in the Government’s recent Green Paper on industrial strategy. May should wake up. “The next highly charged bid will probably last longer than 48 hours”; May should “take a £115bn hint and form a policy”.

Making money: what the experts think

● HSBC punished

It’s bank reporting season, and HSBC got proceedings under way with a glum set of results featuring a 62% crash in headline profits in 2016. Much of that stark percentage fall was down to the one-off costs of restructuring, said Citywire – the overhauling of its private banking business and the sale of its Brazilian operations. But even once those costs and currency movements were stripped out, revenues were flat. Cue much navel-gazing in the City, and a sharp correction to HSBC shares, which had been riding high. Analyst Laith Khalaf of Hargreaves Lansdown views the bank, ominously, as “a shining example of how the decline of sterling has bumped up the price of some of the largest companies, without much progress in underlying profits”.



HSBC: a 62% crash in headline profits

to \$250m-\$300m in net income – “very useful”, assuming the US Fed “obliges on the rate front”. If not, the excitement “will be harder to sustain”. The underlying point is that HSBC is “still struggling to find growth” in the teeth of declining global trade, “and the threat of protectionist trade policies is a serious worry”. This week’s 6.5% fall in the share price was overdue.

● The boring bubble

M&A activity is “always worth keeping a close eye on”, said John Stepek on MoneyWeek.com. “It’s one of the most obvious indicators that a sector or theme is becoming overheated.” And that makes the giant Unilever tilt (see above) significant, even though it failed. Arguably, the most obvious asset in “bubble” territory right now is bonds; but “defensive blue-chip” shares, paying reliable dividends, have also seen a rush of investors seeking alternative income sources. Unilever is a “classic example” of the kind of multinational “buy-and-hold-forever stock so beloved of the post-2009 rally”. We had a dotcom/telecoms bubble in 2000, and a banking/property bubble in 2007-08. “Now we have a bubble in boring stuff.”

● Protectionist worries

“Congratulations if you bought shares in HSBC this time last year,” said Nils Pratley in The Guardian: your investment has risen by 50%. But that’s actually only partly down to sterling’s decline. “A bigger factor is the expectation that interest rates will rise in the US.” For “well-capitalised” HSBC, each quarter-point increase equates

Rapping out the profits

The rapper Jay Z has a long pedigree in business, says Josh Constine on TechCrunch.com. And now he’s getting serious about finance too. The entertainment mogul is reportedly starting his own venture capital firm, with his long-time partner and Roc Nation co-founder, Jay Brown. The plan is to focus on “seed investments”. Here’s a rundown of “Mr Beyonce’s” main hits and misses, to date:

Hits

Stance Roc Nation invested \$6m in this “premium sock company” in 2011. It has since raised a total of \$116m from investors, “signalling it is doing well”.

Uber Jay Z invested in 2011, when Uber was valued at just \$300m. In its last funding round in 2015, the taxi app was valued at around \$62bn – a 200-times increase.

Misses

Viddy/Supernova Roc Nation invested in this buzzy “Instagram for video” app in 2012, but the start-up failed when “Instagram became the Instagram for video”. Eventually sold to Fullscreen in a likely fire sale for little or no return.

BlackJet Roc Nation backed this private jet start-up in 2012, before it crashed and burned, along with their money. Undeterred, Jay Z has invested \$100m plus in another start-up, JetSmarter.

Are investors too complacent about Trump?

Gillian Tett

Financial Times

“Stock market hits new high with longest winning streak in decades. Great level of optimism and confidence.” That’s what Donald Trump tweeted last week, says Gillian Tett. And he’s right. But the market’s high spirits are hard to reconcile with the political chaos widely predicted: Ladbroke’s is now offering “even odds” that the US president is either impeached or resigns before his first term ends. Bookmakers are not infallible, and it may be that they’re “just wrong” – that once the Trump administration’s more “seasoned operators” get into their stride, the turmoil will abate. Alternatively, it could be that the so-called Trump rally “is not really about the president” – it’s more the expression of “a wider hope about reflation” in an economy growing healthily. But a third, most alarming, explanation is that a “bubble mentality” has made investors “impervious to negative news”. I suspect it is “still too early to expect a crash”; for now, markets are giving Trump the benefit of the doubt. But “complacent investors should heed the political risks”. Expect “extreme market volatility” soon.

The City still has the law on its side

Harry Wilson

The Times

Amid all the Brexit talk about bank relocations, London’s role “in the legal underpinning of financial markets” is often forgotten, says Harry Wilson. Non-British companies and investors happily trade together, “safe in the knowledge that should a dispute arise, they can fall back on common law to decide the matter”. And while rival trading centres have set up their own courts to provide English legal oversight – the Dubai International Financial Centre is one example – punters appear to have concluded “there is nothing like the real thing”. When something goes wrong in global business, “there is about a 40% chance that a case will end up in an English court”. Even if Brexit leads to the growth of other European financial centres, “it seems unlikely that English law will be dislodged from its central role in international finance”. The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators puts the cost of taking legal action in other EU countries at about a fifth higher than in the UK – “a significant incentive to keep writing business under English law”. We must hope London’s legal expertise acts as a “magnet holding business here that otherwise might have left”.

The market in contemporary art is a racket

Luke Johnson

The Sunday Times

Collecting art has been a “hobby for the wealthy for centuries”, says Luke Johnson. But the modern market is “much bigger and more treacherous than it used to be, and full of risks for the uninformed”. I am sure many art dealers are “reputable individuals”, but the title of a new book about art dealing by Sotheby’s auctioneer Philip Hook – *Rogues’ Gallery* – “gives the game away”. There is no professional code of conduct in the art market, nor any “recognised set of rules about conflicts of interest, or insider dealing”. And it’s all too easy to persuade “gullible buyers” to overpay. The global art market is worth at least £48bn a year, and around 40% of that market is in contemporary art – “a brilliant invention to expand the industry, since artists keep making more of it, and creating it often requires minimal craft while selling it just needs lots of hype”. Very little contemporary art will ever resell for anything like its purchase price, yet dealers still manage to convince clients that they’re making a good investment. “*Caveat emptor*” is the only sound advice.

Will the law crack down on Trump toilets?

Editorial

The Economist

Many Chinese products unrelated to the American president use the word “Trump” in their brand names, says The Economist. But not, perhaps, for much longer. A legal dispute dating back to 2006 ended last week when a Chinese court agreed that the name “Trump” belongs to The Trump Organisation, at least when it comes to construction. “By amazing coincidence”, the ruling came just after Trump promised to honour the “one-China policy” with Taiwan, which Beijing holds sacrosanct. It’s not yet clear what the legal implications of the ruling are for one “great Chinese success story”: Trump toilets. These conveniences, much in demand at “high-end spas, hotels and public institutions”, are made by Shenzhen Trump Industries, a firm founded in 2002 whose Chinese name, Chuang Pu (which means “innovate everywhere”), is remarkably similar to Donald Trump’s Chinese nickname, Chuan Pu. China has a history of “hilariously inappropriate export brand names” – including Long March luggage and Front Gate underwear. Trump toilets could be a big hit in America, “at least among Democrat-voting households”.

City profiles

Jim Ratcliffe

Having built his private empire, Ineos, into one of the world’s largest chemicals companies, Jim Ratcliffe seems bent on “branching out”, says John Collingridge *The Sunday Times*. The Manchester-born tycoon plans to build a new off-road car inspired by Land Rover’s iconic, but now defunct, Defender model: the target market is “farmers, explorers and residents of upmarket areas”. An ardent Brexit supporter who last year moved Ineos’ HQ back to Britain, Ratcliffe rejects criticism that reviving the “Landy” is a vanity project: “We’ll only do it if we can be economically successful”, he said. If it doesn’t work out, he can always fall back on another hobby. As the *Daily Mail* once noted, Ratcliffe has “a curious passion for sit-on lawnmowers, which he is believed to collect”.

Felix Kjellberg



It has been a bruising week for one of YouTube’s “favourite” celebrities, says the FT. The floppy-haired gamer-comedian, known as PewDiePie, has been dumped by all the big media groups over the “supposedly anti-Semitic content” of his videos: one featured two Indian men holding up a sign reading, “death to all Jews”. Swedish-born Kjellberg, 27, gained cult status by broadcasting footage of himself playing video games in his Brighton flat and “hamming up his reactions”. His average daily audience of almost nine million “is larger than most cable networks”, earning him around \$15m last year. His descent from “poster child” to “pariah” has cost him millions in sponsorship. In a tearful video, Kjellberg denied having “hateful attitudes”, and said he was the victim of “an attack by the media”.

Nuclear Briefing

Can the world meet its climate change targets without nuclear?

Some experts argue renewable energy is too intermittent to meet ambitious goals alone



Nuclear power is, for some, the black sheep of the low-carbon energy family.

On the one hand you've got the 'greens': wind, solar and hydro. All of them are exceedingly clean, or at least, they seem so. As clean as a cool breeze, as a sunny day, as a rushing river.

Then you've got nuclear. That cold-war harkening cousin of the low-carbon family.

People cling to horror stories, which is why the disasters at Chernobyl and more recently at Fukushima are so compelling. Several environmental groups, such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, have spoken out loudly against the use of nuclear power.

But for all of that, there is a large scientific stance claiming that without embracing nuclear, we don't stand a chance of meeting the targets we've set ourselves to avoid cataclysmic climate change.

What are the arguments in favour of nuclear power?

It is 100 per cent 'clean' in that it produces no climate-change contributing by-products – and it is also very predictable.

The nuclear reactions used to create electricity do not produce harmful carbon dioxide because the process does not involve the same kind of simple burning of fuel. Instead, uranium atoms are split in a process called nuclear fission.

That process produces significant heat, which boils water and produces steam that in turn spins a turbine, generating electricity.

Why not just use the other clean power sources?

In 2015, four scientists writing for *The Guardian*, James Hansen, Kerry Emanuel, Ken Caldeira and Tom Wigley, said nuclear power is necessary to plug an otherwise yawning gap in energy generation.

At the Paris climate change conference in December 2015, the world agreed to limit post-industrial temperature rises to two degrees or even less. To have any chance of achieving

that, most fossil fuel reserves like oil and coal must be left unmined and unburned.

So how do we keep the lights on while undertaking such a radical shift?

Advocates point to the low installation cost of the likes of solar, wind and hydro power, but the four scientists argued that renewable-only models ignore the intermittency problem, place too much hope in future technological breakthroughs in areas such as battery storage and aren't even truly sustainable.

"Indeed, cutting down forests for bioenergy and damming rivers for hydropower... can have terrible environmental consequences," they wrote.

The quartet instead pointed out that modern nuclear reactor processes re-use spent fuel – and that nuclear energy over the last 50 years has already avoided emitting 60 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. They calculated that building 61 nuclear reactors per year could completely replace fossil fuels by mid-century.

What are the arguments against nuclear power?

There isn't nearly so much scientific material online outlining the case against nuclear power. However, one outspoken opponent of nuclear power is Greenpeace. On its site it decries nuclear power as expensive, dangerous and dirty.

"Nuclear energy is both expensive and dangerous," it says on its website, "and just because nuclear pollution is invisible doesn't mean it's clean."

It cites the disasters at Chernobyl and Fukushima, and argues that there is still no safe, reliable way of dealing with nuclear waste. The charity also makes a connection between the proliferation of nuclear power technology and the ability to produce nuclear weapons.

Who is building new nuclear?

There are currently 65 new reactors already under construction around the world. India and China are two of the most ambitious countries when it comes to plans for nuclear power infrastructure. The latter especially is not known to do things by halves.

In December 2016, two US senators from opposing parties – Republican senator Lamar Alexander and Democrat senator Sheldon Whitehouse – came together to write in *The New York Times* that by 2038, about half of the 99 nuclear reactors operating in the USA will be more than 60 years old.

They called for a levelling of the playing field when it comes to nuclear energy, including more federal support to build new plants.

Closer to home in Britain, where the first full-service nuclear power station was opened in 1956, the government has ambitious plans to build a whole fleet of new nuclear power plants, which could eventually provide 35 per cent of the country's electricity.

What makes nuclear power go?

Unlike other renewable energies, nuclear still relies on mining, in this case to extract uranium. Where are we going to get the uranium to fuel the nascent demand for nuclear power?

At the moment the largest producer is Kazakhstan, which produces more than a third of the total used to generate nuclear power around the world. Australia, Canada and the United States have sizeable uranium deposits, but countries with questionable safety standards like Niger, Namibia and Uzbekistan also remain prominent.

In the EU, around 60 per cent of the uranium demand is met by imports from Kazakhstan, Russia and Niger. By the end of next year however, a new mine will be rapidly building production of uranium within the EU, in Salamanca in north-western Spain. Berkeley Energia's facility is the only one currently under construction in the world and the biggest ever in Europe.

It will eventually produce enough uranium to meet 10 per cent of Europe's nuclear energy needs – and could alone power the UK for four-and-a-half years.

Who's tipping what: the week's best buys...

Halma*Shares*

Halma manufactures a wide range of health and safety products. Organic growth is being supplemented by acquisitions, and its margins consistently beat peers'. An unrivalled record of dividend growth. Buy. 955.5p.

M.P. Evans Group*Investors Chronicle*

The palm oil producer has only one remaining minority investment to sell (which could mean a special payout) and will then be in full control of its acreage. Oil prices are rising and there's a buyer circling. Buy. 719p.

Parity*The Daily Telegraph*

The recruitment specialist's higher-margin consultancy arm is targeting a potentially lucrative niche in the utilities sector. Parity is a high-risk play, but a management shake-up could trigger a turning point. Buy. 9.38p.

Primary Health Properties*The Times*

PHP buys NHS properties and pharmacies and then rents them back to the tenants. Debt is down and there's capital to fund further portfolio growth, including an Irish expansion. Yields 4.9% – a “perfect income stock”. Buy. 107.5p.

QinetiQ Group*The Times*

Q3 results show that trading and margins at the defence group are holding up despite pressure from the UK regulator. North America is recovering from a decline in robotics orders, which is a boon. Good value. Buy. 277p.

Rolls-Royce Holdings*The Times*

The aeronautical engineer has suffered tough times. But Rolls has shaved £60m off costs, and streamlined management. Engine orders look healthy and there are plans to double production by 2020. Buy. 666p.

Severn Trent*The Daily Telegraph*

The water industry “keeps churning out good news”, to the benefit of Severn Trent, whose shares “continue to grind slowly higher”. Q3 results were solid, and the 3.5% yield is well covered, with scope to grow. Buy. £22.90.

Smith & Nephew*Investors Chronicle*

The medical devices firm has suffered several years of falling profits and earnings. But there is strong US demand for sports medicine products, and shares are good value for a global market leader. Buy. £11.53.

Treant*Shares*

Treant makes ingredients for the flavour, fragrance and personal care industries, and is riding the demand for healthy, natural low-sugar drinks. Geographically diverse, with falling debt and improving margins. Buy. 258.93p.

Directors' dealings**Dixons Carphone**

Shares in the electronics retailer have gone sideways since the EU referendum, on mounting inflation fears. CEO Seb James is among four board members who have offloaded shares totalling £2.3m.

SOURCE: INVESTORS CHRONICLE

Market view

“There is a certain feeling of confidence that equities are underpinned by something durable.”

Nicholas Colas of Convergenx, on the strengthening US economy. Quoted in the FT

ISAs. GET INSIDE AN EXPERT'S HEAD.

LET'S TALK HOW.

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...and some to sell

CYBG*The Mail on Sunday*

In its overview of “challenger” banks, Panmure Gordon claims the combined Clydesdale/ Yorkshire outfit is too reminiscent of the large banks. Low growth, low returns and consistent restructuring costs are all problems. Sell. 274.5p.

Nex Group*The Times*

Nex (formerly Icap) has made hay from the “Trump boom”: uncertainty has boosted trade on its interest rate and currency derivatives platforms. But earnings visibility isn’t clear: take profits. Sell. 551.5p.

St Ives*Shares*

The printer and digital marketing services firm has been hit by cancelled contracts and has issued its third profit warning in a year. Exposure to the groceries sector doesn’t help. The dividend is vulnerable. Sell. 59p.

Form guide

Shares tipped 12 weeks ago

Best tip
Luceco

The Mail on Sunday
up 25.55% to 185.5p

Worst tip
Motorpoint Group
The Daily Telegraph
down 4.29% to 134p

Market summary**Key numbers for investors**

	21 Feb 2017	Week before	Change (%)
FTSE 100	7274.83	7268.56	0.09%
FTSE All-share UK	3960.17	3957.59	0.07%
Dow Jones	20698.62	20429.00	1.32%
NASDAQ	5853.43	5764.41	1.54%
Nikkei 225	19381.44	19238.98	0.74%
Hang Seng	23963.63	23703.01	1.10%
Gold	1233.20	1230.75	0.20%
Brent Crude Oil	56.89	55.96	1.66%
DIVIDEND YIELD (FTSE 100)	3.64%	3.59%	
UK 10-year gilts yield	1.24	1.31	
US 10-year Treasuries	2.42	2.51	
UK ECONOMIC DATA			
Latest CPI (yoy)	1.8% (Jan)	1.6% (Dec)	
Latest RPI (yoy)	2.6% (Jan)	2.5% (Dec)	
Halifax house price (yoy)	+5.7% (Jan)	+6.5% (Dec)	
£1 STERLING	\$1.245 €1.184 ¥140.822		

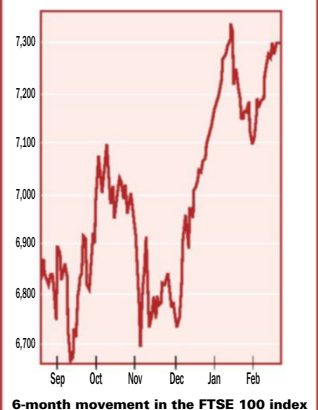
Best and worst performing shares**WEEK'S CHANGE, FTSE 100 STOCKS**

RISES	Price	% change
Unilever (UK)	3586.50	9.16
Coca-Cola HBC (Cdi)	1979.00	8.80
Shire	4810.50	5.54
BT Group	320.80	4.92
Royal Bank of Scti.Gp.	251.80	4.48
FALLS		
Mediclinic International	754.00	-8.05
Tui (Lon)	1124.00	-7.72
Standard Chartered	758.00	-5.11
Hargreaves Lansdown	1322.00	-4.55
HSBC Hdg	665.70	-4.52

BEST AND WORST UK STOCKS OVERALL

PCG Entertainment	0.25	+121.74
North River Resource	4.00	-54.29

Source: Datastream (not adjusted for dividends). Prices on 21 Feb (pm)

Following the Footsie

Choosing the right funds for your ISA takes a fair bit of thought, but our award-winning guidance can help. It includes four fund recommendations for this year's ISA from our Investment Director Tom Stevenson, as well as the Select 50, which gives you our experts' shortlist of funds to research yourself. Starting your ISA has never been easier.

And, if you open an ISA online before 31 March 2017, you'll have a chance to win back the amount you initially invested, in cash.

Get smarter with your ISA today and use our online tools at fidelity.co.uk or call us on 0800 368 0219.

Please remember that the value of investments can go down as well as up, so you may not get back the amount you invest. The value of tax savings and eligibility to invest in an ISA depend on personal circumstances and all tax rules may change in future. The Select 50 and Tom's chosen funds are not personal recommendations.



The secrets of the Victorian body

Our great-grandparents didn't talk much about their bodies – not through prissiness, says Kathryn Hughes, but because they were over-exposed to them. Here, she presents three case studies that illustrate Victorian attitudes to their physical selves

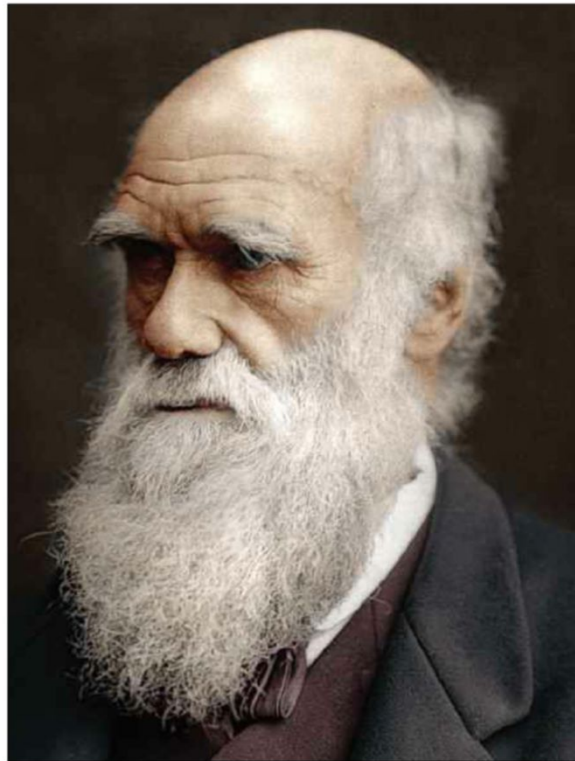
The story about Victorians wrapping little trousers around their indecent piano legs is apocryphal, or at the very least a weak joke. Yet the idea endures that our great-grandparents muffled their bodies in heavy fabric and silence. It's an idea we picked up from the early 20th century, and then, because it was flattering to imagine ourselves as so different from our buttoned-up ancestors, we refused to let it go. Yet you only have to take a quick imaginative tour of the conditions in which the Victorians lived to realise that a state of chilly physical self-sufficiency would have been beyond them. From the end of the 18th century, Britons piled into the expanding cities from the countryside. Strangers who had never previously set eyes on one another found themselves in an involuntary embrace at the factory bench, railway station, lodging house, park, or on the top deck of an omnibus. Other people's sneezes, bums, elbows, snores, farts and breathy whistles were, quite literally, in your face.

To the brute proximity of other people's bodies you would have to add the tyranny of living in your own. In an age without antibiotics or much effective doctoring, discomforts that we moderns can magic away in less than a week – constipation, an aching tooth, or a swollen toe – became chronic conditions to be endured over decades. In the process, a body might become permanently marked with the tokens of its earthly passage – an osteoporotic hump, smallpox scars, a missing finger – that it carried with it to the grave.

So if the Victorians have a reputation for denying or concealing their bodies, it is only because they were obliged to live with them so intensely. And that reticence slipped naturally into the way that they wrote, or rather didn't, about their physical selves. Most biographers in the 19th century behaved as if their subjects had taken leave of the body, or had never possessed such a thing in the first place. If flesh and blood registered at all, it was in the broadest generalities – a manly stride here, the sweetest smile there. Mostly, though, there was a hole in the text where arms, legs, breasts and bellies should have been. I set out to track the bodies of a clutch of famous Victorians, in the hope of getting closer than before to the physical experiences of 150 years ago.

Charles Darwin's beard

In April 1866 Charles Darwin made a rare appearance at a Royal Society soirée in Burlington House, Piccadilly. It quickly became apparent that few among the company recognised the tall, stooped man in the brushed-down evening dress. The scientific superstar was left having to sidle up to old friends and introduce himself, an ordeal for such a shy man, and a mortification for those who realised too late that they had spent the evening snubbing the most distinguished person in the room. The last time anyone had seen Darwin in public had been four years earlier,



Darwin's "forest of facial hair" covered his eczema

when he had been clean-shaven, give or take some gingery mutton chop whiskers. Now here he was, quite transformed, sporting a forest of grey facial hair that made him appear at least a decade older than his 57 years.

It was his wife, Emma, who had suggested Darwin grow a beard, as a way of dealing with his severe eczema. Since adolescence he had been subject to breakouts of a skin complaint that swelled his lips and turned his pleasantly pudgy features red, so that he periodically appeared like an angry cherub. Ceasing to shave would eliminate the irritation that came with the daily scraping of skin with steel, and allow Darwin to conceal the scaly redness that had been the source of much embarrassment. Indeed, disappearing behind a thick curtain of facial hair was a relief for a man who had long been convinced that he was, to use his own sad self-accusation, "hideous".

Darwin was not alone in using the new fashion for facial hair to bind up private psychic wounds. For the previous 15 years, men of every class had been growing out their early-Victorian mutton chops and "Piccadilly weepers" into spectacularly bushy beards. Alfred Tennyson had started his poetic career as a clean-shaven young man with a jaw that could only be described as "lantern". But by the age of 45 his facial architecture had begun to collapse, thanks to a "queer" set of false teeth. Growing an extravagant moustache and beard not only allowed the poet laureate to hide his caved-in mouth, but also enabled him to fashion himself as a timeless sage. Dickens, meanwhile, was so self-conscious about his weak chin, especially now that he was besieged by requests to sit for portraits, that he grew his trademark door knocker as a kind of prosthesis (a full beard was beyond him).

In his *The Descent of Man*, Darwin wrestled with the problem of what the beard is for. Is it there to attract a female mate, like the peacock's bright tail feathers, or a lion's handsome mane? Or is it something to do with male competition: the man with the hairiest jaw gets to dominate his smoother friends? But, in that case, why was it that in Tierra del Fuego, which Darwin had visited as a young naturalist aboard the *Beagle*, indigenous men, who might be assumed to be "closer to nature", had such light beard growth? And why did the Fuegians appear to regard the bristly chins of the *Beagle* crew with all the horror of home counties aunts? Did the answer lie in culture, biology, or both? Darwin never came to a conclusion, and it is a puzzle that scientists share to this day. What is apparent, though, is that Victorian women tended not to share their men's enthusiasm for a bristly chin. Emily Tennyson longed for her "Ally" to shave off his malodorous attachment (personal hygiene was not the poet's strong point), while Mary Butler, with whom Darwin struck up a friendship, declared, "I

"The Victorians lived in brute proximity with other people's bodies – their sneezes, bums, elbows, farts and breathy whistles"

don't like the idea of your long beard", and never wrote to him again.

George Eliot's hand

One day in the 1840s, a young woman in her mid-20s was talking to her neighbour in a genteel villa on the outskirts of Coventry. At some point in the conversation, Mary Ann Evans stretched out her right hand "with some pride" to demonstrate how much bigger it was than her left. It was the legacy, she explained, of having spent her teenage years making butter and cheese on her family's farm, eight miles outside the city. All that vigorous turning of the churn at 40 repetitions a minute, not to mention the squeezing of the curds to expel the watery whey, had built up the muscles in her right hand. Even now, several years on, her right hand was broader than her left, making her permanently lopsided.



Cornforth in Rossetti's *Bocca Baciata*

Fifteen years after that Coventry conversation, Evans entered public consciousness with a flourish as "George Eliot". In *Adam Bede*, her first full-length novel, Eliot tells the story of Hetty Sorrel, a pretty dairymaid who frets at the way her hands have been coarsened by "butter-making, and other work that ladies never did". Dismayed at the way that her body blabs its social origins, Hetty relishes the tokens that she believes will erase the marks of her lowly status – fancy earrings, a pretty neckerchief. It is this desire for a different kind of body that, ironically, leads Hetty to that folkloric fate – seduction by the young squire, resulting in pregnancy.

When Eliot died, in 1880, you might have expected the guardians of her posthumous reputation – widower, brother, nephew – to be delighted for the public to hear this charming story about how the great novelist's body carried a permanent memento of her early years in rural Warwickshire. Not a bit of it. When the first, unauthorised, biography came out just 28 months after her death, these professional men – a banker, a clergyman and a gentleman farmer – were appalled to discover the Coventry neighbour had passed on the anecdote about Mary Ann Evans' broad right hand.

There was nothing for it but to embark on an energetic campaign of disinformation. Over the next 50 years, Eliot's increasingly genteel descendants issued stern denials about the great novelist's labours in the dairy. Any would-be biographer who wanted access to Evans family documents was required to include in their text a strongly worded rebuttal of the ridiculous story about how the great novelist George Eliot, author of the incomparable *Middlemarch*, had spent her youth doing sweaty, back-breaking manual labour. There was, maintained Eliot's heirs, nothing remotely odd about her right hand: it had done nothing more taxing than practising the piano and taking tea.

Fanny Cornforth's mouth

In 1859, Dante Gabriel Rossetti unveiled his latest painting to a select group of friends and supporters. It depicts the head and torso of a luscious young woman in a brocade costume that falls open to reveal her thick pillar of a neck and deep, creamy chest. A tumble of red-gold hair adds to the sense of undoneness. And then there is her mouth. "Mulatto mouths", carped the critics, would become a signature of Rossetti's work over the decades to come. This, though, is the first one that really matters: thick, quilted, and so ripe that on this occasion it is unable to hold itself decently shut. Rossetti titled the painting *Bocca Baciata*, which translates as "the kissed mouth".

Fanny Cornforth's mouth marks a moment of radical departure in Rossetti's art. His earlier works had been sharp of outline,

bright of colour and pure of thought – in line with the Pre-Raphaelite manifesto that aimed to inject English painting with the artistic and moral astringencies of the Italian quattrocento. Frequently using his mistress Lizzie Siddal and sister Christina as his models, Rossetti's early female figures are angular and spare. Above all, they keep their thin lips firmly clamped together. This latest painting, though, was something quite different. If it can be said to have a subject at all, it is pleasure – not just the pleasure of Cornforth's luscious features, but of the material quality of the paint, here laid on in loose oily swipes so different from Rossetti's earlier dense stippling. This, critics have suggested, is the moment when British painting turned away from its obligation to represent the exterior world and grew concerned with the practice of its own making. Or, to put it another way, what we are looking at is the first

sighting of artistic modernism.

Cornforth was not simply Rossetti's favourite model of the early 1860s. She was also his on-off domestic partner for a quarter of a century. Her mouth – not so much its shape but what she did with it – marks her difference from the other two, far more celebrated, mistress/models in Rossetti's life. These were Siddal (to whom Rossetti was briefly married) and Jane Morris (the wife of his friend William Morris). Like Siddal and Morris, Cornforth came from a working-class background. Unlike them, though, she never bothered to change the way she spoke in order to fit with the Pre-Raphaelites' middle-class mores. Cornforth chattered 19 to the dozen in her rural mid-Sussex burr. "I know I don't say it right," she shrugged when Rossetti's friends sniggered at her tendency to mangle aspirates, past participles and even plurals.

Then there was the question of food, or rather appetite. Siddal and Morris kept themselves rigorously thin, to the point where they might today be described as anorexic. Disciplining your flesh was necessary to have a hope of fitting into the "aesthetic" dress

that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood preferred their women to wear – loose, floating gowns with minimal underpinnings that looked as though they belonged in a medieval fresco. Cornforth, by

contrast, loved food, preferred the cheerful vulgarity of contemporary fashion, and relied on a corset and cage crinoline to squeeze herself into the required shape. Rossetti nicknamed her "Elephant" – a play on her name (EleFANt) and her bulky shape.

The moment Rossetti died in 1882, at the age of 53, Cornforth was cast out of what remained of the Pre-Raphaelite circle and all but excised from its biographical records. She ended her days in the county asylum in her native Sussex, where the medical casebook records that, now an old lady, she is "incoherent and talks incessantly", but also loves her food. And as for the mouth that was once described as "so awfully lovely", the asylum authorities say that it is now devoid of teeth apart from a few decaying stumps over which upper and lower dentures are insecurely hooked. What's more, the authorities note in a final terse observation before rearing back in disgust, Cornforth's tongue is furred and her breath foul. Sad perhaps, but irrelevant surely not. For it is here, in the smells, blots and gurgles of the body's physical life that some of the most revealing biographical stories about the Victorians turn out to reside.

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THE WEEK CROSSWORD 1044

An Ettinger Croco ebony key case and two Connell Guides will be given to the sender of the first correct solution to the crossword and the clue of the week opened on Monday 6 March. Send it to: The Week Crossword 1044, 2nd floor, 32 Queensway, London W2 3RX, or email the answers to crossword@theweek.co.uk. Set by Tim Moorey (www.timmoorey.info)



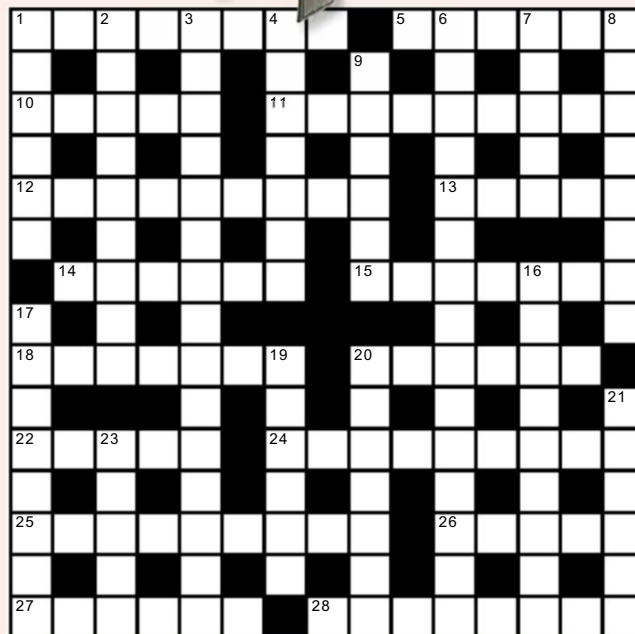
This week's crossword winner will receive an Ettinger (www.ettinger.co.uk) Croco four-hook key case, which retails at £94, and two Connell Guides (www.connellguides.com).

ACROSS

- 1 Cop seen around outlying parts of notorious Yorkshire town (8)
- 5 Did force revolt in empty parade ground? (6)
- 10 Opera group has a learner in lead perhaps (5)
- 11 Editors seen with Communist cast (9)
- 12 Reversal comes from a second-class result (5-4)
- 13 Quiet dancing girl in island capital (5)
- 14 Scandinavian king seen in publication alongside students (6)
- 15 Moved quickly, wearing loose dress? (7)
- 18 Shoes quickly put on in boring flight? (4-3)
- 20 Musician with burning ambition? (6)
- 22 In music, very short attack (5)
- 24 Soldier on for each grave (9)
- 25 Showing no feeling, prisoner grabs one twice (9)
- 26 Rubbish in street recalled by revolutionary types (5)
- 27 Second week with old PM in the country (6)
- 28 Flying ends in expensive and total hasn't developed this island (2,6)

DOWN

- 1 Fail badly, for example losing head in old city (6)
- 2 What some alcohol reformers might do in logic (9)
- 3 Construction to arguably avoid, for example (5,10)
- 4 Refusal to change lectures (7)
- 6 Temporary accommodation in which Wi-Fi should be perfect? (9,6)
- 7 Only mentioned one capital (5)
- 8 Cowards feature prominently in pop repeatedly (8)
- 9 One fellow lives with a handsome chap (6)
- 16 Arrangement of three comes before four? One's heard so! (9)
- 17 Sign of damage in disease attributable to worms (8)
- 19 Colours very good in the main succeeded (6)
- 20 Play present and past wind instrument (7)
- 21 Girl some acknowledge is harassed (6)
- 23 Interest in a post (5)



Name _____

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_____ Tel no _____

Clue of the week answer: _____

Clue of the week: Trouble brewing over missing murder suspect (6)
The Sunday Times clue writing contest (Barrie Graham)

Solution to Crossword 1042

ACROSS: 7 More so 8 Driveller 9 Fearless 10 Thesis 11 Eyeball 12 Intros 13 Trescothick 18 Panama 20 Austere 22 Odious 23 Carouser 24 Earnings 25 Sorbet

DOWN: 1 Covered 2 Dear dear 3 Bodega 4 Dietrich 5 Object 6 Venison 8 Disallowances 14 Swan song 15 Chequers 16 Bandsaw 17 Serener 19 Amount 21 Stress

Clue of the Week: Politician was no stranger to Scotch whisky at the end (7, first letter K)

Solution: KENNEDY (kenned + y)

The winner of 1042 is Colette Murphy from Belfast

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Sudoku 588 (easy)

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 587

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

Puzzle supplied by PUZZLE

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Index : FTSE World Europe ex UK	£1,244	£1,219	£1,310	£1,455	£1,799	£1,737
Cash : Bank of England Base Rate	£1,004	£1,009	£1,014	£1,019	£1,024	£1,036

Source: FE © 2017, bid-bid, £1,000 invested, cumulative performance to 31.01.17. *Launch date 01.10.09. †Bid-bid, TR, 29.01.16 - 31.01.17.

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